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ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

WASHINGTON, D.C., 10 SEPTEMBER 1985

PRESIDENT HESS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS A VERY REAL PRIVILEGE TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TODAY TO SPEAK TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB. YOUR INFLUENCE ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF EVENTS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY, AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, IS REALLY IMMEASURABLE. TO SPEAK HERE IS ALSO A CONSIDERABLE CHALLENGE.

IN MY OPINION, TWO ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ARE DISCRETION AND OBJECTIVITY. THIS COMBINATION IS NOT, I SUSPECT, EXACTLY WHAT A GOOD-MANY JOURNALISTS WOULD CHOOSE IN THEIR LUNCH-TIME SPEAKER. I WOULD ONLY SAY THAT I HAVE SOUGHT TO BE HONEST AND FORTHRIGHT IN DESCRIBING, FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, THE STATE OF THE WORLD AND, IN PARTICULAR, OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AND I INTEND TO BE SO TODAY.

IT IS USUALLY THE PREROGATIVE OF JOURNALISTS TO PUT FORWARD QUESTIONS. TODAY, I INTEND TO ALTER THIS PROCEDURE SOMEWHAT BY FOCUSSED MY INITIAL REMARKS ON A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS WHICH I HAVE ALREADY HEARD - QUESTIONS WHICH, I SENSE, ARE BEING ASKED WITH INCREASING INSISTENCY IN THE UNITED STATES BY THE PRESS, THE INTERESTED PUBLIC AND, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF. THESE QUESTIONS ARE BY NO MEANS LIMITED TO THIS COUNTRY. IF THEY ARE MORE EVIDENT HERE, THIS MAY BE IN PART THE RESULT OF THE VERY MAGNITUDE OF THE HOPE, THE RESOURCES, AND THE STATESMANSHIP WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS INVESTED IN THE UNITED NATIONS FROM THE TIME, MORE THAN FORTY YEARS AGO, WHEN THE CONCEPT OF A NEW WORLD ORGANIZATION TO PRESERVE PEACE WAS FIRST CONCEIVED BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, SECRETARY HULL, AND OTHER FAR-SIGHTED AMERICAN OFFICIALS. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT MY APPROACH IS NOT AN EFFORT TO ^{USURP} THE JOURNALISTIC FUNCTION, OR TO AVOID YOUR QUESTIONS. I WILL LOOK FORWARD TO ANSWERING THOSE THAT ARE PUT FORWARD LATER, AS I BELIEVE IS THE CUSTOM OF THE HOUSE.

I WILL START MY "SELF-INTERROGATION" WITH A VERY COMMON QUESTION:
¿ HOW DOES THE UNITED NATIONS SERVE UNITED STATES INTERESTS?

I COULD DEVOTE MY ENTIRE REMARKS TODAY TO DESCRIBING THE VARIOUS UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER GLOBAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE, WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FOR A STABLE WORLD COMMUNITY, SOMETHING WHICH I BELIEVE MOST AMERICANS WOULD AGREE IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN FURTHERED, HEALTH IMPROVED, HUNGER FOUGHT, REFUGEES CARED FOR, NATIONAL POPULATION PLANNING ENCOURAGED, EDUCATION POSSIBILITIES BROADENED AND, SOMETHING ON WHICH I AM URGING FURTHER EFFORTS, ILLEGAL TRAFFIC IN DRUGS COMBATTED. THESE ASPECTS OF UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES, WHILE INSUFFICIENTLY KNOWN, ARE GENERALLY HIGHLY VALUED, AS SHOWN BY THE STRONG AND SUSTAINED SUPPORT MOST HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS. FOR THIS REASON, I THINK-IT MORE USEFUL, TODAY, TO CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH THE UNITED NATIONS, IN THE DANGEROUS CIRCUMSTANCES OF A NUCLEAR ERA, HAS CONTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE MAJOR POWERS CERTAINLY DO NOT LOOK TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR THEIR DEFENSE, AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO DO SO IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. BUT, THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CANNOT, OR DOES NOT, CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR SECURITY. LET ME CITE FOUR EXAMPLES SPANNING MOST OF THE 40 YEAR HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION.

FIRST, THE BERLIN CRISIS OF 1948-1949. THIS WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AND A SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL DEVOTED EXTENSIVE EFFORT TO DEVISING A PLAN TO RESOLVE THE PIVOTAL CURRENCY PROBLEM. THE PLAN WAS NOT ACCEPTED, AND DID NOT FIGURE IN THE ULTIMATE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. THE EXTENDED ACTION TAKEN IN THE COUNCIL WAS ONE ELEMENT, HOWEVER, IN LESSENING THE PRESSURE TOWARDS ARMED CONFRONTATION, AND IN AFFORDING TIME FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WERE EVENTUALLY INITIATED IN THE UNITED NATIONS PREMISES, PREMISES THAT ALWAYS OFFER A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERNATIONAL CONTACT AND EXCHANGE.

SECOND, THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS OF 1962, WHICH MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE BROUGHT THE WORLD CLOSE TO NUCLEAR WAR. I WOULD NOT SUGGEST THAT THE UNITED NATIONS WAS THE PRIMARY ELEMENT IN PREVENTING THIS FROM HAPPENING. BUT THE THEN ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL, U THANT, THROUGH THE MESSAGES WHICH HE SENT TO THE TWO POWERS WHILE THE CRISIS WAS BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL, FACILITATED A RESOLUTION, BY PROVIDING A FORMULA AT A CRITICAL MOMENT, EMANATING FROM AN OBJECTIVE AND RESPECTED SOURCE, WITH WHICH BOTH COULD AGREE WITH DIGNITY.

NEXT, THE MIDDLE EAST WAR OF 1973. AFTER A CEASE-FIRE CALLED FOR BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL WAS OBTAINED UNDER THE STRONG AND, I THINK, RESPONSIBLE INFLUENCE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION, DISENGAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS WERE WORKED OUT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY FORCE COMMANDER. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, & IS IT POSSIBLE TO IMAGINE A RUSSIAN OR AMERICAN GENERAL SUCCESSFULLY PERFORMING THIS FUNCTION? FOLLOWING THE DISENGAGEMENT, UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES STOOD BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI FORCES UNTIL THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS CAME INTO EFFECT. THEY STILL STAND TODAY ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

FINALLY, I WOULD CITE A FAILURE - THE UNITED NATIONS' EFFORT TO PREVENT THE FALKLAND OR MALVINAS WAR. WHEN ARGENTINE FORCES LANDED IN THE MALVINAS, THE SECURITY COUNCIL QUICKLY ADOPTED A RESOLUTION DEMANDING IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF THESE FORCES AND A CEASE-FIRE, AND CALLING FOR NEW DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THIS RESOLUTION PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR THE MEDIATION EFFORT UNDERTAKEN BY THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE.

I SUBSEQUENTLY USED MY GOOD OFFICES IN AN INTENSE EFFORT TO OBTAIN A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CRISIS, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SAME SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. THE EFFORT WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL, BUT I HAVE NOT THE SLIGHTEST DOUBT THAT IT HAD TO BE DONE, THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CONTRIBUTION WAS IMPORTANT, AND THAT, BECAUSE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE OUTCOME IN COMPARABLE CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE FUTURE MIGHT BE POSITIVE.

THESE WIDELY SEPARATED INSTANCES - ALL OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO UNITED STATES INTERESTS, ILLUSTRATE THREE POINTS WHICH, I BELIEVE, CAN BE VERY SIGNIFICANT IN THE FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. FIRST, IN CONDITIONS OF DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MAJOR POWERS, THE UNITED NATIONS MAY PROVIDE A WAY OUT - A FORMULA FOR AGREEMENT, OR SIMPLY A PERIOD OF DEBATE, DURING WHICH THE FLASH-POINT OF CRISIS CAN PASS. EVEN IF THIS IS SEEN AS MARGINAL, SURELY IT CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED WHEN THE MARGIN FOR SURVIVAL IS SO NARROW. SECONDLY, IN THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF CONFLICT SITUATIONS, THE UNITED NATIONS CAN CARRY OUT FUNCTIONS, SUCH AS FACT-FINDING, OBSERVATION AND PEACE-KEEPING, NOT EASILY PERFORMED BY NATIONAL ENTITIES; AND THIRDLY, THE UNITED NATIONS CAN PROVIDE FOR MEDIATION WHICH, THOUGH BENEFITTING FROM THE SUPPORT OF MAJOR POWERS, CAN AVOID THE COMPLEXITIES OF THEIR DIRECT INVOLVEMENT, OR THE JEOPARDY TO RELATIONS WHICH DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN A DISPUTE BETWEEN FRIENDS CAN ENTAIL.

BUT, IT IS OFTEN ASKED: ¿ WHY HAS THE UNITED NATIONS BECOME POLITICIZED TO THE POINT THAT USEFUL OPERATIONS ARE JEOPARDIZED?

THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WERE BOTH ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE THE RESOLUTIONS OF POLITICAL PROBLEMS. FOR THIS PURPOSE, DISCUSSION AND DEBATE IS NOT ONLY IN ORDER, IT IS ESSENTIAL. THE PROBLEM IN THESE BODIES IS THE FREQUENT FAILURE BY THE CONFLICTING PARTIES TO UTILIZE THE POLITICAL PROCESSES WHICH ARE AFFORDED FOR THE HARMONIZATION OF POLICIES AND THE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES. IT IS A PROBLEM OF POLEMICS, RATHER THAN POLITICS. THE FUNCTIONAL AGENCIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE NOT CREATED FOR THE PURSUIT OF POLITICAL OBJECTIVES.

A PRINCIPAL REASON WHY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM WAS ESTABLISHED ON A HIGHLY DECENTRALIZED BASIS, WAS SO THAT THE OPERATIONAL AGENCIES AND OFFICES WOULD BE SEPARATED FROM THE POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE POLITICAL ORGANS.

IT NEEDS TO BE EMPHASIZED THAT, FOR THE MOST PART, THIS HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL. THE WORK OF MOST UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES HAS PROCEEDED UNPREJUDICED BY EXTERNAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSY. UNICEF, FAO, WHO, THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION, ARE ALL EXAMPLES. THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES HAS PROVIDED PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO AS MANY AS TEN MILLION REFUGEES AT ONE TIME, OFTEN WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENT OF POLITICAL CONFLICT, WITHOUT DIVERSION BY EXTRANEIOUS ISSUES.

THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEAL, ON A PRAGMATIC, FUNCTIONAL BASIS, WITH PROBLEMS THAT ENTAIL HIGHLY SENSITIVE POLITICAL ELEMENTS SUCH AS THE FIRING ON CIVILIAN AIRLINERS.

EVEN WHERE POLITICAL ISSUES HAVE INTRUDED, THE FUNCTIONAL WORK OF THE AGENCY-CONCERNED HAS USUALLY PROCEEDED EFFECTIVELY. NONETHELESS, I FEEL THAT EACH SUCH INSTANCE HAS ILLUSTRATED THE WISDOM OF THE FOUNDERS, IN SEEKING TO SEPARATE POLITICS AND FUNCTIONAL PROGRAMMES. IT IS IMPORTANT, FOR THE UNITED NATIONS AS A WHOLE, THAT INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES NOT BE ALLOWED EVEN TO APPEAR TO INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF THE WORK OF ANY UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES. THIS WILL, AT TIMES, REQUIRE PATIENCE AND PERSUASION, TO WHICH, WHERE APPROPRIATE, I WILL CONTRIBUTE WITHIN MY ABILITIES. I BELIEVE IT IS AN ACHIEVABLE GOAL, BECAUSE THE MAJORITY OF MEMBER STATES HAVE A PRACTICAL INTEREST IN THE PROGRAMMES THAT COULD BE HARMED.

IT IS EVIDENT, FROM VARIOUS CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSALS AND ACTIONS, THAT A VERY PREVALENT QUESTION IN WASHINGTON IS THE COST OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO THE AMERICAN TAX PAYER.

I MUST START HERE WITH A FEW BASIC FACTS AND FIGURES. THE REGULAR BUDGET EXPENDITURES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR 1985 ARE 806 MILLION DOLLARS, IN ROUND FIGURES. THIS IS ABOUT TWO THIRDS THE ANNUAL BUDGET OF THE NEW YORK CITY POLICE FORCE, AND JUST OVER ONE THIRD THE COST OF A FULLY-EQUIPPED TRIDENT SUBMARINE. SINCE THE UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTES ONE FOURTH OF THE UNITED NATIONS BUDGET, THE PER CAPITA COST FOR AMERICANS IS ABOUT 86 CENTS, PER PERSON, ANNUALLY.

ACCORDING TO THE CHARTER - WHICH IS OUR CONSTITUTION - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, LIKE THE AMERICAN CONGRESS, DECIDES ON THE UNITED NATIONS BUDGET AND DETERMINES THE PERCENTAGE OF THE BUDGET TO BE CONTRIBUTED BY EACH MEMBER STATE.

THIS IS DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A COMPLEX FORMULA, IN WHICH NATIONAL INCOME IS THE MAJOR ELEMENT. IF THE FORMULA WERE FOLLOWED IN THE CASE OF THE UNITED STATES, YOU WOULD NOW BE REQUIRED TO PAY MORE THAN 28 PER CENT OF OUR BUDGET. HOWEVER, IN 1972, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGREED, AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNITED STATES, THAT THE UNITED STATES ASSESSMENT WOULD NOT BE MORE THAN 25 PER CENT, AND 25 PER CENT IS NOW THE FIGURE ESTABLISHED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. IT CAN ONLY BE CHANGED BY THAT BODY.

I FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE THIS POINT CLEAR, SINCE LEGISLATION HAS JUST BEEN ENACTED REQUIRING THAT, BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 1987, THE UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTION WILL NOT BE MORE THAN 20 PER CENT OF THE ASSESSED BUDGET, UNLESS BY THAT TIME THE UNITED NATIONS INTRODUCES WEIGHTED VOTING ON BUDGETARY MATTERS. CHANGES IN VOTING PROCEDURE REQUIRE AMENDMENT OF THE CHARTER, A COMPLICATED PROCESS ENTAILING RATIFICATION BY TWO THIRDS OF THE MEMBERSHIP, INCLUDING ALL THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. I MUST STATE THAT UNILATERAL REDUCTION BY THE UNITED STATES OF ITS PROPORTIONAL ASSESSMENT, AS DETERMINED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WOULD BE WIDELY SEEN AS NON-COMPLIANCE WITH A CHARTER COMMITMENT.

AS IN ANY SERVICE ORGANIZATION, BY FAR THE MAJOR PORTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS BUDGET IS DEVOTED TO PERSONNEL EXPENDITURES. THERE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FREQUENT SUGGESTIONS THAT UNITED NATIONS SALARIES ARE TOO HIGH.

THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE SALARIES OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND HIGHER LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE IS BASED, IS THAT THEY SHOULD BE EQUIVALENT TO THOSE OF THE HIGHEST PAID NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE, WITH AN INCREMENT TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE FACTOR OF EXPATRIATION IN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE. THIS PRINCIPLE DATES FROM THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. THE UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE IS CONSIDERED THE "HIGHEST PAID NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE" AND IS, THEREFORE, THE ONE TO WHICH UNITED NATIONS SALARIES ARE COMPARED. NO REAL INCREASE IN THE BASE PAY OF THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS. THERE HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS, BUT EVEN THESE HAVE NOW BEEN SUSPENDED FOR THE TIME BEING. THESE ADJUSTMENTS ARE DETERMINED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION, A BODY CREATED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO MONITOR SALARIES AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS OF THE STAFF, AND WHICH INCLUDES AN AMERICAN MEMBER.

IN ITS REPORT TO THE FORTHCOMING SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE COMMISSION IS RECOMMENDING THAT THE DIFFERENTIAL, OR MARGIN, BY WHICH UNITED NATIONS REMUNERATION IN NEW YORK SHOULD EXCEED THAT OF THE UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE, SHOULD BE MAINTAINED WITHIN A RANGE OF 10 TO 20 PERCENT, WITH 15 PERCENT CONSTITUTING THE "DESIRABLE MARGIN" TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FACTOR OF EXPATRIATION. IT ALSO REPORTS THAT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF THE MARGIN IS APPROXIMATELY 21 PERCENT - NOT THE FIGURE OF 40 PERCENT WHICH HAS SOMETIMES BEEN CITED. THE COMMISSION HAS INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO SUSPEND COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS, UNTIL THE MARGIN IS BROUGHT WITHIN THE DEFINED RANGE.

BEFORE BECOMING SECRETARY-GENERAL, I HAD LONG EXPERIENCE AT THE UNITED NATIONS, AS A NATIONAL DELEGATE AND AS A MEMBER OF THE SECRETARIAT SERVING IN NEW YORK AND ABROAD. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT UNITED NATIONS SALARIES DO NOT PERMIT EXTRAVAGANT LIVING. THEY HARDLY SUFFICE FOR ADEQUATE HOUSING IN MANHATTAN. AND THE LEVELS OF SALARIES AT THE VAST MAJORITY OF UNITED NATIONS DUTY STATIONS ARE LOWER THAN IN NEW YORK. BY CONTRAST, A UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVANT ASSIGNED OUTSIDE THIS COUNTRY NEVER RECEIVES LESS, AND ALMOST ALWAYS RECEIVES MORE, THAN THE AMOUNT HE WOULD RECEIVE IN WASHINGTON. AT MANY LOCATIONS, UNITED NATIONS PERSONNEL ARE RECEIVING LESS COMPENSATION THAN AMERICAN CIVIL SERVANTS OF COMPARABLE RANK STATIONED THERE.

