

### III. Session Two: Canada and the Security Council in the 1990s

Canada last served as a member of the Security Council in 1989-1990, on the cusp of the period of euphoria discussed above. This period witnessed a sea-change in international relations, the end of the Cold War ushering in far greater cooperation from the then Soviet Union at the UN. This was particularly noticeable during the Security Council's response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. From August 1990 onwards, the Security Council began meeting on a daily basis. The emerging P-5 domination of the Council agenda sparked the formation a "Group of Four" representatives of the non-aligned world (then Malaysia, Cuba, Yemen, and Columbia), that tried to counterbalance this unified domination by the P-5. These developments led Canada to play a new and significant role within the Council mediating between these two groups.

The marked change in the type and number of Security Council operations after 1990 also meant that the Canadian Permanent Representative had to play an enhanced role in explaining fast-moving developments at the UN to Canadians, particularly with respect to enforcement mandates, in effect as the "UN representative to Canada". For many Canadians, the resort to the use of force by the UN was difficult to absorb, given that peacekeeping had for so many years almost defined the Canadian contribution to UN system. But this period, particularly from 1992 to 1994, was also one of great optimism and idealism at the UN, with a proliferation of complex peace operations which in most cases produced very positive results. Such expanded activity meant that the Security Council was effectively pushing the limits of existing international law and customary norms, taking a greater interest in the *internal* political situation of states. The UN mission in Haiti, in which Canada plays a central role, is the most recent example of such a new, standard-setting peace operation. The very suggestion that the situation in Haiti is an appropriate matter of concern and action by the Security Council would have been unthinkable only a few years ago, and yet now enjoys a fair degree of support.

If this early optimism has faded to a certain extent, it is perhaps because the UN is still searching for the most adequate tools and mechanisms to respond to these internal conflicts. In Bosnia, for example, false expectations were created by referring to UNPROFOR as a "peacekeeping" mission, when in fact it was a containment and humanitarian mission. The greater degree of uncertainty associated with these new operations makes many troop-contributing countries reluctant to risk military casualties in protracted conflicts that do not engage their vital national interests. Is there not thus a great need for the international community to seriously consider better tools for conflict *prevention*, rather than difficult, high-risk, and costly late-stage intervention? Political will is the key consideration, and it involves a moral dilemma for all UN Members, not just Canada. One participant argued the need for the Security Council to provide leadership in addressing the root causes of protracted conflict with early preventive action, and to broaden the definition of international peace and security to include human security issues such as social development, human rights, and democratic governance. Here Canada could play a leading role.

After 1992, Canada took a strong interest in developing standards for the Security Council's peace operation mandates. In particular, Canada argued for a better equating of *goals* with the *means* available