

United Nations Must Succeed

I now wish to comment on the United Nations itself. I was present in a humble capacity at San Francisco in 1945. I believe in the United Nations, not because it has always succeeded but because it must succeed; it must go on from strength to strength or we perish. But that does not mean that bringing before the Assembly weaknesses now shows any desire to undermine or corrode it. I believe that we do not serve its high purposes by pretending that all is well when it is clear to everyone that all is not well. I do not take the cynical view that the United Nations is a failure. There have been many successes in its endeavours to keep the peace. But the major question today is whether we have had enough success for the terrifying needs of this age. We have had successes and we have had failures, but it is questionable whether, under the shadow of the dread menace of the latest nuclear weapons, we can afford any more major failures.

I spoke of the work of the last session. Much solid work was done at that session, and many new members deployed their forces in the cause of peace. But the United Nations found itself incapable of finding a solution to the Hungarian question. That was not because of the Charter; that was in spite of the Charter. The ineffectiveness of the action taken last year by the Assembly to assure justice to the Hungarians arose because of the existence of double standards in the United Nations membership rather than from any weakness in the Charter. But there are no double standards provided for in the Charter. Double standards are found not in the Charter but in the performance of some of its members. Some abide by the decisions; others do not. And there is no use in pretending that in all cases we, through the United Nations, can force recalcitrant members to behave as the Charter dictates. It is equally foolish to believe that we would have such power if the Charter were amended.

I believe that if the United Nations is to maintain its capacity to exercise an ameliorating influence on the problems of mankind it must be a flexible instrument. The United Nations must not become frozen by the creation of hostile blocs, which will have the result of stultifying efforts to find real and sensible solutions. There has been at the present session, I think, quite a movement against the bloc system, particularly in the votes that are being cast. It is healthy that member states should group together on a basis of common interest, consult with one another and, at times, adopt common policies. That is common sense. With an expanding membership, there is much to be said for like-minded nations adopting like-minded positions and putting them forward, provided that the groups do not become blocs which would strangle the