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QUESTION CONSIDERED BY THE SECOND EMERGENCY SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FROM 4 TO 10 NOVEMBER 1956

Report of the Secretary-General

I

In a number of resolutions the General Assembly has adopted decisions concerning various aspects of the situation in Hungary and requested action of the United Nations referring thereto. The main decisions adopted have covered the withdrawal of troops from Hungarian territory and related questions, including that of deportations; investigations of the situation caused by foreign intervention in Hungary; and humanitarian activities, including assistance to refugees. The Secretary-General has been requested to report to the General Assembly on compliance with its decisions, as well as on the development of such activities as the United Nations has decided upon.

By circulation of the messages exchanged the General Assembly has been kept currently informed of the Secretary-General's efforts to arrange for direct observation in Hungary and of the reactions of the Hungarian Government to his démarches. Apart from these exchanges a number of personal contacts concerning the matter have taken place.

Through an interim report, 19 November 1956, (A/3371) the Secretary-General has informed the General Assembly about the development up to that date in the field of assistance to refugees.

The document now submitted to the General Assembly is intended to register aspects of the present situation about which the General Assembly may at this stage wish to be informed.

II

By letters of 28 November 1956 to the Chairmen of the Delegations of Hungary and of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Secretary-General - drawing the attention of the Governments to the General Assembly resolutions on the situation in Hungary, of 21 November 1956, which had been transmitted to the Governments immediately after their adoption - addressed requests to the Governments for information on points to be taken into account in an interim report on implementation of the various resolutions. In the case of the Hungarian Government special attention was drawn to the question of observers. The requests to the two Governments were intended to bring the information in the report as closely up to date as possible.

The Secretary-General received, on 29 November, a reply to his letter of 28 November from the Chairman of the USSR Delegation. The reply is annexed to this report.

At the time of writing this report the Secretary-General has not yet received a reply from the Government of Hungary. He has, however, been informed that, due to difficulties in the transmission, his request of 28 November did not reach Budapest until some time in the course of 29 November. The Secretary-General will circulate separately the reply he expects from the Hungarian Government as soon as it is received.

No information is available to the Secretary-General concerning steps taken in order to establish compliance with the decisions of the General Assembly which refer to a withdrawal of troops or related political matters.

III

The efforts of the Secretary-General have been directed primarily to obtaining permission from the Hungarian Government for observers, named by the Secretary-General, to enter Hungary for the purposes prescribed. So far no such permission has been given.

The Secretary-General has offered to go personally to Budapest for discussions with the Government. This offer was confirmed in the course of the debate in the General Assembly, 21 November. The Secretary-General has been informed that

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this question is under consideration by the Government. It is his hope that the reaction will be positive and that he will be invited to make a personal contact in Budapest. If an invitation is received, it would be his intention so to organize the visit as to cover not only the humanitarian activities, to which his offer originally referred, but also in general the position taken by the Government of Hungary regarding the resolutions of the United Nations, as indicated by the Government itself in a cablegram, 15 November 1956, addressed to the Secretary-General (A/3358). While the aims of the United Nations in the case of the situation in Hungary, as set out in the various General Assembly resolutions on the matter, would guide his efforts in Budapest, it seems appropriate that the contact of the Secretary-General with the Hungarian Government be considered as based on his position under the Charter, with the wider scope that such a standpoint might give to his approach.

The arrangements for direct observations in Hungary, to which reference has been made above, were part of the wider plan, adopted by the General Assembly, which requests the Secretary-General to investigate the situation caused by foreign intervention in Hungary, to observe the situation directly through representatives named by him and to report thereon to the General Assembly. In addition to the efforts mentioned above, certain other measures have been taken in implementation, or in preparation of the implementation of this plan.