THERE IS ONE FINAL POINT ON THIS TROUBLESOME SUBJECT THAT I FEEL BOUND TO MAKE. UNITED STATES STAFF MEMBERS, WHICH MAKE UP THE LARGEST SECRETARIAT CONTINGENT, ARE SUBJECT TO ALL FEDERAL, STATE AND MUNICIPAL INCOME TAXES. EMPLOYEES FROM MOST OTHER MEMBER STATES HAVE BEEN EXEMPTED FROM INCOME TAXATION BY THEIR GOVERNMENTS, AND ARE NOT SUBJECT TO SUCH TAXES IN THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, TO AVOID DISCRIMINATION AMONG NATIONALITIES, AN INTERNAL TAX, OR STAFF ASSESSMENT, IS IMPOSED ON ALL STAFF MEMBERS IN THE APPROXIMATE AMOUNT OF THE TAXES THEY WOULD PAY IF THEY WERE SUBJECT TO AMERICAN INCOME TAXES. BECAUSE OF THIS STAFF ASSESSMENT, THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GROSS SALARY AND THE NET SALARY RECEIVED BY THE EMPLOYEE. THE STAFF ASSESSMENT IS IMPOSED ON ALL, INCLUDING THE SECRETARY-GENERAL.

I HAVE SOUGHT - (WITH THE UNITED SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN AND SOVIET GOVERNMENTS, I MIGHT SAY,) - TO ASSURE STRINGENT ECONOMY IN THE UNITED NATIONS. FOR THE PRESENT BIENNIUM, WE ARE OPERATING ON AN ESSENTIALLY NO-GROWTH BUDGET, NOTWITHSTANDING THE ADDITION OF NEW PROGRAMMES BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND THE FURTHER INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORGANIZATION. IT WOULD BE RASH TO SAY THERE IS NO WASTE, OR THAT EVERY PROGRAMME IS ESSENTIAL. IT IS ONE OF MY MAIN CONTINUING CONCERNS, AND THE LEGITIMATE CONCERN OF MEMBER STATES, TO CORRECT THE INSTANCES THAT EXIST. I MUST WARN, HOWEVER, THAT UNILATERAL WITHHOLDING OF ASSESSED FUNDS FOR SPECIFIC PEACE-KEEPING PROGRAMMES BY OTHER COUNTRIES, BROUGHT THE UNITED NATIONS INTO A SEVERE FINANCIAL CRISIS FROM WHICH IT STILL SUFFERS. UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS IN THE ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BASIC CORE BUDGET OF THE UNITED NATIONS, CAN MAKE ORDERLY ADMINISTRATION IMPOSSIBLE, AND JEOPARDIZE THE CAPACITY OF THE ORGANIZATION TO CARRY OUT THE RESPONSIBILITIES MANDATED TO IT WHICH, I BELIEVE, ARE CLEARLY IN THE INTEREST OF ALL MEMBERS, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES.

THE FINAL QUESTION THAT I WILL SEEK TO ANSWER, BEFORE RETURNING THE QUESTIONING TO YOU IS: ¿ WHY HASN'T THE UNITED NATIONS KEPT THE PEACE?

IN THE MIDST OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, WHEN, HERE IN WASHINGTON, OFFICIALS CAME TOGETHER TO CONSIDER WHAT FORM A NEW WORLD ORGANIZATION SHOULD TAKE, ONE OF THE FIRST QUESTIONS THEY STUDIED WAS, IN A SENSE, THE SAME QUESTION: ¿ WHY WASN'T THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS ABLE TO KEEP THE PEACE?

THEY CAME TO TWO CONCLUSIONS THAT ARE REFLECTED IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER. ONE WAS THAT THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRIES MUST SHARE A JOINT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND, IN RECOGNITION OF THE UNIQUE BURDEN WHICH THIS COULD ENTAIL, SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT OF VETO IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON ACTION RELATIVE TO PEACE AND SECURITY. A SECOND CONCLUSION WAS THAT ENFORCEMENT OF DECISIONS RELATED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE SHOULD BE COLLECTIVE RATHER THAN UNILATERAL, IMPLEMENTED, IF NECESSARY, BY AN INTERNATIONAL ARMED FORCE AT THE DISPOSITION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT POWER HAS NOT BEEN REALIZED. THE UNITED NATIONS, UNTIL NOW, HAS NO MORE ENFORCEMENT POWER THAN THE LEAGUE DID. ALL MAJOR COUNTRIES JOINED THE UNITED NATIONS AND HAVE REMAINED MEMBERS, WHICH IS A VERY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE COMPARED TO THE LEAGUE EXPERIENCE. BUT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN WILLING, OR ABLE, TO PUT ASIDE BILATERAL DIFFERENCES, IN ORDER TO EXERCISE CONSISTENTLY THEIR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE.

THESE ARE MAJOR REASONS WHY THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN UNABLE TO PREVENT THE CONTINUING OUTBREAK OF WARS AND ARMED CONFLICT DURING THE FORTY YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE. YET, THE RECORD OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IS, BY NO MEANS, ONE OF FAILURE. AS I HAVE POINTED OUT AT THE BEGINNING OF THESE REMARKS, IT HAS REPEATEDLY HELPED TO RESOLVE OR RESTRICT CONFLICTS, AND PROVIDED TIME AND A MECHANISM FOR CRISES TO BE DEFUSED. THESE ARE NO MEAN ACHIEVEMENTS, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN INSUFFICIENT TO AVOID THE VAST SUFFERING CAUSED BY RESORT TO ARMS OR TO GIVE ASSURANCE THAT THE ULTIMATE DISASTER OF NUCLEAR WAR, WILL NOT OCCUR IN THE FUTURE.

IN CONFRONTING THIS SITUATION, I WOULD REFER AGAIN TO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. A WEAKNESS OF THE LEAGUE, MORE FATAL, I THINK, THAN THE TWO TO WHICH I HAVE REFERRED, WAS THE FAILURE OF THE MEMBERS TO IDENTIFY INTERESTS COMMON TO ALL WHICH TRANSCENDED PURELY NATIONAL GOALS. THE CO-OPERATION OF COUNTRIES WITHIN UNITED NATIONS BODIES DURING THE PAST FORTY YEARS, IN PURSUIT OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, OF THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL PROGRESS AND OF THE ALLEVIATION OF HUMAN NEEDS, SUGGESTS THAT A CHANGE HAS OCCURRED; THAT THERE IS NOW INCREASED, IF STILL INADEQUATE, RECOGNITION OF OVER-RIDING INTERESTS, COMMON TO THE MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES. THE SUCCESS OF MANY UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES, IN IMPROVING THE GLOBAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE, REFLECTS THIS. SURELY THERE IS NOW A UNIVERSAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUPREME INTEREST SHARED BY ALL NATIONS IN AVOIDING NUCLEAR WAR. WHAT THE WORLD COMMUNITY HAS FAILED TO DO UNTIL NOW, IS TO PURSUE THIS UNDERSTANDING TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION BY STRENGTHENING ITS CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH THREATS TO THE PEACE, WHICH COULD LEAD, ULTIMATELY, TO THE UNTHINKABLE CONSEQUENCE, THAT ALL AGREE MUST BE AVOIDED.

THE UNITED NATIONS EXISTS AS A PRACTICAL, ESSENTIALLY UNIVERSAL INSTRUMENTALITY FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THESE COMMON INTERESTS, MOST IMPORTANTLY THE PREVENTION OF WAR. IF, AS I BELIEVE, THESE COMMON INTERESTS ARE INCREASINGLY RECOGNIZED, THEN IT SURELY MAKES SENSE TO WORK TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, RATHER THAN TO DIMINISH ITS POTENTIAL BY DISINTEREST, DIMINISHED SUPPORT, OR TENDENTIOUS CONDEMNATION.

I HAVE SPOKEN OF THE UNITED NATIONS TODAY, PRIMARILY IN THE
CONTEXT OF AMERICAN QUESTIONS AND AMERICAN INTERESTS. I MUST ADD
THAT THE UNITED NATIONS WAS NOT CREATED TO SERVE THE NATIONAL
INTERESTS OF ANY ONE COUNTRY. ANY SUCH EXPECTATION IS BOUND
TO LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT. ANY EFFORTS BY ONE OR MORE COUNTRIES
TO EXPLOIT THE UNITED NATIONS FOR SELF-SERVING PURPOSES, WILL WEAKEN
THE OVER-ALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ORGANIZATION.
THE UNITED NATIONS IS AN INSTRUMENTALITY BELONGING TO ALL, FOR USE IN
PURSUIT OF THE OBJECTIVES DEFINED FORTY YEARS AGO, IN THE
UNITED NATIONS CHARTER, AND STILL VALID TODAY. THEREIN LIES ITS
ENORMOUS POTENTIAL TO SERVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF EACH
MEMBER STATE. IT NEEDS, AND MERITS, THE STRONG SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT,
ESPECIALLY OF ITS MOST POWERFUL MEMBERS, IF ITS
EVIDENT INADEQUACIES ARE TO BE OVERCOME AND ITS POTENTIAL, FULLY REALIZED.

