

the armistice, we cannot claim that the peace-making task of the Organization is in any way fulfilled. Three current conflicts there -- the Israeli-Syrian dispute over the Jordan River, the Israeli-Jordan dispute over boundary violations and the Israeli-Egyptian dispute over passage through the Suez Canal -- are acute expressions of a state of affairs far from final peace. In all of them the United Nations organs are actively endeavoring to bring about a solution. And in all of them the United Nations appears as the only party which has a chance to serve as a catalyst for those forces which work in the direction of establishing conditions under which lasting peace is possible. The work is not much talked of and the day-to-day results may not be spectacular. But seen from the inside the contributions made on a United Nations basis must be recognized as vital. The primary task of the United Nations is to prevent conflicts or a sharpening of conflicts that might lead to war. Its work in fulfillment of that task must necessarily to a large extent be a slow, patient, undramatic operation based on continuing negotiations with all parties concerned. A resolution in the General Assembly or in the Security Council may be the starting point for such an operation, or a registration of its results. The negotiations themselves are generally not headline news but the very substance of the United Nations' peacemaking work.

A third example of the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and in the peaceful settlement of disputes is the case of Korea. Here the United Nations sought for three years by peaceful means and common consent to bring about the unification in freedom and independence of a people long under foreign domination who had been left divided by the development of the "cold war." In 1950 that peaceful effort was interrupted by the act of aggression from North Korea. This presented the United Nations with its greatest challenge. We know how this challenge was met. The armistice that was won in Korea at such heavy cost was a victory for collective security. Since the armistice the United Nations and the Member Governments most directly concerned have been seeking to move forward in the direction of real peace in Korea. This effort has gone forward at United Nations Headquarters in New York, at Panmunjon and, most recently, in Berlin. It has been a slow and painful process. You will recall that it took a whole year of negotiation even to reach an armistice. Now it has taken nine months even to reach an agreement on the time, place and composition of a peace conference. The agreement that was reached at Berlin last week to hold a conference in Geneva in April has broken that deadlock. This is a step forward, though he would be a rash man who would venture to guess today how far this conference will bring us toward peace. It may prove to be necessary to live for a long time to come with another armistice regime -- another truce line -- like those in Palestine and Kashmir, and like the demarcation lines between the Soviet and Western occupation zones in Germany and Austria. Even if that should come to pass, let us remember, however, that it is better to disagree around the conference table and then try again, no matter how frustrating the experience, than to meet on the battlefield in war.

The price of peace since 1945 has come high indeed and I would be the last to pretend that I can see