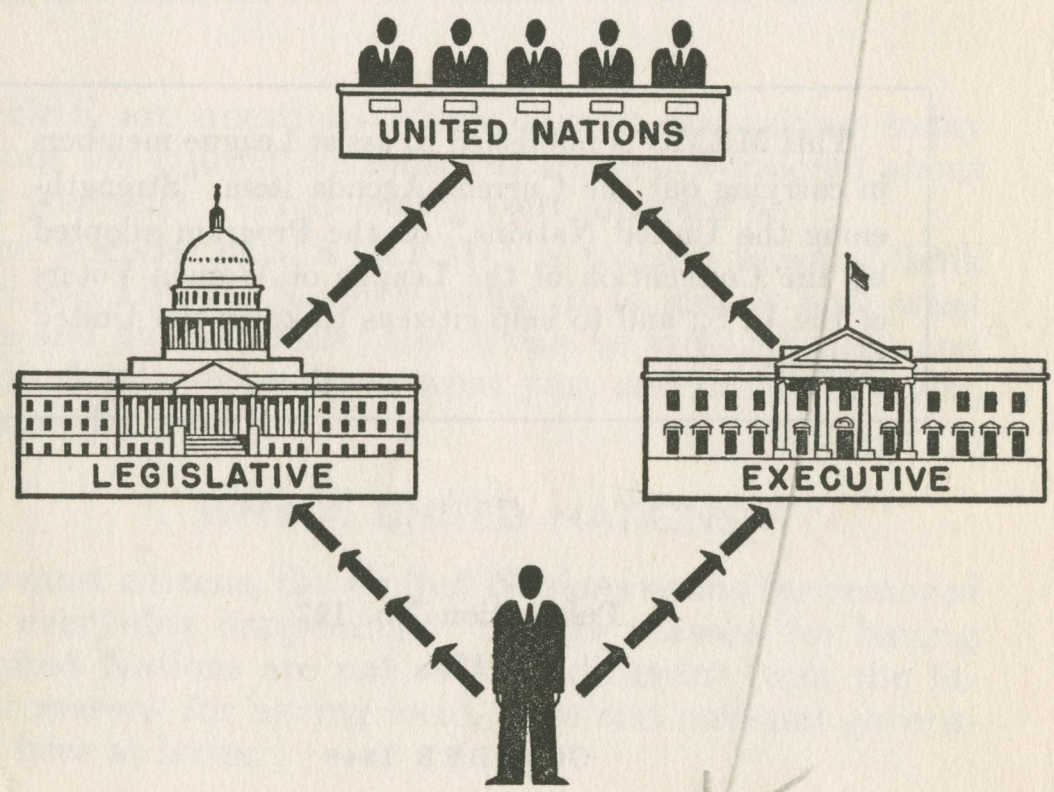


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Free

MEMO
War & Power

The Citizen and the United Nations



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

League of Women Voters

—a nonpartisan organization established in 1920 to encourage citizen participation in government—

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THE CITIZEN AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Do we need a United Nations?

Would things be better or worse if we had no U.N.?

Is the U.N. to blame for the East-West split?

Can the United Nations prevent war?

What if the United Nations should fail?

What can I do to make the U.N. work?

THESSE are questions which citizens are asking today about the United Nations. Have you wondered about them yourself? What would your answers be?

The purpose of this MEMO is to help citizens think about the United Nations—what it is and is not; what it has and has not done; how it can be strengthened; and how its future depends on what you, and others like you, say and do.

1. WHY A UNITED NATIONS?

To most citizens, the United Nations seems far removed from every-day happenings. Yet the reasons for having a United Nations are not so very different from the familiar reasons for having local, state and national government here at home.

If you were asked, "Why does your TOWN have a government?", you would reply that people in your community have certain needs which they cannot fill individually—fire prevention, public education, police protection. To meet these needs, they have formed a government.

In going on to explain why you have a STATE government, you would turn to the services which it performs. You might mention highways, explaining that here the community to be served is bigger than the town—it is the state.

When it comes to the coining of money, interstate commerce, or the mails, you look beyond state boundaries and your needs are met by the government of your NATION. Today, for example, the way in which a company in New Jersey manufactures canned food can affect the health of a citizen in California. So we have a Pure Food and Drug law, administered by our national government.

