

" an international organization like the United Nations represents the application of a principle which all nations must recognize as valid in international affairs, that no nation can live in peace and attain its own national security save in collective action maintain international peace and security. The alternative would take us back to the position which existed before 1939. During those earlier years an attempt was made to establish an international organization which did not include all the great centres of material strength and military power in the world ... Decisions which depend on the co-operation or at least the acquiescence of all the great powers, if they are taken in an organization in which those powers are not all present will inevitably be unreal and impractical".

The signature of the North Atlantic Treaty was in essence an admission of the existence of a divided world but was also a provision against the deficiencies of the United Nations. The recognition of such a difference would make it "a good deal easier for us to devise practical means of coming to terms with it". It was still possible, Mr. Pearson thought, to "reaffirm our belief in the integrity of the experiment of the United Nations" and to consider the United Nations as a "useful and practical instrument ... in immediate circumstances for the prevention or settlement of international disputes," provided there is a clear understanding of the limits within which it is possible for the United Nations to operate. Already the United Nations had shown itself capable of taking effective though not spectacular action in the cases of Palestine, Indonesia and Kashmir in the sense that it had been able to avoid a major conflict. Mr. Pearson then went on to outline three principles which, in his opinion, could serve as a guide for future United Nations action in the circumstances of the moment. These principles were restated and enlarged upon in his address before the General Assembly in September, 1949. Although derived from Canada's experience as a member of the Security Council, they represented in essence the view that until such time as the international situation was able to permit the United Nations to function along the lines intended by the framers of the Charter, and the inadequacies of the Security Council had in large part been overcome, this body should aim at the achievement of more limited objectives. As outlined to the General Assembly, Mr. Pearson's principles, which are worth quoting in full, were as follows:

" These principles, in default of an improvement in relations between the communist and democratic worlds, would seem to mark the limits that we can now reach. To attempt to go beyond these limits in present circumstances is merely inviting failure. The first is that the Security Council shall not initiate action that it cannot complete with its present resources. There have often been demands that the Security Council should intervene in some area or another with force, and that when fighting occurs, the Security Council should take steps to suppress it. There would be a great deal to recommend such intervention if it could be carried out firmly and quickly, but the fact is, of course, that the Security Council has at present no effective way of imposing its will. In consequence in many cases it can do little more in the first instance than call upon the parties engaged in the dispute to stop fighting and start talking, offering them the means by which they can work out a settlement by negotiation rather than by conflict. This is not a dramatic or spectacular method of procedure, but in the circumstances it has served fairly well.