

# I

## POLITICAL AND SECURITY

### Korea

From the moment when the armed forces in North Korea launched their attack across the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950, the Korean problem overshadowed all other questions before the United Nations. After five years spent in employing processes of negotiation and conciliation as a means of settling disputes such as those in Palestine, Kashmir and Indonesia, and of attempting to solve the multiple issues of the "cold war", the U.N. had now been confronted with a case of outright and unprovoked aggression against a sovereign state. The ability of the world organization to take collective action in the face of aggression had thus been directly challenged, and the challenge was the clearer by reason of the fact that the Republic of Korea had been brought into being as an independent nation under the auspices of the United Nations.

The prompt action of the Security Council to meet this crisis was generally accepted as the only response possible in the face of such a crucial test; and fifty-three of fifty-nine members supported the Council's stand against the aggression. It was soon clear, however, that the campaign to repel the invaders would be arduous and costly and that a very substantial build-up would be required before United Nations forces could mount an effective counter-offensive. Moreover, while the war was confined to Korea, it had repercussions which demonstrated that much more was involved than the fate of that country alone. Although the U.S.S.R. had been careful to avoid an open entry into the fighting, the direction of Soviet sympathies was manifest and there was much speculation as to the degree to which the Soviet Union was prepared to support the North Korean Communists. Later, with the intervention of Chinese Communist forces, there was no doubt that the United States and other Western nations were engaged in a serious diversionary war in the Far East and that their contributions to the defence of Western Europe were in danger of being gravely affected.

The implications of the war, therefore, extended into the heart of the relations among the great powers. Moreover, as the war had progressed, fundamental questions had been raised with regard to the capacity of the United Nations to act as an agent of universal collective security.

The previous record of the United Nations in Korea had been one of limited success. The organization had endeavoured, over a period of years, to assist the Koreans to achieve independence and unity under a freely elected government. These efforts, however,