

crisis in Africa; achieved, by consensus, a potentially powerful convention on torture; accepted, by consensus, a resolution on international drug trafficking; and reached, as well, a consensus on outer space.

In other words, whatever the defects in process and substance, whether in plenary or in committee, the fact remains that this was a productive thirty-ninth session, reflecting urgent human concern, considerable vision, and practical measures of response. As such, it stands as a microcosm of the continuing United Nations response and experience.

That experience has, over the 40 years, nurtured the welfare of humankind. And that is why gratuitous, fashionable assaults on the United Nations, to diminish or to demean it, just will not do.

The various agencies, whether the United Nations Children's Fund, the UN Development Program, the World Health Organization or the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, represent all in all, the finest expressions of human aspiration and dedication. The triumph of international peace-keeping is one of those rare reflections of sustained international sanity. The prestige and influence of the office of the Secretary-General augur well for the future direction of this entire organization. Indeed, the present incumbent has won the trust of every member state — as well he might when one thinks of his skill and initiatives on Afghanistan, on Cyprus, on Lebanon, on Iran-Iraq, to name but a representative few. It is not so much a solution which is required here; it is rather the inspired knack of keeping doors open, countries talking, a vital process going. These modest initiatives help to keep the world on track when all around us there is menace, alarm and hostility. If the United Nations system did not exist, it would be somehow recreated.

To be sure, that section of the Charter which speaks to the most important goal of all — international peace and security — has proved the most intractable. If human survival is the ultimate *raison d'être* of the United Nations — and what else could be? — then we have, admittedly, a long way to go. But given all of the other cumulative accomplishments, 1985 should be seen as the year when we marshal every conceivable energy to encourage the superpowers to negotiate, to compromise, and to agree. The process appears to have started — we should now heed the words of the Secretary-General delivered so eloquently in this Assembly just last week.

None of this is meant to be sanguine. Canada understands just how tough and complex the issues are. And we understand, equally, that the United Nations is an easy target for invective, and derision. But the quality of the critique is fundamentally unsound — there is more villification than analysis; more axes to grind than hatchets to bury; and sometimes, silence from those who fear the future or favour the *status quo*.

The fortieth anniversary is surely the occasion to turn it all around, and to restore to the United Nations that central role envisaged in the Charter.

To do that it will be necessary to attempt some internal reforms. They will be difficult to achieve. We shall have to approach every aspect of process, of procedure, of structure, and of substance with

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