

REGIONAL CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Toward Further Marginalization of the Third World?

The improvement in East-West relations is so dramatic and encouraging that it may quickly come to dominate the attention, as well as the available aid and investment resources, of the Western world. Already Western governments are facing severe pressures in trying to meet these new needs while maintaining their stretched commitments in other parts of the world. How these new choices are resolved over the next couple of years by countries like Canada will have far-reaching implications for decades to come.

One good reason for restraining our euphoria at the improved climate of East-West relations and the beginning of substantial NATO/Warsaw Pact arms reductions is that in spite of (or, some would argue, because of) the apocalyptic potential of East-West warfare, none of the 22 millions killed in armed conflict since World War Two have actually been casualties of East-West conflict proper. The toll of conflicts in other regions, however, has been constant and frequently horrific, with civilians being indiscriminate or often even selected targets, large regions being laid waste, and their inhabitants swept up in the wretched tide of refugees that has become a flood in the Horn of Africa, Angola and Mozambique, in Indochina, Afghanistan and Central America.²

The 1980s saw the atrocious eight-year war between Iran and Iraq, in the course of which the world's general taboo against chemical weapons was broken, with pesticide factories converted to the production of chemicals for human extermination. The agonized anarchy of Lebanon continued, creating a terrible new model for the world of generalized inter-factional warfare without apparent purpose or end, and in neighbouring Israel the *intifadah* was for a second year the focus of hostility and brutalization in the still explosive Arab-Israeli conflict, now into its fifth decade. The cancer of ethnic conflict has flared in many parts of the world, with countries like Fiji and Sri Lanka now thoroughly infected. As the decade ended, the United States demonstrated in Panama its continuing readiness to intervene unilaterally, especially in the Western hemisphere, to try to determine the shape of governments in other countries.