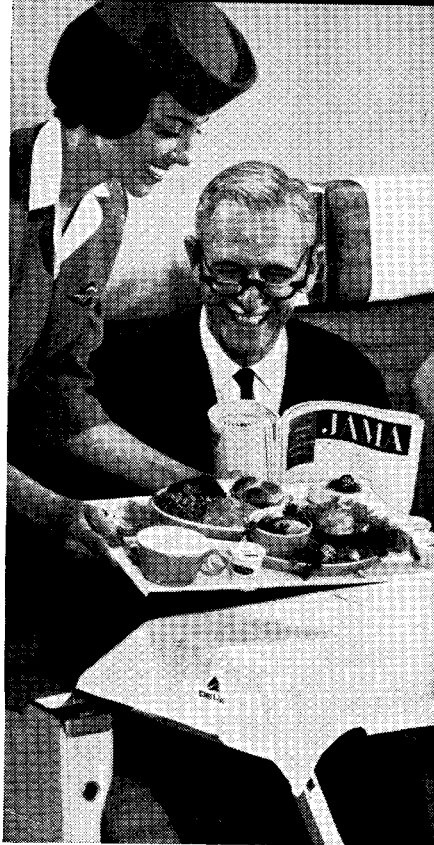


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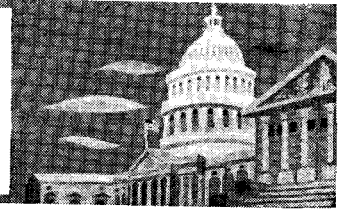
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## State of Affairs



### Financial Brinkmanship at the U.N.

**T**HE UNITED NATIONS, at the opening of its 19th General Assembly on December 1, will be faced with what might be called "financial brinkmanship." Even before it can conduct any business, it will have to decide whether the Soviet Union should lose its vote in the General Assembly for refusing to settle the assessments for the Congo and Middle Eastern "peace-keeping" operations. The two-years' grace is up and the United States is determined to force the issue to a showdown vote in the General Assembly. The Russians have been arguing that these assessments are "illegal," that they were not authorized by the Security Council, and that if the issue were pressed to a vote and they lost, they would walk out of the United Nations.

At issue is whether the United Nations should continue to have enough muscle to carry out so-called peace-keeping functions, or whether it should be reduced to a debating society.

There never was much love lost for the United Nations in the Kremlin. Its leaders harbor an inborn mistrust of international organizations in which a majority could override Soviet national interests. Hence the Russians' consistent emphasis on the Security Council with its veto procedure, and their frequent use of this procedure to frustrate any decision they find unpalatable. Yet despite earlier threats to walk out, the Soviet Union has never done so because on balance it has found the United Nations a useful propaganda forum.

American policy makers who advocate the showdown are therefore convinced that, forced to the brink, the Soviet Union will find a way to step back from it.

The concept of financial brinkmanship is the result of an unusual alliance between the "hard-nosed" experts and those idealists and crusaders for the United Nations who see the organization threatened by Soviet tactics. Their case is based on Article 19 of the United Nations Charter and a nine-to-five recommendation of the World Court. The article states that members owing the equivalent of two years' past contributions "shall have no vote" in the Assembly. The Soviet debt of \$52,600,000 to the United Nations does not relate to delinquency in membership dues; it relates to the refusal to make any contribu-

tion to the costs of the United Nations Congo and Middle Eastern forces.

France and several other members will be similarly in default after January 1.

Up to now the United States has made up most of the deficit, not only to prevent a serious financial crisis in the U.N., but also because, on the whole, the United Nations peace-keeping operations have been a useful supplement to American foreign policy.

For U Thant, the U.N. Secretary General, this crisis is an exceedingly awkward situation, and one that would have bewildered even Solomon. He clearly must want his organization to be able to play an active and constructive role in international fire prevention; hence he probably views the American position sympathetically. At the same time he must be anxious to find a compromise solution. But there is little he can do as long as the test of strength between the United States and the Soviet Union continues. This is a test wherein both are exerting themselves to influence the General Assembly—the Soviets by threatening to walk out of the United Nations, the United States by threatening to withhold its pledges for U.N. technical assistance to the underdeveloped countries.

