

If a powerful group in the Assembly opposes this development, and if others stand aloof, then the United Nations may become little more than a forum for the expression of world opinion, and an instrument for the conciliation and negotiation of disputes, if any, which do not involve any major power. These are important functions. But if they are the only things we can do, then the whole character of our world organization is changed from the concept of San Francisco, and collective security on a universal basis becomes a distant dream. As it disappears, we will be forced to rely more and more, as a second best, on more limited and regional arrangements to protect the peace.

Such a possibility, I suggest, must certainly be faced. There is no point in deceiving ourselves. The United Nations has great achievements to its credit, and will have more, but the vision which once inspired such world-wide and such fervent hope has been dimmed by the dark clouds of political conflict between the great powers.

International relations are now, in a very real and dangerous sense, centred on the conflict between two great blocs, facing each other in suspicion and animosity and fear, with the chasm between them growing wider, and the efforts to bridge that chasm apparently becoming less effective. Indeed, if we took the statement of the Soviet delegate on Thursday last at face value, it would show that the Russian government has now decided to abandon the effort completely: and to use the United Nations, not for the removal of differences, but merely to vilify, sneer at and attack those with whom it disagrees. This, in turn, naturally produces a hardening on the other side until diplomatic negotiation of any kind becomes practically impossible. That is the real tragedy and the real danger of the present position.

Between these two blocs other states hover uneasily, form their own smaller groupings and pursue their own aims inside and outside the United Nations. Some of these aims are peaceful and legitimate; others have very little to do with the principles of our Charter.

Many of the states between the two blocs are what we now describe as under-developed areas. They are receiving a measure, indeed an increasing measure of technical assistance from the United Nations, and technical and economic aid from various agencies in the free world, including that from the Colombo Plan, an initiative of the Commonwealth of Nations, in which my country is proud to play a part.

If only the burden of defence programmes could be reduced, a much larger measure of such technical assistance and aid for capital development could and would flow in a far greater stream into the under-developed countries and territories.

Unhappily, the necessity forced on the free states of protecting themselves against Russian imperialism, using as its spear-head the weapons of international communism, has become now the mainspring of national policy. It has forced us into this "cold war" which now colours every subject that appears on a United Nations agenda, whether it is the election of the chairman of a sub-committee, or a