Toward a New Level of Government. The tremendous growth in technical skills, the great changes brought about by modern transportation and industry, have made distances shrink. Many of our problems today extend beyond national frontiers. We have reached the point where regulation between nations is necessary, just as it is between communities and states. A new level of government is in the process of evolving: the UNITED NATIONS is the latest step in its development.

Almost a century ago, nations began to look for some common rules so that letters might be carried safely from one country to another. The result was the Universal Postal Union, founded in 1874. In the years that followed, machinery was established in many other fields—telegraph and cable service, shipping, health, agriculture, statistics, trade and aviation.

By the time of the first World War, it became clear that cooperation between nations was needed in more than these technical fields: an international agency to keep the peace was necessary. The first major effort at setting

up general machinery to prevent war was the League of Nations. The United Nations is the second.

Problems of International Government. Unfortunately, the evolution of this new level of government is a painful and halting process. Differences throughout the world in races, forms of government, languages, laws and customs, economic systems, religious and moral codes, are far greater than those within any national state. The problem of finding common ground on which all nations can meet and agree—common rules which all will recognize—is the hardest we have ever faced. Although scientific achievements have brought nations nearer together, they have not brought the unity of purpose and sense of mutual responsibility which alone can make a real community. Today, with atomic bombs and new weapons of mass destruction, keeping the peace is more urgent than ever before.

Difficult as these problems are, they are worth our best efforts. The cost of ignoring them is tragically high. If the United Nations should fail, we would have to pick up such pieces as are left and start again on the same task. The job which the United Nations is performing has to be done.

II. THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The first aim of the United Nations is to keep the peace. To carry out this fundamental purpose, the United Nations is organized along two parallel lines: *preventing war*, through a system of security; and *promoting peace*, by working toward solutions of basic economic and social problems. These two approaches are like the engines of a twin-motored plane: both are needed; the plane is apt to crash if either fails to work.

United Nations Machinery. A glance at the chart on pp. 14 and 15 will show how the United Nations is set up to carry out its purpose by this two-fold approach.

The GENERAL ASSEMBLY has overall responsibilities in both fields. So has the SECRETARIAT which services all parts of the United Nations.

The main organs for *preventing war* are the SECURITY COUNCIL, which has the primary responsibility for keeping the peace; and the INTERNATIONAL COURT, which may consider legal disputes between nations.

The main organs for *promoting peace* are the ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, which coordinates the many activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies * in these fields; and the TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL, which oversees the international trusteeship system.

Authority of the U. N. The United Nations is an organization of nations—it is not a superstate. It provides a forum where members meet regularly to pool information, discuss common problems, and work out solutions. Whether these solutions are put into effect depends upon the member nations. International conventions, for example, once passed, must be ratified by each signatory nation and carried out by them.

Suppose the General Assembly passes a resolution calling for certain steps to relieve the world food shortage. Unless member nations carry it out, the recommendation cannot be effective. Yet no nation can be forced to comply.

Under the Charter, the United Nations may use force for just one purpose: to stop a conflict or a threat to the peace. Only here have members delegated enforcement powers to the United Nations; and in the case of the Big Five, that power is modified by their right to “veto.”

Sovereignty Is Limited. Although the United Nations is an organization of “sovereign” states, their freedom of action (sovereignty) is limited in many ways—probably more than most of us realize.

Whenever the United States signs a treaty, we limit our sovereignty. We give up the right to do exactly as

* International Labor Organization; Food and Agriculture Organization; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; International Civil Aviation Organization; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; International Monetary Fund; Universal Postal Union; International Telecommunications Union; World Health Organization; International Refugee Organization; International Trade Organization (in preparatory commission stage).

we please, and agree to abide by certain rules—provided other nations do the same. This is characteristic of law at any level of government.

International Law. If you add together all the agreements and treaties, the conventions and Charters of international organizations, as well as customs which are generally recognized by civilized nations, you have the sum of what is known as international law—the rules which govern the relations between nations today.

While nations have accepted international law extensively in technical fields like transportation and communication, they have been far slower to accept it in settling disputes between nations, and in enforcing international decisions.

International law by definition deals with relations between states, not individuals. Yet individuals are bound by it. Treaties become the law of the land. A U. S. citizen may not violate international laws of commerce, for example, to which the United States subscribes. The principle established during the Nurnberg trials—that individuals may be held responsible for war crimes—is an important step in making individuals accountable for obeying international law.

