

4. The first is the situation in the Middle East. Although no obvious progress was made in the Assembly on various Middle Eastern issues, the reason for this was not a bad one. In the Special Session in August, the Assembly had had in the united Arab resolution one of its more hopeful achievements. The détente produced by this resolution produced a considerable effect throughout the regular session of the Assembly. The relatively good atmosphere on these issues was one of the happier, even though negative, features of the session.

5. The other major issue was China. The Americans once more secured the passing of their moratorium on a discussion of the question of Chinese representation but they lost still more ground. With a number of other countries very uncertain on this issue, it seems highly doubtful if the moratorium procedure can be risked another year. If it is not, the Fourteenth Session could begin with one of the most dangerous and crucial debates in the Assembly's history. As for the question of the off-shore islands, this was the major preoccupation of members of the Assembly during the first weeks of the session. There was a great deal of diplomacy going on in the corridors and many projects for intervention by one or other of the United Nations organs or the Secretary-General. All of these, however, foundered on the anomalous position of China in the United Nations; and the absolute refusal of Peking to have any relations with the United Nations short of full satisfaction served to point up the ineffectiveness of the United Nations under present circumstances in dealing with a major threat to peace.

6. This apparent record of failure can, of course, be made to look worse than it is. Critics all too often forget that the purpose of the Assembly is to debate, not to legislate; that it is not the agency intended to deal with breaches of the peace; that its role is not to negotiate but to facilitate negotiation. It should never be expected that it would settle the issues of Cyprus, Algeria or Korea. The question is not whether it settles an issue but whether it contributes to the settlement or makes the settlement less likely.

7. Looking at the results in this way, one must conclude that for Algeria and Korea it did no good and possibly some harm. As for Cyprus, one's impression on the spot was that it did a great deal of harm. The debate was more bitter than ever, and efforts to compromise were frigidly rejected. Nevertheless, the facts are that, after a couple of months, agreement over Cyprus seems closer than it has been for a long time. The debate in the Assembly would, of course, be only one of many elements contributing to this result. It could be argued, however, that the failure of any party to a dispute to get satisfactory endorsement in the Assembly may contribute more to an atmosphere of settlement than the achievement, as in the past, of a deceptive agreement. In the disarmament debate, one also had on the spot the impression of failure. It seemed that the inability of the parties, with the assistance of neutral countries, to achieve the kind of unanimous resolution which would give the Geneva talks a good send-off, was discouraging. In fact, however, it is doubtful if this was the effect achieved. The Russians undoubtedly hoped to mobilize Assembly opinion to strengthen their hand for suspension of nuclear tests with as few conditions as possible; whereas the United States, the United Kingdom and France hoped to get support for their reasonable programme. Neither side, however, achieved a resounding success or the voting support of the uncommitted. This failure may also have contributed more to successful negotiations than the patching over of differences with pious resolutions.

8. If there is validity in this conclusion, then the implications for Canadian policy in the Assembly are considerable. The traditional pattern of our Assembly policy has been to cooperate with Scandinavian countries and with others in putting forward compromise resolutions which would draw away support from the two extremes and end the discussion with a better taste, in the hope that we would thereby help the parties concerned more easily to reach agreement. If, however, these compromises which we have achieved served