

A more promising direction in which to look for a solution might be through the further development of representative committees of limited size which would be more or less in continuous session. This practice has become increasingly common at the United Nations, in any event, even though the principle of equitable geographical distribution which is usually followed in establishing the membership of such committees may not be the most effective in achieving the purpose I have in mind. Perhaps more attention should be paid to such criteria for membership as the contributions which member states are making or may make to the particular activity which is the subject of the committee's competence. It might also be considered whether the Assembly's voting procedures should be changed so as to ensure that on certain kinds of questions -- for example, those involving peace and security -- the Assembly would not be able to make recommendations without an important majority of the membership voting in favour.

Multilateral diplomacy in the Assembly, as in the Council, has also suffered from the absence of important states. I have already quoted remarks I made on this subject 13 years ago. We all know the difficulties of implementing the ideal of universality; none better than the Government of Canada, which made proposals on the question of Chinese representation in the United Nations two years ago, without success. However, I would like to draw attention to the suggestions made by the Secretary-General from time to time that non-member states should be enabled to maintain observers at United Nations headquarters and at other United Nations offices. Some of these states follow this practice now. Others do not, for one reason or another. I agree with the Secretary-General that it would be desirable for the Assembly to give him a clear directive as to the policy to be followed in future on this subject.

### Security Council

If, as I have suggested, the diplomatic functions of the General Assembly have been somewhat inhibited in recent years by the practice of "majority" diplomacy, the reverse seems to be the case in the Security Council. Since the expansion of the membership of the Council from 11 to 15 in 1966, the latter has tended to fulfill a function resembling the fourth purpose of the United Nations: to be "a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations". The nine votes necessary to enable the Council to take a decision are easier to prevent under the new composition than to secure. Thus an incentive is created to negotiation and compromise. No single or group point of view can be assured of finding a majority. What used to be called the hidden veto is now distributed more evenly among all the members of the Council and the veto itself has virtually disappeared from its proceedings. Over the past three and a half years, only one question has failed to be decided because of a veto, although occasionally no decision has been taken because of failure to obtain the required majority. There have been other questions which have not been settled by the Council because no resolutions were put forward - the Vietnam and Korean questions, for example. Most questions which were the subject of a decision by the Council during this period were decided unanimously or by consensus. This means that most of the business of the Council is now done in private consultation behind the scenes; in these consultations one can find the best illustrations of multilateral diplomacy in the UN today.