III. KEEPING THE PEACE

How can the United Nations keep the peace? This was the central problem faced at San Francisco by the nations writing the U. N. Charter. Remembering past experiences, they knew that pacts to outlaw war and solemn statements of principles do not stop aggression. Only by providing a force strong enough to be respected could the United Nations hope to keep the peace.

Security Council Functions. The Charter outlines a definite procedure for the Security Council to follow when peace is threatened. First come the steps for “*peaceful settlement*”. The nations involved are asked to try to iron out their differences themselves, or with the help of an impartial third party (arbitration or mediation). Dur-

ing this stage, the Security Council may recommend means of settlement, or may suggest that the case be put before the International Court of Justice.

If these steps fail, the Security Council moves on to enforcement measures. The Council must first decide that there is a "threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression." It may then require members to take such economic measures as trade embargoes or blockades. Finally, the Council may call for the use of force. If the Council calls for this final step, force may be used only to stop the conflict. The United Nations may *not* use force to impose a settlement, the terms of which must still be worked out by the nations concerned.

United Nations Forces United Nations forces, to be used as the final step, are a key link in the whole chain of Security Council action: for in the early stages, the Council's decisions carry authority mainly because force can ultimately be used, if the states do not comply.

The Charter says that all members of the United Nations shall make armed forces available to the Security Council, "on its call and in accordance with special agreements", which must be ratified by the nations concerned. The Military Staff Committee of the Security Council, made up of the five major powers, has the task of drawing up plans for these forces. So far, the Committee has been unable to agree on their composition, and on how much each nation should contribute. Russia holds one view, the Western powers another.

The Charter provides that during the interim period, before the Security Council has forces at its disposal, the five major powers may act on behalf of the United Nations. Unfortunately, the same distrust which has kept them from agreeing on U.N. forces is likely to keep them from agreeing on joint action in a particular case.

Controlling Armaments and Atomic Energy In two other closely related fields—the regulation of armaments, and the control of atomic energy and other weapons of mass destruction—the Security Council

has reached virtual deadlock. It has been unable to agree on terms for reducing armaments. It has not been able to reconcile wide differences of viewpoint on the kind of agency which should control atomic energy; what its powers, particularly of inspection, should be; how violations should be punished; and the stages through which existing atomic energy resources should be brought under control. Here again the distrust between the Soviet Union and the Western powers is the chief reason for lack of progress.

The "Veto." The "veto" refers to the voting formula in the 11-member Security Council: decisions are made by a majority of 7, which must include the permanent members of the Council (the Big Five). There are two exceptions to this formula: questions of procedure are decided by a vote of any 7 members; and in questions involving the pacific settlement of disputes (but not enforcement action), no party to the dispute may vote, even one of the Big Five.

In other U. N. organs, votes are taken by a simple majority, or by two-thirds. The voting procedure in the United Nations represents an advance over the League of Nations, and many other international bodies, where every state had a "veto" since decisions had to be unanimous.

The "veto" was originally written into the Charter mainly because the major powers were unwilling to sign over a "blank check" to the United Nations. Knowing that they would be called upon to carry the main burden of any enforcement action, they wanted to be sure that their own forces would be used only with their consent. The "veto" gives them that protection.

From the earliest negotiations for the United Nations, the executive branch of our government was wary of committing the United States to any agreement which the Senate might not approve. The "veto" was considered a necessary safeguard to make the United Nations acceptable to the American people and their Congress. It was equally important to Russia.

The "veto" means in practical terms that the Security Council cannot take action against any one of the Big Five. This recognizes a fundamental premise on which the United Nations is based—that peace depends upon the cooperation of the five nations deemed to hold the balance of power in the world—U. S., U. S. S. R., Britain, France, and China.

Security Council Record. The record of the Security Council in the cases which it has handled gives ground for both discouragement and encouragement. Here too, the East-West split has been an important factor. A Russian veto stopped Council action in the Greek case, and investigation of the Czechoslovakian coup. Yet in the Indonesia and Kashmir disputes, the Council has been able to bring about negotiations between the parties and has kept the conflicts from spreading. Although both cases are far from settled, on-the-spot United Nations Commissions have exercised a moderating influence.

