

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The pace and scope of events since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War have challenged the international community. While a debate over the shape of a new international system has begun, a series of crises has demanded immediate responses from both the United Nations and its member states. For this reason, the tool of peacekeeping, which evolved during the Cold War as a means to allow the UN to operate usefully in a polarized international climate, has become a favourite response of the international community. Indeed, with the publication of his report *An Agenda for Peace*, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has contributed to the wide-ranging debate on improving the ability of the UN to act in the grey area which exists between peacekeeping operations under Chapter 6 of the UN Charter and collective military action under Chapter 7.

Like other countries, Canada is participating in this current debate, while at the same time trying to adapt its defence and foreign policies to the new geopolitical and economic realities of the post-Cold War era. Indeed, Canada is faced with conflicting demands. Before the end of the Cold War, Canada was able to make a significant contribution to UN peacekeeping operations by using a relatively small percentage of its military resources. That situation has now changed. While reducing its planned military expenditures, it is faced with ever-increasing demands for commitments of troops to more complex and dangerous peacekeeping operations.

The dilemmas facing Canada are several: Should it concentrate only on peacekeeping operations, or continue to maintain all-purpose forces to deal with any eventuality? Having decided to participate in peacekeeping, should it maintain its near-perfect record by participating in all future operations, or should it limit the number it undertakes to ensure that they are carried out as well as possible? Once it decides to participate in an operation, how can it best tailor its contribution in order to participate in the most efficient manner? Finally, as it begins to answer these questions, should it assume that the number of peacekeeping operations will continue to increase in number and complexity, or in view of past experience, expect that the number of operations will eventually decline? The answers to these questions are crucial, if only because policies affecting the size and equipment of military forces take years to implement, and as the past few years have shown, the international situation will not sit still as policies are decided. The possible options will have to be carefully studied before selecting the course to follow.

We cannot conclude, however, without mentioning the dedication and sacrifices of military personnel who have enabled Canada to do more than its share in efforts to secure international peace. While the end of the Cold War appeared to announce a more peaceful period for members of the military, a number of them have found themselves forced to leave their families and friends for months on end in order to take part in UN operations in countries scarred by wartime atrocities and famine.