

virtue of their importance as providers of services or facilities in these fields, while, by custom, their status as permanent members of the Security Council and developed countries has given them easy access to the executive bodies of most of the other Specialized Agencies. Some of these traditional arrangements are now under attack from developing countries, especially in the ILO.

The permanent members of the Security Council, with the possible exception of China, are determined to maintain their special position, i.e. their veto power. Both the United States and the Soviet Union regard it as essential that the leading roles they play in world affairs should continue to be reflected in the UN Charter and structure. Britain and France, as the repositories within the world organization of the power, tradition and influence of Western Europe, are no less concerned than the other permanent members about retaining their privileged status on the Security Council.

The ten non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected on the following geographical basis: five from Asian and African states, two from Latin American states, two from "Western European and other states" (WEO) (the group to which Canada belongs for election purposes), and one from Eastern European states. Thus two-thirds of the non-permanent members at any one time represent Third World interests. They contribute actively to the Council's deliberations on a wide range of subjects, often drafting and presenting the resolutions that form the basis of the Council's decisions or recommendations. They cannot be very impressed, however, by the argument sometimes advanced by one or other of the permanent members that the non-permanent members enjoy a "collective veto" because resolutions of the Security Council require nine affirmative votes. In practice, the so-called collective veto of the non-permanent members has never been applied and could be invoked only against a decision of the Security Council that would be advocated by the five permanent members alone, a situation most unlikely to arise.

Many of the newer members of the UN, and some of the original members, regard the provisions of the Charter on permanent membership of the Security Council as outdated and have pressed for revision. Both the composition and the responsibilities of the Council, as well as the veto power, have come under scrutiny. As long as the permanent members oppose any change, however, it is unlikely to take place, although an Assembly committee on Charter review has been established and may make proposals. Canada has taken the view that the balance of power between the General Assembly and the Security Council as embodied in the Charter is an essential element in the life of the organization and that without the "safety-valve" of the veto power intolerable strains might have developed between majority and minority at any one time. There are other ways in which the effectiveness of the UN as an instrument for international co-operation can be strengthened, short of Charter amendment, including restructuring of the economic and social sectors and agencies so as to enhance the influence and status of the developing countries. Nevertheless, Canada agrees that the question of Charter reform deserves sympathetic examination. It will certainly not go away. If the UN is to evolve gradually into a body capable of making decisions that affect the vital interests of states, it must follow procedures that give confidence to its leading members or groups of members that their interests are protected in some rational and responsible way. In the meantime, the essential condition for change in the system is that it be accomplished in ways that ensure the integrity of the system itself. A United Nations without the U.S.A. or without the U.S.S.R. or without Africa might have a role to play, but it would not be able to implement the principles and purposes of the Charter.