

five UN initiatives that have been mounted with such unprecedented success. Over 1,000 Canadian women and men are serving abroad today -- in Lebanon, in Cyprus, in Central America, in the Sinai and on the Golan Heights. And in the weeks and months ahead, there will be new peacekeeping missions, missions which may be of unprecedented scope.

It is a popular notion that peacekeeping demonstrates how the UN has worked. Indeed, peacekeeping is a success story. Yet peacekeeping was not envisaged by the founders of the United Nations. It is not even mentioned in the UN Charter. Peacekeeping was an inspired innovation, which Canadians helped to construct. But it was an innovation spawned not by a UN that had worked, but by a UN that had failed.

The UN was put in place so the Great Powers would act together to deter war and to fight it if it occurred. As the UN was consumed by another war -- the Cold War -- the divisions of that war became divisions in the Security Council. And the Security Council was unable to act.

In conflicts where the vital interests of the Permanent Members were at stake, the UN was kept out. But in other situations, where the Great Powers decided conflict should be controlled without their direct involvement, peacekeeping was allowed. But it was allowed to function in a tightly controlled way. The principles that have governed peacekeeping for many years -- the consent principle, the idea of the use of force only in self-defence, the absence of the Great Powers from the forces on the ground -- these principles were very different from the principles embodied in the collective security sections of the UN Charter. The Charter envisioned Great Power involvement. It envisioned the use of force. It envisioned the UN acting as a policeman. So the principles of peacekeeping did not, in fact, reflect what the Charter said. It was a concept put together because the Charter did not work.

For some countries, peacekeeping was a threat to Great Power influence. But for Canada, peacekeeping was a natural avocation. It did not threaten our empire because we did not have one. And the Canadian qualities of fairness and skill made us valued members of peacekeeping missions. Indeed, not only did peacekeeping not threaten Canada; it offered the great promise of international order collectively maintained.

Peacekeeping helps build the confidence required to let settlement occur. The means have been soldiers who can verify, who can observe, and who can separate opposing forces. And while Great Powers have acted in the past to constrain it, it has played a significant role in maintaining international order. Peacekeeping is both a symbol of what the UN is, and what the UN can be, if countries co-operate.