

of multilateralism was echoed by many. Canada, of course, was among them.

The many speeches could be broken down into three groups: those that spoke on the need for the United Nations and international cooperation; those that ran the gamut of political and economic problems, much like spokesmen do in the General Debate held at the start of the General Assembly each year; and those like Canada, that contained a mixture of both.

There were those like the President of the United States and the Foreign Minister of the USSR who used the platform to reach the world's public. There were those like the President of Cyprus and the Prime Minister of Ireland who concentrated on conflicts at home. There were those who justified their political decisions, like the Prime Minister of Jamaica who explained at length his efforts to revive his country's economy. There were those who could have, perhaps even should have, commented on domestic situations of concern to all, but ignored them, like the speakers from the Sudan and Ethiopia. There were those who spoke primarily, if not wholly, to domestic audiences, like the Vice-President of North Korea, and there were those who spoke to those listening in the General Assembly hall itself, like the Prime Minister of Dominica.

There were many styles and logics. Some displaying fiery oratory like the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega; some, quietly and simply registering their position for the record, like the President of the Maldives. Some were as eloquent as one can be in such circumstances, like the Secretary of State of the Holy See.

Styles and personalities were displayed in other ways as well. The down-to-earth approach of Prime Ministers Olaf Palme of Sweden and David Lange of New Zealand was apparent. The aloofness of First Lady Imelda Marcos of the Philippines with her enormous entourage was equally noticeable. There was the almost comic but understandable ploy for recognition by Norodom Sihanouk, the exiled leader of the Democratic Kampuchea, who sat through every speech and raced to the speaker upon conclusion to be the first in line to offer congratulations and have a few words.

Tackling real issues

There were, of course, some speeches that did contain substantial proposals. The most important of these in the entire two-week period was arguably the offer to Jordan by the Prime Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres. He called for immediate talks with a Jordanian or Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to be begun in Amman and proclaimed an end to the state of war between Israel and Jordan. But there was also the importance of President Reagan's speech on the all-important bilateral relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union which set the stage for the summit in Geneva that followed.

The most unacceptable speech came from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan. He said "The new revolutionary order has ensured under the law, the democratic rights and freedoms of the individuals and the full equality of all the nationalities, tribes and ethnic groups of the country." While almost providing comic relief by calling Afghanistan a "free, independent and non-aligned

country," not once did he mention the presence of thousands of Soviet troops in his country.

Some topics were common to nearly all speeches that addressed political matters. Some were political in nature, like the question of apartheid in South Africa and independence for Namibia. These were, without doubt, the most talked about issues and concerted international action was repeatedly called for. The President of Botswana said the mood in South Africa is of a people on the brink of war.

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Several speakers called for immediate mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa. The evolving Canadian policy, in Mr. Mulroney's statement, to invoke "total sanctions" if there are not fundamental changes in South Africa drew immediate and very favorable response, especially from the Africans.

More issues

The second most talked about subject was the external debt of the developing countries. Many touched on the crippling burden of the results of high interest rates, falling export earnings and huge accumulated debts. Most called for international action or conferences to deal with the subject as soon as possible. The problem is obviously of great concern to the developing countries and will be a focal point for some time. The Holy See singled out this issue above all others.

Most of the speakers, but not all, touched on the situation in the Middle East. All called for a just solution,