Chapter Six

CONCLUSIONS
India's view of the role played by the United Nations in the establishment and maintenance of peace through collective security is based upon firm faith in the indispensability of the Organization. (1) This faith has survived the worst possible crises encountered by the United Nations. (2) To a certain extent it has prevented India from a doctrinaire denunciation of the United Nations, although it has not made her incapable of objective appraisal. Few critics of the United Nations could surpass the acidity of Nehru's observations on the achievement of the United Nations in the field of peace and security. (3) India did not

(1) India has always regarded the United Nations as the greatest single factor in the world endeavouring towards the establishment of universal peace and security. Sethavat, "India and the United Nations," India Quarterly, 6 (1950) 107-8.

(2) In December 1956 - when the twin tragedies in Egypt and Hungary had led pessimists to predict that the United Nations was done for - Nehru declared that even if the United Nations did not do anything wonderful, the mere fact of its existence was of great significance to the world. Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, 173-9.

(3) Commenting on a statement by the British Prime Minister, "It is something that we have kept the peace, even this fevered peace," Nehru said, "Without doubt it is something better than war. Nevertheless, it is hardly peace except that killing is not being undertaken on a large scale." Nehru, Lok Sabha Debates, 11 (1958) col. 1382.
spare the United Nations for its meagre achievements in the field of disarmament, its unsatisfactory treatment of the colonial and racial issues and its initial indifference to the resurgence of Asia and Africa. Nor did she make any reservations about her disapproval whenever the principles of the Charter were allowed to be lost in the fog of the cold war.

On the whole, however, in criticizing the United Nations, India's tone has been generally modulated by a keen awareness of the limits of the possible in international politics. Firstly, domestic experience has made India appreciate that every age, like each individual, learns to live in the company of some of its unsolved problems. In some cases, only a partial settlement is attainable, while in many others the best that can be done is to wait for the healing effects of time. Many conflicts which in the past seemed irreconcilable have lost their significance to the present age. (4) By providing even a means of delay the United Nations has often prevented a situation from deteriorating until the time came when some settlement could be made. Secondly, India realizes that the United Nations is not a supra-national organization and its capacity to take collective action independent of the policies of its individual members is very limited. The limitations of the United Nations are derived from the world situation itself. (5)


As the late Secretary-General pointed out, it would be hardly reasonable to criticize the United Nations for having not been able to cope with the cold war or the Hungarian question, confining itself to an expression of principles and not taking any action. In the first case, it is obvious that the Organization cannot go farther than the intentions of the parties concerned. In the latter case, it is worth remembering that, with the exception of one or two of the small countries, no member urged measures other than those which were actually taken. (6) Thirdly, India does not share the misapprehensions about the United Nations based upon the fact that quite a lot of what should have been done inside the United Nations is being done outside. Discussions among representatives of nuclear powers, negotiations conducted among states on regional basis, as for example, within the OAS, or the Asian-African states, exchange of visits of leading statesmen for thrashing out current political issues are apparently developments outside the United Nations, but they do not amount to votes of no confidence against the Organization. The growth of intense diplomatic activity outside the United Nations has a dual significance. (7) First, it indicates that various international problems have been brought to a point where they call for renewed and urgent efforts to find a solution. Second, it emphasizes that although the Charter entrusts the United Nations with primary responsibility in the field of


(7) Introduction to the Secretary-General's 14th Annual Report to the General Assembly. 1A(A/4132) Add.1.) 1 ff.
peace and security, the United Nations is not intended to be a substitute for all the normal procedures of international contact. Viewed in this light, the developments that have taken place in what is called "outside the U.N.," in so far as they are developments which contribute towards the progress of world peace and co-operation, are inside the United Nations because the United Nations is not bound by the limits of this Organization but by the purposes and principles of the Charter. (8) Therefore, India has been consistently supporting both official and non-official co-operation outside the United Nations not only among the few who are in a position to deliver the goods but also among the small powers whose voices can be hard when they speak collectively. In fact, India openly criticized the United Nations whenever it tried to snatch for itself a problem that was being dealt with satisfactorily outside its purview, e.g., Indo-China. Untimely and improper use of an instrument is likely to blunt its efficiency and make it unfit for further use.

