

could enforce world law with a kind of world police. The Canadian view is that the United Nations is an agency for reconciliation and negotiation, a forum where opponents can maintain contact and eventually reach compromises and solutions. It is not a substitute for diplomacy; it is a place where one can conduct diplomacy more effectively. And it has had a good deal of success in hammering out truces and rough settlements whether in Indonesia or in the Middle East. It is clear, of course, that few of these settlements are perfectly satisfactory or equitable; but what the United Nations did was to make it possible for the parties, with the assistance of mediators or commissioners and all the devices at its disposal, to get together and arrange to stop fighting. Then the long slow process of finding a permanent settlement could get under way with United Nations assistance. This would not seem very much in a perfect world; but in a highly imperfect world it may have prevented two or three nuclear wars, and this is not a bad record.

The United Nations, in Canada's view, is no more a perfect institution than is any other constitutional body in this imperfect world. It is, nevertheless, one which we could not get along without even if we wanted to. We doubt very much if it is possible, as some people profess to believe, to settle world problems "outside the United Nations", because there really isn't anywhere outside the United Nations. We may deplore at times the balance of power in the United Nations Assembly, but it does reflect in a rough way the world as it exists, and it is never very wise to be unrealistic. It is true that the system of voting in the General Assembly, by which the tiniest country has the same vote as that of the largest power, looks foolish; but it should not be assumed that the power of each country in the Assembly is exactly the same as the power of every other country. The General Assembly cannot force any member to do anything—it can only persuade; and the power of persuasion of the larger members is inevitably greater than that of the smaller. This fact is taken into consideration by all members when actions are contemplated. It is much easier to prove theoretically that the United Nations General Assembly has the power to be irresponsible and mischievous, than it is to prove from the record that it has in fact been so.

It cannot be denied that the United Nations passes some foolish and unwise resolutions, but it should be judged, like any other constitutional body, not by the sound and fury of its speeches but by the actions it takes. My view is that the best way to see that it acts wisely is neither to avoid the United Nations nor to leave matters passively to the decisions of an automatic majority, but rather to conduct an active policy within its framework. The policy of leaving things to the United Nations is as dangerous as the policy of deploring and ignoring the United Nations. The United Nations is not merely a Gallup poll or a voting-machine; it is a place where countries which are prepared to work vigorously, to cultivate good relations with other members, and to accept responsibilities, can achieve results. It is a place, furthermore, where countries of the size and population of ours can best work for peace, because our influence is not judged strictly in accordance with our population.