

the Assembly asserted the right to make recommendations for the maintenance of peace and security, including the right to recommend the use of force to maintain or restore peace if there was a breach of the peace and the Council was prevented from taking appropriate action. Canada was a leading advocate of the Assembly's right to assert this residual power and has continued to be ever since, on the grounds that collective action to stop aggression is the overriding purpose of the organization and must not be frustrated by the abuse of the veto power.

We were confirmed in our opinion by the Assembly's role in the establishment of the United Nations Emergency Force in 1956. It has been argued that the recommendation to establish the Force was ultra vires of the Assembly's authority because it is a military force with potential if not actual coercive functions. Whether or not the functions of the Force are defined as peace-keeping or enforcement action (and we have always thought it to be the former) seems to me, however, to be irrelevant to the point that the Assembly can make recommendations for action in the circumstances I have described and that such recommendations serve to implement the purpose of the UN if they obtain the required two-thirds majority.

The view is sometimes expressed that the expansion of the membership of the General Assembly has created a new situation and that peace-keeping operations might now be authorized which would ignore or defy the interests of important member states or even important groups of members. I think this is unlikely to happen because the Assembly is a political body and in politics it is not customary to take actions which are self-defeating. A veto in the Council is one thing. Opposition to UN action by a number of powerful states is another. I think it very improbable that the Assembly would recommend a peace-keeping operation without making some provision for its financing and without knowing whether sufficient personnel and logistic support would be available.

On the other hand, I also think it might not be a bad idea if we were to take another look at the voting procedures of the Assembly. It is now possible to adopt important recommendations by a substantial majority which are quite unrelated to the facts of power in the world. Such recommendations remain "on the books" but they have little or no effect. This is not a procedure calculated to expand the influence of the Assembly or to enhance the prestige of the organization. The Foreign Minister of Ireland proposed two years ago that the Assembly change its rules of procedure in order to increase the number of affirmative votes required for Assembly recommendations on peace and security questions. I believe this proposal deserves careful study.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of this question, however, the fact remains that the argument reflects a deep split between the permanent members of the Council about how to exercise control over peace keeping, and it has blocked any progress on financing and advance planning. As we all know, such conceptions as aggression or threats to peace have always been extraordinarily difficult to define to everyone's satisfaction. They are doubly so today, the era of such phenomena as wars of liberation, subversion and neo-colonialism.