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ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

WASHINGTON, D.C., 10 SEPTEMBER 1985

PRESIDENT HESS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

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IT IS USUALLY THE PREROGATIVE OF JOURNALISTS TO PUT FORWARD QUESTIONS. TODAY, I INTEND TO ALTER THIS PROCEDURE SOMEWHAT BY FOCUSING MY INITIAL REMARKS ON A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS WHICH I HAVE ALREADY HEARD - QUESTIONS WHICH, I SENSE, ARE BEING ASKED WITH INCREASING INSISTENCY IN THE UNITED STATES BY THE PRESS, THE INTERESTED PUBLIC AND, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF. THESE QUESTIONS ARE BY NO MEANS LIMITED TO THIS COUNTRY. IF THEY ARE MORE EVIDENT HERE, THIS MAY BE IN PART THE RESULT OF THE VERY MAGNITUDE OF THE HOPE, THE RESOURCES, AND THE STATESMANSHIP WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS INVESTED IN THE UNITED NATIONS FROM THE TIME, MORE THAN FORTY YEARS AGO, WHEN THE CONCEPT OF A NEW WORLD ORGANIZATION TO PRESERVE PEACE WAS FIRST CONCEIVED BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, SECRETARY HULL AND OTHER FAR-SIGHTED AMERICAN OFFICIALS. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT MY APPROACH IS NOT AN EFFORT TO USURP THE JOURNALISTIC FUNCTION OR TO AVOID YOUR QUESTIONS. I WILL LOOK FORWARD TO ANSWERING THOSE THAT ARE PUT FORWARD LATER AS I BELIEVE IS THE CUSTOM OF THE HOUSE.

I WILL START MY "SELF-INTERROGATION" WITH A VERY COMMON QUESTION:
HOW DOES THE UNITED NATIONS SERVE UNITED STATES INTERESTS?

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN FURTHERED, HEALTH IMPROVED, HUNGER FOUGHT, REFUGEES CARED FOR, NATIONAL POPULATION PLANNING ENCOURAGED, EDUCATION POSSIBILITIES BROADENED AND, SOMETHING ON WHICH I AM URGING FURTHER EFFORTS, ILLEGAL TRAFFIC IN DRUGS COMBATTED. THESE ASPECTS OF UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES, WHILE INSUFFICIENTLY KNOWN, ARE GENERALLY HIGHLY VALUED, AS SHOWN BY THE STRONG AND SUSTAINED SUPPORT MOST HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS. FOR THIS REASON, I THINK IT MORE USEFUL TODAY TO CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH THE UNITED NATIONS, IN THE DANGEROUS CIRCUMSTANCES OF A NUCLEAR ERA, HAS CONTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE MAJOR POWERS CERTAINLY DO NOT LOOK TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR THEIR DEFENSE AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO DO SO IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. BUT THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CANNOT OR DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR SECURITY. LET ME CITE FOUR EXAMPLES SPANNING MOST OF THE 40 YEAR HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION.

FIRST, THE BERLIN CRISIS OF 1948-1949. THIS WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AND A SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL DEVOTED EXTENSIVE EFFORT TO DEVISING A PLAN TO RESOLVE THE PIVOTAL CURRENCY PROBLEM. THE PLAN WAS NOT ACCEPTED AND DID NOT FIGURE IN THE ULTIMATE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. THE EXTENDED ACTION TAKEN IN THE COUNCIL WAS ONE ELEMENT, HOWEVER, IN LESSENING THE PRESSURE TOWARDS ARMED CONFRONTATION AND IN AFFORDING TIME FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WERE EVENTUALLY INITIATED IN THE UNITED NATIONS PREMISES, PREMISES THAT ALWAYS OFFER A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERNATIONAL CONTACT AND EXCHANGE.

SECOND, THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS OF 1962 WHICH MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE BROUGHT THE WORLD CLOSE TO NUCLEAR WAR. I WOULD NOT SUGGEST THAT THE UNITED NATIONS WAS THE PRIMARY ELEMENT IN PREVENTING THIS FROM HAPPENING. BUT THE THEN ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL, U THANT, THROUGH THE MESSAGES WHICH HE SENT TO THE TWO POWERS WHILE THE CRISIS WAS BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL, FACILITATED A RESOLUTION BY PROVIDING A FORMULA AT A CRITICAL MOMENT, EMANATING FROM AN OBJECTIVE AND RESPECTED SOURCE, WITH WHICH BOTH COULD AGREE WITH DIGNITY.

NEXT, THE MIDDLE EAST WAR OF 1973. AFTER A CEASE-FIRE CALLED FOR BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL WAS OBTAINED UNDER THE STRONG AND, I THINK, RESPONSIBLE INFLUENCE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION, DISENGAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS WERE WORKED OUT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY FORCE COMMANDER. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IS IT POSSIBLE TO IMAGINE A RUSSIAN OR AMERICAN GENERAL SUCCESSFULLY PERFORMING THIS FUNCTION? FOLLOWING THE DISENGAGEMENT, UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES STOOD BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI FORCES UNTIL THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS CAME INTO EFFECT. THEY STILL STAND TODAY ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

FINALLY, I WOULD CITE A FAILURE - THE UNITED NATIONS' EFFORT TO PREVENT THE FALKLAND OR MALVINAS WAR. WHEN ARGENTINE FORCES LANDED IN THE MALVINAS, THE SECURITY COUNCIL QUICKLY ADOPTED A RESOLUTION DEMANDING IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF THESE FORCES AND A CEASE-FIRE, AND CALLING FOR NEW DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THIS RESOLUTION PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR THE MEDIATION EFFORT UNDERTAKEN BY THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE.

I SUBSEQUENTLY USED MY GOOD OFFICES IN AN INTENSE EFFORT TO OBTAIN A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CRISIS UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SAME SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. THE EFFORT WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL, BUT I HAVE NOT THE SLIGHTEST DOUBT THAT IT HAD TO BE DONE, THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CONTRIBUTION WAS IMPORTANT, AND THAT, BECAUSE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE OUTCOME IN COMPARABLE CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE FUTURE MIGHT BE POSITIVE.

THESE WIDELY SEPARATED INSTANCES - ALL OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO UNITED STATES INTERESTS, ILLUSTRATE THREE POINTS WHICH, I BELIEVE, CAN BE VERY SIGNIFICANT IN THE FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. FIRST, IN CONDITIONS OF DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MAJOR POWERS, THE UNITED NATIONS MAY PROVIDE A WAY OUT - A FORMULA FOR AGREEMENT, OR SIMPLY A PERIOD OF DEBATE DURING WHICH THE FLASH-POINT OF CRISIS CAN PASS. EVEN IF THIS IS SEEN AS MARGINAL, SURELY IT CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED WHEN THE MARGIN FOR SURVIVAL IS SO NARROW. SECONDLY, IN THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF CONFLICT SITUATIONS, THE UNITED NATIONS CAN CARRY OUT FUNCTIONS, SUCH AS FACT-FINDING, OBSERVATION AND PEACE-KEEPING, NOT EASILY PERFORMED BY NATIONAL ENTITIES; AND THIRDLY, THE UNITED NATIONS CAN PROVIDE FOR MEDIATION WHICH, THOUGH BENEFITTING FROM THE SUPPORT OF MAJOR POWERS, CAN AVOID THE COMPLEXITIES OF THEIR DIRECT INVOLVEMENT, OR THE JEOPARDY TO RELATIONS WHICH DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN A DISPUTE BETWEEN FRIENDS CAN ENTAIL.

BUT, IT IS OFTEN ASKED: WHY HAS THE UNITED NATIONS BECOME POLITICIZED TO THE POINT THAT USEFUL OPERATIONS ARE JEOPARDIZED?

THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WERE BOTH ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE THE RESOLUTIONS OF POLITICAL PROBLEMS. FOR THIS PURPOSE, DISCUSSION AND DEBATE IS NOT ONLY IN ORDER, IT IS ESSENTIAL. THE PROBLEM IN THESE BODIES IS THE FREQUENT FAILURE BY THE CONFLICTING PARTIES TO UTILIZE THE POLITICAL PROCESSES WHICH ARE AFFORDED FOR THE HARMONIZATION OF POLICIES AND THE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES. IT IS A PROBLEM OF POLEMICS RATHER THAN POLITICS. THE FUNCTIONAL AGENCIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE NOT CREATED FOR THE PURSUIT OF POLITICAL OBJECTIVES.

