

they signed the Charter or adhered to it, have repudiated, one and all, the idea that any human being—and, even more, any group of human beings—should be held in political subjection or be the object of any kind of exploration. The very principles of our Charter proclaim in the most solemn fashion that alike in the relations between individuals and between nations or peoples, the golden rule is one of service, of dedicated and generous assistance. It is not helpful to suggest, therefore, in anything we say here that some members of our organization are not prepared to abide by these principles and are influenced by any purpose other than those which have enshrined in the Charter. It is not better to assume that in all this the main difference between us is not one of principle but perhaps one of method, not one of goals but rather one of approach. All of us here should seek what will be most beneficial to those peoples or areas which are not self-dependent or self-governing. We are all of us committed under the Charter to enlarge as far and as fast as possible the area of freedom in the world, in a manner which is consonant with the provisions of the Charter as a whole.

If we approach the issue facing this Committee with these thoughts in mind, our task will remain formidable but I am confident that it will be much more easily manageable. It is our hope that, through calm and friendly discussion among Member Governments, many of the question-marks resulting from the various understandings of this provision in the Charter will be permanently removed by working out generally agreed answers to the questions.

#### **No General Agreement**

What are these questions? They have been asked before, but I take the liberty of repeating them. First, "what do we really mean by the term 'self-determination'?" Second, "what do we really mean by the term 'peoples and nations'?" Mr. Chairman, I am sure that no member of this Committee would pretend that there are generally agreed answers to these questions. There is, for example, no general agreement whether political self-determination is achieved when self-government, or autonomy or full internal and external sovereignty have been concerned. Similarly, there is no general agreement on who is to enjoy self-determination — whether racial, religious, geographical, cultural and economic units are to be invited to determine their fate *and, if so, what tests are to be applied to ascertain whether such a unit is seeking expression of an articulate desire in this respect.* Besides, how many countries have no minorities? There is also the question of timing and

of selecting the arbiter. Who will say when a certain unit has reached the necessary degree of maturity? This raises problems which may not be essentially different in nature from those involved in the question of recognition of states. It seems to us what the very notion of who is entitled to self-determination and what it means—or when and how it should be asserted—is still too loose, too vague, to be defined with the desirable accuracy. In these circumstances, we find it impossible to declare our unreserved acceptance of self-determination, either as a right or as a principle. It is already clear that there are many other governments represented here which find themselves in very much the same position.

#### **More Specific Questions**

Mr. Chairman, I have mentioned a few questions of a general nature which have been troubling us. Since the generality of these questions may make them seem not too difficult to answer, I should like to mention briefly a number of more specific questions which I think will bring out the very real difficulties inherent in any attempt to implement self-determination.

First, self-determination must be examined in relation to Article 2 (7) of the United Nations Charter. If it were to be suggested, for instance, that the General Assembly ought to determine when self-determination should be applied, intervention in domestic matters might be involved and nothing less than an amendment of the Charter might be required.

Second, the preamble to the Charter states that one of its purposes is to promote respect for the obligations arising from treaties. To accept self-determination as a right might have far reaching effects on existing territorial arrangements. Acquire rights under valid international treaties might also be affected.

Third, the provisions in Chapter XII of the Charter recognize that self-determination is not an absolute right and that, in their own interest, certain peoples need the protection and support of other countries and that in such matters "the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples" must be taken into account.

Fourth, the provisions of Chapter XI of the Charter imply that self-determination is not to be interpreted in such a way that it would be inconsistent with the obligations and rights of the administering countries. Admittedly, this is a contentious subject but even so, my government is of the opinion that any action which might have the effect of urging interpretations which are unacceptable to a number of members of the United Nations is