

"So, war being something to be avoided at almost any cost, the alternative way to settle international differences had to be some supranational machinery for the purpose. The United Nations, successor to the League of Nations, was the essay of the statesmen of the world to create such machinery. Whatever the imperfections of the organization, and whatever faults might develop in its functioning, the ideal of the prevention of a war which would destroy countless million man-years of thought and labour was there, in the United Nations Charter. Everyone who believed in that ideal — that common-sense alternative to mutual destruction — had a duty to do what he could to make this aspiration into a reality."

Lt. Gen. E.L.M. Burns, *Between Arab and Israeli*, 8. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Ltd., 1962

In order to address structural difficulties at UN headquarters in New York, Canada seconded experts to the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations. This helped to overcome staff shortages and to strengthen working structures, so that the UN could cope with the highly increased workload due to the rapidly growing number of peacekeeping operations. Canada also engaged in a study, initiated by Minister Ouellet's address to the UN General Assembly in September 1994, on the feasibility of a United Nations rapid reaction force.

The Role of Regional Organizations

The end of the Cold War freed regional organizations to take part directly in improving security and stability within their own areas. Canada has become more involved with regional groups in the areas of peacekeeping, and conflict management and prevention.

In Europe, organizations active in these areas include the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), NATO, and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Organization of American States (OAS) are involved in their regions.

Regional activities, and Canadian involvement in them, are most advanced in Europe. NATO has a role in UNPROFOR, the UN Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia. The NACC planned four peacekeeping exercises by member states for 1994. Within the CSCE, six conflict prevention missions are currently on the ground. Within ASEAN, Canada is a member of the Regional Forum. This is a group where key countries in the region can discuss security issues. And, within the OAS, a systematic discussion of security issues has developed, and a special committee has been formed to foster confidence-building measures and ways of managing conflicts.

There is a need for peacekeeping operations in the former Soviet Union. Russia has launched several such missions without the involvement of the UN or the CSCE. However, Moscow is seeking both resources and approval for these organizations.

Canada has become more involved in peacemaking in recent years. It is a member of the Friends' Group on Haiti. This was set up to help the transition to democracy in Haiti under the Governors Island Agreement. In the current Middle East peace talks, Canada chairs the Multilateral Working Group on Refugees, and contributes to other working groups. Through the North Atlantic Council, Canada also helps develop NATO policy in the former Yugoslavia.

There is no shortage of challenges for the future. Canada will continue to work for improvements in peacekeeping. It will assist in developing a framework for CSCE peacekeeping, and in building security systems through regional organizations. Finally, Canada has reaffirmed its standby commitment to the UN, and is working to enhance the standby capacity of the UN.

