

information gathered by national governments, since they have much better means to acquire relevant data. But this worries some diplomats, who say the UN should not be spying on its own members.

With advance warning that a conflict is brewing, the UN could send in troops whose job it would be to discourage both sides from opening fire. Such a deployment of troops hinges on the consent of the parties involved. Aside from the soldiers, preventive diplomacy could mean sending in humanitarian aid and providing conciliation services.

However, if the parties to a conflict are determined to fight, what then? Mr. Boutros-Ghali has suggested that a force be set up that could be sent to hot spots to enforce the peace. Such a force would be provided by member states and made up entirely of volunteers. Such a force would act under the authority of Article 40 of the UN Charter. It would be mobile and ready to go into action within hours. Contrast this with the three to four months it takes to assemble and deploy a traditional peacekeeping force. This force, as envisaged by the Secretary-General, would not be big enough to take on major armies, but in Mr. Boutros-Ghali's view it could be useful in select cases where rogue factions are the major agents of violence, or when a more forceful presence than lightly armed peacekeepers are capable of providing is necessary. When the peace has been made, it is important that people be sent in to keep hostilities from breaking out again. Mr. Boutros-Ghali has suggested setting up a working-capital fund that would give him immediate access to money to get a peacekeeping mission rolling. He also wants member states to hold some of their defence forces ready to go to any trouble spot at a moment's notice. Along with this, countries might have ready a basic stock of supplies (vehicles, radios, uniforms, generators, prefabricated buildings, etc.) that would be needed in any peacekeeping operation. The Secretary-General has also suggested that ceasefire monitors should get tougher. All too often a ceasefire is signed and factions from one or both sides ignore it.

Finally, after the peace treaties have been signed, Mr. Boutros-Ghali sees the need for peace building. By this he means encouraging the hostile parties to co-operate in economic and social development. Educational and cultural exchanges help break down the barriers of prejudice that can lead to war. The Secretary-General wants the UN to devote more resources to countries to help them develop democratic institutions. This all rests on the notion that social peace is as important as strategic or political peace.

An Agenda for Peace sparked off numerous activities in order to improve the quality of UN peacekeeping. Canada took the initiative on a number of issues. It hosted a high-level brainstorming session for officials from 24 states in order to identify ways in which UN capabilities in peacekeeping could be boosted. It also took part in working groups dedicated to key issues of UN missions, like:

- political direction and control of peacekeeping operations,
- executive direction and management of operations,
- education and training of personnel.

Besides these more theoretical activities, Canada was also among the first to lend practical support to new developments in UN peacekeeping. Canada participated in the first preventive deployment under UN auspices: in an attempt to halt the spread of fighting, a UN mission was sent in 1993 to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. So far, this mission has been a success.

Thoughts on Canada's Flag

During the Suez Crisis, Canada had planned to send infantry to join the UN peacekeeping force. However, Egypt objected. The Canadian uniforms, badges, flags and regimental names were all too much like those of the British invaders, said the Egyptians. Under the circumstances, it would be impossible for Egyptians to believe the Canadians were impartial. So service and supply personnel replaced the foot soldiers in the Canadian contingent.

This experience convinced Lester B. Pearson that Canada needed its own symbols. Nine years later, when Mr. Pearson was Prime Minister, Canada got its distinctive maple leaf flag.