India's inclination to take a lenient view of the limitations of the United Nations may be attributed partly to the fact that right from the first she had nursed very modest hopes. She did not expect the United Nations to transform the war-torn world into a haven of idyllic peace. (9) It was supposed to act as a kind of bridge between the past and present conflict and a happy


future. After a decade and a half of its working, it reaffirmed
the original contention of India that the United Nations should
neither be romantically regarded as a panacea, as the centre for
resolving every dispute, or as having the answer to every problem,
nor should it be regarded as an institution that has failed to
perform its functions. (10) India would like the United Nations to
be recognized for what it is: "an admittedly imperfect but indis-
pensable instrument of nations in working for a peaceful evolution
towards a more just and secure world order." (11)

India is fully convinced that as the institutional component
of collective security system the United Nations has proved
"worthwhile." (12) Each year it has blossomed out in different ways
to meet different situations. (13) The form of collective action
resorted to in Korea was prudently discarded in dealing with the
Suez crisis. Similarly, the UNEF experiment which proved so
necessary for Egypt was considered out of question over the
Hungarian issue and would have been too extreme a measure for
either Lebanon or Jordan in 1958. The Congolese tragedy required
a performance for which no rehearsals could be relied upon and the
United Nations successfully played a role that was sui-generis —
to say the least. These instances are instructive because they
displayed security needs in the widest sense which could be met

Mtgs., 318 ff.

(11) Introduction to 12th Annual Report of the Secretary-
General. 1A(A/3594/Add.1) 3.

(12) Menon, 10th Anniversary of the Signing of the U.N.

(13) Menon, n. 10, 318.
only on the basis of freedom from sectional interests and in this respect, there could be no substitute and no alternative for the United Nations.

Besides its military and para-military role to meet the breaches of peace and acts of aggression, the United Nations has made a positive contribution towards the removal of conflicts which could endanger peace. India attaches the utmost importance to the fact that the United Nations did not stand as a passive witness to the racial and colonial struggles in the world. (14) As Dag Hammarskjold said, in more than one way, the United Nations put its weight on the scales and used whatever influence was available to it in order to make these momentous transitions as peaceful and humanitarian as possible not only in political but also in social and economic terms. (15)

India believes that even in those issues of world peace and security on which nothing better could be offered by way of solution except a discussion the value of the United Nations cannot be undermined. (16) Whereas in any diplomatic contact outside the United Nations the participants are mainly the parties directly involved in the conflict and they can easily avoid answering a question that may embarrass them the same cannot be done in the United Nations where discussions include those also


(16) Menon, n. 8, 412.
who are not involved and are yet interested.

From India's viewpoint, perhaps the greatest feature of the United Nations is the psychological impact it makes on the minds of the people. (17) It is not as though its contributions were something of a forced levy on the governments, or as if it were something exclusively concerned with government departments, blue books, files and papers. "For the first time, we have the beginnings of what might be a world public opinion behind a great world organization." (18) Gradually an international code of behaviour is taking shape and in spite of the words that are sometimes used at the United Nations and elsewhere, there is in the minds of nations and in the minds of leading statesmen a general realization that there cannot be a departure from these standards so marked as to expose them to the odium that rises either from the challenge of their conscious or from public opinion. (19) That is a very important factor which in future will probably deter or make more difficult any aberrations from the path of rectitude by any nation. (20)

Within the general approach stated above, India viewed collective security system as a means to an end, the end being the maintenance of peace and security in the world. Reliance upon the means was considered only in the context of the ends it served.

(18) Ibid.
(19) Menon, n. 12, 264.
(20) Nehru, n. 2.
The Main Characteristics of India's Attitude

The main characteristics of India's attitude as it evolved till 1962 may be stated.

India did not regard collective security system as confined to Chapter VII of the Charter. If the primary objective before the Charter was "to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war," then efforts had to be made both for preventing conflicts among nations from becoming the issues of war and peace as well as removing those causes which may give rise to these conflicts. Therefore, India viewed enforcement action through the United Nations as only one aspect of the system, the other equally important aspect being all those provisions of the Charter and the activities thereunder which sought to remove the causes of friction in the world. As such, all the efforts made by India to co-operate with others in removing the causes of war and creating a climate of peace became directly relevant to her attitude towards collective security.

Given a choice, India would have preferred that the United Nations should direct all its collective efforts to create a world where the need for taking enforcement action either did not arise or was treated as the very last resort to deal with a situation.

India regarded collective security system under the United Nations as the primary, though not necessarily the exclusive, instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. If a conflict could be resolved satisfactorily outside, there was no need to bring it to the United Nations.

There has been a conspicuous absence of legal finesse in India's attitude. On the one hand, she insisted that legal
"strait-jacketing" should not stand in way of expeditionary measures, on the other, she suggested that so long as the objectives of the system could be obtained by a liberal interpretation of the existing rules, there was no need to devise new ones. India's firm stand on the issue of Charter revision reflected her dislike of legal sophistication. To put the Charter in a new steel frame every time a fresh change occurred on the international scene would have been tantamount to putting a brake on its inherent adaptability.

