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Press Release SG/382
13 May 1954

ADDRESS BY SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJOLD AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA CONVOCATION BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1954, AT 10:00 A.M. (PACIFIC COAST TIME)

I am very happy indeed to have been able at last to accept your invitation to come to this great University. As a matter of fact, this is my first visit to San Francisco -- and to California. I must say that it was high time such an improper state of affairs was set right for the Secretary-General of the World Organization that was born across the bay just nine years ago this spring! Needless to say, my long standing impression that the United Nations was fortunate in the choice of its birthplace has been more than sustained by all that I have seen in the few hours since my arrival yesterday afternoon.

As we look back upon it now, we can see that the spring of 1945 was a favorable time for such an historic act of creation as the writing of the United Nations Charter. We can also see how far the hopes that were then aroused in many hearts out-ran the limitations of human nature. The mood of disillusion and of doubt that has followed is not, of course, a new phenomenon of our civilization.

It was 130 years ago that Shelley, in his essay on "The Defence of Poetry," wrote:

> "We have more moral, political and historical wisdom than we know how to reduce into practice; we have more scientific and economical knowledge than can be accommodated to the just distribution of the produce which it multiplies."

These words seem to apply to our present situation. We justly pride ourselves in the creations of human genius and in the enormous achievements of science. You as teachers, students and friends of a great University know how far we have got in a technical sense, but is not Shelley right when he holds that our development as men, and the development of human society, has not kept pace?

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Morally, the findings of modern psychology and the thought of modern philosophers, should have made us better equipped to tackle our problems. So should the development of democracy, and of liberal institutions as tools of democracy, by spreading knowledge and by stimulating in an atmosphere of freedom a wider awareness of essential issues. But for all this "progress," are we really better than our fore-runners? When we are ridden by fear, do we not experience as often as before, brutal or mean reactions? Do we not seek to pass the burden of our responsibility over to innocent scapegoats? Do we not forget the sufferings of our neighbor? Do we not covet his possessions? And when we think of brainwashing and mental torture, what must we say of such fruits from the tree of psychological knowledge applied in a refinement of evil -- to kill the man instead of the body.

Politically, sociology has taught us much of the working of society and of the laws governing the intercourse between peoples, but are the actions of governments any wiser than before? Do we show more creative political ability than our predecessors?

Historically, we are, perhaps, beginning to understand the laws governing the growth, culmination, decline and fall of political systems and civilizations. At any rate, we know much more than our predecessors about the facts of the past. Modern history is documented, studied and debated beyond what has ever been the case before. But what have we done to "reduce our knowledge into practice"?

Economically, we have progressed further in our analysis of the mechanisms governing the creation and distribution of wealth. We have developed a few tools for control of the disruptive forces in economic life. We have built up institutions serving collective economic needs. But have we found a way to ensure freedom from want — in fairness and justice to all?

Finally, science has given us access to new sources of power, to new natural resources, to more powerful tools for the creation of all that is required to meet the needs of man, to new means of fighting sickness and of prolonging our life-span. But what are the uses to which we put these achievements? Are they not too often destructive?

These questions might seem to indicate a very negative view of our civilization in its present phase of development. I do not hold such a view. My questions are posed simply to underline the belief that our generation has been dangerously outdistanced by the development of our technical knowledge of society and of nature. It is an understatement to say that this development represents a major challenge to our civilization. The demands put to us must be met -- if our civilization is to survive. Ever since the dawn of the present revolutionary development

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of science the thinkers have recognized this truth. The inventions culminating in the hydrogen bomb should now make it clear to all.

I do not intend to speak here about the basic moral issues involved, but will limit myself to the question of our practical means to cope with the situation which we are facing.

I do not believe that any ready-made solutions can be found or that we can avoid a painful period of trial and error in the elaboration of the necessary tools. It will undoubtedly be a slow process requiring much patience, registering many shortcomings and mistakes, suffering serious setbacks. But I am sure that such a process will ultimately yield results if approached and conducted in the right spirit.

The right spirit. . . From what I have said it is obvious that the first thing required is patience, the patience inspired by a firm faith in our ability to reach the goal. But we need more than patience in the passive sense. We need perseverance, of the kind that equips us not to take defeats to heart, in the knowledge that defeats are unavoidable, and that if our efforts do not seem to get results, it may be because we have not yet applied the necessary degree of perseverance.

This brings me to an essential point in the consideration of our possibilities to translate our knowledge into practice. For some people the driving force in life is faith in the success of their efforts. For others it is simply a sense of duty. We need both types of men. We need the man of faith and his imagination, his inspiration, in the search for great achievement. But we also need the other one, who is animated by his feeling of collective responsibility, without consideration of such recompense. We need both the architect and the bricklayer.

Where, in the light of this philosophy, do we find the United Nations? First of all, let us recognize that the United Nations was set up in response to the collective needs to which I have referred. It is an attempt to give a first rough constitutional form to the fact of world interdependence. It is an approach to the problem of world organization for a still anarchic world community.

By regarding the United Nations in this pragmatic way, I feel that we will be more just in our appraisal both of its achievements and of its failures. We will look at the achievements as the first modest yield we have been able to reap from our efforts, and we will look at the failures as natural and unavoidable in such a pilot venture, where we learn as much from the mistakes as from the positive experiences. The United Nations is not and should not be an organizational strait-jacket on the world or on the independent states which are its Members.

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The Organization does not exert any powers beyond what the Member states at any given moment, and in any given situation, collectively are willing to give to it in order to cope with problems they have in common. It is an organ for free co-operation of the nations, inside the framework of agreed procedures, and supported by a permanent civil service.

