

effective union which it represented, required many years of experiment before it was completed and within a century was challenged in a civil war that very nearly destroyed it, but the conception of a central government, of a united states, remained and by 1860 this conception had become so firm that the great conflict which broke out during that decade was a civil war and not a war amongst the states. I don't suppose that made much difference to the people who were killed, but it made a very great deal of difference to the people who went on living, and who undertook the work of reconstruction. The beginning which we have made in this direction now on a much larger scale is too important to surrender while the last sign of life remains in the body.

It would, however, be a mistake to suggest that the United Nations at the moment lacks vitality. It has, if anything, too much energy and is trying to accomplish more than is possible in an organization which is, as yet, scarcely three years old. Within that time an elaborate ingenious constitutional structure has been worked out, and all the parts are functioning with the highest degree of energy. An international Secretariat has been recruited and put to work, and for my own part I am constantly surprised at the efficiency with which they go about their business. I cannot imagine a more difficult task than that of recruiting from amongst 57 nations a group of people competent in almost as many different varieties of work, getting them together, getting them trained in common procedures, getting them to understand the objectives of their service. I know that the efficiency of the Secretariat will not save the United Nations if the member states themselves do not wish to use the organization, but I think that the way in which this staff has been recruited and set to work is a most encouraging example of human ingenuity and adaptability.

So successful has this preliminary work of organization been, that I am quite confident that, if some measure of political stability can be restored to the world, the United Nations could quite readily become a kind of gyroscope to help maintain that balance. If some nation is eventually determined to go to war, nothing, of course, can prevent a war from breaking out. But, if over a period of years, we have built up customs and procedures by which conflicts can be localized and machinery of settlement put in operation, we shall at least have improved our chances of keeping the peace and if, at the same time, we have built up a body of loyalty amongst the majority of nations in support of the organization itself, we shall have greatly increased the risks that face any nation that is attempting an aggressive act.

There are other considerations more immediate and more practical which justify this organization. In one sense, the General Assembly at its last session before Christmas may be said to have gone into business. Previously, the main attention had been on structural organization. On this occasion, however, an attempt was made to face up to some of the political problems of the world. In a clumsy and inadequate manner, haltingly, often mistakenly, the Assembly began to experiment in methods to circumvent the frustration which had fallen upon the Security Council. It took action with regard to Korea and Greece. It established a continuing body of its own - the Interim Committee.