Earlier, in the case of Russian troops in Iran, and British and French troops in Syria and Lebanon, the open discussion and publicity in the Security Council were probably helpful in bringing about withdrawal of the troops.

When, after several months' hesitation, the Council finally took decisive action on the Palestine case, it demanded and got a truce between Jews and Arabs. For the first time in United Nations history, the Council declared that a threat to the peace existed. If warfare should be resumed in Palestine, the Council would be obliged to move on to enforcement measures. Whether the Council, and particularly the five permanent members, could agree on such measures remains to be seen.

Growing Role of General Assembly. Although the Security Council is the primary United Nations organ for keeping the peace, the General Assembly has broad powers. As the "town meeting of the world," expressing world public opinion, it has been growing in stature. Since mid-1947 there has been a trend to refer security cases here

when action has been, or might be, blocked by a "veto" in the Security Council.

The Assembly may consider any question, provided it is not at the moment on the agenda of the Security Council. And while the Assembly has the power only to recommend, not to enforce, its recommendations can be extremely effective if they are carried out by the member governments.

In both the Greek and Korean cases, the Assembly made recommendations and set up observer bodies. In both cases, certain nations complied with the Assembly recommendations, thus giving them some force. Action has been taken which would not have been possible under the Security Council.

The same trend of giving more responsibility to the Assembly was responsible for setting up the Assembly's Interim Committee, or Little Assembly, to function when the Assembly is not in session. The Soviet Union has vigorously protested these developments, which she considers attempts to bypass the Security Council. She has refused to participate, both in the Little Assembly and in the Greek and Korean commissions.

Regional Arrangements and Article 51. Because of the deadlocks within the Security Council, increasing attention is being given to the possibilities for action under Article 51. This Article says that nothing in the U. N. Charter prevents member nations from taking steps—individually or together—for self-defense. If a nation is the victim of an armed attack, and the Security Council fails to act, that nation may defend itself and others may help it to do so. A group of nations might sign an agreement, supplementary to the Charter, promising to come to one another's assistance under these circumstances.

Two such agreements are already in effect: the Brussels Pact, signed by Britain, France, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg; and the Rio de Janeiro Treaty binding the United States and other American republics. These are examples of the regional arrangements permitted under the Charter that are assuming growing importance.

Action under Article 51, however, need not be regional, but may include all nations which wish to participate.

Security under the United Nations. The basic security provisions of the United Nations Charter have not yet been fulfilled. Primarily because of distrust between East and West, the United Nations has no forces, nor has it been able to control armaments, atomic energy, or other weapons of mass destruction. These failures have weakened United Nations prestige. They have made member nations continue to rely on the traditional methods of security—strong national armaments, and defensive alliances—rather than upon the United Nations, to keep the peace.

IV. ADVANCING HUMAN WELFARE

Suppose for a minute that there were no East-West split. Suppose that the Western nations were getting along reasonably well with the Eastern ones—as well as they now get along among themselves. There would be other disputes, but with the great powers cooperating United Nations machinery would be able to handle them better. Would the main troubles of the United Nations be over?

Quite the contrary, one of the United Nations' most difficult problems, which tends to be overlooked today, would come into perspective. This is the problem of raising world standards of living—referred to in the Charter as "the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples."

Raising World Standards. Some Americans might ask whether we are really concerned with this aim of the United Nations. They can see that keeping the peace is important, but wonder why we should try to make everybody in the world more prosperous. Yet progress along these lines is in the long run just as important to peace as progress in the security field.

All nations are now our neighbors. Our prosperity and our security are intimately linked with theirs. We have

entered two World Wars because our security was threatened by events thousands of miles away. We are supporting our government in a tremendous peacetime aid project, the European Recovery Program, because empty stomachs and idle factories abroad can endanger our welfare here at home.

Before the war, in "normal" times, about two-thirds of the people of the world never had enough to eat. Even today, about half of them can neither read nor write. The job to be done is tremendous.

Americans find this hard to realize. The majority of United Nations members, however, are very conscious of these facts—particularly the "underdeveloped" nations like China and the Latin American republics whose economies are still quite primitive.

Scope of U. N. Activities. The work of the United Nations in advancing human welfare is of two sorts: direct service functions, where the United Nations itself carries out programs; and cooperative projects, which must be translated into action by the member nations.