India did not insist that collective action should necessarily take the form defined in the Charter. A permanent international force could not be relied upon as the best means for dealing with every situation. As a matter of fact, the success of the system depended on the degree of flexibility with which it reshaped its means to deal with the circumstances peculiar to each situation. The UN Command for Korea consisted of combatant troops whose explicit object was to drive out the aggressor. The UNEF was a peace force with the sole object of supervising the withdrawal of forces from the area concerned and guard the armistic lines. The UNOGIL was an observers team which had gone to Lebanon on a fact-finding mission. The ONUC was sui generis in the sense that it combined all the elements of its predecessors and yet was different from all of them. It was an observers team, a peace force and a combatant unit, all at the same time. Irrespective of the number of personnel involved and the nature of action taken under each experiment, India supported all these forms of UN action in so far as they were likely to serve the interests of peace in each
specific case. So much so that the proposed visit of the Secretary-
General to affected area during the Hungarian crisis was also
supported by India as an adequate measure of collective concern
in the circumstances particular to that situation.

India's attitude towards the limits of UN action was
governed by the consideration of the sovereign rights of the state
concerned. During the Korean crisis, initially India insisted that
the task of the United Nations would remain incomplete so long as
Korea remained artificially divided; but this insistence lasted only
so long as the powers concerned gave the impression that Korean
unification was a non-controversial issue. The moment it became
clear that the unification of Korea, even under the UN auspices, was
not acceptable to both the existing states, she firmly opposed it.
Over the Suez issue, India held from the very beginning that the
United Nations should limit itself to the task agreed to by the
Egyptian Government, i.e., the withdrawal of foreign forces from
Egypt. Any attempt by the United Nations to deal with the nationali-
ation of the Suez Canal or the idea of the United Nations
operating the Canal was criticized by India as unnecessary
interference in an issue which was within the sovereign jurisdiction
of Egypt. During the Hungarian crisis, India wanted the United
Nations to limit its action to the expression of concern over what
was happening and not to enter the Hungarian territory without
the permission of the Hungarian Government. In this particular
case, India's stand was influenced a great deal by the fact that
the Soviet Union was strongly opposed to any action by the United
Nations. During the Lebanese-Jordanian trouble, India wanted
the United Nations merely to make its presence felt in the area and
in spite of the desire of the existing government in Lebanon she
did not support the idea of giving teeth to the UNOGIL. Surely it
was nobody's business to keep in power governments which were not
acceptable to their people. During the Congo crisis, India
supported the widest limits of UN action partly because it was
acceptable to the state concerned and more so because neither of
the super-powers was actively opposed to it. Although it appeared
that India was asking the United Nations to remain seized of the
Congolese situation in spite of the protests by the Congolese
Government, the established fact is that according to the reports
of the UN Conciliation Commission as well as world opinion,
the protesting authorities constituted neither the legally
established nor the constitutionally accepted Government of the
Congo. At every stage when the United Nations took a new decision
regarding the Congo, it was implemented with the consent of the
Congolese Government and when the Government itself toppled down,
India insisted that the United Nations should help in the
establishment of one.

