

The device of co-chairmanship, which the Eighteen-Nation Committee employed, had been successfully applied outside the United Nations in the Geneva negotiations of 1961-62 on Laos. As regards the situation in Laos, at the beginning of 1962 it seemed far from settled but, by July, international agreements providing for a unified, independent and neutral Laos had been signed by the 14 nations attending that Geneva conference. The result was a positive step toward peace and stability in Southeast Asia, even though the situation in neighbouring South Vietnam continued to cause anxiety.

Southeast Asia was the scene of another negotiated settlement, which resulted in part from assistance rendered by the United Nations. The Netherlands and Indonesia, with the help of the United States, and the Secretary-General, reached agreement which resolved the irritating West New Guinea dispute. Since this situation had threatened to erupt into serious fighting, the outcome was welcomed with relief by most member states, which supported the establishment of the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority in the territory. It represented a further extension of the United Nations peace-keeping role, in that the organization assumed administrative functions. This development in West New Guinea removed a contentious issue from the United Nations agenda.

Another long-standing agenda item was dropped when France and the Algerian leaders concluded the Evian Agreements in March. For many years, the Algerian question had been a source of sharp friction within the United Nations. The negotiated settlement was a tribute to French diplomacy and not only paved the way for Algeria's admission to the United Nations but greatly improved the prospects for co-operation between the states of Western Europe and those of Africa and Asia.

In addition to Burundi, Rwanda and Algeria, the United Nations in 1962 welcomed the admission of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda. For Canada, the entry of these new states of the Commonwealth was a source of special satisfaction. It was also gratifying to see the continuing growth in the membership of the United Nations, though enlargement brought with it increased burdens and pressing problems for the organization.

The situation in and around Berlin continued to be a cause of anxiety but, notwithstanding unpleasant incidents along the Berlin wall, did not reach crisis proportions during 1962. No appreciable progress was made toward solution of this flashpoint of East-West tension but, in private consultations through diplomatic channels, the United States and the Soviet Union probed one another's position quietly for evidence of areas which might be usefully explored.

All these encouraging developments were sharply disturbed by a sudden intensification of tension in two widely separated areas. The situation in the Caribbean showed no signs of improvement during the spring and summer.