Direct Service Functions You may remember the headlines when 69 persons were rescued from a downed seaplane in the North Atlantic in 1947 by a boat in the weather reporting system of U.N.'s International Civil Aviation Organization. And you probably thought that the United Nations was "really doing something" when prompt action by the World Health Organization checked a dangerous cholera epidemic in Egypt. These were two of the more spectacular examples of direct U. N. services. Here are some others:

The *International Children's Emergency Fund*, set up by the General Assembly, is feeding 4 million children in 35,000 feeding centers in 12 European countries.

The *Food and Agriculture Organization* has sent missions to Greece, Poland and Siam, showing people in those countries how to make their land more productive and their food more nourishing.

The *International Refugee Organization* is providing food and shelter for more than half a million displaced per-

U.N.: MACHINERY FOR PEACE



UNITED NATIONS WORLD Chart by James Cutler

sons, while helping them to get back home, or resettle in new countries.

The *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development* has granted more than 500 million dollars in loans to such countries as France and the Netherlands, for projects which will help hasten their recovery.

Cooperative Projects The bulk of the United Nations activity takes the form of cooperative projects which are actually carried out by the member nations.

1. **GATHERING INFORMATION** is the first step in working out such projects. Simply by pooling facts, nations can go a long way toward solving some of their problems. When epidemics and contagious diseases are reported to a central office in the World Health Organization, for example, each nation can be on the lookout for those which might spread across its own borders.

Monumental economic surveys produced by the United Nations in the past year on the world situation have showed significant facts and trends on production, employment, trade, inflation and deflation. U. N. statistical and census services also provide essential data. Only on the basis of such facts can governments take intelligent action toward solving their problems.

2. **RECOMMENDING SOLUTIONS** is the next step. Negotiation is a long-drawn-out process, often tedious, which goes on day after day in the United Nations: more than 6,000 working sessions, general and technical, on issues large and small of world-wide and regional interest are being held annually. Their purpose is to reach agreements, satisfactory to the nations concerned, which will then be put into effect. The United Nations and the specialized agencies are often criticized because they have so little authority to act independently. Yet in most cases, it is action by member nations that is needed to do the job. Here are some examples of effective cooperation:

The *International Emergency Food Council*, now a part of the Food and Agriculture Organization, has had a notable record of allocating foods in short supply to those nations which need them most. Although the allocations are only recommendations, they have been complied

with almost 100% by both consuming and producing nations. The work of the I.E.F.C. has hastened recovery by making the best use of available supplies. In 1947, the I.E.F.C. allocated more than 80% of the food shipped in world trade.

The *Economic Commission for Europe*, one of the regional commissions under the Economic and Social Council, has to its credit several cooperative schemes which are being carried out by European nations to hasten recovery. The Commission, for example, worked out a trucking agreement between nine European nations. Each nation of its own accord did away with some of the red tape involved in carrying truck loads of goods across its borders.

The *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade*, negotiated by 23 nations under the U.N., is the most comprehensive trade pact in history. It includes 123 separate agreements between the participating countries, and sets tariff schedules on more than 45,000 items.

The work of the *Postal and Telegraphic Unions*, and narcotics control, are further examples.

3. **SETTING STANDARDS** is another kind of cooperative project. The International Labor Organization, for example, has prepared model standards of working conditions, hours and wages. Although no nation is bound to put these standards into effect, progress toward them is much faster than if no goals were set. The same is true of the Declaration of Human Rights, which has recently been drafted.

Helping Dependent Peoples. Still another task of the United Nations in the field of human welfare concerns the 400 million dependent, or non-self-governing, peoples. Here the problem is political, as well as economic and social; for the aim of the United Nations is not only to promote the welfare of these people, but also to prepare them for self-government.

Perhaps you have noticed items in the papers about missions from the Trusteeship Council to Western Samoa, Tanganyika and Ruanda-Urundi. These areas are a part of the International Trusteeship System of the United Nations. Trusteeship agreements, approved by the United Nations, must be signed by the administering powers,

promising to help the people raise their standards of living and prepare themselves for self-government. United Nations missions are an accepted method for determining the extent to which they are doing so.

Not all dependent areas come within the U. N.'s International Trusteeship System. The Charter, however, contains a "Declaration on Non-Self-Governing Territories" which sets standards for all U. N. members in the territories they administer, whether or not they fall within the System. These standards cover "the economic, social and educational advancement of the people and their just treatment."

