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CONCLUSIONS

CONFIDENTIAL

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1. The terms of reference of the Special Committee covered a broad field, namely to report to the General Assembly and to all Members of the United Nations after full and objective investigation, its findings on all aspects of the question of Soviet intervention in Hungary by armed force and by other means and the effects of such intervention on the political development of Hungary. The Committee's investigation, as has been explained, involved the study of copious documentation from various sources and in several languages, as well as the questioning of more than a hundred witnesses, whose testimony fills two thousand pages in the verbatim record. It follows that the Committee's findings relate to many aspects of the events in Hungary and are concerned with numerous points of detail that have a bearing on the origin and nature of those events. The report itself embodies the conclusions of the Committee, and these conclusions cannot be readily dissociated from the evidence which is there assembled. A summary of the Committee's findings on individual aspects of the situation in Hungary has been appended to certain of the Chapters. It would, however, seem appropriate at this stage to summarize a number of conclusions drawn by the Committee from its study of the evidence as a whole. To the best of the Committee's belief, these conclusions represent the essential facts about the Hungarian uprising which are necessary to an understanding of its nature and outcome. They are as follows:

- (i) What took place in Hungary in October and November 1956 was a spontaneous national uprising, due to long-standing grievances which had caused resentment among the people. The most important of these grievances was the position of complete subordination of Hungary with regard to the USSR.

The system of Government was in part maintained by the weapon of terror, wielded by the AVH or political police, whose influence was exercised through a complex network of agents and informers permeating the whole of Hungarian society. In other respects also, Soviet pressure was resented. From the stifling of free speech to the adoption of a Soviet-style uniform for the Hungarian army, an alien pressure existed in all walks of life. Hungarians felt no personal animosity towards the individual Soviet soldiers on Hungarian soil, but these armed forces were symbols of something which annoyed a proud people and fed the desire to be free;

- (ii) There is proof of foreign influence in Hungary, but that influence was, and continues to be, exclusively Soviet. The thesis that the uprising was fomented by reactionary circles in Hungary and that it drew its strength from such circles and from Western "Imperialists" failed to survive the Committee's examination. From start to finish, the uprising was led by students, workers, soldiers and intellectuals, many of whom were former Communists. In a country where anti-Semitism was formerly rampant, cases of it were extremely rare during the uprising, in which Jews fought side by side with other Hungarians and were elected to serve on Revolutionary and Workers' Councils. The majority of political demands put forward during the revolution included a stipulation that democratic socialism should be the basis of the Hungarian political structure and that such social achievements as the land reform should be safeguarded. At no time was any proposal made for the return to power, or to the Government, of any figure associated with pre-war days. "Fascists" and "saboteurs", heavily armed, could not have succeeded in landing on Hungarian airfields which were under Soviet

supervision, or in crossing the Austrian frontier, where a system of patrols was shown by the Austrian authorities to the military attachés of France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the USSR;

- (iii) The uprising was not planned in advance. It was the universal testimony of witnesses that events took the country by surprise. No single explanation can determine exactly why the outbreak occurred just when it did. Communist spokesmen, including Mr. Kádár and the members of his present Government, have recognized the bitter grievances of the Hungarian people before 23 October. They have spoken of a "broad, popular movement" caused by the "bitterness and indignation" of the masses. Two factors would seem to have brought this resentment to a head. The first of these was the news received on 19 October of a successful move by Poland for greater independence from the USSR. This news was largely instrumental in bringing the Hungarian students together in the meetings of 22 October. The second factor was the acute disappointment felt by the people when Mr. Ernő Gerő, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' (Communist) Party, in his speech on the evening of 23 October failed to meet any of the popular demands and adopted what was considered a truculent tone towards his hearers;
- (iv) Although no evidence exists of advance planning, and although the whole course of the uprising bears the hallmark of continuous improvisation, it would appear that the Soviet authorities had taken steps as early as 20 October to make armed intervention in Hungary possible. Evidence exists of troop movements, or projected

troop movements, from that date on. It would appear that plans for action had therefore been laid sometime before the students met to discuss their demands. The Committee is not in a position to say whether the Soviet authorities anticipated that the grievances of the Hungarian people, stimulated by events in Poland, could no longer be contained. While the evidence shows that Soviet troops from outside Hungary were used even in the first intervention, no clause of the Warsaw Treaty provides for intervention by armed forces of the Soviet Union to dictate political developments within any signatory's frontiers;

- (v) The demonstrations on 23 October were at first entirely peaceable. None of the demonstrators appear to have carried arms, and no evidence has been discovered that any of those who voiced the political demands or joined the demonstrators had any intention to resort to force. While disappointment at Mr. Gerö's speech may have angered the crowds, it would hardly of itself have sufficed to turn the demonstration into an armed uprising. That this happened was due to the action of the AVH in opening fire on the people outside the Radio Building. Within a few hours, Soviet tanks were in action against the Hungarians. This appearance of Russian soldiers in their midst not as friendly allies, but as enemies in combat, had the effect of still further uniting the people.

(vi) Obscurity surrounds the invitation alleged to have been issued by the Hungarian Government to the Soviet authorities to assist in quelling the uprising by force. Mr. Nagy has denied, with every appearance of truth, that he issued this invitation or was even aware of it. Since Soviet tanks appeared on the streets of Budapest at about 2 a.m. on 24 October, it would have been impossible for him to have addressed any official message to the Soviet authorities, since he held no Government post at the time when the tanks must have received their orders. An invitation may have been made privately by Mr. Gerö, First Secretary of the ^{Central Committee of} Communist Party, or Mr. Hegedüs, the Prime Minister. The Committee, however, has had no opportunity of seeing a text of such an invitation, or of considering the exact circumstances in which it may have been issued. Until further information comes to light, it would be wise to suspend judgement as to whether such an invitation was issued at all.

