

effect here, too. These issues are being dealt with bilaterally. This is what the more powerful countries want, because they have more control, and they have moved these issues out of the UN. It is short-term, it is not going to resolve the issue. We are in a cycle where people are going to be careful. I think it is simplistic to say it is a result of the Reagan administration's policies. It is probably also a reflection of the more conservative world we live in, generally, even in developing countries. People who are hungry at one point, they really feel threatened; they are going to be very careful. They just cannot afford to antagonize someone who they sense may be ruthless enough to say, "To hell with it!"

Of the journalists who have covered the United Nations since the earliest days, Ginette says she is "in two minds" about the merit of staying so long. "I did not know the UN in the 1950s, when the West comfortably controlled the United Nations. Therefore I cannot go back to that nostalgia; my point of view is not, shall we say, tainted with 'the good old days.' The only thing I will admit to is that, because there was more interest in the UN in the late 1960s, I miss those days. Maybe this is why my colleagues of a previous generation regret those days. In some cases, I think it is more than just that: it is because they truly were of a certain outlook, and they feel they have lost something. I try not to be drawn into that. It is a different reality now. The world has changed, and what do you do? You don't regret either the Renaissance or the Middle Ages; you just say it was a different time.

"The thing is, I would hate to become Miss UN! Because that is another distortion. You almost need a balance between a healthy dose of cynicism and hope at the same time, and yet remember constantly that this is a beat. One is not here to join a cause, because that is not my business. And yet to be fair to the story—it is that kind of balance.

"You have to be very vigilant to keep a balance, and say, 'Come on now, listen; hear them out; see what it is.' You have to be a listener. A sense of humour helps, because it puts things in perspective. The UN deals with so many emotional issues. The ideals are there and they are certainly laudable, but the application of those ideals by, I would say, every single member state is far from perfect. No one has a monopoly of self-righteousness in this day, and the danger is—and I have seen it happen with some members of the press corps of various ideologies—that they will decide that wherever they come from has the answer to the problem. My feeling is, it's not that simple: everyone is right, and everyone is a bit wrong. Let's hear them out, and then let the viewer and the listener decide. It's a tricky game....

"In a place like this you need what Voltaire called for, which was a bit of humour, compassion and tolerance. There's a lot happening that is either outrageous, silly, very threatening or—just let it be, it's not that important. But everyone in here is an actor. If you are an actor in this theatre, you have to take yourself very seriously; you have to play your part. I am not an actor, and so my point of view is: let's see the show, does it convey a message, is it interesting? Every member state has to sell a line and, the more you know about various member states, the more interesting it becomes to hear what they have to say."