

USSR. Gromyko did not attend the Assembly, and during this period there was a great deal of discussion as to whether the USA had violated the Headquarters Agreement with the UN. A senior member of the US delegation suggested that perhaps the UN should leave the United States, a remark which received wide public attention.

Examples of the Americans' unhappiness with the UN system are many: their withdrawal from UNESCO; their failure to ratify the Law of the Sea treaty; their withholding of assessed funds for UN programs of which they disapprove. American opposition to UN actions is symbolized by the tough position taken by Jeane Kirkpatrick on these and other issues. These actions have led some to ask whether the Reagan approach is the natural path of US foreign policy in the tradition set by George Washington's valedictory address to Congress and the Monroe Doctrine, and not the more altruistic philosophy of the postwar period as symbolized by the Marshall Plan.

Two divisive issues

The two political issues which are excessively divisive at the UN are the situation in the Middle East and the continuing policy of apartheid by the government of South Africa. The latter has been excluded from the UN General Assembly since 1974 when its credentials were refused; and, in recent years, there have been periodic attempts made to exclude Israel from meetings in UN bodies. These issues have now reached the entire UN system, often paralyzing action in unrelated fields. In the autumn 1984 issue of *Foreign Affairs* former Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim says that "the effect of this activity is to cheapen the currency of UN resolutions and thus to reduce the effectiveness of the United Nations in the peaceful resolution of disputes. I do not question the good faith of those who sponsor such resolutions. I do question their judgment."

The UN system is based on a functional, rational and efficient distribution of responsibilities and activities. Each UN body in that system should adhere to its mandate and respect the division of labor on which the system is predicated. To act otherwise results in growing dissatisfaction, chaos in programs, and absorbs limited resources at the expense of the purposes of the organization. As an example, the World Health Organization as the name implies, deals primarily with health, not, as has occurred, with the Arab-Israeli dispute or disarmament issues for which it is neither equipped nor mandated. This kind of situation is occurring more frequently and, if not managed and controlled, can in the long run only destroy the organization concerned.

Secretary-General's proposals

Beginning with his 1982 report and following the same pattern in 1983 and 1984, Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar has made specific suggestions for changes both in attitude and performance. He has appealed for a "conscious recommitment by governments to the Charter," and the use of