

## CHAPTER NINE

# A Centre for Harmonizing the Actions of Nations

To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

*The Fourth Purpose of the United Nations  
(Article 1, Paragraph 4, of the Charter)*

The achievements of the United Nations clearly reflect the success of the organization as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations. It would be oversimplifying, however, to state that the failures of the UN reflect the failure of the organization to fulfill its "Fourth Purpose". In some cases this may be so. In many other cases, however, apparent failures are at least partial successes; the situation might have been worse if the United Nations had not existed and there had been no multilateral attempt to find a solution. It should always be borne in mind, moreover, that the United Nations has no independent life of its own; rather, it is a useful mechanism through which its sovereign members may or may not try to act together. Thus the last 30 years reveal that its major successes occurred when the member states acted positively to harmonize their actions. Its major failures occurred when they did not do so.