

clear reminder that it can be a polarized environment with special difficulties for Canada. In a less murky case of US intervention, such as has often occurred in the past, any Canadian government can be expected to take the opposite view, which too will have its consequences.

In Canada, which is one of the select group of countries that has been acceptable to all parties as a supplier of official observers, this further faltering of the peace process has caused deep concern – and temporarily obstructed the work of the Canadian observer team. From a Canadian perspective, there are still plausible hopes for a reasonably free and fair election in Nicaragua, and its certification as such may provide an opening for stabilization and normalization in that part of the region. It will be a longer and more difficult task to help El Salvador to emerge from its morass of violence and oppression.

Southern Africa: More Grounds for Hope

The conflict-wracked region of Southern Africa, where Canadian foreign policy has had a substantial focus throughout the past five years, has taken important steps forward in 1989. There is more hope on the horizon, although it is by no means assured, and the legacy of destruction is still a harrowing one.

The most substantial advance is in Namibia, where a confluence of factors – not least the agreement of the superpowers – finally permitted the process of peace and independence to proceed under the terms of the UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978. Canada had been on the Security Council at that time, and played an important part in designing this framework. Eleven years later, Canada was serving another term as the Plan was implemented, and we also took a substantial part on the ground. The UN task of assuring the cessation of hostilities, the holding of free and fair elections to a constituent assembly, and the transition to independence from illegal South African occupation has been one of the most ambitious and, on balance, most successful projects ever undertaken by the world organization. It had some perilous moments, and there are important lessons to be absorbed about the planning and execution of such operations, but the world can legitimately rejoice in a major achievement with potential beneficial effects in all countries of the region, including South Africa itself.

Direct superpower pressure, of course, played a crucial role in achieving the Cuban withdrawal from Angola, to which the South African withdrawal and the Namibian settlement were linked. There has been on-again, off-again progress toward resolving the conflict in