

## II

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY

#### The Dilemma of Peace-Keeping Financing

Ostensibly, the dispute over the payment of peace-keeping assessments was financial in character. By the end of the year the arrears owed by member states to the Organization amounted to more than \$135 million. Ninety-five per cent of that amount represented unpaid assessments for the costs of the peace-keeping operations in the Middle East (UNEF) and the Congo (ONUC). By the time the General Assembly convened on December 1, 1964, nine states were so far in arrears — by amounts exceeding their total assessments for the preceding two years — that they stood liable to lose their Assembly vote under the provisions of Article 19 of the United Nations Charter. By February 1965, the number of states liable to Article 19 had increased to 13, including the Soviet Union and all its allies (except Bulgaria), France, South Africa, Belgium<sup>1</sup> and Yemen. A number of other states were in arrears in lesser amounts. The steadily mounting toll of arrears had a serious if not crippling financial effect on the Organization. By early 1965, the operating deficit of the United Nations exceeded \$90 million, and at one stage its ability to meet routine bills — much less take on new peace-keeping commitments — seemed in question.

But the dispute went far beyond the possible insolvency of the Organization and the penalty to be imposed on persistent defaulters. The real issue at stake was the constitutional mechanism for implementing the Charter provisions dealing with the maintenance of international peace and security, and the nature of the obligations devolving as a consequence on individual member states. The financial problems of the United Nations, essentially political in origin and nature, were part of the larger problem of the Organ-

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<sup>1</sup> In March 1965, the long-standing claims of Belgium against the United Nations for use of and damage to Belgian-owned installations during the Congo operation were settled. Belgium immediately began to pay its ONUC arrears.