On 12 November, the Secretary-General announced that he had taken steps to establish a group to assist him in fulfilling the investigatory duties mentioned in paragraph 4 of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 4 November 1956 regarding the situation in Hungary, and on 16 November he informed the General Assembly (A/3359) that this group would consist of Judge O. Gundersen, Mr. A. Lall and Mr. A. Lleras. ✓

This group has been examining some material presently available to the Secretariat. The Secretary-General has been informed, however, that this material does not provide a sufficient basis for a report to him at the present stage and that the group, moreover, deems it essential that its work should be supplemented

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by and co-ordinated with such findings as might result from the process of direct observation in Hungary. Since arrangements have not been concluded for effecting observation in Hungary, the stage has not yet been reached where it is possible to present a comprehensive report. Meanwhile, however, the investigating group is continuing to examine available material with reference to certain broad issues. In this connexion the Assembly will recall that the Secretary-General stated as his view that the investigation should be based on available and confirmed material. It will be clear that for these criteria to be fulfilled some co-operation of those Member Governments mainly concerned will be necessary. At this stage the Secretary-General would only draw the attention of Member Governments to this point, which is likely to become one of immediate relevance when the group advances further its consideration of specific issues.

V

The situation in the field of humanitarian activities is more advanced. The Secretary-General need not here raise the question of refugees. He can, therefore, limit himself to the following observations concerning humanitarian assistance in general.

As requested by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General issued an appeal on 15 November to Governments for contributions in support of relief to Hungary. So far, few Governments have made contributions to the United Nations fund. Some have indicated that humanitarian aid is being channelled through national Red Cross societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Secretary-General has been informed that an agreement has been concluded between the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Hungarian Red Cross covering the distribution of relief supplies to Hungary.

The Secretary-General has undertaken negotiations with the International Committee of the Red Cross with a view to channelling through that organization contributions for relief in Hungary made to the United Nations.

He has consulted with the heads of the specialized agencies who expressed readiness to co-operate in appropriate ways as and when required.

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He has requested the Hungarian Government to indicate the specific requirements of relief needs so as to be in a position to make these needs known to Governments and to private humanitarian organizations wishing to offer aid. With the co-operation of the Hungarian Government, he hopes, as requested by the General Assembly, to be in a position at all times to assist in the assessment of relief needs and to report to the General Assembly on the results of relief efforts in Hungary.

By the means and through the channels available to him, the Secretary-General has used his best endeavours to further compliance with all the various decisions of the General Assembly on the situation in Hungary. The nature of the problem, and insufficient information concerning some of the basic assumptions for his activities, have complicated the task. It has already been mentioned that it seemed natural to him to concentrate first of all on the investigatory activities. This has been so as progress concerning these activities is of key significance for a successful approach to other points raised by the General Assembly.

His offer to go personally to Budapest should be seen in this light; it seemed to him that when a satisfactory basis for progress did not prove attainable through an exchange of communications, the initial step had to be the establishment of a direct personal contact. While discussions concerning his visit to Budapest were going on, he found it appropriate to suspend his reporting to the General Assembly. As long as these discussions had not been concluded, he did not consider it likely that considerations based on an interim report would be to the purpose.

However, although a reply to his latest request for clarification has not been received from the Government of Hungary, the Secretary-General has not considered it possible to wait any longer before reporting to the General Assembly. If the present report were to be taken up for consideration, he assumes that full account will be taken of the fact that he is still waiting for a reply from the Hungarian Government and that, therefore, the possibility of a visit by the Secretary-General to Budapest in the near future remains open.

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ANNEX
LETTER DATED 29 NOVEMBER 1956 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE USSR DELEGATION
AT THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ADDRESSED TO THE
ORDINARY GENERAL

New York, 29 November 1956

In acknowledging receipt of your letter dated 28 November 1956 relating to the General Assembly resolution of 21 November on the so-called question of "The situation in Hungary", I have the honour to make the following statement.

The position of the Government of the USSR on the above question was explained in the note of 13 November 1956 addressed to you by the Permanent Mission of the USSR.

So far as concerns General Assembly resolution A/RES/407 of 21 November 1956, I must draw your attention to the statement on the subject made by Mr. Shepilov, the Chairman of the USSR delegation, at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly held on 19 November, and to the Hungarian Government's statement of 18 November. As was declared in these statements, allegations of the deportation of Hungarian citizens to the USSR are based on slanderous rumours circulated by certain groups for the purpose of misleading public opinion.

(Signed) V. KUZNETSOV
Chairman of the USSR delegation