

Where, above, all, the Charter was superior to the Covenant was in relation to collective security. We talk a great deal now of the veto, but under the old League arrangement every member of the Assembly had a veto. The Charter contemplated a much more qualified and, in reality, more effective arrangement. The primary responsibility for collective security rests with the Security Council which acts on behalf of the whole organization. In certain circumstances, it was foreseen that the Council could vote enforcement action with the participation, but not necessarily the individual consent of member nations. This represented an important advance in making provision for effective collective security. True, collective forces could not be used by United Nations direction against the permanent members of the Council but, then again, military and other pressure could not be exerted against any member of the organization without the concurrence of two of the non-permanent Council members. The system was not fool-proof; it could not be. But, in many respects, it went further than might have been thought possible before the war. The smaller nations had learned the lesson that organized force might deter aggression and that there was no security in isolation. They were prepared to acknowledge the special responsibilities - and therefore the special privileges - of the more powerful in the maintenance of peace. They were also hopeful that the great would exercise their powers with a sense of moderation.

It seemed reasonable to hope the ties and restraints of a wartime alliance would not be severed as soon as peace was achieved.

Such, then, was the picture in 1945: there was agreement and a prospect of continued agreement between the permanent members of the Security Council. Acting in co-operation, they had drafted a plan for international co-operation for promoting collective security, social and economic progress and respect for fundamental freedoms, which represented a considerable advance over anything which had been in existence before. The smaller nations were not satisfied with the arrangements in every respect, but given the prospect of continued co-operation and understanding between the major powers, and the provision for amendment in the Charter, there was some reason to believe that, in our imperfect world, peace could be made secure.

1955

If we examine the position of the United Nations today, there is of course one obvious and tragic difference from that of 1945. Any unity, and understanding between the Big Powers has been lost. As the organization, and in particular the Security Council, was based on the assumption that it would be retained, the repercussions were bound to be far-reaching. The problem of assessing the position of the United Nations in 1955 is, therefore, one of examining to what extent these Big Power differences and misunderstandings have crippled its operations, and whether alternative arrangements might have been or may yet prove feasible.

Very soon after 1945, such wartime unity of the Big Five as existed began to disintegrate. The first serious conflict was over the fate of the former German