

the superpowers to withdraw their support. There have been occasions, though, when both have simultaneously recognized that the risks of intensifying and spreading the conflict are far greater than any immediate advantage gained by supporting one side or the other. The Middle East war in 1973 is a prime example. Both the US and USSR were on military alert, both fearing and threatening direct intervention. Both sides withdrew.

Above all it is important to note that UN peacekeeping forces have never been introduced in a conflict where one of the superpowers is directly involved or anywhere which is within one of their extended orbits of strategic influence. Soviet military interventions in Eastern Europe or that of the United States in Vietnam were not conflicts amenable to UN peacekeeping. The same is presently true for the situations in Afghanistan and Central America. Historically, most peacekeeping has occurred in the Third World outside the areas of direct superpower dominance.

PEACEKEEPING BY REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Though peacekeeping is characteristically a UN phenomenon, it has also been used by regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAS is designed to guarantee peace and security in the American hemisphere by committing its members to collective security and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The OAS makes use primarily of diplomatic means to arbitrate or otherwise negotiate settlements of conflict. Nevertheless it has employed low level peace observation "peacekeeping" methods in seven interstate border disputes, and on two occasions in situations of domestic origin, all in Central America or in the Caribbean Basin.

Two other occasions appear similar to large-scale UN peacekeeping operations. In 1965-66 the dictator of the Dominican Republic, General Rafael Trujillo, was assassinated. The political situation threatened to drift to the left. To prevent that possibility the United States sent in 1,500 marines. This was later increased to 21,500 personnel, ostensibly to prevent deterioration of the situation into civil war, and to protect American citizens there. After the fact the OAS was asked to pass a resolution to sanction the operation by calling for an Inter-American Peace Force to monitor the situation. Five countries then sent an additional combined force of 2,000. Though classified as a "peacekeeping" operation, there is serious doubt about its purpose and impartiality.

In recent years, however, the OAS has suffered considerably from overzealous domination by the United States and a loss of internal cohesion. It was unable to take action in the Falklands/Malvinas crisis

in 1982 or in Grenada in 1983. Nor has it attempted to seek a resolution of the current crisis in Central America, leaving that to the efforts of specific nations in the region, the so-called Contadora group and to other initiatives.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) came into being in the 1960's when the process of decolonization was far from complete. The central objectives of the organization were to pursue that goal and develop means for co-operation and unity among the newly independent African states. Emphasis was placed on "the peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration". No thought or provision whatsoever was made for the use of military forces or peacekeeping. In fact, at the time, because many in Africa believed that the UN operation in the Congo was a neo-colonialist operation, peacekeeping was highly suspect.

As a consequence, the OAU was unprepared to manage serious conflicts when they did occur. In its first years, there were a number of attempts by the Organization at peacekeeping which failed to get off the ground. In the 1980's the civil war in the land-locked former French colony of Chad disintegrated into chaos. Libyan intervention further complicated the situation. The OAU became determined to try again. Before the OAU itself could take action there was an invitation to Nigeria by neighbouring states and Chad to police a demilitarized zone around the capital, N'Djamena, and to enforce a cease-fire. In March of 1979, Nigeria sent 800 men. The fighting continued and Nigerian troops were accused of partisanship. The concept of neutrality was not at all understood or appreciated. Each faction fighting for power believed that the Nigerians should be on their side.

Despite the Nigerian failure, the OAU made two attempts at peacekeeping in Chad in 1980 and again in 1981. The mandates called for approximately 5,000 independent military observers to supervise cease-fires, ensure freedom of movement throughout Chad, disarm the population, restore law and order and assist in the reorganization and integration of the warring factions. It was to be such a large-scale operation that the OAU asked the UN for financial and logistic support. The UN could not, however, accede to these open-ended requests in a situation where it would have no control. The efforts of the OAU were unrealistic and resulted in total failure. As before, each fighting faction saw the OAU force as its own saviour, and condemned it when it behaved as it was supposed to do, namely, as a neutral force to create and maintain peaceful conditions as a basis for a negotiated settlement.

The lessons of the African experience are very clear. The OAU does not have the infrastructure or the military, logistic and financial resources to mount a major peacekeeping operation. The parties in conflict are seemingly unprepared for a neutral non-enforce-