India was always insistent that collective security system
should not be employed as an instrument of the cold war. Any attempt
to use it as a tool for censure or condemnation by the rival blocs
would have an effect opposite to what was planned by the Charter.
It is here that the Indian attitude was different from the attitudes
of both the super-powers and all those powers of small and medium
rank which had got themselves allied with either of the blocs.
Whereas each one of the two super-powers was eager to be the
leader of UN collective action by isolating its rival, India considered it indispensable that both the powers should be associated. In the absence of this condition there was not only the danger of United Nations becoming less than a universal organization and losing its acceptability to non-committed nations but also there was the likelihood that the purpose for which the action was taken may never be achieved since either of the super-powers is singly capable of tarpeoing a UN operation if it chooses to do so. During the Korean crisis, India made persistent efforts to associate the Soviet Union with the UN operations and later on when People's China entered the scene of conflict, India suggested that Chinese co-operation was essential to bring an end to the Korean war. In 1952 when the armistice agreement over Korea was rejected by the Chinese Government India counselled patience and tried to understand the Chinese viewpoint. Similarly when the Peking Government accused the U.S.A. of having invaded the Chinese United territory and requested the Nations to condemn the United States India firmly opposed the move precisely on the same grounds which had led her to associate the Soviet Union and People's China with the UN operations. During the Suez crisis, India came out with open condemnation of the two great powers which had committed aggression because both the super-powers were supporting the UN action. And even then, the General Assembly resolution, which India co-sponsored, carefully omitted any formal condemnation of the U.K. and France. It seems unlikely that India would have adopted the same attitude towards the Suez issue if the U.S.A. put her weight on the side of its allies. Nowhere was India's attitude
more adamant than in her refusal to openly condemn the Soviet Union for its treatment of the Hungarian people. Although she did not approve of the atrocities committed on the Hungarian masses, she refused to support any condemnatory resolution of the United Nations partly because it would have hardened the Soviet attitude still further but more so because there was no way of stopping the Soviet Union with force except by starting a world war. During the Lebanese crisis again, a super-power was involved and though India supported the UN resolutions asking for the withdrawal of foreign (U.S.) troops from Lebanon, she did not favour any suggestions to name the U.S.A. as an aggressor and drive it out by force. In the confused picture on the Congo India came out with open criticism of Belgium because neither of the super-powers was involved directly. This may imply that India would willingly compromise with the misdeeds of the super-powers while taking strong objection to the misbehaviour of the powers of the smaller or the medium rank. That is not true because a pragmatic view of power realities in the cold war has made it clear that action against a power of small or medium rank may remain collective but action against a super-power or against a power supported by the super-power would lead to greater conflict than the one which made the United Nations take the initial steps. India's attitude in this respect would imply that if a choice were to be made between a complete solution of the problem concerned coupled with the chances of a super-power confrontation on the one hand and on the other, a partial solution of the problem coupled with another period of peace in the world, India would opt for the latter. To put it rather frankly, if justice for the people concerned and peace for the world were both at stake India
would compromise rather on the side of justice than on the side of peace, as it did during the Hungarian crisis.

There was nothing extraordinary about India's willingness to make compromises on the basis, the nature, the form or the content of collective security system, provided a collective action through the United Nations could be taken without a risk of great power confrontation. The desire to avoid a third world war was universal, but with the newly independent states it was almost an obsession.

What distinguished India from the other countries with broadly similar attitudes was a combination of historical perspective, geographical position and diplomatic strategy. Historically, India was among the first few newly independent countries which frankly recognized the corporate indispensability of the great powers for a proper working of the collective security system and made persistent efforts to see that if they could not co-operate to make the system work, they should not, at least, be offered opportunities to tear it apart. Geographically, the large size, populousness and the strategic location of India was such that what she said about major international issues could not be easily ignored. In terms of diplomacy, it may be said that the Government of India took active interest in the major issues concerning world peace and security. Both the Indian delegations to the United Nations and the Indian statesmen at home and abroad were rather vocal (and perhaps even unnecessarily verbose) in their views on international problems. On many occasions these views were accepted as practicable bases for the solution of some serious conflict. India's role in the armistice agreement over Korea, her active
participation in the UNEF, her cautious warnings over Hungary, her objective analysis of the situation in Lebanon and her significant contribution to the ONUC, showed a maturely pragmatic international outlook which was not very common for a country just emerging on the international stage. Not only that, India always tried — in co-operation with other like-minded countries — to divert the attention of the United Nations from a discussion of the theoretical problems of war and peace to an active contribution towards building the socio-economic basements of the structure of world peace and security. In doing so India's efforts were not contained within the orbit of the United Nations and were made outside also both at the formal and the informal levels.

The Changing Character of the Collective Security System

In understanding India's attitude towards the UN collective security system, due consideration has to be given to the changing character of the system itself. If collective security was a form of international endeavour towards world peace and security, the United Nations was its institutional component. The institutional survival of the system has been made possible by the flexibility with which its functional expression was adapted to the changing realities of international politics. The adoption of the system was based on the assumption that the great powers would co-operate to meet all the threats to world peace and that no such threat would be posed by the great powers themselves. But the implementation of the system showed that the great powers were willing to co-operate only on rare occasions and the substantial threats to world peace emanated from the great powers themselves. The hiatus
between the assumptions of the Charter and the realities of post-
war politics made the application of the system relevant to only
those situations where the great powers were not committed to the
opposite sides of the conflict. Since the likelihood of such
situations was very little in the context of bipolarity of power,
it was feared that the system might be considered increasingly
obsolete. However, the influence of two major factors in inter-
national politics saved the system from being completely outmoded.
These two factors are: the development of a nuclear stalemate among
the super-powers and the emergence of a large number of independent
states in Asia and Africa.

