

One might suppose, therefore, that in this field there was some hope of co-operation at all levels in the United Nations based on a common interest.

Unfortunately this is not the case. The dispute over the powers of the General Assembly in initiating, controlling and assessing the sharing of the costs of peace keeping has its roots deep in the history of the United Nations. It is not possible to review that history now. We can merely note that the United Nations has reached a very difficult point in its history; it has an accumulated debt, a patchwork of payment arrangements for operations under way and a constitutional crisis over responsibility for peace keeping.

Future developments in this field depend very much on the general international atmosphere, and particularly on the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. They are, therefore, not easy to predict.

The Soviet Union believes that only the Security Council can take decisions on questions relating to the establishment, financing and use of United Nations forces. It is using all the arguments it can muster from the Charter and all its power and influence to make its point of view prevail.

The Soviet Union can impose a kind of financial veto and is doing so. It has, of course, made a very general commitment to contribute voluntarily to a fund to overcome the debts, in recognition of the fact that the majority of nations did not finally force the issue over the loss of voting power. I hope that it will make this contribution during the current Assembly session and that others also will help voluntarily to restore United Nations solvency. If the Soviet Union makes this contribution, however, it will undoubtedly extract as much benefit as possible from this act in trying to ensure that its views prevail in the future. If they do, then the Assembly would have little significant power in the peace-keeping field and the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, on whose prompt and impartial action so much depends, would be hampered seriously in their tasks.

Complete control of peace-keeping operations by the Security Council would not, of course, end all such operations or prevent any firm recommendations on world crises. The Council took a vigorous stand on the India-Pakistan conflict in September and the observation and truce supervision role of the United Nations in that area has been extended. Already, however, the Soviet Union is objecting to the follow-up actions taken by the Secretary-General to help arrange a cease-fire.

Clearly it would be undesirable if the Soviet Union were able to impose its more restrictive interpretation of the United Nations role on other Council members or on the membership as a whole. There are occasions when it is essential for the Assembly, acting through middle and smaller powers, to attempt as balanced a solution as possible.

The position of France is, of course, different from that of the Soviet Union, both with respect to motivation and with respect to compromise solutions which might be found. It is a rather conservative and restrictive position so far as the possibility of effective peace keeping is concerned. As a result, France seems unlikely to play a role in the field of United Nations peace keeping commensurate with its wide influence and contacts in world affairs.