

So far, peace keeping has been pre-eminently the province of the middle and smaller powers. One reason for this is that countries seeking a United Nations peace-keeping presence must be concerned to avoid the complications that could result from great-power involvement. For their part, the great powers would seem to have an interest of their own in letting the international community act in situations which, if not contained, might have the effect of extending the area of great-power confrontation. But if great-power acquiescence in peace keeping has been tacitly assumed, the extent of that acquiescence is still very much at issue. And it is an issue that is likely to confront us in critical form at the very outset of the General Assembly session which opens in New York in ten days' time.

The form in which the issue arises at this particular juncture is financial. In essence, the Soviet Union and its allies maintain that the Security Council alone can initiate, direct and prescribe the financial arrangements for operations to maintain the peace. They argue that certain peace-keeping operations -- those in the Middle East and in the Congo -- were not undertaken in conformity with the proper constitutional procedures as they see them, and that they are, therefore, illegal. That being so, the Soviet Union has refused to bear its due share of the expenses of these operations, and it has maintained that refusal, even in the light of an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (subsequently sustained by the General Assembly), which declares these expenses to be "expenses of the organization" payable by all member states. This is a situation which is naturally of concern to those who agree with the Secretary-General of the United Nations that peace keeping represents a vital step "toward a more mature, more acceptable and more balanced world order". What is at stake here is not merely -- or, indeed, mainly -- the solvency of the United Nations. What is at stake is a predictable United Nations capacity to intervene effectively in future situations involving peace and security. For it is obvious that the capacity of the United Nations to do so would be weakened if it were left to individual member states to decide, in each case, whether or not to contribute.

We have come a long way in evolving a meaningful peace-keeping concept in the United Nations context. I am confident in my own mind that the progress we have made cannot and will not be reversed. But this implies that some agreement can be reached on the financial issue of which I have spoken. Such an agreement, as I see it, must encompass both aspects of the issue -- the matter of past financial arrears and the working out of equitable financing arrangements for future peace-keeping operations. As far as Canada is concerned, we firmly believe that, except in those cases where particular circumstances dictate particular arrangements, the cost of United Nations peace-keeping operations should be regarded as an obligation to be shouldered in common by the United Nations membership. This is the objective towards which we have always worked and towards which we shall continue to work. We agree with the Secretary-General that a sound basis must be created "for providing the United Nations in the future with the sinews of peace".

Finance has, of course, been only one of the problems that has confronted the United Nations in mounting its peace-keeping operations. The provision of adequate forces and logistic support for those operations has been another. In the nature of things, the United Nations has had to rely on ad hoc