The trial of strength between the two nuclear giants reached
a stage where each one of them became strong enough to destroy all
the major defences of the other side and between them they were
capable of destroying the world many times over. Both the great
powers had to realize that they could not convert each other by
force or by threats of force, for any such attempt would lead to
catastrophe for all. Consequently, while on the one hand, the
dangers which faced the world became much greater, on the other,
there was a much keener awareness of these dangers. The crusading
spirit of military alliances lost its old zeal and their inevitable
companions, foreign troops and strategic bases all over the world,
were no longer considered as indispensable as before. Neither of
the super-powers needed more allies to make itself stronger. In
fact, an indiscreet ally might land them in catastrophe by
starting a war which it did not have the power to control. The
super-powers became as much against being dragged into a nuclear
war which they did not start as they were against starting a war which might bring the world to an end. The U.S. attitude during the Anglo-French adventure in Suez, the Soviet reactions to the Chinese excursions beyond its borders and the joint U.S.-Soviet performance during the Cuban crisis were outstanding results of nuclear stalemate.

With the fading away of the crusading spirit of the rival blocs, forces within each bloc started asserting their independence and the forces outside the two blocs received new impetus to make their own contribution. The area of non-alignment in the world not only expanded but was increasingly recognized as an independent factor in international politics. The super-power themselves relaxed their attitude towards the so-called neutral nations. In 1955, they signed a treaty with neutralized Austria. In 1960 they agreed to neutralize the Antarctica and a year later they were prepared to guarantee the neutrality of Laos. Although countries like India would desire that the new forces set in by the development of a nuclear stalemate should make it possible for the great powers to come to some sort of explicit understanding with each other as regards the rival security systems set up by them, the chances for a non-aggression pact between the NATO and Warsaw alliance are rather remote at present. Their exceptional capacity to destroy the world might act as a deterrent to the misuse of power by them to an extent where it involves direct confrontation, it does not imply that they are prepared to forego their extraordinary status, not at least in the near future.
The emergence of independent states in Asia and Africa is almost as important a factor in the post-war politics as the development of nuclear energy. Out of the 800 million independent people in the world at the end of the Second World War, no less than 600 million achieved their independence by the year 1960 and a couple of millions more were expected to achieve it shortly. Most of these newly independent countries belonged to Asia and Africa and the spectacular aspect of this development may be seen from the fact that over half of the total membership of the United Nations at present belongs to the Asian-African continents. The pattern followed by the independence movements was not the same for Asia and Africa. Even within the same continent each colony reached its goal in a different way. They did not arrive at the United Nations in a single group and among those who came together some were lucky enough to be admitted immediately while others had to knock several times and for long before they were allowed to get in. But taken together they differed from the other members of the United Nations. All of them needed rapid economic development. They were more concerned with the primary needs of their people — food, clothing, housing and the other necessities of life — and had no desire to get entangled in international conflicts. On the basic issues of peace and war, they wanted to stay out of the cold war and were not willingly prepared to enter into either of the rival security arrangements. Their aversion to Western imperialism was perfectly understandable in view of their immediate pasts and their suspicions of communism stemmed from a deep-seated dislike for totalitarian regimes. But more than an ideological evaluation,
the Asian-African states were guided by their own immediate interests in deciding to stay out of the cold war. Most of them wanted to get economic aid from both the blocs to catch up with the developed nations in the race for economic development.

The attitude of the Asian-African states towards the United Nations was one of faith as demonstrated by their maiden get-together at Bandung. Only half of the twenty-nine nations represented there had by that time been admitted as members of the United Nations and yet support for the United Nations was the foremost among the principles endorsed by them. Some of these newly-independent countries owed their independence to the United Nations, for others the United Nations provided a framework within which new friendships could be cultivated easily. The general feeling among the new countries was that the United Nations was least likely to impair their freedoms. Consequently, they approached it with confidence and relied upon it rather heavily. Asked why it was that the Asian countries regarded the United Nations as a bulwark against tyranny and exploitation, while the older members treated it somewhat like a poor-relation, the late Secretary-General's answer was: "It is natural for old and well-established countries to see in the U.N. a limitation on their sovereignty. It is just as natural that a young country, a country emerging on the world stage, should find in the U.N. an addition to its sovereignty, an added means of speaking to the world." (21) In this sense, the Asian-African states may be said

to have provided an anti-dote to the cold war. Confidence in the effectiveness of a system is a strong incentive to its effective functioning. If the wavering allegiance of the great powers had threatened to sweep the United Nations off its moorings the faith of the new states helped to restore the equilibrium. Of course, it has to be admitted that the attitude of the Asian-African states would have provided poor protection against the onslaughts of cold war if their emergence on the world stage had not coincided with the development of nuclear stalemate among the super-powers themselves.

