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General Survey

Gradually, in spite of the sharp political division which has fallen across the contemporary world, methods are being worked out in the United Nations and the specialized agencies which enable these organizations to undertake effective work within limited fields. Demands of unexpected importance, arising out of the very political problems which handicap the organizations, have been made on them, and their members have shown resourcefulness in a marked degree by working out techniques and procedures to meet these problems.

The adaptability, as well as the limitations, of the United Nations in existing circumstances have been best demonstrated within the field of security affairs. In the absence of agreement amongst its permanent members, the Security Council remains incapable of enforcing its decisions. The abuse of the voting procedure, which requires unanimity amongst the permanent members on all questions of substance, and the failure of the Military Staff Committee to agree upon measures for the establishment of military force under international control, are the formal handicaps from which the Security Council suffers. These limitations, however, are merely symptoms of the major difference of opinion in regard to the purposes of the United Nations and the manner in which that Organization should be permitted to function, which exists between the free democracies on the one hand and the Communist-controlled states under the influence of the U.S.S.R. on the other. In the presence of this great division, the Security Council is in the ordinary sense of the term powerless. It can at no time impose its will, and there are large areas of the world in which it is not permitted to operate at all.

In spite of these limitations, the Security Council was the instrument in 1949 through which the international community dealt with three dangerously inflammable problems—Indonesia, Kashmir and Palestine. The Security Council did not in itself produce a solution to any of these problems, and all three areas may yet be overwhelmed by the disaster which the United Nations has sought to avert. In most difficult circumstances, however, the Security Council managed in all three areas to bring an end to fighting when it occurred, and to assist the parties concerned to undertake negotiations by which, with varying degrees of success, they are proceeding towards permanent solutions.

The most effective action taken by the Security Council related to Indonesia. When the year began, a major military engagement had been undertaken in Indonesia and it seemed that nothing but a trial of strength lasting over an indefinite period would bring a solution to the political