

and knowledge of local conditions - their "proximity" to conflict. In effect this is the fundamental regionalist thesis: regional problems, regional solutions. Since the conflict is literally in its backyard, the organization should be better able to gain the political, and with it, the financial commitment of its members states needed to deal with conflict.

In practice, however, the value of this "proximity" varies. Members of the organization may not be neutral among the parties to the conflict, thus complicating the search for a solution. Some members may be more interested in pursuing the role of regional hegemon than in resolving disputes. Finally, some regional organization members may lack the resources to contribute to the search for peace, no matter how strong their motivation to do so. Despite these drawbacks, in certain cases there are no effective alternatives to a regional or sub-regional mediation process. One very good example of this is the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Drought and Desertification (IGADD) mediation process in the Sudanese conflict, one of Africa's longest running civil wars. Endorsed by an international 'Friends of IGADD' committee, it represents the most serious attempt to settle the conflict in that country in years.

The physical reality of "proximity" varies also. Some organizations have an enormous geographic reach: the OSCE, for example, stretches from Vancouver to Vladivostok and encompasses 53 states; similarly the OAU covers a continent of 53 states.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Peacekeeping and enforcement: tasks for regional organizations?*

The *Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* makes a clear distinction between Chapter VI and Chapter VIII operations. Given the major problems experienced with Ch. VII mandates in Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Secretary General has come to the conclusion that, at present, enforcement actions are 'beyond the capacity of the United Nations except on a very limited scale', a statement that is not likely to be disputed.<sup>13</sup> Given that one of the expectations of the original *Agenda* was that regional organizations should become involved in the field of peace operations, should we expect regional organizations to take on peacekeeping and enforcement tasks?

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<sup>12</sup> For comparison purposes, more states belong to the OAU and the OSCE today than to the UN at its foundation in 1945.

<sup>13</sup> Boutros-Ghali, Position Paper - A Supplement to An Agenda for Peace/Executive Summary, 5 January 1995, p. 4.