

Perhaps the most important lesson learned over the past several years, particularly in Somalia, has been that the UN should not attempt to enforce Council resolutions unless both the political will and the necessary resources are available to do so. Furthermore, the requirements of enforcement, where the UN takes sides to impose a solution, militate against the needs of peacekeeping, where the UN must remain impartial and, in principle, acts with the consent of the parties to the conflict. Enforcement and peacekeeping are largely incompatible efforts.

The Security Council is thus unlikely for some time to seek to enforce its decisions through a UN PKO. It will, however, continue to grant mandates to **coalitions of member states** ('coalitions of the willing') to enforce its decisions. NATO air strikes in Bosnia, followed by the sizeable IFOR operation to police the Dayton settlement, are recent evidence of this. As the Bosnian experience demonstrates, the co-existence of a UN PKO and of forces from another organization charged with enforcement can create difficulties for decision-makers. However, under the Dayton agreement, the waters continue to be muddied: the UN has been allocated important civilian functions in Bosnia which many UN players believe should have gone to NATO, including the training and monitoring of police and responsibility for a new peacekeeping operation in eastern Slavonia.²⁸

Finally, it is important to recognize the major new role of **Non-Governmental Organisations** (NGOs) in the construction of peace. Significant NGO contributions, notably by the ICRC and its affiliates but also by such organizations as CARE, OXFAM, Save the Children and Médecins Sans Frontières, have been made in humanitarian endeavours that are linked closely to several of the UN's peace operations in the field. The UN has been getting better at working with these partners, and they, in turn, have been learning how to work with the UN. However, as in Bosnia and Somalia, the process has not always been smooth.

Some priorities for the future

It is paradoxical that while the UN is under constant congressional attack, and while Washington is handicapping the organization through its failure to meet financial obligations, the US is at the zenith of its power in the Security Council, particularly after Dayton. As one Council Ambassador recently indicated privately, the US is no longer 'the last remaining super-power', but rather 'the supreme power'.

discussions is contained in Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations, Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1995.

²⁸ The belief that the UN is uniquely handicapped in discharging tough (and often opaque) mandates is wrong. NATO is under intense academic, media and NGO pressure to cooperate more actively with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and has clearly experienced difficulty in determining the priority to be given to such cooperation relative to its other operational responsibilities.