

Text of Introduction to Report by Thant on the Year's Work of the United Nations

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UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., Sept. 3—Following is the text of the introduction to the annual report by U Thant, Acting Secretary General, on the work of the United Nations during the year ended June 15, 1962:

I

The year covered by the present report has been a critical period in the life of the organization.

Amidst its efforts to resolve the continuing and urgent problem of the Congo, the United Nations suffered the tragic loss of Dag Hammarskjöld, its dedicated Secretary General, and other members of his staff who accompanied him on his last journey to this troubled land. I have elsewhere paid tribute to his great personal qualities, to his unique contribution to the development of the United Nations in its formative years, and to his vision of the United Nations as a dynamic force for peace.

In my view, too, the responsibilities of the organization in these changing times call for a dynamic rather than a static approach.

Since the late Secretary General signed, on 17 August 1961, the introduction to his last report on the work of the Organization, the Congo crisis has continued to weigh heavily on the United Nations.

The rounding up of mercenaries in Katanga and the serious incidents which followed in September, 1961, culminated in the tragic death of the Secretary General. The cease-fire signed in October was not long or ever fully honored by the Katangese, and the Security Council spelled out in November its authorization to the Secretary General to use force in order to complete the removal of the mercenaries.

At the end of that month, Katangese outrages against United Nations personnel, civilian and military, and an overt attempt by roadblocks to immobilize the O.N.U.C. [the United Nations Operation in the Congo] force in Elisabethville, brought about a situation there so explosive that even the uneasy peace that had prevailed since September could no longer be preserved.

Congo Fighting Recalled

Hostilities broke out in December, 1961, through failure of the Katangese to fulfill a promise to remove a strong roadblock.

Later that month, after hostilities had come to an end by mutual agreement, a meeting was arranged between Prime Minister [Cyrille] Adoula and Mr. [Moïse] Tshombe at Kitona, in an effort to reconcile their differences. Agreement was, in fact, reached but Mr. Tshombe held it to be, so far as he was concerned, conditional on acceptance by the Katangese Legislature and it was honored only in its most important aspects.

During the first months of 1962 the United Nations continued its effort to bring about a peaceful and mutually acceptable end to the Katangese secession. Prime Minister Adoula and Mr. Tshombe were brought together again for talks, this time in Leopoldville, and although large areas of agreement seemed to be reached, the talks collapsed in June of this year.

It has become increasingly clear that the Katangese provincial authorities and the forces supporting them have felt that time is on their side, and must accordingly be gained at all costs; they make gestures of reconciliation leading to no practical results, whenever the pressure builds up, while at the same time seeking to further the aims of secession.

Katanga's Secession

The core of the Congo problem is that of the secession of Katanga; the problem of the Katanga secession is primarily a problem of finance; the problem of finance, in turn, is the problem of the major mining companies. This is not an oversimplification of the facts.

The end of the secession of Katanga would not mean a solution to all the problems of the young Congolese Republic. Far from that. But as long as this secession is not ended, neither can the Congo move forward on the way to recovery, nor can the United Nations effectively fulfill its mandate of effective and massive technical assistance to the Republic.

The present situation in the Congo, which is particularly critical—as I stated in the appeal sent to all member states on 31 July 1962—in view of the lives, effort and money already expended and currently being expended by the United Nations and the financial crisis into which this unprecedented drain on its resources has brought the organization, must improve before long.

Even as this is being written, a new effort toward reconciliation is being made with it, appears, new promise. Progress in the Congo is essential for the good name of the organization as for the organization's continued usefulness in similar circumstances that may arise in the future.

II

Throughout the past year the financial difficulties confronting the organization became increasingly serious as a result of the continuing need to incur large expenditures for O.N.U.C. and U.N.E.F. [United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East], while a number of

member states failed to pay their assessments for the maintenance of these peace-keeping forces.

In an effort to ease the cash problem, and maintain the organization's solvency pending a long-term solution for its financial requirements, the General Assembly at its sixteenth session adopted two exceptional measures.

The first of these was the request to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion on the question of whether the expenditures for maintaining O.N.U.C. and U.N.E.F. constitute "expenses of the organization" within the meaning of Article 17, paragraph 2, of the United Nations Charter and therefore represent binding, legal obligations on member states to pay their assessments for these operations.

