

Nations had not foreseen the speed, scope and consequences of decolonization. The granting of independence to the Indian subcontinent in 1947 gave momentum to the movement for decolonization and radically changed the nature and priorities of the UN. Starting with Kashmir and Palestine, post-colonial disputes, power vacuums and conflicts soon became a major part of the Security Council's agenda. The cold war gave this responsibility a double importance. The Council was not only trying to find solutions to particular problems. **It was also functioning as a fuse box, preventing regional disputes and conflicts from overloading the international system and igniting an East-West confrontation.**

(v) The enforcement machinery of Chapter VII of the Charter was not usable in the political circumstances of the cold war --Korea was a historical fluke --and even the implementation of Chapter VI (Peaceful Settlement) was clearly going to require the development of techniques only hinted at in the Charter. **These included mediation, conciliation, good offices of the secretary-general, so-called 'quiet diplomacy', and above all peacekeeping. This form of non-forceful military action was a radical departure from the military concepts of the Charter --and indeed from traditional military practice.** It entailed a major addition to the responsibilities of the Secretary-general and the secretariat. Peacekeeping became, in the context of the cold war and decolonization, a key technique for conflict control and limitation.

(vi) **'Classical peacekeeping' as it came to be called, was very much a product of decolonization and of the cold war.** One of the major forces that made it possible was the overriding fear of a nuclear confrontation between the superpowers and the need for arrangements to isolate regional conflicts from that relationship. The main motivation of the permanent members for agreeing to peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, Lebanon, the Congo, Cyprus, Kashmir and elsewhere was their anxiety to fill a vacuum that might otherwise prove irresistible to one or other of the superpowers. (When one of the superpowers decided to go it alone in a regional conflict, as in Vietnam or Afghanistan, unilateral involvement could prove to be a disastrous option.) **That the UN's operations were militarily weak and largely symbolic was an important part of the arrangement. Peacekeeping was fundamentally a pretext for not continuing to fight based on the consent of all the parties concerned.** Normally the political limitations of the cold war Security Council were sufficient to act as a brake and as a guard against 'mission creep'.

(vii) **An essential element of classical peacekeeping was its respect, often derided in the media, for the sovereignty of the parties concerned. It was the knowledge and assurance of this respect that made the provision of peacekeeping troops by the other sovereign members of the UN possible.** If that consent was withdrawn, the arrangement collapsed --sometimes, as in the Middle East in '967, with extensive and disastrous consequences. Attempts to give peacekeeping operations a limited enforcement capability without either the necessary legitimacy or resources usually led, as in the Congo, to confusion and frustration.