INTRODUCTION:

The following study is an analysis and evaluation of the role of the Secretary General in international conflict resolution. The study confines itself to his political role in questions of maintenance of peace and security. The scope of his role and limits of his influence are sought to be determined by viewing the office in the wider perspective of the process of conflict resolution.

Studies of the office have been either legal-constitutional, idiosyncratic (personality) or ethical-normative. The legal-constitutional studies stress the constitutional, legal powers of the office and trace the expansion of these powers. They assume a unilinear progress in such expansion. Such an assumption is not borne out by facts. The Secretary General's influence and role depends on so many other variables. Studies which view his activities in terms of functions like observation, mediation etc. also have the same shortcoming in that they seem to discuss the effectiveness of the office in relation to certain functions, whereas the functions are only means to be employed, depending upon their suitability, for conflict resolution.

The idiosyncratic studies emphasize the personality factor—political, charismatic or bureaucratic. According to these the man makes the office. They place great value on the skill, fact, and other qualities of the incumbent. While the personality is an important base of influence useful in conflict resolution it is not the only one; nor is it sufficient to explain his influence in all cases. The ethical-normative studies view the office in terms of predetermined normative concepts of the office.

It is thought that an analytical study of the role of the Secretary General which would take into consideration not merely the personality factor and the legal framework but other factors in international conflict which determine his influence, would be more useful. This study views the Secretary General as a 'third party' in international conflicts. It discusses the role of third parties in international conflicts (with the help of some insights derived from studies of industrial conflicts) and then analyses some of these conflicts so as to bring out his role and influence.

Oran A. Young in his work has also discussed the role of such third parties and the Secretary General as one such third party. But his work is more theoretical and primarily concentrates on Great Power conflicts. The scope of the present study is extended to small power conflicts and cases of preventive diplomacy. It can, therefore, be considered an original contribution to the literature on the subject.

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