The second measure was the authorization granted to the Secretary General to issue during 1962 and 1963 up to \$200,000,000 of United Nations bonds bearing interest at 2 per cent per annum, with the principal repayable over a twenty-five-year period.

On 20 July 1962 the International Court of Justice by a nine to five majority gave an affirmative answer to the question posed to it by the General Assembly. As of 1 August 1962, forty-six governments, including four non-member states, had announced their intention to purchase United Nations bonds having a total value of more than \$72,000,000. Actual bond sales had been made at that date to eighteen governments in the amount of \$27,308,257.

If, as a result of the Court's opinion, members in arrears in the payment of their O.N.U.C. and U.N.E.F. assessments make payments of the amounts due, and substantial pledges and purchases of United Nations bonds are forthcoming from other members who have not yet been able to announce their intention to purchase United Nations bonds, the long-range financial prospects for the organization would be more encouraging than has been the case since the beginning of the large peace-keeping operations several years ago.

For the immediate future, however, the financial difficulties confronting the organization must be expected to continue, since no provision has been made for assessing members for the costs of O.N.U.C. and U.N.E.F. beyond 30 June 1962 and some delay must be realistically anticipated before the members in arrears pay their full assessments.

Nonetheless, I sincerely hope and believe that member governments, who are all agreed on the indispensable role of the organization in the world of today, will take appropriate action to solve its financial problems, which may otherwise severely limit its usefulness for the future.

III

In the course of the year, positive action was taken toward international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. Earlier difficulties were overcome, and in March, 1962, the enlarged Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space met under encouraging signs and later on, in May and June the Scientific and Technical and the Legal Subcommittees

held their first session in Geneva.

The willingness of the two leading powers to cooperate in outer space exploration was expressed in a heartening exchange of messages between the President of the United States and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U. S. S. R. holding out prospects of a cooperative approach to the immense task of probing cosmic space and using the knowledge so gained for the benefit of all mankind.

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee agreed upon a series of recommendations concerning the exchange of information, the encouragement of international programs and the organization of international equatorial sounding rocket facilities which offer a basis for practical and useful action.

In the Legal Subcommittee, no agreement was reached on the proposals submitted. However, the discussions were regarded by delegations as a useful exchange of views on a number of important legal questions. It is my firm hope that a cooperative approach between the leading powers may be evolved without delay in this field, so as to insure that the exploration of outer space will not be a source of discord and danger, but an area of understanding and increased confidence.

To provide a focal point for international cooperation in this field, a public registry of information furnished by states on orbital launchings has been established within the Secretariat, as well as an Outer Space Affairs Section, including scientific advisers, to assist the committee in receiving and disseminating voluntary information supplied by member states.

Within the United Nations family, the World Meteorological Organization, the International Telecommunication Union and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are engaged in far-ranging studies on specific space problems, and the first reports prepared by the specialized agencies will be laid before the Assembly at its seventeenth session.

IV

While the progress in outer space has thus been somewhat encouraging, the same cannot be said in regard to the important problem of disarmament.

The eighteen-nation Disarmament Committee had the advantage that, for the first time, eight nonaligned states were participating in it. I feel that their participation is a significant event. For one thing, it is a recognition of the fact that disarmament is a subject in which all nations, big and small, are concerned, and not just the great military powers.

Further, the nonaligned states have been an important element, exercising a moderating and catalytic influence in helping to bridge the gap between extreme positions of either side.

It is regrettable that one of the members of the committee, a great power, did not take part in its work.

In spite of their meeting for three months between March and June of this year, and again from the middle of July, and in spite of orderly

and social potential as possible.

While much has been accomplished in the past two decades to mobilize resources on an international as well as on a bilateral basis to assist in lifting the living standards of two-thirds of the human race living in poverty and want, it is abundantly clear that the rate of development has fallen far short of meeting the needs and hopes of emerging peoples, and the risk cannot be ignored that their disappointment may well overflow to the extent of endangering an orderly pace of development.

I have said and would like to repeat that the present division of the world into rich and poor countries is, in my opinion, much more real and much more serious, and ultimately much more explosive, than the division of the world on ideological grounds.