Two-fold Approach. A large part, then, of the United Nations' work toward keeping the peace is in the long-range fields of human welfare. The U. S. delegate to the first session of the Economic and Social Council summed it up this way:

"The battle of peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the world of an enduring peace."

V. STRENGTHENING THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations needs to be strengthened: most of its critics and supporters agree on this basic fact. They disagree, however, on how it can and should be done.

Amending the Charter. Those who propose the most drastic measures believe that the Charter must be amended before the United Nations can effectively keep the peace. The United World Federalists, for instance, want to give the United Nations true governmental powers—policing, taxation, and enforcing law on individuals, not simply on states. They want a world bill of rights which would guarantee equal and adequate protection to all persons within the United Nations. They cite the lessons of history to show that sovereign states will always quarrel and

settle their quarrels by war—that only through union, under a true world government, can war be abolished.

Others want a much more limited revision of the Charter at this time. They believe that a true world government enforcing law directly on individuals is still many years away. But they maintain that changes in the Charter can be made now to guarantee keeping the peace. The Citizens Committee for U. N. Reform would reorganize the Security Council and abolish the veto; reduce armaments according to quotas; increase the powers of the World Court, so that it can define aggression; and set up a World Police Force to stop aggression if it should occur. They would delegate no other governmental functions to the U. N.: each nation would give up sovereignty only with respect to security.

What Is the Problem? Are the difficulties of the United Nations a result of its structure? Those who want to amend the Charter now believe that they are—that by revising the structure, the central problem of war can be solved. Their reasoning runs as follows: We now have a system of international anarchy where peace is impossible: the only relationship possible between sovereign states is an armed truce or actual war. Wars between groups of men forming social units have always taken place when these units—whether tribes, feudal systems, dynasties, churches, cities or nations—exercise unrestricted sovereign power and come into contact with one another. Only by delegating sovereignty to a larger government—a world government—can wars be stopped.

The counter argument goes like this. Keeping the peace is not primarily a question of machinery: it is a question of finding solutions to the problems that bring wars. Simply unifying nations into a superstate will not eliminate wars if the fundamental problems are not solved. Conflicts would go on under the name of civil war, and could be just as disastrous as international war. The central issue—finding a way in which different nations can live together in peace—cannot be solved prematurely by

a world government. The same problems will still remain to be solved just as they now need to be solved under the United Nations. A true world government can come only when there is a far greater basis of community between nations than we have today.

Is Amendment Possible? Can the Charter be amended under existing circumstances? Amendments are subject to the "veto"; they require a two-thirds vote of the members, including approval of the five major powers. Regardless of whether the United States would agree to Charter changes, strong Russian opposition to Charter changes make almost certain a Soviet veto of any proposals. Under these circumstances, the question would be whether to go ahead without Russia, since under the Charter she is able to block amendments. Those who favor amending the Charter now would thereby create another new international organization, leaving behind in the United Nations the Soviet Union and any others who would be unwilling to amend the Charter.

This course would create many problems: it would, first, cause other nations to make the choice between the United Nations and the new organization; and we have little reason to think that all other U. N. members would come with us. It would also probably heighten the East-West split. As long as Russia and the Western powers remain members of the United Nations, they have a common meeting place in which their differences may be ironed out. If we should make the break final, could we ever work out a means of living peacefully with Russia?

Working under the Present Charter. Those who consider amendment of the Charter impossible, or unwise, at this time put their hope for strengthening the United Nations in developments within the present Charter.

Implementing Security Provisions Some believe that the most constructive step we can take is to continue exploring every possible way of regulating armaments, controlling atomic energy, and providing forces to the United Nations. They maintain that our

government should take the lead in continuing to negotiate and to search for agreement with the Soviet Union in order to fulfill the security provisions of the Charter. They favor, as possible opening wedges to a solution, such plans as the Secretary General's suggestion for a small U. N. Guard Force, recruited by the Secretariat and put at the disposal of the Security Council.

Regional Arrangements and Article 51 Others, however, do not put much hope in this approach, pointing out that after more than two years of negotiations on security and disarmament, there is less confidence today between Russia and the West than when the Charter was written. They see little hope that the main security provisions of the Charter can be fulfilled unless relations between East and West greatly improve. They would turn to the use of regional arrangements and Article 51 as a necessary alternative at this time.

