

At the opening of the General Assembly this year, Canada called for a strengthening of the United Nations in order to meet new challenges. The member states of the United Nations must consolidate the base for its activities -- not least of all peacekeeping.

Between 1945 and 1987, there were 13 peacekeeping operations established. Since 1987, 13 additional peacekeeping operations have already been established.

The UN system cannot maintain this level of commitment if its members do not pay their dues or contribute their resources to UN sanctioned actions.

I do not want to dwell on this point yet again, but the recent decision to fund the second phase of UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) by charging only those countries who have already decided to support the effort by providing troops, sets a dangerous precedent that goes directly against the UN principle of universality and collective responsibility.

Peacekeeping

The nature of peacekeeping itself is evolving. With each new requirement, new techniques and methods must be developed. However, some things will remain the same -- the need for a clear mandate from the Security Council tied to aggressive diplomatic efforts. Canadian experience in Cyprus has shown that the UN must be vigilant in ensuring that peacekeeping is seen as a tool in the peace process, not as an end in itself.

More basically, we must look critically and creatively at peacekeeping as a conflict management instrument. Is it the best tool for dealing with new types of ethnic, social and religious conflicts that we see in Moldova, Somalia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Cambodia? What about the future of peacekeeping in support of humanitarian assistance, as is the case in Sarajevo?

Canada has already responded to real needs in many of these places. But the international community needs to think its way through these new approaches in a more structured fashion, rather than on an ad hoc basis.

Rethinking the Limits of Sovereignty

Fundamental to these developments is the fact that international action often crosses over into areas previously considered off-limits for reasons of national sovereignty.

Many of the sources of tension and conflict are found in human rights abuses, persecution of minorities or political repression, which often lead to, or are compounded by, economic deprivation.