

I do not intend, however, to comment further on this particular situation. I have discussed Vietnam in Parliament on several occasions in recent days and I should like to continue rather with an assessment of your main theme at the Model United Nations -- the challenge to the organization in many fields. There is some danger involved in considering the United Nations too much in the light of the crisis of the day, with the result that we miss the significance of gradual development on a broad front.

### Twenty Years After

Twenty years is a very brief span in the development of a great political institution. Our national parliaments have taken centuries to establish principles and rules for the orderly and democratic conduct of the nation's business. It is curious that on the international plane, and in an organization now composed of 117 independent countries, we have a tendency to demand instant perfection.

"We find it hard", as the Secretary-General of the United Nations said at the Commemorative Meeting in San Francisco last year, "to accept the time-lag between the formulation of an idea and its practical realization, and we are sometimes inclined to question the validity of an idea -- or even to reject it impatiently -- before it has had the chance to take root and grow."

I, for one, would agree with U Thant that it was never realistic to suppose that sovereign governments, in a relatively short period, would be able to live up to all the ideals and aims of the United Nations Charter. It seems obvious that, if we want a better system for peace and security, then years of long and hard work will be required to remove the many obstacles in the way.

The United Nations is not, and may never be, a world parliament. As long as the world is made up of independent sovereign states, the work of the United Nations will be affected by the clash of national interests. But this does not mean that we cannot set some limits to the rivalry of nations. It does not mean that we cannot direct that rivalry into more constructive channels of peaceful competition.

It is often forgotten that, only a few years after the United Nations was founded, the effect of the cold war and the East-West deadlock almost made it impossible for the organization to work as a force for peace. And yet, what has in fact happened in the last 15 years or so? We have, through a process of trial and error, found ways to keep fighting from breaking out in several parts of the world. Also, the United Nations, by serving as a place for discussion and an agency for the peaceful settlement of disputes, has itself helped a good deal to improve relations between East and West.

The lesson to be drawn from this is that it will take many years to make the United Nations into a really effective world organization. We shall have to find new ways of getting along with other countries. Every country will have to give up something of its own interests, in the interest of a better world.