Taken together the development of nuclear stalemate and the emergence of Asian-African states have brought about marked changes in the working of the UN collective security system.

Firstly, in spite of the cold war, issues are no longer decided before they have been thoroughly discussed and voted upon. Till 1950, when the total membership of the United Nations was sixty, there were thirty states which could be relied upon to vote with the Western bloc, five with the Soviet Union and seventeen states happened to judge issues on their merits. Now the General Assembly has more than fifty nations which are not committed to either side and their swinging votes are decisive. The small powers have also helped the rival blocs to accept compromise solutions without appearing to have lost their respective positions. The agreement among the super-powers for the peaceful uses of outer-space was partly the result of a realization by the nuclear giants of the fruitlessness of carrying their battles to the space, but it was partly the result
of the efforts made by small powers also. Even outside the United Nations these powers have been enthusiastic supporters of bringing the super-powers together. The significance of their modest efforts cannot be under-rated in view of the fact that in the world of diplomacy the quiet work of preparing the ground is almost as welcome as a direct solution.

Secondly, greater attention is being paid to providing sound socio-economic foundations to world peace and security. When the cold war was at its intensest the hardy annuals of UN agenda were frozen issues like those of capitalism vs communism, German unification or the credentials of some satellite countries; now the agenda contains frequent references to colonialism, self-determination, economic development and racial discrimination. The older members of the United Nations may not be directly interested in these problems which primarily concern the newly emerging states, but they cannot afford to ignore them. The success of the great powers in gathering support from the Asian-African countries through the United Nations depends increasingly on the stand which they take on issues which are vital for the smaller countries. This consideration has not been changed by the nuclear stalemate. The super-powers may not need allies who can provide them with military bases, but they do need friends who would save them from being outvoted on issues which may not be vital for the small powers. A natural temptation for the small powers, most of whom are under-developed also, is the offer of generous economic aid. But many of them, particularly those belonging to Asia and Africa, have stubbornly resisted economic
aid offered with political strings. As a result, the great powers, who would have definitely preferred to give bilateral aid for political reasons, are now willing to channelize a part of it through the United Nations.

Thirdly, the enforcement aspect of collective security system has also registered a change. The Korean crisis demonstrated beyond doubt that it was neither desirable nor possible for the United Nations to intervene with force in a conflict where the super-powers were involved. Since then efforts have been made to keep the newly arising conflicts outside the great power differences, a policy which has developed into "preventive diplomacy."

Under "preventive diplomacy" the United Nations tries to forestall developments which might draw the specific conflict, openly or actively, into the sphere of power bloc differences. "It has done so by intruding into the picture, sometimes with very moderate means, sometimes in strength, so as to eliminate a political economic and social or military vacuum." (22) Experience indicates that "preventive diplomacy" has been of special significance in cases where the original conflict might be said to be either the result of, or implied the risk for, the creation of power vacuum between the main blocs. Preventive action in such cases aimed at filling the vacuum so that it would not provoke action from any of the major powers, the initiative for which might have been taken for preventive purposes but which invited

later on, counter-action from the other side. (23) The way in which a vacuum could be filled in by the United Nations so as to forestall such initiatives, differs from case to case, but they have one thing in common: the United Nations enters the picture on the basis of its non-commitment to any bloc so as to provide, to the extent possible, a guarantee in relation to all parties against initiatives from others. The mere physical presence of the United Nations, irrespective of the strength of its personnel, shields the area from conflicting intrusions by the rival blocs. The personnel for the UN presence are supplied, as a rule, by the small and uncommitted powers who are more acceptable to the governments of the areas of conflict and less likely to be openly opposed by the great powers, for example the UNEF, the UNOGIL and the ONUC.

This new role of the United Nations — providing military personnel for "supervising truce arrangements, patrolling armistice lines and observing developments in zones of particular instability and at times backing these functions with economic, administrative and military requisites" — is a far cry from the type of collective action envisaged in Chapter VII of the Charter. If the original implementation of collective security system was dependent upon unanimous participation by the great powers, the functioning of "preventive diplomacy" depends upon "unanimous abstention of the great powers." (24) It is a policy rendered possible by the fact

(23) Ibid.

that both the great and the small powers have a common interest in preventing a local conflict from developing into a world war. Persistent pursuit of this policy is likely to have indirect influence on the conflicts between the power blocs by preventing the widening of the geographical and political area covered by these conflicts and by providing for solutions whenever the interests of all parties in the localization of a conflict can be mobilized in favour of its efforts.

