

## CONCLUSION

The goal should be to work for the degree of international consensus that will allow governments to move beyond the boundaries of national sovereignty toward the eventual acceptance of a constitutional system of international responsibility, at least in matters involving deadly conflict and human survival. In the absence of sudden enlightenment or the stimulus of some new global catastrophe, this will be a long and frustrating process. We should, however, take courage from the fact that in its first fifty years, in spite of formidable obstacles, the UN made remarkable progress in many ways that would have seemed inconceivable in 1945.

Where does power and authority reside in the world today? The single superpower is proving to have far less real authority than was so confidently expected at the end of the cold war. Military and economic power do not translate directly into political power, and the exercise of authority requires consent and rests on a moral position. To be the catalyst in this process was the main original function of the United Nations, but the organization is still more often than not on the sidelines during the formative phase of an international crisis and has, at present, very limited capacity to shape events or prevent disasters. Regional organizations are even less effective in relation to the very real potential dangers the human community may have to face in the coming years. This is an alarmingly weak international system --indeed, most of the time, scarcely a system at all.

Fortunately the international cast of characters, and with the~ political fads, taboos, and fashions, inevitably change with the passing of time. It is the duty of those who have been fortunate enough to experience at first hand the stormy development of international organization, to do what we can to ensure that thinking and policy about international arrangements develop in the right direction and with all possible speed. No-one can afford to await the stimulus of yet another world catastrophe.

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<sup>2</sup> President Clinton, during the 1992 presidential election campaign, came out in favour of a standing UN rapid deployment force, but quickly backtracked once in office. As late as 1993, in Oxford, former President Ronald Reagan made an impassioned plea for the establishment of a standing UN force. It seems that this important, common sense idea can only be supported by American leaders when they are out of office.