

I suppose we have always been aware in the United Nations that underneath the so-called East-West issues which have for the most part pre-occupied our political discussions in the General Assembly during the past six years, there lay other difficulties of a long-range character which at some time or another were bound to emerge here and which would continue to exist even if by some magic the East-West issues were to evaporate overnight. Some of these underlying issues are this year beginning to come to the surface as major problems before the Assembly. It is our duty to give a fair hearing to every complaint and to every appeal that we have bound ourselves by the Charter to consider and discuss.

Since the Second World war, it is a fact that one-quarter of the world's population has achieved, by various roads, independence and direct control over their own destinies. This great surge towards self-determination is an historical trend. It is the goal not only of the aspirations of the peoples who for many years have been dependent economically and politically upon other Powers, but it is in large measure true to say that the same goals are now recognized also, for the first time in history, by all civilized free states, those who control dependent territories as well as those who do not. The point at issue, therefore, has become increasingly one of means rather than ends, of timing rather than ultimate objectives.

Speaking for a country which grew up from colonial to independent status before the United Nations came into existence, I cannot guess how our development would have fared had those of our forefathers who pursued the family struggle for independence had such an organization as this to which they might have appealed. I think it would be very difficult to say whether, looking back on our history, any kind of international organization could, in fact, have speeded up the process. And I think it is even more difficult to say whether a speeding up would, from our purely national point of view, have been to our long-term advantage.

Yesterday the distinguished delegate the Foreign Minister for Iraq, paid a generous tribute to the far-sighted leadership of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands under whose auspices freedom has come to India and Pakistan, to Ceylon and Indonesia. He also acknowledged with a gratitude we all share our debt to France which has for so long stood as a living symbol of the principles of liberty. My country has confidence that the notable record of progress, of which these nations are so justly proud will continue unabated, and that their proclaimed goal will be realized to the benefit of the peoples concerned. To achieve this, two things are necessary: orderly progress not jeopardized through the reckless and destructive action of extremists, and a constant awareness by the administering powers of the need for the maximum rate of progress in the countries under their authority. Moderation on the one side, and good faith on the other are the twin methods by which the progress of dependent peoples toward freedom will be steady and sure. In the same temper of moderation and good faith, our debates here should not certainly at this time, degenerate into an exchange of accusations and recriminations, but should seek to bring the collective good sense of this body to bear on these problems in a way that will help instead of hinder our advance toward the goal in which all civilized states believe.

If the General Assembly is misused as if it were a government or a court, the result will, I fear, be that delegations who think as we do will be less inclined than they are at present to see whether Assembly discussions of, for example, the colonial