

*United Nations Agreement*

problem, a world organization based upon the closest understanding and cooperation among all the nations, and more particularly among the great powers, offers the only true hope of humanity's survival in this and in future centuries.

San Francisco, to my mind, represents the beginning of such an organization. It provides a bare—yes, and I will admit, a pretty bare—skeleton upon which mankind must mould the body of real world security; and let progressive people keep some facts in mind. Under the charter the security council is under no definite obligation to inquire into the merits of a dispute brought to its attention. Article 34 says:

The security council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

If the situation or the dispute is not likely to endanger international peace and security, there is certainly no obligation on the part of the security council to take any action at all. True, a nation threatened by aggression, may bring its grievance to the attention of the council or the general assembly; but the general assembly will be subject to articles 11 and 12 of the charter, which expressly forbid the general assembly making any recommendations to the security council upon any matter concerning which the council is exercising any functions assigned to it by the charter, unless the security council itself requests the assembly to do so.

It can be seen therefore that contrary to what many people assume, the charter does not provide for obligatory intervention of any sort by the security council unless it determines itself that the situation is likely to endanger the general peace of the world. In the effort to maintain complete national sovereignty of the nations, the charter does not provide, as the old league of nations charter did provide, any definite guarantee of action in the event of violation of the territorial or political independence of a member nation.

Mr. MARTIN: Neither did the old covenant.

Mr. COLDWELL: But it did guarantee that the matter would be carefully investigated and a conclusion arrived at. This charter provides for investigation only if the security council shall so decide. Should such a situation be brought to the attention of the security council there is no obligation of any sort, unless it considers that the maintenance of international peace and security is threatened.

[Mr. Coldwell.]

This council, I think it might be said again, is to consist of eleven members. Five members, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China, are to have permanent seats on the security council. The remaining six shall, after the first year, when three will be elected for two years and three for one year, hold office for two years; and in the election of non-permanent members the Canadian delegation as the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent) and the member for Peel (Mr. Graydon) stated the other evening, secured an important proviso, that the potential contribution of the members of the united nations to the maintenance of peace and security should receive consideration. A nation like Canada, which has made a very considerable contribution to peace and security in two world wars, should be in a position somewhat different from that of a small nation like San Salvador, which is unable to make the type of contribution that Canada can make, and that is to be one of the considerations when appointing a non-permanent member to the security council. Also, some heed is to be taken of the geographical position of the nation to receive a non-permanent seat on the security council.

Decisions of the security council regarding procedural matters require an affirmative vote of seven members—any seven members; but on all other matters apart from procedure, that is matters determining any sort of action, there is required an affirmative vote of seven members with the proviso that these seven must include the votes of all the permanent members. This provides the veto power, about which there has been so much discussion, which simply means of course that one of the five permanent member powers can prevent any declaration condemning its own actions or that of one of its friends or satellites as endangering international peace and security.

I think it is safe to say that some of the permanent members of the council, or at least some of the delegates to the conference representing some of the permanent members of the council, disliked this proviso as much as we did, and certainly most of the nations wished it could have been abandoned. But the bald fact is that without it, and for somewhat different reasons, neither the United States nor Russia would be likely to sign or to ratify the charter. And this is what I mean when I say that the bare skeleton of security has been provided. But in accepting the skeleton we must make up our minds to do all in our power so to nourish and cover the skeleton