

Summary

The years 1965 to 1974 were those of superpower détente, despite an increasing number of extremely serious regional conflicts. William Epstein, who directed the UN Disarmament Division for many years, talks of the bilateral (U.S.—Soviet) and multilateral treaties signed during this period, in particular, the one in which he played a major part: the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Some treaties, like the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-I), were negotiated outside the UN framework, but other important ones, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Seabed Treaty, were achievements within the system. Another aspect of big power détente was the arrival in 1971 of representatives of the People's Republic to take the "China seat" at the United Nations.

But regional conflicts seemed to multiply and intensify. The spotlights of the media were on Vietnam; on Rhodesia, where Ian Smith made his illegal declaration of independence in 1965; and on the Middle East, where two sharp wars were fought in 1967 and 1973. George Ignatieff, Canada's permanent representative at the UN during the Six-Day War, tells of the usefulness of the Security Council in easing the retreat of a superpower, in this case the Soviet Union under Khrushchev. On the other hand, the United States used the "silent veto" (six Security Council members not wishing it on their agenda) to prevent the Council's taking up the issue of Vietnam. But Britain did take the Rhodesian question to the Security Council, to have sanctions imposed. Gordon Goundrey talks of the preparations that were made to help the front-line states of southern Africa cope with their economic problems when borders were closed by, or against, Rhodesia.

Heading other regional conflicts were the battles between India and Pakistan in 1965 and again in 1971, when Bangladesh was born, and the growing campaigns of nationalists in the Portuguese African territories. All these conflicts added to the streams of refugees in Africa and Asia. George Gordon-Lennox tells of two episodes that ended more happily, in the Sudan and Burma.

This decade was a time when the world community took stock of global resources and started organizing its knowledge of these assets (and the threats to them) for policy-makers to act upon. Maurice Strong, who stepped in to run it, talks about the first of these great global gatherings, the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. It was followed by the Population Conference in Bucharest and the World Food Conference in Rome, both in 1974. These conferences achieved more than stock-taking. They prompted countries and international agencies to take a much more integrated approach to development, and reinforced the International Development Strategy published in 1970 for the Second Development Decade. The integrated approach was followed in many quarters: at the national level, with, for example, Canada's "Strategy for International Development Co-operation 1975-80"; and at the international level, with the United Nations Development Programme's organizing a five-year planning cycle and with each recipient country's having an "indicative planning figure" of funds with which to flesh out its schemes for development. Despite these moves, as George