A PRINCIPAL REASON WHY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM WAS ESTABLISHED ON A HIGHLY DECENTRALIZED BASIS WAS SO THAT THE OPERATIONAL AGENCIES AND OFFICES WOULD BE SEPARATED FROM THE POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE POLITICAL ORGANS.

IT NEEDS TO BE EMPHASIZED THAT, FOR THE MOST PART, THIS HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL

THE WORK OF MOST UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES HAS PROCEEDED UNPREJUDICED BY EXTERNAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSY. UNICEF, FAO, WHO, THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION ARE ALL EXAMPLES. THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES HAS PROVIDED PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO AS MANY AS TEN MILLION REFUGEES AT ONE TIME, OFTEN WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENT OF POLITICAL CONFLICT, WITHOUT DIVERSION BY EXTRANEIOUS ISSUES.

THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEAL ON A PRAGMATIC, FUNCTIONAL BASIS WITH PROBLEMS THAT ENTAIL HIGHLY SENSITIVE POLITICAL ELEMENTS SUCH AS THE FIRING ON CIVILIAN AIRLINERS.

EVEN WHERE POLITICAL ISSUES HAVE INTRUDED, THE FUNCTIONAL WORK OF THE AGENCY CONCERNED HAS USUALLY PROCEEDED EFFECTIVELY. NONETHELESS, I FEEL THAT EACH SUCH INSTANCE HAS ILLUSTRATED THE WISDOM OF THE FOUNDERS IN SEEKING TO SEPARATE POLITICS AND FUNCTIONAL PROGRAMMES. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS AS A WHOLE THAT INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES NOT BE ALLOWED EVEN TO APPEAR TO INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF THE WORK OF ANY UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES. THIS WILL, AT TIMES, REQUIRE PATIENCE AND PERSUASION, TO WHICH, WHERE APPROPRIATE, I WILL CONTRIBUTE WITHIN MY ABILITIES. I BELIEVE IT IS AN ACHIEVABLE GOAL BECAUSE THE MAJORITY OF MEMBER STATES HAVE A PRACTICAL INTEREST IN THE PROGRAMMES THAT COULD BE HARMED.

IT IS EVIDENT FROM VARIOUS CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSALS AND ACTIONS THAT A VERY PREVALENT QUESTION IN WASHINGTON IS THE COST OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO THE AMERICAN TAX PAYER.

I MUST START HERE WITH A FEW BASIC FACTS AND FIGURES.

THE REGULAR BUDGET EXPENDITURES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR 1985 ARE 806 MILLION DOLLARS IN ROUND FIGURES. THIS IS ABOUT TWO THIRDS THE ANNUAL BUDGET OF THE NEW YORK CITY POLICE FORCE AND JUST OVER ONE THIRD THE COST OF A FULLY EQUIPPED TRIDENT SUBMARINE.

SINCE THE U.S. CONTRIBUTES ONE FOURTH OF THE U.N. BUDGET,
THE PER CAPITA COST ~~OF THE REGULAR UNITED NATIONS BUDGET~~ FOR AMERICANS IS ABOUT 86 CENTS PER PERSON ANNUALLY.

ACCORDING TO THE CHARTER - WHICH IS OUR CONSTITUTION - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, LIKE THE AMERICAN CONGRESS, DECIDES ON THE UNITED NATIONS BUDGET AND DETERMINES THE PERCENTAGE OF THE BUDGET TO BE CONTRIBUTED BY EACH MEMBER STATE.

THIS IS DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A COMPLEX FORMULA IN WHICH NATIONAL INCOME IS THE MAJOR ELEMENT. IF THE FORMULA WERE FOLLOWED IN THE CASE OF THE UNITED STATES, YOU WOULD NOW BE REQUIRED TO PAY MORE THAN 28 PER CENT OF OUR BUDGET. HOWEVER, IN 1972, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGREED, AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNITED STATES, THAT THE UNITED STATES ASSESSMENT WOULD NOT BE MORE THAN 25 PER CENT AND 25 PER CENT IS NOW THE FIGURE ESTABLISHED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. IT CAN ONLY BE CHANGED BY THAT BODY.

I FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE THIS POINT CLEAR, SINCE LEGISLATION HAS JUST BEEN ENACTED REQUIRING THAT, BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 1987 THE UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTION WILL NOT BE MORE THAN 20 PER CENT OF THE ASSESSED BUDGET, UNLESS BY THAT TIME THE UNITED NATIONS INTRODUCES WEIGHTED VOTING ON BUDGETARY MATTERS. CHANGES IN VOTING PROCEDURE REQUIRE AMENDMENT OF THE CHARTER, A COMPLICATED PROCESS ENTAILING RATIFICATION BY TWO THIRDS OF THE MEMBERSHIP, INCLUDING ALL THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. I MUST STATE THAT UNILATERAL REDUCTION BY THE UNITED STATES OF ITS PROPORTIONAL ASSESSMENT, AS DETERMINED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WOULD BE WIDELY SEEN AS NON-COMPLIANCE WITH A CHARTER COMMITMENT.

AS IN ANY SERVICE ORGANIZATION, BY FAR THE MAJOR PORTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS BUDGET IS DEVOTED TO PERSONNEL EXPENDITURES. THERE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FREQUENT SUGGESTIONS THAT UNITED NATIONS SALARIES ARE TOO HIGH.

THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE SALARIES OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND HIGHER LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE IS BASED IS THAT THEY SHOULD BE EQUIVALENT TO THOSE OF THE HIGHEST PAID NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE WITH AN INCREMENT TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE FACTOR OF EXPATRIATION IN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE. THIS PRINCIPLE DATES FROM THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. THE UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE IS CONSIDERED THE "HIGHEST PAID NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE" AND IS, THEREFORE, THE ONE TO WHICH UNITED NATIONS SALARIES ARE COMPARED. NO REAL INCREASE IN THE BASE PAY OF THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS. THERE HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS BUT EVEN THESE HAVE NOW BEEN SUSPENDED FOR THE TIME BEING. THESE ADJUSTMENTS ARE DETERMINED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION, A BODY CREATED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO MONITOR SALARIES AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS OF THE STAFF, AND WHICH INCLUDES AN AMERICAN MEMBER.

IN ITS REPORT TO THE FORTHCOMING SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE COMMISSION IS RECOMMENDING THAT THE DIFFERENTIAL OR MARGIN BY WHICH UNITED NATIONS REMUNERATION IN NEW YORK SHOULD EXCEED THAT OF THE UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE SHOULD BE MAINTAINED WITHIN A RANGE OF 10 TO 20 PERCENT, WITH 15 PERCENT CONSTITUTING THE "DESIRABLE MARGIN". TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FACTOR OF EXPATRIATION. IT ALSO REPORTS THAT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF THE MARGIN IS APPROXIMATELY 21 PERCENT - NOT THE FIGURE OF 40 PERCENT WHICH HAS SOMETIMES BEEN CITED. THE COMMISSION HAS INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO SUSPEND COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS UNTIL THE MARGIN IS BROUGHT WITHIN THE DEFINED RANGE.

BEFORE BECOMING SECRETARY-GENERAL, I HAD LONG EXPERIENCE AT THE UNITED NATIONS, AS A NATIONAL DELEGATE AND AS A MEMBER OF THE SECRETARIAT SERVING IN NEW YORK AND ABROAD. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT UNITED NATIONS SALARIES DO NOT PERMIT EXTRAVAGANT LIVING. THEY HARDLY SUFFICE FOR ADEQUATE HOUSING IN MANHATTAN. AND THE LEVELS OF SALARIES AT THE VAST MAJORITY OF UNITED NATIONS DUTY STATIONS ARE LOWER THAN IN NEW YORK. BY CONTRAST, A UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVANT ASSIGNED OUTSIDE THIS COUNTRY NEVER RECEIVES LESS, AND ALMOST ALWAYS RECEIVES MORE, THAN THE AMOUNT HE WOULD RECEIVE IN WASHINGTON. AT MANY LOCATIONS, UNITED NATIONS PERSONNEL ARE RECEIVING LESS COMPENSATION THAN AMERICAN CIVIL SERVANTS OF COMPARABLE RANK STATIONED THERE.

THERE IS ONE FINAL POINT ON THIS TROUBLESOME SUBJECT THAT I FEEL BOUND TO MAKE. UNITED STATES STAFF MEMBERS, WHICH MAKE UP THE LARGEST SECRETARIAT CONTINGENT, ARE SUBJECT TO ALL FEDERAL, STATE AND MUNICIPAL INCOME TAXES. EMPLOYEES FROM MOST OTHER MEMBER STATES HAVE BEEN EXEMPTED FROM INCOME TAXATION BY THEIR GOVERNMENTS AND ARE NOT SUBJECT TO SUCH TAXES IN THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, TO AVOID DISCRIMINATION AMONG NATIONALITIES, AN INTERNAL TAX, OR STAFF ASSESSMENT, IS IMPOSED ON ALL STAFF MEMBERS IN THE APPROXIMATE AMOUNT OF THE TAXES THEY WOULD PAY IF THEY WERE SUBJECT TO AMERICAN INCOME TAXES. BECAUSE OF THIS STAFF ASSESSMENT, THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GROSS SALARY AND THE NET SALARY RECEIVED BY THE EMPLOYEE. THE STAFF ASSESSMENT IS IMPOSED ON ALL, INCLUDING THE SECRETARY-GENERAL.

