

With the end of the Cold War, the UN has come to be perceived as the police force, fire brigade and rescue team of a world community which does not yet exist except in the speeches of politicians. The organisation is neither equipped nor authorised to act in such roles but, too often, that simple fact is conveniently ignored when yet another terrible human disaster appears on our television screen.

Those who complain that the UN has failed in Bosnia and Somalia should remember that every international crisis cannot always mobilise the world organisation. If I may paraphrase a popular expression of recent years, the United Nations should just say No, particularly when member nations propose projects which they are unwilling to pay for. Canada would do well to heed the advice of the Secretary General who wrote recently that member states cannot use the United Nations to avoid a problem and then blame the United Nations for failing to solve it. Mandates given to the United Nations must be clear, realistic and backed by the human and material resources required to complete the assigned task successfully.

On other fronts, such as human security, Canada should remember that the Organisation has racked up a long list of successes. I refer to UNICEF, the UNDP, the WHO, the HCR to name only a few agencies. The steady development of international legal instruments and conventions in its first 50 years in a vast range of human activity, should lead Canada to approach its UN reform efforts with caution.

I leave for another time my musings about reform of the Security Council, of the secretariat and, generally, the fixing of its dramatic financial woes. Reform in these areas is both imperative and easy to prescribe. It is, however, very difficult to accomplish.

In view of the importance of the United Nations for the future of human security in all its dimensions, without any doubt, Canada and other like-minded nations must continue to do all they can in order to sustain the Organization's integrity. A comprehensive assessment of what is right and what is wrong with the UN is needed, and as much and as varied input into that process as possible is required. In most of those periodic reviews of Canada's foreign policy to which I have referred, we have made abundantly clear our fundamental commitment to the goals of the UN. One conclusion remains clear: for all of its faults and for all of its setbacks and disappointments, the United Nations has proven to be a remarkably durable and adaptable institution.

The human race will have to face numerous problems in the coming years. No government, however powerful, has the capacity to manage those problems on its own. Only a collective effort of nations is likely to be able to channel into a constructive direction the forces which are already shaping the future. The only existing, universal, politically acceptable, international