Recent developments in the collective security system have increased the usefulness of the United Nations for the small powers and given them a major role to play. They look to the United Nations with great enthusiasm because it provides them with a mechanism for restraining the super-powers. (25) Their growing reliance has added to the prestige of the United Nations and given meaning to its authority.

In view of the growing reliance being placed on the United Nations, world federalists contend that those who believe in collective security must believe in world government as an ultimate goal. (26) But the existing political realities make this development impracticable in the foreseeable future. Firstly, a world organization sometimes implies added complications to the many problems faced by a nation-state. So there is a natural temptation


to direct policies and programmes through familiar channels that avoid the interposition of world institution and, in the short term, seem to be more useful or manageable from the point of view of realistic politics. (27) Secondly, the United Nations is an organization of nation-states and one of the few things they have in common is their pride in nationhood. The establishment of a world government would imply a willingness to sacrifice national sovereignty and to submit it to the decisions of others. There is little evidence that any of the great powers are prepared to do this today any more than they were in 1945. In fact, in recent years the great powers have been outvoted so often by the small powers in the General Assembly that they would not agree to enter into any permanent arrangement which does not give them some concessions for their greatness. So far as the small powers are concerned it may be said that they focus on the nation-state their highest ambitions of international power, economic development and social unity. They might agree to international control and management of some specific problem in so far as those problems do not stake their vital national interests, e.g., telegraphic or postal unions, but there is no likelihood that they would subordinate their independence of action to the collective will of a world government. In this context the extent to which the United Nations tries to tighten its hold over nation-states it would lose its grip on their allegiance.


(28) Hoffman, n. 25.
In view of these recent developments in the UN collective security system, the United Nations today stands closer to what India has always wanted it to be, and India wants it to play an increasingly important role. (29) Not only that, India has been a keen supporter of the idea of a world government and in the words of Nehru, "A World Government must and will come. ... It can be an extension of the federal principle, a growth of the idea underlying the United Nations, giving each national unit freedom to fashion its destiny according to its genius but subject always to the basic covenants of a World Government." (30) On the relation between the world law and national sovereignty the views expressed by Sir B. N. Rau may be considered. Commending the work of the International Law Commission, Sir Rau said that the Draft Declaration on the Rights and Duties of States contained a tacit recognition of the UN Charter as a part of the contemporary International Law. It also laid down the principle that "the sovereignty of each state is subject to the supremacy of international law." (31)

These statements might imply that India would be willing to see the United Nations develop into a world government, a contention which is not likely to be borne out in the context of India's attitude towards the United Nations as a whole. With all her faith


(30) Nehru, Broadcast from New Delhi, 3 April 1948. India's Foreign Policy, 183.

in the United Nations India's view on making the United Nations develop into a supra-national organization may be inferred from a statement made by Menon in regard to the Congo. "No government of the people, no management of the affairs of a people by other nation or even by all of us together is any substitute for management by themselves." (32) Of course, India would be willing in this matter, as in any other, to accept limitations on national independence for the common good of the world, provided that there is a guarantee that there would be no domination of one country by another. (33) In the present context no such guarantee can be given. In any arrangement for a world government that includes all the member-states of the United Nations there are bound to be grave differences in the economic, political and military power of the different members, and consequently, differences in their status. (34) The worst affected in such an arrangement would be the small powers and the under-developed countries who might never get the chance to grow to the fullness of their sovereign stature. As such India is not likely to support any proposal for world government in near future, however logical the development may be considered for the effectiveness of collective security system.

The Need for Re-thinking on India's Attitude

The purely pragmatic basis of India's approach to collective security system has enabled her to accept variations in the system

(33) Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, 193.
(34) Ibid.
without radical changes in her own approach. Nevertheless, some re-thinking on certain aspects of India's attitude may help her to give a more pragmatic response to the future challenges to world peace and security. This may require a few more adjustments: shift of emphasis on some issues, reformulation on some others, changes in some aspect and reaffirmation of some stands already taken. Of course, in expecting any departures from the established conduct of the foreign policy of a democratic country, due consideration has to be given to the fact that democratic processes turn policy-making into a difficult and long drawn out affair, unless the very existence of the country is at stake. Still, the following suggestions may be considered.

