
LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CHILE TO THE
UNITED NATIONS DATED 12 MARCH 1948 ADDRESSED TO THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL

Sir,

The Government of Chile has noted that on 10 March Mr. Jan Papanek, Permanent Representative of Czechoslovakia accredited to the United Nations, sent you a communication requesting that the Security Council should consider the events which had taken place in his country since 22 February last on the grounds that they constitute a situation endangering the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the said note Mr. Papanek says that the political independence of Czechoslovakia, a Member of the United Nations, has been violated by the threat of the use of force by another Member of the United Nations, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. He goes on to say that a minority in his country, encouraged and given promise of help by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, usurped power by eliminating the constitutional system of Government, violating personal guarantees and trampling under foot the public liberties established by the Constitution, in the manner described in his letter. He also says that this coup was effectuated successfully only because of "official participation of representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the threat of the use of military force of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in readiness on the north-west boundaries of Czechoslovakia".

In the opinion of the permanent representative of Czechoslovakia, these facts involve a violation of the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance of 12 December 1943, constitute an obvious threat to world peace and security and a flagrant violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the San Francisco Charter. The Security Council should therefore investigate them, in accordance with Article 34 of the Charter.

My Government has been informed that you have refused the request of the Permanent Representative of Czechoslovakia, because you consider it as coming from a non-governmental organization and not, therefore, as a communication from a Member State.

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Without wishing to give an opinion on the propriety of the step you have taken with regard to the Czechoslovak Representative's request, and without implying that I accept his status as a private individual and not the legitimate representative of his Government, as you have suggested, I have the honour on behalf of Chile, which I represent before the United Nations, on personal and direct instructions from the President of the Republic, to request you to refer the question raised by the Permanent Representative of Czechoslovakia in the above-mentioned letter, to the Security Council, for the purposes set forth in that letter.

In making this request, I am using the right conferred by Article 35, paragraph 1, of the Charter on all Members of the United Nations.

The Chilean Government considers that the responsible and authoritative accusation of the Permanent Delegate of Czechoslovakia is of such a serious nature that a mere reason of formality, such as the alleged lack of status of Mr. Papenek, cannot be allowed to prevent the institution whose specific task is to safeguard world peace and security, from making the necessary investigations to prove the truth of this accusation. If the events mentioned in Mr. Papenek's denunciation prove to be true - and everything seems to indicate that they are - it would mean that the world is again facing an exact repetition of the actions and methods which were employed by Nazi Germany in the years preceding the last World War, and were its immediate cause. It would therefore mean that world peace and security are in imminent danger both on account of an international act contrary to the Charter committed by one Member State against another, and on account of a serious violation of the principles of democracy, respect for human dignity and individual freedom, indicated in the San Francisco Charter as being inseparable from the maintenance of peace, and one of the principal purposes of the United Nations.

My Government considers that the United Nations is under the unavoidable obligation to act in this situation, using all the means allowed by the Charter to prevent, before it is too late, these actions and methods from completing the execution of a plan, the intentions and range of which are not difficult to forecast.

As part of the American community, which has achieved enviable progress in the elimination of methods of violence, aggression and conquest, whose peoples live according to principles of human solidarity, Chile cannot remain indifferent before the events described by the

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representative of Czechoslovakia. No country which is a Member of the United Nations, however small or however remote from the theatre of events in question, can evade the responsibilities of solidarity deriving from the Charter and from the conviction that another world war would be a catastrophe whose consequences no part of the world could escape. In taking the present attitude, my Government believes that it is making the only possible contribution, within its limited means and the present circumstances, to the common task of preventing this disaster. It believes also that it is thereby fulfilling its duty, as a signatory to the San Francisco Charter, of ensuring that the Organization affirms its status as a decisive instrument for the maintenance of world peace. It is not difficult to forecast that failure by the United Nations to intervene in the situation before us would result in loss of its prestige and a consequent reduction of its future effectiveness. The Chilean Government's attitude, therefore, is motivated by its devotion to the United Nations' cause and its sincere respect for democracy and human dignity.

But there is another moral reason which leads my Government to sponsor the Czechoslovak delegate's request that his country's case should be investigated and considered. In October last Chile was obliged to sever diplomatic relations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and with Yugoslavia, because those countries were interfering in her internal affairs (trying to disrupt and hamper production of the basic raw materials such as copper and nitrates, which Chile exports to friendly countries) through the illegal revolutionary action of a national group working in their interest. The objects of this action, which coincide completely with those of her intervention in Czechoslovakia, demonstrate the extent and nature of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' plans and prove that neither geographical situation nor greater or lesser degrees of strength or size, or a country's love of peace, or indifference to it, are factors which can have any influence in enabling a country to avoid becoming involved in a conflict such as a great power like the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics might undertake. Thus the Chilean Government on that occasion most reluctantly felt obliged to extend its severance of relations to the Czechoslovak Government. It did so because it had proof that agents of that Government were taking part alongside those of the other countries mentioned, in truly aggressive activities, by paralyzing the economic life of Chile, as I have stated. The Chilean Government understood that this was happening without the knowledge of President Benes and Mr. Masaryk, his Minister for Foreign Affairs, whose democratic and pacifist opinions have always been beyond doubt, and that it was merely the international

manifestation of action being taken inside the country by elements which, shielded by the democratic National Coalition Government, were preparing the coup of 22 February. However, we were obliged to break off our traditional friendly relations with Czechoslovakia, in defence of our elementary duty to defend the country against the intervention of foreign powers desirous of disturbing production and overthrowing the democratic constitutional regime which Chile has enjoyed since achieving her independence.

Now that events have proved the rightness of the Chilean point of view and justified the true reasons which led my Government to take such steps, we wish to render homage to the noble Czech people - for whom we feel a deep admiration and respect - by supporting in our capacity as a Member of the United Nations, the just demands made in their name by their Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

In view of the foregoing considerations, I repeat to you, in the name of my Government, our request that the case be brought before the Security Council, in order that, in accordance with Article 34 of the United Nations Charter, it may investigate the events reported by the Permanent Representative of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Jan Papanak, which constitute a threat to international peace and security.

I also request you to communicate to the Security Council, our petition that, in conformity with Article 31 of the Charter, my country be invited to participate in the discussion of this matter, when it is brought before the Security Council.

I have the honour to be, etc.

HERNAN SANTA CRUZ
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of
Chile to the United Nations.