

UNPREDEP mandate on the eve of the Kosovo conflict is only the most blatant. Therefore, transparency and effectiveness are more urgent goals than considerations of the Council's size and the status of its membership. The world needs a more, not less, accountable Security Council. It is good for the UN that prospective Security Council members face an electorate and stand for election. People should be encouraged to talk about their ideas. Moreover, new ideas often come from the non-permanent members.

Some progress has been made in adapting the Council's working methods. It has become increasingly common for Council presidents to hold several thematic or open meetings during a month on topics as wide-ranging as the impact of AIDS on conflict, the United States theme (last January), or terrorism (proposed by Russia last year). When Canada joined, one thematic discussion per month was seen to be the limit of what the traffic would bear - Canada arranged six such discussions in April. Last December the Council also agreed to more inclusive meeting formats, allowing non-Council members and even non-state parties to participate in Council discussions. Canada hopes that such innovations will move the Council towards a comprehensive concept of security.

In conclusion, Paul Heinbecker reflected on the challenges and constraints to human security-centred approaches at the UN. A key constraint to Council action is both the narrow, state-centred security mandate assigned to it in the UN Charter and the reticence of many states to broaden traditional definitions of security to encompass new human security imperatives. The Charter does not contemplate explicit response to intra-state threats to peace, including abusive even genocidal acts by governments against their own people, even when they have destabilising consequences of neighbouring countries or whole regions. The Charter's provisions on sovereignty continue to be interpreted by some, particularly Russia and China, as privileging the security of the state over that of its citizens. These countries consider these provisions to constitute a legal basis for their opposition to Council action on behalf of human security. At the same time human rights and humanitarian norms have been gaining strength through a progressive accumulation of treaties, covenants, protocols and precedents, including most recently the creation of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and Yugoslavia and the adoption of the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court. These developments have contributed to a tempering of the power of the concept of state sovereignty when it conflicts with human rights and humanitarian principles. The Charter itself, however, does not reflect this evolution, and because of the veto, it is frozen in time. Unfortunately, there is a reluctance among many member states to even debate these questions. In addition to the constitutional constraints, the UN financial crunch remains a key impediment to effective Council action. The American arrears continue to hobble Council decision-making, particularly on peacekeeping mandates, where Washington has tried to keep costs down, sometime at the expense of the operational soundness of the mission in question. The low ebb in the United States-UN relations also continues to undermine effective Council action because it precludes American political leadership on key issues.

According to Paul Heinbecker, the old East versus West, Communism versus Capitalism,