

The main question is now to be decided by a plebiscite conducted under the supervision of the United Nations, which has been able to secure the services for this purpose of a famous and distinguished American -- Admiral Nimitz. In making these arrangements, however, the United Nations have been careful to leave it to the people of Kashmir and to the Governments of India and Pakistan to arrange the actual settlement. It is these people -- the interested parties -- who must see to it that the plebiscite is conducted in an honest and orderly manner. It is they who are responsible for keeping the peace while the settlement is being worked out. It is they who must arrange for the administration of the territory until a settlement has been reached. The United Nations can help them -- and I am sure that under the direction of Admiral Nimitz this help will be prompt and efficient -- but the success of the experiment rests primarily with them.

A third general principle which I think we may discern in the events which I have mentioned is that the United Nations is on strong grounds when it begins its efforts to deal with a situation or dispute insisting that disorders shall cease. In Palestine, in Kashmir and in Indonesia there has been fighting -- too much fighting. The members of the Security Council have always said to themselves and to the parties that the first thing is to get the fighting stopped. They have insisted on getting it stopped without too much arguing about who started it or about the merits of the strategic position at any particular moment. They have also insisted that it should be stopped without prejudice to the political settlement which might finally be reached. I do not think that any member of the Security Council has blinded himself to the fact that the nature of the settlement has sometimes been affected by the fighting, but they have done their best to reduce that effect as much as possible.

Once a cease-fire order has been issued, the United Nations has then offered a variety of services to maintain the truce which has been established. The record of the various truce commissions is, I think, one of the most impressive examples of the work of the United Nations. It is made even more impressive by the fact that the United Nations has been able to command the loyal and devoted service of a group of courageous men, drawn from many nations but moved by a common ideal, who have risked their lives, and in some cases given their lives, in carrying out the missions which were assigned to them. They have gone unarmed and without military support into areas where heavy fighting had taken place in order to report on the way in which truce provisions were being observed. They have brought together disputing parties under difficult circumstances and made it possible for them to negotiate with one another. They have gone back and forth across the lines between the contending forces carrying out the work of negotiation in the most dangerous possible circumstances. To these men, and to the techniques which they have applied, we owe the fact that warfare in three dangerous areas of the world has been contained and stopped rather than been permitted to take on dangerous proportions. The fact that it has been possible to work out these techniques, to find men who will apply them and to put them successfully into operation is an encouraging proof of the practical resources of the United Nations.

The conclusion we must reach from this kind of re-assessment of the United Nations is that the organization, though it may have little power, has growing influence. No one would pretend that the United Nations can in present circumstances stop a big power that is determined to go to war -- or even a truculent small one that is sure of the support of a big neighbour. But it is constantly exerting its influence on world affairs, sometimes in purely administrative matters, like the control of narcotics, sometimes on idealistic subjects of long range rather than immediate importance, like human rights, sometimes in political matters of great and urgent importance, like the