In a timely decision, the General Assembly designated the present decade as the United Nations Development Decade, a global effort to mobilize, in cooperation with the specialized agencies, the accumulated experiences and resources of mankind in a full-scale and sustained attack on poverty, disease, hunger and illiteracy. These evils are not only affronts to human dignity; each intensifying the other, they menace the stability of governments, aggravate tensions, threaten international peace.

The Development Decade

In launching the United Nations Development Decade, the General Assembly has dramatized the importance and urgency of the work to be accomplished for reversing the trend toward wider differences in levels of living between rich and poor countries. Whether or not the latter will be able to achieve self-sustained growth over the next few years primarily depends on their own efforts and on an increase in international cooperation and assistance, for which the organization is at present neither the only instrument nor the most important channel.

Member states have made it clear, however, that they wish the organization to play a central role and to be a focal point for the formulation and evaluation of measures and policies which may affect or influence the pace and direction of the development process in national or regional contexts.

In addition to making recommendations to governments, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have taken steps to ensure increased action through United Nations organs. Less conspicuous than the thrashing out of the political issues with which the United Nations is seized, but hardly less far-reaching in the long term, are the intensification of the work on industrial development and the emphasis laid on projections, planning and programming for balanced economic and social development.

The resolve of the Economic and Social Council to convene a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development is a major move toward stimulating thought and practical action of worldwide scope in a crucial area. The progress already made in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Application of Science and Technology for the Benefit of the Less-Developed Areas is a further harbinger of the growing capacity of the United Nations system to inspire, and help in bringing about, the achievement of the objectives of the Development Decade.

With the bolder approach of the Council and of its Commission on International Commodity Trade to the preoccupying questions of commodity prices and trade expansion, the decision of the Council to establish a Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, the setting up in the Secretariat of an Economic Planning and Projections Center and of a Centre for Industrial Development evidence the determination of our governing bodies to assert the over-all responsibilities of the Organization and to improve its ability to contribute effectively to progress toward the objectives of the Development Decade.

Role of United Nations

With the increased contribution that the regions commissions and their secretariats are making to the global effort by assuming spearhead functions on the strength of their knowledge and experience of local conditions, with the growing interplay of operational work and research activity, and with the closer cooperation among agencies of the United Nations family exemplified by such projects as the joint U. N. - F. A. O. World Food Program, the Organization should be able to play in the worldwide strategy for fostering economic and social development, a role not less important than that devolving upon it for peace-keeping operations.

As in the case of peace-keeping operations, its response to the challenge conditioned by the ability to mobilize the services of experienced and dedicated personnel, and by the sustained availability of adequate financial resources, including provision for a controlled expansion of the staff resources necessary for carrying out the tasks laid on the Secretariat in a growing body of unarmously adopted resolutions.

In this mobilization of speedier progress in economic and social development, the

Charter provisions as they stand. In the preamble itself the United Nations expresses its determination "to reaffirm faith . . . in the equal rights . . . of nations large and small." Article 2, paragraph 1, states more explicitly: "The organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members." At the same time, and as a natural corollary, there is a reciprocal responsibility on the part of all sovereign states to recognize and respect the sovereign rights of other states.

Warns on Conclusions

As regards his remarks concerning the grouping of items dealing with different aspects of the same problem, it is useful to bear in mind that it is not only the substance of the debate to which consideration must be given by each delegation, but also to the conclusions and recommendations which may have to be formulated.

Were similar questions to be considered collectively, as suggested, it might avoid in turn the duplication of discussion, as also the proliferation of special and other committees with overlapping responsibilities. This is true of the political as well as the economic field.

To mention just one example, in the field of non-self-governing territories, some four committees and special committees are dealing with matters that might usefully be combined, thus relieving the concerned delegations of other erwise added burdens and at the same time reducing costs and staff requirements. It may perhaps be possible to concentrate all the work in this field under the special committee which was set up pursuant to resolution 1654 (XVI).

I wish particularly to commend the proposal that the date for the beginning of the regular session of the General Assembly be advanced to the first Tuesday in September, thus adding two weeks to the duration of the Assembly's session. Such an extension might contribute materially to avoiding resumed or special sessions by giving added time for the conclusion of the Assembly's business during the regular session.

