

The view is sometimes expressed that the expansion of the membership of the General Assembly has created a new situation and that peacekeeping operations might now be authorized which would ignore or defy the interests of important member states or even important groups of members. I think this is unlikely to happen because the Assembly is a political body and in politics it is not customary to take actions which are self-defeating. A veto in the Council is one thing. Opposition to U.N. action by a number of powerful states is another. I think it very improbable that the Assembly would recommend a peacekeeping operation without making some provision for its financing and without knowing whether sufficient personnel and logistic support would be available.

On the other hand, I also think it might not be a bad idea if we were to take another look at the voting procedures of the Assembly. It is now possible to adopt important recommendations by a substantial majority which are quite unrelated to the facts of power in the world. Such recommendations remain "on the books" but they have little or no effect. This is not a procedure calculated to expand the influence of the Assembly or to enhance the prestige of the organization. The Foreign Minister of Ireland proposed two years ago that the Assembly change its rules of procedure in order to increase the number of affirmative votes required for Assembly recommendations on peace and security questions. I believe this proposal deserves careful study.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of this question however the fact remains that the argument reflects a deep split between the Permanent Members of the Council about how to exercise control over peacekeeping and it has blocked any progress on financing and advance planning. As we all