I HAVE SOUGHT - (WITH THE UNITED SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN AND SOVIET GOVERNMENTS, I MIGHT SAY,) - TO ASSURE STRINGENT ECONOMY IN THE UNITED NATIONS. FOR THE PRESENT BIENNIUM, WE ARE OPERATING ON AN ESSENTIALLY NO-GROWTH BUDGET, NOTWITHSTANDING THE ADDITION OF NEW PROGRAMMES BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE FURTHER INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORGANIZATION. IT WOULD BE RASH TO SAY THERE IS NO WASTE OR THAT EVERY PROGRAMME IS ESSENTIAL. IT IS ONE OF MY MAIN CONTINUING CONCERNS AND THE LEGITIMATE CONCERN OF MEMBER STATES TO CORRECT THE INSTANCES THAT EXIST. I MUST WARN, HOWEVER, THAT UNILATERAL WITHHOLDING OF ASSESSED FUNDS FOR SPECIFIC PEACE-KEEPING PROGRAMMES BY OTHER COUNTRIES BROUGHT THE UNITED NATIONS INTO A SEVERE FINANCIAL CRISIS FROM WHICH IT STILL SUFFERS. UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS IN THE ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BASIC CORE BUDGET OF THE UNITED NATIONS CAN MAKE ORDERLY ADMINISTRATION IMPOSSIBLE AND JEOPARDIZE THE CAPACITY OF THE ORGANIZATION TO CARRY OUT THE RESPONSIBILITIES MANDATED TO IT WHICH, I BELIEVE, ARE CLEARLY IN THE INTEREST OF ALL MEMBERS, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES.

THE FINAL QUESTION THAT I WILL SEEK TO ANSWER BEFORE RETURNING THE QUESTIONING TO YOU IS: WHY HASN'T THE UNITED NATIONS KEPT THE PEACE?

IN THE MIDST OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, WHEN, HERE IN WASHINGTON, OFFICIALS CAME TOGETHER TO CONSIDER WHAT FORM A NEW WORLD ORGANIZATION SHOULD TAKE, ONE OF THE FIRST QUESTIONS THEY STUDIED WAS, IN A SENSE, THE SAME QUESTION: WHY WASN'T THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS ABLE TO KEEP THE PEACE?

THEY CAME TO TWO CONCLUSIONS THAT ARE REFLECTED IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER. ONE WAS THAT THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRIES MUST SHARE A JOINT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND, IN RECOGNITION OF THE UNIQUE BURDEN WHICH THIS COULD ENTAIL, SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT OF VETO IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON ACTION RELATIVE TO PEACE AND SECURITY. A SECOND CONCLUSION WAS THAT ENFORCEMENT OF DECISIONS RELATED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE SHOULD BE COLLECTIVE RATHER THAN UNILATERAL, IMPLEMENTED, IF NECESSARY, BY AN INTERNATIONAL ARMED FORCE AT THE DISPOSITION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT POWER HAS NOT BEEN REALIZED. THE UNITED NATIONS, UNTIL NOW, HAS NO MORE ENFORCEMENT POWER THAN THE LEAGUE DID. ALL MAJOR COUNTRIES JOINED THE UNITED NATIONS AND HAVE REMAINED MEMBERS WHICH IS A VERY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE COMPARED TO THE LEAGUE EXPERIENCE. BUT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN WILLING OR ABLE TO PUT ASIDE BILATERAL DIFFERENCES IN ORDER TO EXERCISE CONSISTENTLY THEIR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE.

THESE ARE MAJOR REASONS WHY THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN UNABLE TO PREVENT THE CONTINUING OUTBREAK OF WARS AND ARMED CONFLICT DURING THE FORTY YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE. YET, THE RECORD OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IS, BY NO MEANS, ONE OF FAILURE. AS I HAVE POINTED OUT AT THE BEGINNING OF THESE REMARKS, IT HAS REPEATEDLY HELPED TO RESOLVE OR RESTRICT CONFLICTS, AND PROVIDED TIME AND A MECHANISM FOR CRISES TO BE DEFUSED. THESE ARE NO MEAN ACHIEVEMENTS, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN INSUFFICIENT TO AVOID THE VAST SUFFERING CAUSED BY RESORT TO ARMS OR TO GIVE ASSURANCE THAT THE ULTIMATE DISASTER OF NUCLEAR WAR WILL NOT OCCUR IN THE FUTURE.

IN CONFRONTING THIS SITUATION, I WOULD REFER AGAIN TO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. A WEAKNESS OF THE LEAGUE, MORE FATAL, I THINK, THAN THE TWO TO WHICH I HAVE REFERRED, WAS THE FAILURE OF THE MEMBERS TO IDENTIFY INTERESTS COMMON TO ALL WHICH TRANSCENDED PURELY NATIONAL GOALS. THE CO-OPERATION OF COUNTRIES WITHIN UNITED NATIONS BODIES DURING THE PAST FORTY YEARS IN PURSUIT OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, OF THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL PROGRESS AND OF THE ALLEVIATION OF HUMAN NEEDS SUGGESTS THAT A CHANGE HAS OCCURRED; THAT THERE IS NOW INCREASED, IF STILL INADEQUATE, RECOGNITION OF OVER-RIDING INTERESTS COMMON TO THE MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES. THE SUCCESS OF MANY UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES IN IMPROVING THE GLOBAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE REFLECTS THIS. SURELY THERE IS NOW A UNIVERSAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUPREME INTEREST SHARED BY ALL NATIONS IN AVOIDING NUCLEAR WAR. WHAT THE WORLD COMMUNITY HAS FAILED TO DO UNTIL NOW IS TO PURSUE THIS UNDERSTANDING TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION BY STRENGTHENING ITS CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH THREATS TO THE PEACE WHICH COULD LEAD ULTIMATELY TO THE UNTHINKABLE CONSEQUENCE THAT ALL AGREE MUST BE AVOIDED.

THE UNITED NATIONS EXISTS AS A PRACTICAL, ESSENTIALLY UNIVERSAL INSTRUMENTALITY FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THESE COMMON INTERESTS, MOST IMPORTANTLY THE PREVENTION OF WAR. IF, AS I BELIEVE, THESE COMMON INTERESTS ARE INCREASINGLY RECOGNIZED, THEN IT SURELY MAKES SENSE TO WORK TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS RATHER THAN TO DIMINISH ITS POTENTIAL BY DISINTEREST, DIMINISHED SUPPORT, OR TENDENTIOUS CONDEMNATION.

I HAVE SPOKEN OF THE UNITED NATIONS TODAY PRIMARILY IN THE CONTEXT OF AMERICAN QUESTIONS AND AMERICAN INTERESTS. I MUST ADD THAT THE UNITED NATIONS WAS NOT CREATED TO SERVE THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF ANY ONE COUNTRY. ANY SUCH EXPECTATION IS BOUND TO LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT. ANY EFFORTS BY ONE OR MORE COUNTRIES TO EXPLOIT THE UNITED NATIONS FOR SELF-SERVING PURPOSES WILL WEAKEN THE OVER-ALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ORGANIZATION.

THE UNITED NATIONS IS AN INSTRUMENTALITY BELONGING TO ALL FOR USE IN PURSUIT OF THE OBJECTIVES DEFINED FORTY YEARS AGO IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER AND STILL VALID TODAY. THEREIN LIES ITS ENORMOUS POTENTIAL TO SERVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF EACH MEMBER STATE. IT NEEDS AND MERITS THE STRONG SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT, ESPECIALLY OF ITS MOST POWERFUL MEMBERS, IF ITS EVIDENT INADEQUACIES ARE TO BE OVERCOME AND ITS POTENTIAL FULLY REALIZED.

* * * * *

Nancy Ellen,

This is the old copy
for you to use when
making the new
one.

Cath.

9/9.

OLD

ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

WASHINGTON, D.C., 10 SEPTEMBER 1985

~~MR.~~ ^{HESS} PRESIDENT (~~OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB~~), MR.
(~~INTRODUCER~~), LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS A VERY REAL PRIVILEGE TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TODAY
TO SPEAK TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB.
YOUR INFLUENCE ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF EVENTS OF MILLIONS
OF PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY, AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, IS REALLY
IMMEASURABLE. TO SPEAK HERE IS ALSO A CONSIDERABLE CHALLENGE.
IN MY OPINION, TWO ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ARE DISCRETION AND
OBJECTIVITY. THIS COMBINATION IS NOT, I SUSPECT,
EXACTLY WHAT A GOOD-MANY JOURNALISTS WOULD CHOOSE IN THEIR LUNCH
TIME SPEAKER. I WOULD ONLY SAY THAT I HAVE SOUGHT TO BE HONEST
AND FORTHRIGHT IN DESCRIBING, FROM MY PERSPECTIVE,
THE STATE OF THE WORLD AND, IN PARTICULAR, OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
AND I INTEND TO BE SO TODAY.