The founding fathers in San Francisco were the architects, the men of faith and imagination who wrote the Charter, under which the world community has a chance to develop from anarchy into order. Those in the Governments and Delegations, or in the Secretariat, who pursue the day-to-day operations, trying to meet emergencies as they arise, trying to explore possibilities and trying to give to the tools created by the Charter their maximum value, are the bricklayers who must devote themselves wholly to the effort regardless of any hopes of reaping and rewards of success.

I admit that for Governments and peoples, as for individuals serving the Organization, the experiences may sometimes be most frustrating. For example, who does not feel disappointed when a disagreement reflected in use of the veto prevents or delays a useful action which seems to be in the interest of all? But let us remember that such a disagreement is not the result of our efforts of co-operation. It is one of those conditions in spite of which and against which we must keep trying to develop co-operation.

An effort to keep the disagreements that divide our world outside the framework of the World Organization, would lose more than it gains. It would gain only the appearance of harmony at the cost of real influence. In specific terms and referring to the East-West conflict: we should recognize that it is worth more for world peace to achieve what little agreement is possible between the two conflicting parties, than to register the much broader area of agreement of one side only by excluding the other, knowing that such one-sided agreements cannot be implemented against the will of the party excluded.

The challenge which we cannot escape -- the challenge for which we must seek the answer -- is a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the Communist World and the West. The United Nations would not be strengthened but gravely weakened, if, by exclusion of Communist Members, it were to attempt to push the East-West conflict outside its council chambers.

But let us turn from such general observations to concrete problems. Then we meet, in the first place, the current conflicts of a political nature, like those we see in Palestine, Indo-China or Korea. In the second place we meet the long-term problems of peoples who have been left behind in economic development,

for centuries dependent on the colonial powers of the world and now assuming the responsibilities and rights of self-governing units.

The first set of problems is closely related to the second. If you go beneath the surface in the three acute political conflicts to which I have referred, you will find strong elements of the long-term problems also. It is in the so-called under-developed areas of the world that some of the sharpest frictions are likely to develop. In them we find far too much of the fuel which might start a big conflagration. And they are also the scene of some of the most decisive conflicts of ideologies for the souls of men.

We may cope with an immediate problem by a truce, but we have done so only for today and tomorrow, or for the next few years, if we do not follow up the result by a consistent effort to improve the lives of the peoples concerned, by assistance to their Governments in the political sphere, as well as in the spheres of social policy and economic policy.

In the international field we must make an attempt to repeat on a world scale the process by which -- inside the developed countries of western civilization -- progress towards political, social and economic justice has been sufficient to ward off the risk of revolutions and created inner equilibrium.

This is not a task for any single nation. It is a task for all nations. This is so, first of all, because no single country is strong enough to carry the whole burden and the full responsibility. It is so, also, because the approach gains in value if supported by world confidence and carried through with the backing of world opinion. Finally, it is so because the peoples to be assisted generally prefer to receive help from the community of nations rather than from any single country or group of countries.

When it is a question of acute political conflicts, the United Nations serves primarily as a new diplomatic device for collective negotiation. In the field of economic and social policy, and of guidance and assistance to the under-developed areas, the Organization is in the first place to be regarded as an international administrative instrument, complementing the national administrations.

The results of the long-term policy of helping under-developed areas to find their proper place in the world community do not make news and are, on a day-to-day basis, undramatic. For that reason they are easily over-looked and often forgotten. In the political sphere attention is attracted more by the reflection in the debates of the major disagreements dividing the world than by the fact that the airing of those disagreements around the conference table is in itself an achievement and is far to be preferred to the battlefield.

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The price of peace since 1945 has come high indeed and I would be the last to pretend that I can see any easy way out of continuing to pay that price for a long time to come. When I speak of the high price of peace, I am not thinking of the burden of armaments. That is in the picture, of course. But I am thinking primarily of the price in terms of the demands upon our capacity for patience and for steadiness of purpose. The process of learning to live together without war in this torn and distracted world of ours is going to continue to be painful and a constant challenge for the rest of our lives. Yet we know what the choice is. Either we manage it or we face disaster.

The mere fact that the Governments created the United Nations and have maintained it is, in itself, evidence that mankind is capable of responding to the challenge of interdependence with which the evolution of human society has now brought us face to face as never before. We also know that history has many lessons to teach about apparently irreconcilable conflicts. Terrible wars have been fought in the past because people thought that they could not live in the same world together, or because they thought their beliefs were in head-on collision with those of their neighbors. Then, with time, they found that it was not only possible but necessary to make a working compromise that allowed for the differences. They found that it was not only possible but necessary to accept the principle of diversity in human society. Time itself is a great healer and situations that seem to defy solution can be lived with until that day when the evolution of human affairs may bring a more favorable opportunity.

If we go back to our starting point, I hold that we are justified in regarding the United Nations as an adequate attempt in world organization, to which we justly and soberly attach our hopes, step by step to "reduce our knowledge into practice" and to further the development of that world community which has become necessary for the future of civilization.

Those who have the privilege of a liberal education and, for that reason, are more aware of our technical achievements, of the dangers which those achievements have created for our civilization and of the extent to which our moral and political development lags behind, have a special reason to support the efforts made to close the gap and to create a world where international life does not fall so far short of the standards established by our knowledge.

Their insight into the slow and painful growth of all human institutions should equip them also with full understanding of the difficulties and with the patience to which such an insight should lead. For one of our most compelling needs today is for a wise perspective with respect to both achievements and setbacks, based on the knowledge that there is no quick road to success.

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It has been said that the United Nations was not created in order to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell. I think that sums up as well as anything I have heard both the essential role of the United Nations and the attitude of mind that we should bring to its support.

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