A significant step in this direction was the passing of the Vandenberg resolution (S. Res. 239) in June 1948. The resolution approves the "progressive development of regional and collective arrangements for individual and collective self-defense in accordance with the purposes, principles, and provisions of the Charter." It indicates that the United States might associate itself with such arrangements. It urges our government to make clear that the U. S. will exercise its rights under Article 51 if the Security Council fails to act. Shortly after the passage of this resolution, the United States began conversations with the Brussels Pact nations regarding military aid.

There are admitted dangers in the development of strong regional organizations and groupings of nations under Article 51: for they might increase the division of the world into rival blocs and make impossible the establishment of a universal system under the United Nations. Yet the tendency is to turn to such measures until the East-West split, which now divides the United Nations, can be bridged.

Federal Union Another proposal is the Federal Union plan, for forming now a union of the few democracies which are sufficiently experienced in representative government to be ready for such a step. Other nations would be admitted as rapidly as practicable. This new Union would be modeled on the example of other successful federal unions, such as the United States. It would not now replace the United Nations. Nations in the Union would retain their U. N. membership.

There is nothing in the U. N. Charter to prohibit the formation of such a Union. If military action by the Union should be necessary to defend one of its members, it could be authorized under Article 51. Federal Unionists believe, however, that from the very beginning, the Union would be so strong that no outside nation would dare attack it: so its formation would be a major step in preventing war. They also believe that this is the most practical way to work toward a true world government.

Improving Procedures Many suggestions are being considered for strengthening the United Nations by improving its procedures. The Little Assembly has been studying ways to set up permanent mediation machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes. A Commission of the General Assembly is now at work bringing together under a code the many rules that make up international law today. There are also proposals for strengthening the United Nations through increased use of the International Court of Justice.

Modifying the "Veto" Our government has suggested improving U. N. machinery by voluntary modification of the "veto". Under this plan, the permanent members of the Security Council would agree not to use the "veto" in certain cases—as in the admission of new members (where it has been used most frequently to date), and in the peaceful settlement of disputes. This could be done without amending the Charter. The United States is on record as being willing to give up the veto in all but enforcement cases if the other four major powers

agree. These proposals are being explored by the Assembly, but there is no indication that Russia would consent.

Bridging East-West Gulf. There are those who believe that the key to making the United Nations work is bridging the gulf between East and West. They point out that most of the United Nations' problems stem from this fundamental cause—the failure to write the peace treaties; the failure to provide armed forces, to regulate armaments and atomic energy; and the use of the "veto." They believe that if war is to be avoided, we must continue to search for some way of getting along with Russia. If such can be found, the United Nations should be able to evolve gradually into a more effective world authority.

Supporting the United Nations. Finally, many people—among them Secretary General Lie—put greatest emphasis upon firm support of the member nations. It is on them, in the last analysis, that the success of the United Nations depends. By using the U. N. whenever appropriate to do so, by not by-passing or boycotting its machinery, by carrying out the obligations of the Charter, and by following the recommendations of the U. N. organs and specialized agencies, member governments can gradually but surely increase the authority and strength of the United Nations.

VI. THE ROLE OF THE CITIZEN

How often do you hear people say, "Oh, well, there's nothing *I* can do to help the United Nations"?

Anyone who makes such a statement overlooks two simple but important facts:

1. U. S. citizens determine the policy of their government.
2. The future of the United Nations depends in large measure upon the United States.

Participation Through Government. Because the United Nations is an organization of states, the citizen participates in the U. N. primarily through his government. By

helping to shape United States policies, he helps to shape the United Nations. There are two channels through which he exercises his influence: the executive and legislative branches of the government.

Executive Branch The President of the United States, under our Constitution, is charged with the conduct of U. S. foreign policy. He carries out this responsibility with the assistance of the State Department and other government agencies. He appoints our representatives to the United Nations and the specialized agencies. He formulates the policies which guide our delegates in U. N. meetings. He also formulates domestic policies which have an important bearing on the United Nations.

Legislative Branch The U. S. Senate must agree to all treaties before they are ratified by the United States. It passes on the President's appointments to the United Nations and other international agencies. The House of Representatives shares the power of the purse-strings, and must originate all appropriations bills. Thus the House as well as the Senate must agree to all U. S. contributions to the United Nations and specialized agencies, as well as such matters as the loan for the U. N. site.

