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ADDRESS BY BYRON PRICE, ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS,

AT NORWALK TRICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 1951

It is a high honor to accept this scroll for the United Nations.

It is a special privilege to accept it as an American, standing on the soil of New England.

Three hundred years ago Connecticut already understood that the way to human betterment was through united action. The organization of the United Colonies of New England was dedicated in 1643 to the proposition of "mutual help and strength in all our future concerns." The United Colonies was an imperfect undertaking, but it served security in a troubled time, and planted on this continent an idea and an ideal which can never die.

Two hundred years ago the outlines of a much wider union were emerging amid threats of wider dangers. Only imperfect means for common effort were at hand, but they were good enough to carry a new nation through a war for independence.

One hundred years ago that nation was torn by a great debate, testing and almost breaking the still imperfect bond of the United States. After great agony and sacrifice, the United States remained united.

Today we are engaged in a still broader undertaking, testing whether the United Nations, or any world-wide organism dedicated similarly to freedom and to "mutual help and strength," can survive the continuing pressures of national rivalry.

The means provided for this undertaking are far from perfect, and measures to strengthen them are receiving ever-growing consideration.

A half-dozen wars have been stopped and visible progress made in relieving the economic and social ills which breed wars. In Korea, at a great cost, armed land-grabbing has been halted in its tracks and the principle of collective security put into practice by an international agency for the first time.

But this is not enough. The clustered flags still stir uneasily in the winds of world distrust. It has become necessary, -- necessary beyond all doubt --

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even for our own country, with its deep and sincere devotion to peace, to take up once more the weary burden of protective armament.

Some Americans are losing heart. Some who should know better are echoing the old refrain of isolationism, even though they still give lip service to the United Nations.

This is a time for resolution, not for retreat. Events have thrust our country into world leadership at a moment of crisis for all civilization. Must she plead inability, or a previous engagement? Must America stand before history a nation lion-hearted in war, but chicken-hearted in the good works of peace?

In time, these questions will be answered rightly. They will be answered rightly because the idea of collective security, the idea which made the United Colonies, the United States, and the United Nations, cannot be killed by any amount of misunderstanding or misrepresentation. They will be answered rightly because no one can fool the American people permanently.

The whole nation, the whole world, can well take increased assurance from what you have done here today, and from what you have been doing ever since the first days of the Norwalk Petition Plan.

These acts of yours are important because they come from the people themselves, -- from free Americans, conscious alike of their ancient heritage of liberty and their new heritage of leadership. What you think and do is important because in this country the people decide, -- and please God we will keep it that way.

The United Nations emerged from the sacrifices of a peoples' war, designed to buttress a peoples' peace. It belongs to the people. If now it should fail of support, it is the people who will suffer, and it is they who will perish.

When Americans chose the path of "mutual help and strength in all our future concerns," they understood well enough what the alternative would be. They will not forget now.

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