

GREAT DECISIONS Topic No. 8 What Should the U.S. Do In the New United Nations?

In 1955 the United Nations completed its tenth year as a forum for international debate . . . a keeper of world peace . . . a channel for worldwide programs in hundreds of social and economic fields . . . and a controversial "parliament of man."

The Tenth UN General Assembly, which opened in September, 1955, had high hopes of new cooperation between East and West after the "summit" conference at Geneva. But by December, as the session drew to a close, most of the hopes had gone sour, with the lack of friendly cooperation and increased competition.

Among the battles which took place in the last few days of the general assembly, was the bitter debate on admission of new member countries. Russia cast 15 vetoes, and 16 new countries were admitted to the UN . . . four communist governments and six Arab neutrals among them.

What does this "new" UN of 76 nations mean to the U.S.? What will their influence be . . . What kind of organization is the UN becoming? And what is the UN trying to accomplish in its 11th year? How does it work? What does it do? Is it a help or hindrance to the U.S. now?

WHY A UNITED NATIONS?
The American people are contributing over \$16,000,000 toward support of the UN this year, and another \$112,000,000 for special agencies and programs of the UN. These contributions are roughly one-third of the total UN budget (although only .0003 per cent of the U.S. military budget for 1956).

How is the money spent? What kind of organization does it help? What benefits, if any, does the U.S. receive from UN membership?

Is the UN a "super government," a listening post for foreign agents? Is it building a better world or is it undermining U.S. leadership in the world?

WHAT ARE UN PURPOSES?
Objectives of the UN, summarized in the preamble to the Charter are, briefly, ". . . to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small . . ."

"To establish conditions under which justice and respect for . . . treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained . . ."
"To promote social progress

and better standards of life in larger freedom."

The preamble declares how the UN hopes to achieve these aims:

"To practice tolerance and live together in peace . . . as good neighbors, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace . . ."
"To ensure . . . that armed forces shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples . . ."

HOW DOES THE UN WORK?
A simple organization was set up to carry out the aims of the Charter. It has no governor, no executive power, nor any real legislative power. The UN passes no laws, resolutions being simple recommendations to member countries. A country observes a UN resolution because it wants to or because of the pressure of world opinion. Here is how it works:

The General Assembly has a membership of 76 countries, each with one vote (no vetoes). It meets once a year, may deliberate on any issue under the Charter and make any recommendations to member countries. It controls no UN budget. All members belong to the International Court of Justice, which settles legal disputes among members and offers non-binding legal opinions.

The Security Council is composed of five permanent members, each with a veto, and six non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. It investigates and settles political disputes, stops aggression and works for disarmament.

Eighteen members elected by the General Assembly for three years make up the Economic and Social Council. It sponsors worldwide programs to raise living standards, develop backward economies, promote health and education, working with 12 specialized agencies and various commissions.

The Trusteeship Council membership is made up of all nations responsible for trust territories and an equal number of non-administering countries, elected for three-year terms by the Assembly. It also includes five permanent members of the Security Council and supervises the administration of certain colonies and territories.

The UN Secretariat is the "housekeeping" agency, with some 3,500 jobs. The secretary-

general is chief of staff officer. **WHO SUPPORTS UN?**

Every member nation contributes annually to the support of the organization. The UN budget for the current year, excluding specialized agencies and special programs, is \$48,330,000.

The United States contributes 33 per cent; communist countries, 20 per cent; British Commonwealth, 19 per cent; Western Europe, 12 per cent; Latin America, 6 per cent; and 18 other countries, 10 per cent.

WHERE DO THE EFFORT AND MONEY GO?

Only a small part of the UN budget is for administration. Most of it goes into projects and programs all over the world to raise standards of living and the social welfare of human beings, including Korean Reconstruction Agency and Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees.

The rest of the money is for "self-help" projects, showing backward peoples how to help themselves. One significant UN program is the promotion of equal rights for all mankind; another the study of peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Other current programs include expanded program of technical assistance; World Health Organization; Food and Agriculture Organization; Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; International Labor Organization; and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

IS THE UN IMPORTANT TO THE UNITED STATES?
What kind of world is the UN trying to build . . . and is it succeeding? Does the U.S. want the kind of world the UN is actually building?

Are the programs and projects consistent with the UN charter? Is the UN doing enough—or too much—in social and economic fields? Should any activities be expanded? Should any be re-evaluated or cut out? Is there a large enough budget to do a really effective job?

Does our participation in the UN strengthen or weaken U.S. world leadership? In what ways? Or is the UN relatively unimportant in this sense?

If you believe the UN does not contribute to U.S. interests around the world, would you say this is the fault of the UN, the Russians, or the way the U.S. uses the UN?

Is there any advantage to our having a "clearing house" for international cooperation? Do we gain or lose in the long run from UN projects to develop backward countries?

Is there any political advantage in working through the UN? Would we have more independence in foreign policy if we were outside the UN? Would an independent foreign policy be more—or less—effective?

Is the principle of democratic voting in the General Assembly, of one vote for country, with no veto, an advantage or disadvantage? Is the great power veto in the Security Council a sound or unsound principle from the U.S. point of view?

Should we be willing to give up our veto if the other great powers agree?

BACKGROUND
The year 1955 was an important year for the UN. The tempo of technical assistance all over the world was stepped up. Communist countries increased their

participation in UN technical assistance, made more experts available and increased their contributions. And 16 new countries were admitted, increased membership from 60 to 76 countries.

Now, what is the outlook in the UN for 1956?