Similar considerations apply to the invitation which is alleged to have been addressed to the Soviet authorities before the second intervention on 4 November. Mr. Kádár had remained a member of Mr. Nagy's Government when the latter was reconstituted on 3 November and he had given no recorded indication of his disapproval of Mr. Nagy's policies. Mr. Kádár's movements at this time are not fully known, and he cannot be considered to have substantiated his own claim to have called, in the name of the Government, for Soviet help. In any event, there is abundant evidence that Soviet preparations for a further intervention, including the movement of troops and armour from abroad, had been under way since the last days of October. Mr. Kádár and his Ministers were absent from Budapest during the first few days after he formed his Government, and administrative instructions to the people of Hungary were issued by the commanders of the Soviet troops;

- (vii) When Mr. Nagy became Prime Minister, he was not at first able to exercise the full powers of that office. Only when the grip of the AVH was loosened by the victory of the insurgents was he able to take an independent stand. By this time, the real power in Hungary lay with the Revolutionary and Workers' Councils, which had sprung up spontaneously in different parts of the country and had replaced the collapsing structure of the Communist Party. Mr. Nagy, though himself a Communist of long standing who had lived for many years in the USSR, invited non-Communists into his new Government, and listened to the demands of various Revolutionary and Workers' Councils. It would appear that Mr. Nagy himself, like the country at large, was somewhat taken aback by the pace of developments. However, seeing that his countrymen were united in their desire for other forms of Government and the departure of Soviet troops, he threw in his lot with the insurgents. By this action, he obliterated the impression which he had created while still under the domination of the AVH, and he became a symbolic figure in the uprising, although he had not instigated it, and was never its actual leader;
- (viii) The few days of freedom enjoyed by the Hungarian people provided abundant evidence of the democratic nature of the uprising. A free press and radio came to life all over Hungary, and the disbanding of the AVH was the signal for general rejoicing, which revealed the degree of unity achieved by the people, once the burden of fear had been lifted from them. There were a number of lynchings and beatings by the crowds, but these were, in almost all cases, confined to members of the AVH or those who were believed to have co-operated with them. Steps were taken by the Workers' Councils during this period to give the workers real control of nationalised industrial undertakings and

to abolish unpopular institutions, such as the production norms.

These were widely resented as being unfair to workers and also a reflection of popularly ^{repeated} ~~inspected~~ secret trade agreements with the USSR, which were said to make heavy demands on the Hungarian economy for the benefit of the Soviet Union. During the days of freedom, while negotiations continued with the Soviet authorities for the withdrawal of Russian troops, attempts were made to clear up the streets of Budapest and life was beginning to return to normal. The insurgents had agreed to amalgamate in a National Guard, which would have been responsible, with the Army and Police, for maintaining order;

- (ix) In contrast to the democratic nature of the national demands put forward during the uprising, is the fact that the basic human rights of the Hungarian people were violated by the Hungarian Governments prior to 23 October and that such violations have been resumed since 4 November. The Committee is convinced that the numerous accounts of inhuman treatment and torture by the AVH are to be accepted as true. It is also convinced that numbers of Hungarians, including women, were deported to the Soviet Union and that some may not have been returned to their homes. Action taken by the Hungarian people in their spontaneous uprising succeeded in ridding them for a few days of the apparatus of police terror. This democratic achievement of a united people was, indeed, threatened by a form of "counter-revolution" and it was to this that it succumbed. However, the "counter-revolution" consisted in the setting-up by Soviet armed forces of Mr. Kádár and his colleagues in opposition to a Government which enjoyed the overwhelming support of the people of Hungary.

- (x) Following the second Soviet intervention on 4 November, there has been no popularly supported authority in Hungary. Mr. Kádár has successively abandoned most of the points from the revolutionary programme which he had at first promised to the Hungarian people. On the central question of the withdrawal of Soviet troops, he has moved from complete acceptance of the nation's wishes to a refusal to discuss the subject in present circumstances. Against the workers, he has proceeded step by step to destroy their power and that of the Workers' Councils. The right to strike has become a capital offence. The processes of justice have been distorted by the institution of special police, special courts and in the ignoring of the rights of the accused. The Socialist Party has again been forcibly amalgamated with the Communists. General elections have been postponed for two years. Writers and intellectuals are subjected to repressive measures. The Hungarian workers have shown no sign of support for Mr. Kádár's Government or for the prospect of continuous Soviet occupation. Only a small fraction of the 170,000 Hungarians, mostly young people, who fled the country have accepted his invitation to return. The peasants look back to Mr. Nagy with gratitude for his attitude towards collectivization of agriculture and forced deliveries of farm produce;
- (xi) In the light of the extent of foreign intervention, consideration of the Hungarian question by the United Nations was legally proper and, moreover, it was requested by a legal Government of Hungary. Apart from this fact, the Committee does not regard objections based on Paragraph 7 of Article II of the Charter as having validity in the present case. A massive armed intervention by one Power on the territory of another, with the avowed intention of overthrowing its legal Government and installing a different one must by the Soviet's own definition of aggression be a matter of international concern.