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GENERAL SURVEY¹

The United Nations entered 1965 with its dignity and prestige damaged by a General Assembly immobilized by constitutional disagreement over the financing of peace-keeping operations: it ended the year not with a basic solution to this problem but at least with a compromise which permitted the Organization to chalk up a creditable record of achievement in a period marked by civil strife in the Dominican Republic, rebellion in Rhodesia, war in Kashmir and an expanding conflict in Vietnam. What was and what still is involved is the place of the United Nations in the conduct of international affairs. To paraphrase the now celebrated distinction made by the late Dag Hammarskjöld, certain members of the United Nations conceive of it as "a static conference machinery" designed for the resolution of conflicts of interest and ideology, while others see it as a dynamic instrument through which governments not only seek to reconcile their viewpoints but also try to develop forms of executive action on behalf of all members – forms aimed at forestalling or resolving conflicts by appropriate diplomatic or political means. The small minority of members who support the more limited conception reject the broader interpretation and its corollary that there is a collective obligation on all members to help pay for duly-authorized United Nations peace-keeping actions, whether or not they favour them. The bulk of the membership, in taking these views into account and in accepting a compromise solution, wisely avoided the risk of doing possibly irreparable damage to the fabric of what is, after all, still a very young organization.

The compromise agreed upon took the form of a consensus reached in the Special Committee on Peace-Keeping Operations² that the financial difficulties of the Organization should be solved through voluntary contributions from member states and that the Assembly should resume its normal work without considering the application of the provisions of Article 19 of the

¹The purpose of the General Survey is to discuss briefly some of the principal developments in the United Nations during the year under review and to comment on their significance. A more detailed account of events in the United Nations in 1965 and the part that Canada played in them will be found in the subsequent chapters.

²See Page 18.