IT IS USUALLY THE PREROGATIVE OF JOURNALISTS TO PUT FORWARD QUESTIONS. TODAY, I INTEND TO ALTER THIS PROCEDURE SOMEWHAT BY FOCUSING MY INITIAL REMARKS ON A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS WHICH I HAVE ALREADY HEARD - QUESTIONS WHICH, I SENSE, ARE BEING ASKED WITH INCREASING INSISTENCY IN THE UNITED STATES BY THE PRESS, THE INTERESTED PUBLIC AND, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF. THESE QUESTIONS ARE BY NO MEANS LIMITED TO THIS COUNTRY. IF THEY ARE MORE EVIDENT HERE, THIS MAY BE IN PART THE RESULT OF THE VERY MAGNITUDE OF THE HOPE, THE RESOURCES, AND THE STATESMANSHIP WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS INVESTED IN THE UNITED NATIONS FROM THE TIME, MORE THAN FORTY YEARS AGO, WHEN THE CONCEPT OF A NEW WORLD ORGANIZATION TO PRESERVE PEACE WAS FIRST CONCEIVED BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, SECRETARY HULL, AND OTHER FAR-SIGHTED AMERICAN OFFICIALS. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT MY APPROACH IS NOT AN EFFORT TO ^{USURP} USURP THE JOURNALISTIC FUNCTION, OR TO AVOID YOUR QUESTIONS. I WILL LOOK FORWARD TO ANSWERING THOSE THAT ARE PUT FORWARD LATER, AS I BELIEVE IS THE CUSTOM OF THE HOUSE.

I WILL START MY "SELF-INTERROGATION" WITH A VERY COMMON QUESTION: HOW DOES THE UNITED NATIONS SERVE UNITED STATES INTERESTS?

I COULD DEVOTE MY ENTIRE REMARKS TODAY TO DESCRIBING THE VARIOUS UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER GLOBAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE, WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FOR A STABLE WORLD COMMUNITY, SOMETHING WHICH I BELIEVE MOST AMERICANS WOULD AGREE IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN FURTHERED, HEALTH IMPROVED, HUNGER FOUGHT, REFUGEES CARED FOR, NATIONAL POPULATION PLANNING ENCOURAGED, EDUCATION POSSIBILITIES BROADENED AND, SOMETHING ON WHICH I AM URGING FURTHER EFFORTS, ILLEGAL TRAFFIC IN DRUGS COMBATTED. THESE ASPECTS OF UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES, WHILE INSUFFICIENTLY KNOWN, ARE GENERALLY HIGHLY VALUED, AS SHOWN BY THE STRONG AND SUSTAINED SUPPORT MOST HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS. FOR THIS REASON, I THINK IT MORE USEFUL TODAY TO CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH THE UNITED NATIONS, IN THE DANGEROUS CIRCUMSTANCES OF A NUCLEAR ERA, HAS CONTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE MAJOR POWERS CERTAINLY DO NOT LOOK TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR THEIR DEFENSE, AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO DO SO IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. BUT THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CANNOT, OR DOES NOT, CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR SECURITY. LET ME CITE FOUR EXAMPLES SPANNING MOST OF THE 40 YEAR HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION.

FIRST, THE BERLIN CRISIS OF 1948-1949. THIS WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AND A SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL DEVOTED EXTENSIVE EFFORT TO DEVISING A PLAN TO RESOLVE THE PIVOTAL CURRENCY PROBLEM. THE PLAN WAS NOT ACCEPTED AND DID NOT FIGURE IN THE ULTIMATE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. THE EXTENDED ACTION TAKEN IN THE COUNCIL WAS ONE ELEMENT, HOWEVER, IN LESSENING THE PRESSURE TOWARDS ARMED CONFRONTATION, AND IN AFFORDING TIME FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WERE EVENTUALLY INITIATED IN THE UNITED NATIONS PREMISES, PREMISES THAT ALWAYS OFFER A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERNATIONAL CONTACT AND EXCHANGE.

SECOND, THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS OF 1962, WHICH MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE BROUGHT THE WORLD CLOSE TO NUCLEAR WAR. I WOULD NOT SUGGEST THAT THE UNITED NATIONS WAS THE PRIMARY ELEMENT IN PREVENTING THIS FROM HAPPENING. BUT THE THEN ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL, U THANT, THROUGH THE MESSAGES WHICH HE SENT TO THE TWO POWERS WHILE THE CRISIS WAS BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL, FACILITATED A RESOLUTION BY PROVIDING A FORMULA AT A CRITICAL MOMENT, EMANATING FROM AN OBJECTIVE AND RESPECTED SOURCE, WITH WHICH BOTH COULD AGREE WITH DIGNITY.

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FINALLY, I WOULD CITE A FAILURE - THE UNITED NATIONS' EFFORT TO PREVENT THE FALKLAND OR MALVINAS WAR. WHEN ARGENTINE FORCES LANDED IN THE MALVINAS, THE SECURITY COUNCIL QUICKLY ADOPTED A RESOLUTION DEMANDING IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF THESE FORCES AND A CEASE-FIRE, AND CALLING FOR NEW DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THIS RESOLUTION PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR THE MEDIATION EFFORT UNDERTAKEN BY THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE. I SUBSEQUENTLY USED MY GOOD OFFICES IN AN INTENSE EFFORT TO OBTAIN A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CRISIS, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SAME SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. THE EFFORT WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL, BUT I HAVE NOT THE SLIGHTEST DOUBT THAT IT HAD TO BE DONE, THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CONTRIBUTION WAS IMPORTANT, AND THAT, BECAUSE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE OUTCOME IN COMPARABLE CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE FUTURE MIGHT BE POSITIVE.

THESE WIDELY SEPARATED INSTANCES - ALL OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO UNITED STATES INTERESTS, ILLUSTRATE THREE POINTS WHICH, I BELIEVE, CAN BE VERY SIGNIFICANT IN THE FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. FIRST, IN CONDITIONS OF DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MAJOR POWERS, THE UNITED NATIONS MAY PROVIDE A WAY OUT - A FORMULA FOR AGREEMENT, OR SIMPLY A PERIOD OF DEBATE, DURING WHICH THE FLASH-POINT OF CRISIS CAN PASS. EVEN IF THIS IS SEEN AS MARGINAL, SURELY IT CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED WHEN THE MARGIN FOR SURVIVAL IS SO NARROW. SECONDLY, IN THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF CONFLICT SITUATIONS, THE UNITED NATIONS CAN CARRY OUT FUNCTIONS, SUCH AS FACT-FINDING, OBSERVATION AND PEACE-KEEPING, NOT EASILY PERFORMED BY NATIONAL ENTITIES; AND THIRDLY, THE UNITED NATIONS CAN PROVIDE FOR MEDIATION WHICH, THOUGH BENEFITTING FROM THE SUPPORT OF MAJOR POWERS, CAN AVOID THE COMPLEXITIES OF THEIR DIRECT INVOLVEMENT, OR THE JEOPARDY TO RELATIONS WHICH DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN A DISPUTE BETWEEN FRIENDS CAN ENTAIL.

BUT, IT IS OFTEN ASKED: ¿ WHY HAS THE UNITED NATIONS BECOME POLITICIZED TO THE POINT THAT USEFUL OPERATIONS ARE JEOPARDIZED?

THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WERE BOTH ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE THE RESOLUTIONS OF POLITICAL PROBLEMS. FOR THIS PURPOSE, DISCUSSION AND DEBATE IS NOT ONLY IN ORDER, IT IS ESSENTIAL. THE PROBLEM IN THESE BODIES IS THE FREQUENT FAILURE BY THE CONFLICTING PARTIES TO UTILIZE THE POLITICAL PROCESSES WHICH ARE AFFORDED FOR THE HARMONIZATION OF POLICIES AND THE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES. IT IS A PROBLEM OF POLEMICS RATHER THAN POLITICS. THE FUNCTIONAL AGENCIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE NOT CREATED FOR THE PURSUIT OF POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. A PRINCIPAL REASON WHY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM WAS ESTABLISHED ON A HIGHLY DECENTRALIZED BASIS WAS SO THAT THE OPERATIONAL AGENCIES AND OFFICES WOULD BE SEPARATED FROM THE POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE POLITICAL ORGANS. IT NEEDS TO BE EMPHASIZED THAT, FOR THE MOST PART, THIS HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL. THE WORK OF MOST UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES HAS PROCEEDED UNPREJUDICED BY EXTERNAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSY. UNICEF, FAO, WHO, THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION ARE ALL EXAMPLES. THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES HAS PROVIDED PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO AS MANY AS TEN MILLION REFUGEES AT ONE TIME, OFTEN WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENT OF POLITICAL CONFLICT, WITHOUT DIVERSION BY EXTRANEOUS ISSUES. THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEAL ON A PRAGMATIC, FUNCTIONAL BASIS WITH PROBLEMS THAT ENTAIL HIGHLY SENSITIVE POLITICAL ELEMENTS SUCH AS THE FIRING ON CIVILIAN AIRLINERS.

