

in an organization primarily designed for the maintenance of peace and security is, if all the permanent members of the Security Council are present and voting, incapable of taking action (except - and this may be important - moral action) against a great power; or, indeed against a smaller power if that smaller power has been able to secure the support of one of the permanent members. Now, we all know that major wars are started only by great powers or by smaller powers allied to and instigated by great powers. At this stage in his study of the United Nations Charter, a reader coming to that document for the first time might be inclined to rub his eyes in astonishment. The Organization purports to offer security in a troubled world and yet is precluded from taking any effective action in such situations as are most likely to lead to major breaches of security. Confronted by this seeming inconsistency in the Charter, the student might begin to feel that, in spite of its pretensions to provide security, the United Nations is really naked of any authority which would enable it to do so.

He might then wonder whether those who framed the Charter at San Francisco had not in reality perpetrated a pious fraud. Of course, that was not the case. I was present at San Francisco and well remember the current of determined optimism and high idealism which flowed through our discussions there. Moreover, if you will recall a fundamental assumption made at that time, it is possible to remove the inconsistency in the Charter which I have outlined. For the purpose of drafting a Charter for an international security organization of which the five great powers were to be members, we assumed at San Francisco that the degree of understanding which had been created between those powers during the war would be maintained. When we are criticized now for making this assumption, I reply, how could we possibly at that time have made any other? We were drawing up a Charter but we realized that it would be impossible to frame principles and procedures in a written instrument which would be fully effective in preserving peace and security, if agreement and co-operation between the great powers were not maintained. Expectation of continued agreement on major issues between the great powers, therefore, was necessarily taken as the basis of our work at San Francisco. When the various sections of the Charter, which now seem so inconsistent, are placed on that foundation, they fall into a pattern and make, I think, a coherent picture.

As we all know, the comparative harmony between the great powers which existed in the spring of 1945 has been shattered. The problem of what the role of the United Nations should now be in security matters - a problem which is troubling many who sincerely believe in collective action to prevent war as our only hope - for peace - springs ultimately from that fact.

The issue has been raised in concrete and almost frightening form by the unprovoked attack on the Republic of Korea which occurred last June. The Soviet Union at that time had absented itself from the Security Council; and that fortuitous circumstance allowed the issue to appear with particular sharpness. We all know what action was taken by the Security Council last June. On the initiative of the United States, the North Korean Government was declared an aggressor. That initiative we honour, but it came, I think, as a surprise to most observers and without it, let us not forget, any effective United Nations action, certainly any military action, would