If I have touched upon an aspect of the work of the General Assembly, which is master of its own procedures, I have done so for two reasons. One of them is the personal reason that I have some experience of the floor. Secondly, I feel that the General Assembly should indeed be the Parliament of mankind in these days of rapid change, with the ever present threat of nuclear global war.

The present procedures might have suited an Assembly with fewer members and confronted by less momentous issues. They do not suit the present, when the membership is already approaching 110, and the agenda items, too, may exceed a hundred. A streamlining of procedures has thus become progressively more urgent and necessary, so that the voice of the Assembly may be heard with respect, and in time, all over the world.

VIII

I have so far dealt with specific problems and issues which have been engaging my personal attention. Before closing, I would like to deal with a more general problem—that of the so-called "crisis of confidence" in the United Nations. The same historic process which has liberated so many countries and regions in the world from colonialism and which has enabled the organization to make steady progress toward universality of membership has also upset the original balance of forces within the United Nations.

As a result, there are suggestions that the principle of one vote per member will perhaps have to be reconsidered. I would like to state unequivocally my position on this proposal. On this, as on any other proposal, I am bound by the

VII

In recent years, the membership of the Organization has increased by more than double its original number and has made considerable progress toward true universality.

A cursory examination of the growing number of items inscribed in the agenda of recent sessions provides convincing evidence of the wide scope of the subjects, from urgent items affecting the welfare of the international community to minute details of "housekeeping." In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the conduct of business in the General Assembly and of its main committees has in recent years become increasingly complicated, and in some instances, excessively prolonged.

In his letter of 26 April 1962, the President of the General Assembly during its sixteenth session transmitted to me for circulation to all delegations of member states a memorandum containing certain suggestions concerning changes which might be made in the work of the General Assembly in the interest of greater speed and efficiency.

In commending the President's timely suggestions to the consideration of the General Assembly, I wish to enlarge upon a few of the points dealing with the broader aspects of the work of the General Assembly, namely, the problems arising from resumed sessions and the creation of subsidiary organs having overlapping terms of reference.

The General Assembly of the United Nations was conceived as a body which among other things, would provide leading statesmen of the member states with an opportunity to come into close contact with each other and to lend not only greater authority to the Assembly's work but, what is even more important, to help shape the decisions of indi-

vidual member governments on major issues. All too frequently this purpose has been defeated in the general debate, for reasons set forth by the President.

I believe that, if the United Nations is to survive as a dynamic force for peace and security, these provisions have to be honored in the letter and the spirit of the Charter.

I have heard it said that, if the Charter provision on this subject is not revised, then there will be an increasing tendency to settle major issues outside the United Nations. This prospect does not discourage me for a variety of reasons.

In the first place, I do not believe that it was ever the intention that all problems should be solved within the United Nations, nor was the United Nations conceived as the sole means of conducting international diplomacy. Clearly, it is a relatively novel method of diplomacy, continuously available in the service of peace in addition to the normal bilateral and multilateral channels.

'Crisis' Seen as Passing

To the extent that problems which pose a potential threat to the peace and security of the world may be solved by discussions among the powers mainly concerned, whether within or outside the United Nations, the peace of the world is made more secure and I welcome it. Oftentimes it may happen that, when such a settlement has been negotiated outside of the United Nations, the terms of the agreement may be brought forward for formal ratification by a principal organ of the United Nations in order to give it added authority and solemnity.

Lastly, I have observed that many problems which are, hopefully, taken out of the United Nations context finally come back to the United Nations for debate, negotiation, compromise and ultimate settlement. This is particularly true of global issues in which the small powers are as much interested as the major powers.

For these reasons, I believe that the "crisis of confidence," if indeed there is such a crisis, is a passing phase. I have faith that the United Nations will survive this "crisis" and emerge stronger than before as a force for peace. In restating my faith in the United Nations, I am moved by one more consideration, and that is the increasing tendency to involve the United Nations in the process of combating want and poverty and disease and in helping the advancement of the developing countries.

Earlier in this introduction, I have dealt at length with the United Nations Development Decade. Here I would like to say only this: that the constructive work of the United Nations "for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples" is the solid basis on which the political effectiveness of the United Nations must rest.

The steady and unobtrusive work of the United Nations and its family of agencies to further economic and social progress may not make headlines, but it is more lasting in its contribution to the prosperity, and the peace, of the world.