

The third point I wish to discuss is that of peace keeping. We are all aware that, because of disagreement among members of the Assembly over the financing of certain peace-keeping operations, the General Assembly has passed through a painful period of frustration. I will not recall the circumstances or attempt to ascribe now the responsibility. What is important is that the General Assembly is functioning normally again. A new period of creative action lies before us. This prospect is a matter of satisfaction to my Government. For, notwithstanding the acknowledged importance of the Article 19 issue, we have to consider that the vital need for the United Nations and for this Assembly is to come to grips with compelling world problems. We must not permit this Assembly to be paralysed in the light of these contemporary issues.

Let me give you my Government's view on the future of peace keeping, and I think we have a right to give some advice on this matter because we have participated in every one of the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations. First, we cannot accept the proposition that the Charter reserves the preservation of peace and security exclusively to the permanent members of the Security Council, although we do not for one moment question that co-operation among the great powers is fundamental to the full implementation of the Charter. But in the absence of such co-operation, the membership as a whole must, in our view, have the opportunity to recommend what is to be done when no other course is open.

The Charter explicitly provides that the maintenance of international peace and security is a collective responsibility. This means that when the United Nations acts to keep the peace, a general responsibility rests upon the membership to support that action. We have always believed that the logical consequence of this is an equitable system of sharing the financial burden. If it is right and proper for the Security Council to have the primary responsibility for decisions to establish peace-keeping operations, it is equally to be expected that the members of the Council, and particularly the permanent members, should pay their rightful share of the cost, preferably on the basis of collective assessment. But if this is not possible, then contributions must be forthcoming voluntarily from each member to the best of its ability in common acknowledgement of the obligation we all share to help keep the peace. The alternative is that the burden of peace keeping will fall upon a few member states. I have no doubt that this alternative will be categorically rejected by most countries and that the United Nations peace-keeping operations will not falter through lack of the necessary resources. But I would remind the Assembly that it nearly did falter when the Security Council, by its unique arrangement, provided an opportunity for the establishment of the force in Cyprus.

Our first and most immediate challenge is to restore the organization to solvency. A number of countries, including my own, have already demonstrated their faith that the membership as a whole will respond to this need, and contributions approaching \$20 million have been forthcoming. I am sure that, in the course of the next few weeks, the balance of the membership will respond in full measure to the appeal of the Secretary-General.