

The diplomatic sensitivity of a number of these issues may make it difficult for governments to push them at first, and this is one reason for the selection of this area as a priority for independent work by the Institute for Peace and Security.

However, it is a key problem for Canadian foreign policy that the United States government remains grudging, laggard and still actively hostile – as Vice President Quayle recently demonstrated – to the United Nations, at this time of extraordinary promise. When even the Soviet Union has now paid most of its outstanding arrears, and launched some very promising (and generally serious) “new thinking” about expanded roles for the UN, it is now a matter of crucial importance for the Western world, and for Canada in particular, to get Washington to discharge its responsibilities and to discard its outdated prejudices in relation to the United Nations. The Mulroney government’s first Speech from the Throne stressed that “Canada’s opportunity to influence the course of the world events lies primarily in sound multilateral institutions” and the Prime Minister said in 1986, “we feel that it is unseemly for the United Nations to have to go around with a tin cup, and we’re not going to allow it.” There is now an even stronger case for this approach as the UN’s useful role has increased and its management improved, as certified to Congress by the US State Department. This is surely one area where Ottawa’s carefully cultivated credibility with Washington, and with the American public, should be mobilized to press for wiser American policies and practices.

Even with several settlements achieved and truces in place, the global list of regional conflicts underway or in prospect is a long and depressing one. In some instances, the self-distancing of the superpowers, overwhelmingly a positive development, will, unless the resulting vacuum is filled by the international community, have the negative side-effect of removing at least occasional pressure for the containment or stabilization of conflict from outside. In a trend which would have continued in any event, regional powers will be testing their potential for local overlordship, and the consequences will be predominantly negative.

#### **A Decade of Proliferation? The Test of Testing**

The 1990’s, unless decisive multilateral action is taken to prevent it, will also be the decade of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, even while the superpowers are finally beginning to limit their stocks. The nuclear non-proliferation regime – to be reviewed in 1990 and