In recent years the President has put the question of joining various international organizations to both Houses of Congress in the form of a joint resolution, rather than placing it before the Senate alone in the form of a treaty. This means that a majority vote of each House is needed, rather than two-thirds of the Senate alone.

Congress also passes legislation on domestic matters, such as tariff, which is necessary to carry out U. S. responsibilities under the United Nations.

Non-Governmental Organizations. The U. S. citizen may also participate in the United Nations through private, non-governmental organizations. Under the Charter, such organizations may be given consultative status with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council. They have certain privileges like attending meetings, submitting items for the agenda, and circulating documents

to member governments. Examples of such organizations are the International Alliance of Women (of which the League of Women Voters is the U. S. affiliate), the American Federation of Labor, and Rotary International.

The U. S. and the U. N. The United States has in many fields a notable record for supporting the United Nations. We played a leading role in the preparatory work for creating the U. N., as well as in setting up other specialized agencies such as the International Bank and Fund, and the International Trade Organization. We bear the heaviest share of financing international organizations. We have made an historic offer to place our atomic energy developments under United Nations control. Our government has showed concern for strengthening the United Nations through such plans as modification of the "veto" and increased use of the Assembly.

There have been important occasions, however, when the United States has not acted to strengthen the United Nations. Our government first proposed the Greek-Turkish aid program, and the Marshall Plan, without mentioning their relationship to the United Nations. Our Congress delayed U. S. participation in the World Health Organization and authorization for the \$65 million loan to build the U. N. site. It failed for more than a year to pass legislation to admit displaced persons, and then passed a poor and inadequate bill. The House has failed to act on the important measure to extend privileges and immunities to United Nations personnel living in the United States.

The wavering course of our government on Palestine did serious damage not only to our own prestige, but also to that of the United Nations. In passing the U. S. appropriation for the International Refugee Organization, Congress put riders on the use of the funds which makes I. R. O. operation extremely difficult. At times when the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Food and Agriculture Organization called upon all member nations to utilize their grain supplies carefully in order to meet the immediate world food shortage, our government

did not stop wasteful feeding of grain to livestock, or its use in distilling.

Influence of the Citizen. In all of these cases, the citizen had an important role to play. There are many instances like them ahead. It is the citizen's job actively to support actions of his government which strengthen the United Nations, as well as to protest those that weaken it. What specifically can he do?

The citizen can

1. Elect a President, 2 Senators, and a Congressman committed to strong United States support of the United Nations.
2. Make known to the President, the Secretary of State, and the heads of other Departments his approval or disapproval of United States policies which affect the United Nations.
3. Urge the executive and legislative branches of the government to act, in both domestic and foreign policies, in the spirit of the U. N. Charter, and in fulfillment of our obligations as a member of the United Nations.
4. Urge his Congressman and Senators to support particular bills, including appropriations, which are necessary to the successful operation of the United Nations.
5. Work in his community to spread understanding of the United Nations, its problems and its needs.

United States citizens have more to say about what happens to the United Nations than do citizens of any other country. We can use this power to help the United Nations survive and grow—or we can misuse it by default. The choice is up to us.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. From your experience with local, state and national government, what are the most important governmental functions for the United Nations to perform today?
2. To what extent are differences between peoples and nations today a barrier to the fullest operation of the United Nations?
3. To what degree have we limited our national freedom of action (sovereignty) and in what fields?
4. What are the reasons for the failure to provide U. N. armed forces, to regulate armaments, and to control atomic energy? To what extent have these failures hampered the effectiveness of the Security Council?
5. In what way does the "veto" reflect a fundamental difficulty of the United Nations?
6. Why does the United Nations, whose primary job is to keep the peace, give so much emphasis to promoting human welfare?
7. Which of the United Nations' achievements in the economic and social field are of direct interest to your community?
8. Would amendments to the Charter help to strengthen the United Nations at this time? Do you think they are possible?
9. In what ways can regional arrangements and supplementary pacts under article 51 strengthen the United Nations? In what ways might they weaken it?
10. What is the attitude of your community toward the United Nations?

SUGGESTED READING

- League of Women Voters. *President's Letter on World Government*. March 1948. 5¢.
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