

85. The record of the Security Council since the San Francisco Conference is common knowledge and there is no need to repeat the statements which have so often been made concerning the misuse of the veto power by one of the five permanent members - namely the Soviet Union. Despite the assurances given in the San Francisco Statement that the veto power would not be used "wilfully to obstruct the operation of the Council", the Soviet Union has used its right of veto many times to block the admission of new members to the United Nations, and to frustrate the Security Council from forming subordinate bodies to receive and hear evidence on particular disputes. Neither of these subjects are considered by the great majority of the United Nations as matters in which the veto power of the permanent members should be properly employed. The result has been that considerable bitterness has developed and many suggestions have been made, either for the abolition of the veto or for having its use restricted to matters arising from Chapter VII of the Charter - i.e. actions in respect of threats to the peace, breaches of the peace or acts of aggression.

86. During the 1946 Session of the General Assembly a proposal was made by Cuba that a general conference of the United Nations should be held, under Article 109 of the Charter, for the purpose both of reviewing the clauses relating to the voting procedure in the Council, and of recommending alterations. As the majority of the members of the Assembly felt that it was premature at that time to call such a general conference, this proposal was defeated by 7 in favour, 27 against (including Canada) and 8 abstentions. After long discussion in the Assembly, an alternative resolution was adopted, requesting the permanent members of the Security Council to make every effort to ensure that "the use of the special voting privilege of its permanent members does not impede the Security Council in reaching decisions promptly". The Assembly resolution also recommended to the Security Council "the early adoption of practices and procedures, consistent with the Charter, to assist in reducing the difficulties in the operation of Article 27". On December 13, 1946, the Canadian representative in the General Assembly, speaking in support of this resolution, said: "It clearly means, however, that we, the members of the Assembly, believe that the Security Council has yet to demonstrate that it is capable of doing the job the United Nations has a right to expect of it and which is expected of it by the peoples of the world."

87. In the course of the first eight months of 1947, it became apparent that this resolution of the General Assembly had had very little effect on the continued use of the veto power in the Security Council by the Soviet Union. So the General Assembly in its 1947 Session considered an Argentine proposal (similar to the one previously made by Cuba) that a general conference of the United Nations be called under Article 109 of the Charter to consider the abolition of the veto. An alternative approach to the problem of voting procedure in the Security Council was made by the United States delegation. In his opening speech before the General Assembly on September 17, 1947, the Chairman of the United States delegation, General Marshall, announced that the United States would waive its right of veto on all subjects in the Security Council, except on those which came under Chapter VII of the Charter. When the subject was discussed in the Political Committee of the Assembly, the United States delegation proposed that this whole problem of voting procedure in the Security Council should be referred for detailed study to the Interim Committee (whose establishment was being debated at that time). The United States proposal also requested the permanent members of the Security