

order to help us in dealing with the many topics, covering all quarters of the world, which are before us at this session.

We recall first that the Assembly which met in special session last month was a deeply divided and anxious body, many of whose members felt that their interests were vitally at stake in the proceedings. The discussion was, in general, reasoned and moderate in tone; and as we all know, the result was a resolution passed unanimously, to the credit of all member nations. There are grave subjects on our agenda now, on which opinion is also deeply divided, but surely we can hope and expect that the debate on these subjects can be conducted with a similar lack of polemics, and with a similarly reasoned approach. The recent special session has shown us that this is possible, and it has provided an example -- I think an outstanding example -- of the ability of the United Nations, in the words of the Secretary-General last year, to "serve a diplomacy of reconciliation" and, so to speak, "to blunt the edges of conflict among the nations".

The Secretary-General has defined the United Nations as being "an instrument for negotiation among, and to some extent for, governments". The passage of the Arab resolution of August 21 was a recognition that this "instrument for negotiation" is beginning -- perhaps more than beginning -- to constitute a separate entity which is somewhat more than the sum of its 81 parts, something to which the nations can turn when other more traditional means of negotiation and mediation are exhausted.

The "practical arrangements" which the Secretary-General was requested to make under the terms of the resolution of August 21, to uphold the principles and purposes of the Charter, may necessitate some innovation and improvisation in the development of United Nations representation appropriate to the circumstances. It is perhaps symbolic of the shift in world opinion in the face of the awful means of destruction that this latest United Nations initiative appears to foreshadow a civilian -- a diplomatic and political -- approach rather than a military approach on the model of some of the other bodies of The United Nations already functioning in the Middle East.

We must not, of course, be too optimistic in our assessment of the achievements of the special session. No one will draw the conclusion from the events of that session that the mere entrusting of responsibility for negotiation to a United Nations organism or official is in itself any assurance of abiding success, and we do not yet know the outcome of the protracted and very difficult negotiations which the Secretary-General has been conducting in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, the special session did produce a detente, a marked relaxation of tension. It also laid down, or reaffirmed, certain principles to guide the countries of the area in maintaining this detente. We must hope that the countries concerned will continue scrupulously to abide by these