

Some of the regional conflicts in the world that, not long ago, appeared insoluble are now moving towards solution. That is immensely important in itself but it also allows the UN process to demonstrate its capacity to solve practical problems.

It is one thing to celebrate the idea of international co-operation; it is vastly more persuasive to see that idea actually working. The more the UN is seen to work, the stronger it becomes, and the greater the likelihood that nations would use its auspices to solve international problems.

Opportunities like this don't arise often. They exist today primarily because of a new and more conciliatory relationship the two superpowers have adopted. We, Canadians, have to encourage the superpowers to continue on that more conciliatory course, and we can have some real influence on each of the superpowers. But we must also work to ensure that the UN does not miss this unusual opportunity to prove its worth.

I want to note that it is particularly gratifying that both the Soviet Union and the United States are placing greater weight on the United Nations. The Soviet Union has come to play a more constructive and cooperative role on the Security Council, and is now paying its arrears to the Organization. It has also put forward a number of ideas on how to reform the U.N., and to improve some of its activities like peacekeeping.

For its part the USA appears to be taking a timely and fresh look at multilateralism, generally, and at the United Nations particularly. Last fall President Reagan promised payment of past and current American dues. And now the U.S. is working with the USSR on resolving a number of regional conflicts where the U.N. is involved.

It was not so long ago, and it is worth remembering, that President Bush represented his country as Ambassador to the United Nations. He understands the Organization and its aims, even as he has had first hand experience with some of its shortcomings. We must hope that the Administration will continue to reverse the years of U.S. antipathy toward the United Nations Organization, and seek creatively to use it for the purposes intended by its founders.

It is in these circumstances of a different attitude towards one another and towards the international responsibilities of the superpowers and of a period of really unusual opportunity for the United Nations as an organization, that Canada finds itself once more on the Security Council.