How Are the Votes Divided?
It is inaccurate and unfair to suggest the UN General Assembly votes in blocs . . . "pro-U.S." or "pro-communist." First of all, there are no party lines in the UN in the sense that there are party lines in the U.S. Congress. Second, each country represented has its own special reasons for voting on each measure.

Frequently, these national interests and special concerns show up in the UN voting. The communist countries, for example, almost always cast identical votes. On any problem connected with "colonialism" the countries which were once colonies themselves usually vote together.

On any vital issue (observers used to say) the U.S. could court on the support of her allies and on Latin America. These 36 votes in a 60-vote General Assembly were privately called the U.S. "automatic majority" although a study of voting shows that this was frequently, but by no means, always true.

If the same voting patterns held true in the 76-vote assembly, the combination of U.S. allies and Latin America would be two votes short of a majority.

Some statistics worth remembering for 1956 are that the number of countries not members of a Western military alliance totals 41; countries which were formerly colonies, 40; countries generally considered "underdeveloped" economically and socially and requiring outside assistance, 44; and non-communist countries which do not have highly developed industries, 55.

Can you think of instances in which these groups would vote together?

Are There More to Come?
The original "membership package" presented to the General Assembly last December called for 18 instead of 16 new members. The other two were Japan and Outer Mongolia.

In Security Council debates, Russia insisted that all 18 be admitted . . . or none. (The Council must approve membership applications before the Assembly votes on them.) Nationalist China vetoed Outer Mongolia, insisting it is not an "independent" state. In return, Russia vetoed all other applicants.

But in a final compromise, Russia suggested that Japan and Outer Mongolia both be dropped and the other 16 be admitted.

Another and more difficult battle facing the U.S. say many observers, is the question of turning over China's seat to the Peiping (communist) government. Twenty-five countries already recognize the Peiping regime as the legal government of China. Other countries are believed to resent the Nationalist Chinese government's veto of Outer Mongolia and may favor this Russian-sponsored move.

Another membership question which may come up this year is what to do about the three countries which are half-communist, half-democratic . . . Korea, Viet Nam and Germany. The U.S. does not recognize any of the three communist regimes and would oppose UN membership. Russia is the only major power to recognize both sides of a divided country.

Morocco and Tunisia, two French-administered areas which are now gaining independence, would be on the 1956 membership agenda. The rest of the non-member countries in the world, except traditionally neutral Switzerland, are colonies administered by European powers. They are not eligible for UN membership until they gain independence.

WHAT OTHER UN PROBLEMS DOES THE U.S. FACE?

Because the UN can do only what its members want it to do, many international crises are handled outside the UN, by direct negotiation between nations. Some observers say this is a new and dangerous trend. Rather than face open debate and open voting, nations sometimes prefer to negotiate privately.

On other occasions, when UN machinery has not worked effectively, negotiating countries move their talks outside the jurisdiction of the UN.

Disarmament is an example of an issue discussed both in the UN and outside. A UN disarmament committee has been discussing this question since 1946.

Last year the subject was taken up by the heads of government of the U.S., Britain, France and Russia at the "summit" conference, and later by the foreign ministers of these same countries.

This spring the UN committee took up where the foreign ministers left off.

In 1956, the U.S. must face—and answer—whether to make more, or less, use of UN machinery.

Foreign Aid
United States policy makers are disturbed by Russia's new "economic offensive." In recent months Russia has been competing with the U.S. in offers of economic aid and technical assistance to underdeveloped countries, including non-communist countries such as Turkey and Pakistan.

The UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld suggested that one solution might be for the U.S. and Russia to cooperate in helping backward nations.

Admission of Peiping
There is always a possibility that the General Assembly will seat the Peiping delegates in spite of the U.S. This is a long range problem . . . What should the U.S. do in any situation where we are outvoted in the UN?

Do we go along with the majority . . . or do we walk out? Is the UN important to us only as long as it votes the way we want it to?

WHAT CHOICES HAVE WE?
Is the new, bigger UN a threat to U.S. interests? As the UN, through increased membership, becomes more representative of world opinion . . . does it become less representative of what the U.S. wants in the world? Is this the fault of the UN . . . or the U.S.?

Is the increased communist membership a threat to the U.S. (from five before to nine countries now)? What about the increased membership of Arab-Asian countries (13 to 19) . . . How will this affect the UN? How will they probably vote on economic aid to backward nations . . . Colonial issues such as France in North Africa, Britain in Cyprus? How will they feel about disarmament in East-West military pacts?

Under the present Charter, the UN is not capable of being a "super-government." Since all resolutions are really recommendations, can the U.S. profit from its UN membership . . . regardless of how large or how contrary the UN may become?

Russia and the communist satellites are already cooperating with the U.S. in UN specialized agencies and technical assistance. Are these significant? Should we expand this kind of cooperation with cooperation . . . or cut it off?

Would we gain anything by

Sunday, May 18, 1956

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exploring new areas of East-West cooperation in the UN? Should we consider channeling more of our foreign aid through the UN?

Would you prefer the U.S. to have more say about what the UN does, despite the democratic principle of one vote per country?

Do you want to see the U.S. take the lead in strengthening . . . or weakening . . . the UN?

YOUR OPINION COUNTS
There are a number of branches to U.S. foreign policy. But U.S. policy in the UN is probably the one branch where the American people have the most say . . . through citizens' organizations for and against the UN and its various agencies.

You can make your opinion count by thinking this subject through and communicating your decisions to Washington. The Great Decisions committee will receive letters or the ballots included in the fact sheets to be tabulated and forwarded to the State Department and our congressional representatives. Opinions should be sent to Don Hansen, chairman of the Great Decisions committee, Franklin building, Medford.

The material above is a condensation of the fact sheets prepared for discussion and study in the Great Decisions program.



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