

The second, and perhaps most important, justification for the veto was the conviction that with the prevailing fragility and debatability of the standards of international order, a "safety valve" would be needed to prevent the Security Council undertaking a mandatory enforcement action against one of the great military powers, which threaten the collapse of the UN system itself and probably bring on another world war. There have been a number of occasions, through the Cold War era, when this safety valve has served its purpose and the terminal break with a major power has been averted, permitting the continuation of at least some level of dialogue and negotiation. It is a serious question whether the ending of the Cold War and the current unprecedented climate among the major powers might permit the "safety valve" of the veto to be abandoned or modified. If not, it will certainly be important for the permanent members to declare, and to demonstrate, that they will exercise much more stringent standards of restraint and consistency in any future use of the veto.

Regional Approaches, Including the Middle East

One way to avoid overloading the still-fragile UN Security system is to draw, whenever feasible, on regional security approaches and institutions, which, at their best, have always been conceived as "building blocks" to world-wide order. They are explicitly recognized, endorsed and mandated for carrying such roles in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Moreover, there may now be extraordinary potential for reinforcing such regional systems where they exist, or introducing them where they do not. A promising method may be to adapt and propagate the model of the process which helped to end the Cold War in Europe to other regions of conflict or potential conflict. Here, for example, the ideas that External Affairs Minister Clark has raised for a North Pacific forum for security and cooperation, and related proposals by the Australians and others, are extremely interesting as a way of trying to treat the broad security problems of another region.

Needless to say, there must be great sensitivity in trying to apply any model from one region of the world to any other, but at the same time the spectacular achievement of the Helsinki process in helping to break down the greatest confrontation in history must surely inspire interest and a receptivity to any of its techniques which may prove applicable elsewhere. Some recent preliminary assessments in the Southern African region suggest that with all the dramatic change underway in that area, the withdrawal of Cold War intervention and the beginning of the end of the apartheid system and the relationships it spawned between South Africa and its neighbours, there may well be a possibility