

keeping operations. The General Assembly urged the Committee of 33 to renew its efforts to work towards the completion of agreed upon guidelines.

Afghanistan

The emergency special session of the UN General Assembly on Afghanistan, convened in January immediately after a Soviet veto in the Security Council, was the first use since 1967 of this procedure whose origins date back to the Korean War. A resolution based on the vetoed Security Council draft, and calling for the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 104 to 18 with 18 abstentions; Canada voted in favour of the resolution. A month later, Third World and especially Islamic disapproval had strengthened to the point where the UN Commission on Human Rights passed a resolution explicitly condemning the Soviet invasion as a flagrant violation of Afghanistan's right to self-determination—the strongest language ever used against the Soviet Union by any United Nations body. At its regular autumn session, the General Assembly adopted (by an even larger majority than in January—111 to 22 with 12 abstentions) an Islamic-sponsored resolution calling once more for Afghanistan's independence and self-determination. This resolution also expressed the hope that the Secretary-General would appoint a special representative to promote a political solution on the basis of the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops, and the Secretary-General has done so.

Middle East

Following the Soviet veto of the Security Council resolution on sanctions against Iran, this issue was not pursued further in the United Nations, but the initiative served as a model for a ban against all exports to Iran, except food and medical supplies, later adopted by major Western trading nations including Canada. Emphasis at the UN shifted to the Secretary-General's efforts to negotiate the release of the American hostages through a team of five representatives, which repeatedly seemed close to success only to founder on the lack of clear authority within Iran. A judgment by the International Court of Justice was also ignored by the Iranian regime, and during its autumn session the General Assembly turned its attention to the more general problem of strengthening international machinery for the protection of diplomats.

The General Assembly convened its second emergency special session of the year in July to consider the question of Palestine. A resolution was adopted (by a vote of 112 for, seven against including Canada, with 24 abstentions) which reaffirmed the right of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate, on an equal footing, in all UN deliberations on the Middle East. The resolution also called upon Israel to withdraw completely and unconditionally from all territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, beginning before November 15. Many of the countries not supporting the resolution, while favouring legitimate Palestinian rights and concerns, considered the initiative unbalanced in its at-

tempt to prejudge the outcome of ongoing negotiations aimed at a comprehensive peace settlement.

At the regular autumn session of the General Assembly, as in the past, a number of one-sided and unrealistic resolutions contributed little to the prospects for peace in the Middle East. Several texts criticized again, though less directly, the negotiating process begun with the Camp David accords and the Egypt/Israel peace treaty, both of which Canada has consistently supported as important first steps toward a just and comprehensive settlement. One resolution, which called for an independent Palestinian state in occupied territories to be evacuated by Israel and handed over to the PLO, stated for the first time that Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967 "does not provide for the future", despite the hitherto universal acceptance of that resolution as the cornerstone of efforts toward peace in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, there were a few encouraging developments. Anticipated attempts to expel Israel from the General Assembly after November 15 never materialized, and there were signs of increasing impatience among members with the tactics used to promote some of the more extreme resolutions passed by the Assembly. Consensus was achieved for the first time on the desirability of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and a near-unanimous General Assembly mustered 143 votes, including Canada's, in disapproval of Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem. Canada's position on Middle East issues as a whole maintained the same over-all balance as in the past. This meant that Canada remained one of the two or three countries most supportive of Israel even while showing more sensitivity toward legitimate Palestinian aspirations. In the voting on the 26 resolutions related to the Middle East, Canada joined consensus on three, voted for six, against seven, and abstained on ten.

Southern Africa

The four-year-old initiative by the Western Contact Group (Canada, Britain, France, Federal Republic of Germany and the USA) to bring about a peaceful transition to independence in Namibia through UN-supervised elections, was carried forward during 1980 on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 385 and 435. The successful implementation, under Commonwealth auspices, of the negotiated settlement leading Rhodesia to independence as Zimbabwe, seemed to offer promising encouragement in this endeavour. Through two extensive UN missions to Namibia and neighbouring countries, followed by a series of communications between the UN Secretary-General and the South African government, the latter's concerns regarding impartial election machinery and peace-keeping were, it appeared, resolved one by one. By the autumn the way was clear for the convening of a pre-implementation meeting in January 1981 in Geneva, which was to bring together all parties—South Africa, the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and, for the first time, political groups inside Namibia—to set a date for launching the settlement. This progress was recognized in the virtual avoidance of controversy over Namibia at the General Assem-