

The second kind of diplomacy practiced in the General Assembly may be illustrated by reference to efforts by Canadian delegations over the years to improve peacekeeping practices and procedures. We might call this "functional diplomacy". I mean by this that the supporters and opponents of particular resolutions are not divided by geography or size but by a conception of their functions as members of the United Nations and of the proper functions of the United Nations as an organization. For the last two years, both Canada and Ireland have introduced or supported resolutions on peace-keeping with somewhat different objectives but with a broad cross-sectional appeal. At the twenty-first session, for example, a Canadian resolution on peace-keeping was co-sponsored by seven states -- three from Western Europe, two from Latin America, one from Africa and one from Asia. The Irish proposals that year had support from a number of states in these areas as well. However the permanent members were divided; none supported firmly the Irish resolution and two were opposed to the Canadian resolution. It was this split which in the end led to the relative lack of success of the resolutions. I say relative, because the Canadian resolution received 52 votes in committee, with only 14 opposed, but could not be brought to a vote in plenary. The reasons it was put aside in plenary are complex, but essentially it was the fear on the part of many states that the resolution would further deepen the differences between the great powers on the future role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security. I should not go so far as to say that opposition by one or more permanent members is necessarily decisive in the Assembly. Indeed, it is quite clear that this is not the case for resolutions dealing with colonial questions. But on a subject such as peace-keeping, where the issues go to the heart of the purposes and future of the United Nations, it is doubtful that the Assembly would be wise to insist on arrangements which are unacceptable to either the United States or the U.S.S.R.

A third kind of diplomatic negotiating at the United Nations might be called "group diplomacy". The latter is concerned with issues which, by and large, attract the support or opposition of regional groups and where group cohesion is relatively strong. On some questions, a number of groups will take the same general view of an issue and in combination they can find the votes to pass resolutions which are unacceptable to a single group. There may or may not be an attempt to reach general agreement before the resolution is put to the vote. Let us take the case of South West Africa, for example. Resolution 2145 was adopted in 1966 by a very large majority (114 to two, with three abstentions) but there was a great deal of negotiation behind the scenes which made possible the eventual result. Negotiation took place primarily between representatives of the African and Asian groups and representatives of the Western European and Latin American groups, although I should point out that the Western European-and-Others group does not generally delegate representatives to act on its behalf on substantive issues, and it was on an informal basis only that certain members did so act in this instance. The objective of the negotiation was to reach agreement on the wording of the termination of South Africa's rights under the mandate and on the terms of reference of any committee which might be set up to study the future of the United Nations responsibility for South West Africa. It was only after a willingness to compromise on both sides that agreement was reached, and then only after the defeat of an amendment proposed by the United States which would have made somewhat less direct the responsibility of the United Nations for the territory.