

sibilities of NATO were no less and required continued attention, it was seen that the political and economic problems common to the NATO Powers were such as to demand increased study. At the Ministerial Meeting of the Council in May a Committee of Three Foreign Ministers—those of Italy, Norway, and Canada—was appointed to “advise the Council on ways and means to improve and extend NATO co-operation in non-military fields and to develop greater unity within the Atlantic Community.” The Report of the Committee, which was published in December, examines political co-operation, economic co-operation, cultural co-operation, co-operation in the information field, and the organization of NATO as applied to its non-military aspects. This Report was approved by the Council at its December meeting.

The United Nations, increasingly representative through the addition of new members, became in 1956 more than ever the forum for discussion and negotiation of problems; in particular it was seized of the critical situations that arose in Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the last months of the year. This latter problem is proving to be one of critical importance as a test of the value of the Assembly in the field of peace preservation.

One of the main factors influencing international affairs in the post-war years has been the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. During the early months of 1956 there were indications that that policy was departing in some respects from the rigidities of the Stalinist era. Western governments were under no delusion as to the continuation of the threat to the security of the non-communist world; nor, in particular, did they interpret the modifications in Soviet policy as detracting from the necessity of NATO as a protection against any possible Soviet military aggression. There were, however, some signs of a desire amongst the Soviet leaders to raise the iron curtain. Through the gap visitors passed more freely than in the past between the Soviet Union and Western countries. Cautious hopes arose that the Soviet Union, influenced not least by the appalling prospect of nuclear war, would develop a new interest in meaningful negotiations with non-communist states.

Such budding hopes as may have been briefly cherished were ironically, frozen by the brutal termination of what had seemed to be a more liberal attitude toward the states in Eastern Europe that were under Russian domination. Partly as a necessary corollary of some degree of reconciliation with Yugoslavia, the Soviet Government had given promise of loosening the straitjacket of Moscow control. The responses in Eastern European states demonstrated the desire, which had been known to exist, for return toward personal and national freedom. Poland did achieve some success in moving toward these ends, but the late Hungarian attempts to go further by withdrawing from the Warsaw Treaty and planning for free elections went beyond the boundaries permitted to a satellite state, so on November 4 the Soviet Army intervened to crush what had developed into a revolution of national liberation. An attempt to have the Security Council deal with the Hungarian question was blocked by a Soviet veto. However, this was in turn overcome by transferring the question to the General Assembly, following the pattern followed a few days earlier in the similar situation that had developed in connection with the Middle Eastern item.