

the United States and many Western European and other countries, with damaging consequences for the future of the organization.

In 1975, at the seventh special session of the General Assembly and subsequently at the regular session of the General Assembly, there was hard bargaining between the Third World and the developed countries, but there began to emerge a mutual willingness to understand the other side's problems and to make concessions, and a degree of real consensus was achieved. It appeared that both sides had been at the brink of an abyss and had recoiled. But then the Assembly approached the abyss again by adopting a resolution equating Zionism with racism and racial discrimination, albeit by a margin that revealed a split within the Afro-Arab alliance. The debates on the resolution in committee and in plenary, and its adoption, envenomed the atmosphere for the remainder of the session and had adverse effects on the work of the General Assembly in various fields. Adoption of the resolution outraged public opinion in Western countries, including Canada, where the House of Commons unanimously adopted a condemnatory resolution, and had the effect of lowering public support for the United Nations itself.

### Charter review

The United Nations Charter, reflecting political realities, recognizes that there are circumstances in which the organization cannot take action without the concurrence of the great powers, and explicitly gives them permanent membership of the Security Council and the right to veto proposed decisions. As has been noted earlier in this chapter, Third World countries increasingly resent the preponderant role granted under the Charter to the Security Council and, through it, to the traditional great powers.

At a time when some of the assumptions on which the United Nations has been operating for a generation are being challenged, it is natural that special attention should be given to the possibility of amending the