

Impressions of an observer

most for a Palestinian homeland or State. Many speakers heaped scorn on Israel for its policies but were not more vicious than usual.

The situations in Afghanistan and Kampuchea were also addressed. Many called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from both countries. The myth of the monolith of an automatic alliance between the Soviet group and the developing countries can be shattered with an analysis of the condemnation of the invasion of Afghanistan heard in this debate.

Some speakers touched on the situation in Central America and the conflict between Iran and Iraq. Most called for peaceful resolutions in these two areas of the world, although no new solutions were proposed.

Some progress

Many spoke of the new problem of terrorism and called for international action to deal with it. Sri Lanka proposed an immediate international conference to establish "an international agency committed to the total eradication of terrorism." It was obvious that this issue was going to become an important item for the remainder of the General Assembly and that for the first time a consensus against terrorism was building.

The question of the membership of Korea in the United Nations came up often. Both North and South Korea are observers but not full members of the UN, although they do belong to some of the specialized agencies. The South Koreans called for the membership of

both. The North rejected such a possibility, saying it would make permanent the division of the country. Nevertheless, it has become an issue in the forefront.

Most of the speakers from the West and the developing world spoke at great length about economic problems. Aside from the debt issue mentioned earlier, countries spoke of the worsening situation in most of the world, of the growing gap between rich and poor, of the increasing problems of population and poverty. Many called for a new international economic relationship and most expounded on the urgent necessity for development.

Everyone stressed repeatedly how much still needs to be done to achieve peace and the betterment of the human condition. Illustrative of the complex problems that were discussed was inability of the members to agree on a consensus statement marking the fortieth anniversary. After many hours of drafting the negotiations broke down on the words to use to refer to the Palestinian question.

Past record not bad

These were some of the problems. But many spoke not just of what needs to be done, but what has been achieved. All of the world's leaders recalled the founding of the United Nations and the accomplishments since 1945. Over one hundred countries owed their independence to the process of decolonization which was nurtured by the UN and this was mentioned by many. The importance of

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Secretary of State Joe Clark and Canadian Permanent Representative to the UN Stephen Lewis in the General Assembly.