

SECTION III

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SEMINAR DISCUSSION

After a period of expanded activity, the UN Security Council seems to have lost its resolve to address crises in a proactive and meaningful manner. Intermittent leadership by the US, donor fatigue, UN financial constraints, and traumatic setbacks in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda have all contributed to a loss of momentum in the Council's work. Current Council reluctance to meaningfully address emerging conflicts such as Burundi raises the question of who will carry out the Charter mandate. The risk today is not that the Council is *over*-extended, but rather that it is *under*-utilizing its powers.

Although cooperation among the Permanent Five (P-5) members of the Security Council is showing signs of some strain since 1994, the P-5 continue to dominate the Council's decision-making. Indeed, this current period of pessimism may be temporary as the Council learns from its mistakes and improves its decision-making processes. This was clearly the hope of most seminar participants.

- The Council needs to accept that peace operation mandates and force structures must be related, and avoid passing ill-advised resolutions in response to media or domestic pressures. Politically-motivated "creative ambiguity", and the failure to match resources with stated goals, have repeatedly compromised the UN itself, its peacekeepers, and those they were meant to assist. In this regard, the Council needs to be more sensitive to military advice and the views of the Secretary-General.
- Although peace enforcement operations by coalitions of UN Member states under Security Council mandates will likely continue to occur, the UN itself has proven to be ineffective at enforcement and the forcible provision of humanitarian assistance. However, the UN has an excellent track record in mediating and implementing peace accords, with many recent successful innovations in peacemaking. While peacekeeping also remains a key instrument, more political will, attention, and resources need to be devoted to conflict
- needs the ability to rapidly deploy advance elements of a UN peacekeeping mission to contain fast-moving crises. Ongoing work on a UN military headquarters which would have such rapid deployment capacity was supported.
- Although some progress has been achieved, troop-contributing countries need to be involved even more closely in Council decision-making. This is particularly important for complex peace operations where these countries are increasingly expected to put their soldiers at risk in the field.

The Security Council often performs quasi-law-making functions in the international system, and plays an important role in determining norms under customary international law. In particular, the Council effectively legislates what constitutes a threat to international peace and security, and empowers itself to impose economic, diplomatic, and military sanctions on countries.