

The Korean aggression has now been checked. The fighting has stopped. An armistice has been signed. But the situation is heavy with problems, especially for those members of the United Nations who have made the Korean operation the first international police action in history.

There is, first, the complex and explosive problem of converting the armistice into a peace. Already there have been divergent views between the United States and its friends on this issue, more particularly over the composition of the peace conference. This was an honest difference which, by adequate prior consultation, could have been minimized if not removed. Instead, it was allowed to develop into - and made to look like - a major crisis. Allied diplomacy failed here; or rather it was not given a fair trial. It is to be hoped that we have learned the lesson of this episode.

There may be even more serious problems for the alliance if the armistice breaks down or is indefinitely prolonged. The United States government, understandably doubtful of the Communists' good faith, has secured allied agreement for a declaration which, it is hoped, will prevent renewed aggression. It gives a solemn warning of speedy and firm resistance if such aggression occurs, and adds that should this happen, it might be impossible to limit action to Korea itself.

This "warning declaration" was agreed to by all the other governments with forces in Korea, but it is no secret that the agreement was given, in some cases, uneasily. This uneasiness arose over fears that the armistice might be broken either by the Communists or by the government of the Republic of Korea, which has violently opposed it. There was also concern lest a situation be created in which the origins of the new aggression might be concealed. Either contingency would impose a severe strain on the alliance, not contemplated by the "warning declaration." How can we guard against these untoward developments or ensure unity of action if they occur?

In the first place, the United States should be able to count on its friends if a clear-cut and new aggression from China and North Korea were committed. On the other hand, it should be understood that such support would only be forthcoming if the United Nations had decided that a new aggression had in fact taken place. Also, the government of South Korea must be convinced that it has nothing to gain and everything to lose by sabotaging either the armistice or the Korean peace conference, if and when it takes place. Finally, it should be made quite clear that our objective in Korea is to defeat aggression, and not to impose unity on that country by force. Any doubt on this latter point would certainly make cooperation in the Far East extremely difficult if not impossible.

It is true that the unification of a free and democratic Korea by political means remains a United Nations objective. There is, however, no greater obligation on any member of the United Nations to help bring this about by military means than exists in the issue of German unification.