

I do not know what issues will arise next week, next month or next summer. That's part of the fun of being there. I am told that a student once defined history as being "one damned thing after another". And that is certainly what it's like being on the Security Council.

And if I did know what issues were coming up I could not, with any degree of precision, tell you how we would react. That will depend on a multitude of factors - the issue, its timing, its connection to other issues, and the crucial question of what is finally possible.

That question - what is possible - does not unfortunately, always conform to what is desirable. We will face the choice of working and voting for imperfect compromises that have some chance of success as opposed to speaking and voting for resolutions that sound great but cannot be applied. This Government has no illusions but that some of our positions in the Security Council will from time to time displease some segments of the Canadian public.

We knew that when we sought election to that Council. We understand it now. We believe that is no excuse to shirk from our responsibility to the world community. I can promise you that Canada brings to its Council Chair objectivity and imagination. I can promise you that we are working closely with others on the Council to contribute to finding solutions. We will continue to search for ways to improve the mechanisms of the U.N., especially in the area of peacekeeping.

We will also continue to use our position and our credentials to hammer out the compromises that are so often needed to arrive at agreement. In the course of this month - our first on the Council - we have been actively engaged in promoting agreement over the size of the UN force to be put into place in Namibia. In so doing we have been able to serve as a kind of intermediary between those wanting to cut costs of the operation and those who have wanted to adhere to plans crafted a decade ago under very different circumstances. Our own position is quite simple - the UN operation in Namibia must be equal to the task at hand, no more and no less.

We have been able, following that principle, and using the good offices that have accumulated to Canada, to play a constructive role in the decision not as to whether the United Nations should be active which is one thing, but just how the United Nations can be effective which is in many cases a more challenging task.

More generally anyone searching for the principles that will guide Canada's conduct on the Security Council need only to look to the history of our involvement in the U.N. and in the world community over the last half century.