If a compromise is not found before the opening of the Assembly (and as of this writing both sides insist they are determined to go the "brink"), last year's president of the General Assembly will have to put the issue to a vote, based on a routine communication from the Secretary General regarding members in arrears with payments and thus in conflict with Article 19. The General Assembly would therefore be confronted with this crisis before it could get down to any other business. It could not even vote in a new president.

At present the United States appears to have a large enough vote for its case. It is not an impressive backing because in such controversial matters there are always nations that prefer not to take sides; still, it could be as much as a two-thirds majority. Of the 112 member nations, as many as fifty would probably abstain. The Communist bloc, somewhat isolated, would vote against and the rest of the membership, another fifty, would vote with the United States.

This would leave the Russians with

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the choice of paying up or walking out. However, if they see that the Assembly is likely to reject their case, I doubt that the Soviet Union will allow matters to go as far as a vote. Then, too, it would be surprising if the United States were not open to compromise suggestions should the Soviet Union show signs of flexibility.

Whatever the outcome, it is certain that an operation on the scale of the U.N. intervention in the Congo will not be attempted again; lesser operations will in many cases be financed from outside the United Nations, as was done in West Irian, Yemen, and Cyprus. Yet it is important that the United Nations should have the means to carry out these police duties when it is absolutely necessary that they do so.

**E**VEN if in the past most of these police missions have been more in tune with American than with Soviet foreign policy, there may be future opportunities when United Nations intervention could also be useful to the Soviet Union—for instance, in border disputes in the Far East or in stabilizing India's borders.

Some delegates feel that one way out of the dilemma is for Moscow to offer a financial contribution to help the solvency of the United Nations; others think that if it were possible to agree on improved procedures for the future, it



ought to be possible to settle the disputes about the past.

Like all operations in "brinkmanship," this one, too, is risky; but on balance, the American calculation that more is at stake for the Russians is probably correct.

In the end much will depend on the pressures exerted by the Afro-Asian bloc, much on the deftness with which the United States plays its cards. The problem for the Russians is that new leadership may not find it easy to accept a compromise that could be interpreted as retreat; yet they may find it even harder to take so drastic a step as walking out of the General Assembly.

Still, it should not be beyond their wit to save themselves from the brink.

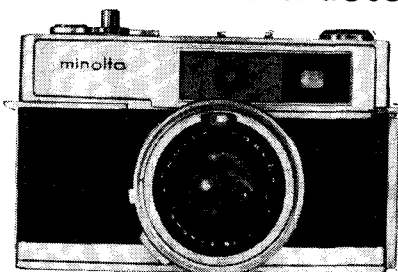
—HENRY BRANDON.



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## As It Happens

The U.N. will find it harder than ever to collect from Russia. The Kremlin can say: "We're no longer responsible for debts incurred by Nikita Khrushchev."

✓ ✓ ✓

Even a bull market has problems. As the year ends, a friend complains he hasn't a single stock to sell for a tax loss.

✓ ✓ ✓

Girl school dropouts would cease if teachers looked like Mr. Novak.

✓ ✓ ✓

Today's crop of muckrakers, who find fault in everything, recalls Jimmy Walker's remark: "A reformer is a man who travels through a sewer in a glass-bottomed boat."

✓ ✓ ✓

Everybody wants to go South this winter except the Vietnamese general staff. They want to go North.

✓ ✓ ✓

A friend, watching two matrons study notices outside a theater one afternoon, heard one say: "I don't want a message at a matinee."

✓ ✓ ✓

Stocks of companies making birth control pills are up, baby furnishing stocks are down. It figures.

✓ ✓ ✓

Saigon has already hinted what it wants for Christmas. The U.S. Marines.

✓ ✓ ✓

Cornell University estimates even a moderate-sized wedding now costs \$1,000 to \$1,500. No wonder modern parents don't complain if their daughter elopes.

✓ ✓ ✓

The airlines are worrying about the cost of in-flight movies. That could easily be covered by popcorn concessions.

✓ ✓ ✓

*Playboy* is a blessing for artists who can't afford models.

✓ ✓ ✓

Experts assure us Red China hasn't the nuclear capacity to destroy more than one major city. It would help urban redevelopment plans if we knew which one.

—FRED SPARKS.