

flying objects. The Special Political Committee heard with interest a statement by the Prime Minister of Grenada, but declined the request to establish a new UN agency to study these phenomena.

Asked for a quick summary of the Assembly's performance, one Western Ambassador gave it a "B" average as an end-of-term grade. As with all report cards, his mark obviously lacked precision, but the Ambassador did draw attention to real improvement in the work of the Assembly over the past two years. Despite disappointment over the handling of some issues, particularly Middle East questions, the

Canadian delegation concluded that the Assembly had accomplished its main purposes with improved efficiency, less rhetoric and a greater degree of consensus than previously. Speaking on behalf of the Western group to the session's closing meeting on December 21, the Canadian Ambassador, W. H. Barton, concluded that, though the representatives had not resolved major problems, "we have seen some modest gains in the art of living and working together—in the recognition that in the final analysis we make progress not by confrontation but by the adaptations that lead to agreed solutions".

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## United Nations

# The shifting Canadian vote on Mideast questions at UN

By Lawrence I. Grossman

The Middle East debates of the 1977 sessions of the United Nations General Assembly came and went with less than the usual amount of public notice. During the months of November and December, when the Assembly voted on resolutions, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat monopolized press attention by travelling to Jerusalem and opening a historic dialogue with Israel. The debates and resolutions on the Arab-Israeli dispute were, nevertheless, as antipathetic to genuine peace in the Middle East as were those of any previous year.

The Assembly passed 16 resolutions either singling out Israel for harsh criticism or endorsing Arab prescriptions for a Middle East settlement. There were no real surprises, just a continuing increase in the volume of declarations. At the same time, the bloc-voting leverage of the Arabs in the Assembly assured that no criticism of their policies *vis-à-vis* Israel crept into any of the resolutions. Neither did it permit the Assembly to examine such threats to world peace and security as the continuing crisis in Lebanon or the untidy disposition of the Spanish Sahara. The lowest-common-denominator logic of "Arab unity" at the UN, in fact, divines that no Arab state ever shares the dock with Israel.

The Arab bloc demonstrated its power at the UN once more by churning out anti-Israel propaganda in bulk. The real impact

of these activities on world public opinion in convincing people that the Jewish state was somehow an elemental evil among the family of nations should not be underestimated. In the Soviet bloc and among the Third World nations of Africa, Latin America and Asia, the state of Israel – and often, as a corollary, world Jewry – have now become associated with the universally-recognized crimes of racism, imperialism and colonialism.

United Nations efforts to disseminate this one-sided perspective were given added impetus in 1977 by the Assembly's passage of a resolution establishing for the first time within the UN Secretariat a Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, with a 1978 budget allocation of \$450,000. Its basic mandate is, working in conjunction with the Palestine Liberation Organization, to promote "max-

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