1) The problem of disarmament occupies a prominent place in India's thinking on collective security. India has always stood for general and complete disarmament as the ultimate goal with partial bans as immediate steps. Since India wanted to keep away from the armaments race and repeatedly denounced any intentions to use nuclear energy for that purpose very often her views on disarmament have been considered impractical. It has been suspected that India views disarmament not with objectivity but with incomprehension. Although from India's viewpoint, disarmament — general and complete — is a corollary to collective security, it cannot be denied that this ideal is as inaccessible in foreseeable future as a world government. Even if all the amassed quantums of armaments are destroyed and all the arms-producing factories are turned to producing something else, what would be the remedy for the possession of atomic secret by the scientists and the workers
who have been engaged in this business? There cannot be any more
guarantee against them using their knowledge when their government
requires their services than against the violation of test ban
agreements. The biggest and the most effective restraint on the
misuse of nuclear power in the present stage of international
politics, seems to be the consciousness of the sinister implications
of a direct confrontation between the nuclear giants. The super-
powers have themselves shown enough signs of being conscious of
their grave responsibility and there is little likelihood that they
would lead the world to its destruction, if they were given the
choice to take that decision. The danger lies more in the misuse
of nuclear power by some nuclear upstart which may have enough
strength to start a war but none to end it. In this context, it
would be worth the goal if India were to shift the emphasis from
general and complete disarmament to a complete ban on the production
and use of nuclear weapons as the ultimate goal and partial
agreements towards that end as the immediate steps. This would
check the spreading of nuclear knowledge for destructive purposes.

2) India's attitude towards the use of force has been
rather categorical in the past. Although it was never the
intention of the Government of India to renounce a country's
inherent right to protect its territorial integrity, the vehemence
with which Indian statesmen deprecated the use of force in the
past seemed to indicate that India was the only country which had
taken seriously the obligation of UN members regarding the non-
use of force. Consequently, other states could claim allegiance
to the Charter and yet retain their sovereign right to resort to
force whenever it became imperative. But any departure on the part of India to do the same was likely to be taken as a significant aberration of the proclaimed policy. With regard to the presence of foreign troops on a country's soil also, the same may be said. India need not change her views on the consequences of the use of force, but it would be better if Indian statesmen could reformulate their statements regarding the use of force in such a way that they can resort to it without arousing doubts about the consistency of the action.

3) India has been persistently supporting the claim of People's China for a permanent seat in the Security Council. The most pressing consideration for this attitude was the fact that situated as India is and where she is, friendship with China should have been a major factor in her foreign relations. But India has been rather quiet on this consideration of her policy and attached very great importance to the argument that the presence of China in the United Nations would be a restraining factor on the policies of that highly enigmatic and prospectively powerful nation. In doing so little attention was paid to the lessons of the recent history of the United Nations. Years of presence in the United Nations failed to improve the behaviour of S. Africa, nor could countries like Portugal be prevailed upon to relax their attitude under pressure from the fellow members of the United Nations. It would not hurt the interests of world peace if India were to change her attitude towards China. Even if she remains convinced that China should be in the United Nations as a matter of principle because the United Nations is supposed to be a universal organization, it should not
be forgotten that a world organization can retain its universal character even without the presence of those countries who refuse to abide by the universally accepted codes of behaviour.

4) India has been following a balanced and restrained policy regarding the newly independent states in Asia and Africa. On the one hand, India has regarded the Asian-African emergence as an independent factor in international politics and pressed their claims for better representation in the United Nations, on the other, there has been no attempt on the part of India to collect these states and form an independent bloc. Although, more than any other country, India has been speaking for the Asian-African peoples, the Indian Government has restrained itself from proclaiming leadership of the small countries. Even informal suggestions and rumours that India was being considered for a seat in the Security Council have been denied by the Government of India. Both these aspects of India's attitude towards Asian-African states need reaffirmation in view of the increasing hypersensitivity of these countries to even the faintest suggestions of foreign interference. This should not imply that if, as a result of spontaneous efforts by the Asian-African themselves, some sort of grouping takes place India should remain outside it. Nor does it mean that India would become a hermit or a recluse even when there is an occasion to give a lead. It only means that India would not consider herself the self-styled spokesman of Asian-African countries and take their co-operation for granted.

In the emergent pattern of collective security system - as indicated by the evolution of "preventive diplomacy" - the
small powers in general and the Asian-African members in particular, should play an increasingly important role. More important still, the economic backwardness and political instability of these states is likely to pose serious threats to world peace and security not only by creating conflicts but also by providing vantage points for the expression of great power differences. The extent to which India can understand these problems and with the co-operation of Asian-African states in particular and the small powers in general, she would be assisting in a more effective functioning of the collective security system and a better promotion of its objective, i.e., the establishment and maintenance of world peace.