

12 September 1957

TEXT OF SPEECH DELIVERED BY H.E. JORGE SKINNER-KLEE,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS OF GUATEMALA, BEFORE
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY MEETING TODAY

"Mr. President:

Almost a year ago the tragedy of the Hungarian people astounded and deeply moved world public opinion. This shock - all the more anguished because of the impossibility of doing anything to help and to repel that abuse of a whole people - found expression here in our organisation through active efforts to find a remedy against the evils that relentlessly hounded the heroic people of Hungary. The speeches of burning indignation pronounced by the Statesmen of the free world were followed by efforts made, in this international parliament, to find a formula which could receive the democratic backing of the majority of the members of the General Assembly and could also put an end to this attack by a foreign army upon the dignity, freedom and life of a country.

One by one the resolutions of the General Assembly crashed against the ruthless reality of the facts, made irrevocable by the brutal use of force, which prevented any positive effect from following from the actions of the United Nations.

It may not be necessary to recall on this occasion the different stages of this painful chain of events, nor is this the moment to enumerate one by one the obstinate refusals of the Soviet Union or of the authorities which

gave themselves up in Hungary to the Soviet rule. It may not be necessary, either, to recall the tragic world political and military circumstances which made it impossible for us to send an armed force to Hungary to defend the sovereignty of that nation, for at that time there prevailed the bitter serenity of those who thought primarily of preventing a Third World War, primary task and *raison d'être* of this International Organisation.

It is befitting on this occasion to note and evaluate the work assigned to the special fact-finding Committee which investigated the abominable events that occurred in Hungary. This investigation was all the more necessary because of the reprehensible attitude of a Great Power and of a subjugated government frustrated the effort of the international community to examine the internal situation of Hungary.

Neither the Government nor the people of Guatemala - as was the case with all the peoples and governments of the free world - had the slightest doubts about what was actually happening in Hungary. There are facts of such notoriety and extraordinary magnitude that they carry in themselves the truth as to their nature and the certainty of their meaning. The United Nations voted on that basis, and adopted by an overwhelming majority the resolutions of the Second Emergency Session and of the first part of this XIth General Assembly. Also, on the basis of truth and justice, the United Nations condemned Russia for its armed aggression against Hungary in the historic resolution of the 12 December 1956.

But it was also the duty of the United Nations to investigate carefully, and by every means at its disposal, the situation created in Hungary. We have

before us today the result of this task entrusted to eminent representatives of leading nations in our Organisation. The report of the Special Committee is the most solemn and categorical monument, raised as an expression of respect, admiration and devotion to the martyred people of Hungary, and it constitutes a historic document of deep ethical, political and juridical significance. The people and the Government of Guatemala pay their tribute of admiration and gratitude to the member States and to the men who, on behalf of their own countries and the peoples of the world, carried out so nobly their terms of reference and found the truth. The gratitude of the free nations of the world go to them and to the Secretariat of the United Nations.

We are deeply impressed by the serene spirit and the realistic character of the report, and also by the valuable documentation contained in it, the objectiveness and impartiality in the enunciation of the facts and the wisdom with which the committee arrives at clear and unquestionable conclusions.

It is now the duty of the United Nations, as the next step in the "Hungarian Problem", to receive this report, to evaluate its contents and to reach a view on its conclusions. After carefully studying the report, the Government of Guatemala has decided to co-sponsor the draft resolution in the document A/3658 which expresses faithfully the thinking and the will of the great majority of the nations of the world following an impartial and objective stock-taking of the conclusions of this Special Committee. We are convinced that this same will - which is ours also - seeks expression in a more efficient form proportionate to the enormity of the events, but we understand the fact that the sanction now proposed had inevitably to adjust itself within the framework of the maximum possibilities permitted by international life. This clear and precise sanction

exceeds the strictly juridical field, and has ethical bounds. Thus, without disturbing the international community but reinforcing it with the clear expression of the moral force of the free peoples, it conveys the feelings of mankind, which has taken the suffering and anguish of the Hungarian people to itself. The conclusions of the draft resolution, the condemnation reiterated in it and the practical steps assigned to Prince Wan Waithayakon have the moral force expected of this Assembly and the practical character of a measure which, within its well-known limitations, the United Nations can now take.

The draft resolution, because of its utter clarity, needs no detailed explanation. Its contents reveal, with a diaphanous quality equal to that of the report, the opinion of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Hungarian events. Nevertheless, we would like in particular to emphasize paragraphs seven to nine because these express our intention to promote by every possible means the enforcement of the General Assembly resolutions and to give back to Hungary her complete sovereignty, today seriously impaired. What is established in this draft resolution does not eliminate or cancel out this painful Hungarian chapter, and if we really want the Charter of the United Nations to be strong and efficient we must insist in our efforts and appeals to find a solution to this problem, which otherwise will continue haunting the conscience of mankind and leave without practical effect the fundamental principles of the Charter.

The fact that it is possible to draft a document of the quality and content of the report of the Special Committee, the possibility that events of this magnitude can be discussed publicly and freely before the world, gives its full value to the appeal contained in the eighth paragraph of the draft resolution, in which we urge the Soviet Union to abandon the use of repressive

measures against the Hungarian people, to respect the liberty and political independence of Hungary and the freedom and fundamental rights of its population, and to assure the return to their fatherland of the Hungarian citizens deported to the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, coupled with the parliamentary action which will be completed by our political activity, it is a moral obligation of the Member States to pass on to world public opinion the painful pages of the document placed in our hands by these irreproachable statesmen.

Mr. President: We understand the political realities which still make limited and imperfect the systematic conduct of international life, but we also are deeply convinced that the value of the principles on which this conduct is based will prevail in the long run, and that all States, large and small, (especially those on whose shoulders rests the greatest responsibility for world peace), will comply faithfully with those principles, accepting categorically international responsibility as a guarantee of the peace and well-being of all the peoples of the world. With this hope and conviction, we are persuaded that the just solution of the Hungarian question, for which we all long, will in the end be found.

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