EVEN WHERE POLITICAL ISSUES HAVE INTRUDED, THE FUNCTIONAL WORK OF THE AGENCY CONCERNED HAS USUALLY PROCEEDED EFFECTIVELY. NONETHELESS, I FEEL THAT EACH SUCH INSTANCE HAS ILLUSTRATED THE WISDOM OF THE FOUNDERS IN SEEKING TO SEPARATE POLITICS AND FUNCTIONAL PROGRAMMES. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS AS A WHOLE THAT INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES NOT BE ALLOWED EVEN TO APPEAR TO INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION OF THE WORK OF ANY UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES. THIS WILL, AT TIMES, REQUIRE PATIENCE AND PERSUASION, TO WHICH, WHERE APPROPRIATE, I WILL CONTRIBUTE WITHIN MY ABILITIES. I BELIEVE IT IS AN ACHIEVABLE GOAL, BECAUSE THE MAJORITY OF MEMBER STATES HAVE A PRACTICAL INTEREST IN THE PROGRAMMES THAT COULD BE HARMED.

IT IS EVIDENT FROM VARIOUS CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSALS AND ACTIONS THAT A VERY PREVALENT QUESTION IN WASHINGTON IS THE COST OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO THE AMERICAN TAX PAYER.

I MUST START HERE WITH A FEW BASIC FACTS AND FIGURES. THE REGULAR BUDGET OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR 1985 IS 683 MILLION DOLLARS IN ROUND FIGURES. THIS IS JUST OVER HALF THE ANNUAL BUDGET OF THE NEW YORK CITY POLICE FORCE, AND JUST UNDER ONE THIRD THE COST OF A FULLY EQUIPPED TRIDENT SUBMARINE. THE PER CAPITA COST OF THE REGULAR UNITED NATIONS BUDGET FOR AMERICANS IS ABOUT 75 CENTS PER PERSON ANNUALLY.

ACCORDING TO THE CHARTER - WHICH IS OUR CONSTITUTION - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, LIKE THE AMERICAN CONGRESS, DECIDES ON THE UNITED NATIONS BUDGET AND DETERMINES THE PERCENTAGE OF THE BUDGET TO BE CONTRIBUTED BY EACH MEMBER STATE.

THIS IS DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A COMPLEX FORMULA IN WHICH NATIONAL INCOME IS THE MAJOR ELEMENT. IF THE FORMULA WERE FOLLOWED IN THE CASE OF THE UNITED STATES, YOU WOULD NOW BE REQUIRED TO PAY MORE THAN 28 PER CENT OF OUR BUDGET. HOWEVER, IN 1972, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGREED, AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNITED STATES, THAT THE UNITED STATES ASSESSMENT WOULD NOT BE MORE THAN 25 PER CENT, AND 25 PER CENT IS NOW THE FIGURE ESTABLISHED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. IT CAN ONLY BE CHANGED BY THAT BODY.

I FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE THIS POINT CLEAR, SINCE LEGISLATION HAS JUST BEEN ENACTED REQUIRING THAT, BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 1987, THE UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTION WILL NOT BE MORE THAN 20 PER CENT OF THE ASSESSED BUDGET, UNLESS BY THAT TIME THE UNITED NATIONS INTRODUCES WEIGHTED VOTING ON BUDGETARY MATTERS. CHANGES IN VOTING PROCEDURE REQUIRE AMENDMENT OF THE CHARTER, A COMPLICATED PROCESS ENTAILING RATIFICATION BY TWO THIRDS OF THE MEMBERSHIP, INCLUDING ALL THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY Council.

I MUST STATE THAT UNILATERAL REDUCTION BY THE UNITED STATES OF ITS PROPORTIONAL ASSESSMENT, AS DETERMINED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WOULD BE WIDELY SEEN AS NON-COMPLIANCE WITH A CHARTER COMMITMENT.

AS IN ANY SERVICE ORGANIZATION, BY FAR THE MAJOR PORTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS BUDGET IS DEVOTED TO PERSONNEL EXPENDITURES. THERE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FREQUENT SUGGESTIONS THAT UNITED NATIONS SALARIES ARE TOO HIGH.

THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE SALARIES OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND HIGHER LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE IS BASED, IS THAT THEY SHOULD BE EQUIVALENT TO THOSE OF THE HIGHEST PAID NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE, WITH AN INCREMENT TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE FACTOR OF EXPATRIATION IN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE. THIS PRINCIPLE DATES FROM THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. THE UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE IS CONSIDERED THE "HIGHEST PAID NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE", AND IS, THEREFORE, THE ONE TO WHICH UNITED NATIONS SALARIES ARE COMPARED. NO REAL INCREASE IN THE BASE PAY OF THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS. THERE HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS, BUT EVEN THESE HAVE NOW BEEN SUSPENDED FOR THE TIME BEING. THESE ADJUSTMENTS ARE DETERMINED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (ICSC), A BODY CREATED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO MONITOR SALARIES AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS OF THE STAFF, ^{AND} WHICH INCLUDES AN AMERICAN MEMBER.

IN ITS REPORT TO THE FORTHCOMING SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE COMMISSION IS RECOMMENDING THAT THE DIFFERENTIAL, OR MARGIN, BY WHICH UNITED NATIONS REMUNERATION IN NEW YORK, SHOULD EXCEED THAT OF THE UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE, SHOULD BE MAINTAINED WITHIN A RANGE OF 10 TO 20 PERCENT, WITH 15 PERCENT CONSTITUTING THE "DESIRABLE MARGIN", TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FACTOR OF EXPATRIATION. IT ALSO REPORTS THAT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF THE MARGIN IS APPROXIMATELY 21 PERCENT - NOT THE FIGURE OF 40 PERCENT, WHICH HAS SOMETIMES BEEN CITED. THE COMMISSION HAS INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO SUSPEND COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS, UNTIL THE MARGIN IS BROUGHT WITHIN THE DEFINED RANGE.

BEFORE BECOMING SECRETARY-GENERAL,
I HAD LONG EXPERIENCE AT THE UNITED NATIONS, AS A NATIONAL DELEGATE
AND AS A MEMBER OF THE SECRETARIAT SERVING IN NEW YORK AND ABROAD.
I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT UNITED NATIONS SALARIES
DO NOT PERMIT EXTRAVAGANT LIVING.
THEY HARDLY SUFFICE FOR ADEQUATE HOUSING IN MANHATTAN.
AND THE LEVELS OF SALARIES AT THE VAST MAJORITY OF
UNITED NATIONS DUTY STATIONS ARE LOWER THAN IN NEW YORK.
BY CONTRAST, A UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVANT ASSIGNED OUTSIDE THIS
COUNTRY NEVER RECEIVES LESS, AND ALMOST ALWAYS RECEIVES MORE,
THAN THE AMOUNT HE WOULD RECEIVE IN WASHINGTON. AT MANY
LOCATIONS, UNITED NATIONS PERSONNEL ARE RECEIVING LESS COMPENSATION
THAN AMERICAN CIVIL SERVANTS OF COMPARABLE RANK STATIONED THERE.

THERE IS ONE FINAL POINT ON THIS TROUBLESOME SUBJECT THAT
I FEEL BOUND TO MAKE. UNITED STATES STAFF MEMBERS, WHICH MAKE UP
THE LARGEST SECRETARIAT CONTINGENT, ARE SUBJECT TO ALL FEDERAL,
STATE AND MUNICIPAL INCOME TAXES. EMPLOYEES FROM MOST OTHER
MEMBER STATES HAVE BEEN EXEMPTED FROM INCOME TAXATION BY THEIR
GOVERNMENTS, AND ARE NOT SUBJECT TO SUCH TAXES IN THE
UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, TO AVOID DISCRIMINATION AMONG
NATIONALITIES, AN INTERNAL TAX, OR STAFF ASSESSMENT, IS IMPOSED
ON ALL STAFF MEMBERS IN THE APPROXIMATE AMOUNT OF THE TAXES THEY
WOULD PAY, IF THEY WERE SUBJECT TO AMERICAN INCOME TAXES.
BECAUSE OF THIS STAFF ASSESSMENT, THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE GROSS SALARY AND THE NET SALARY RECEIVED BY THE
EMPLOYEE. THE STAFF ASSESSMENT IS IMPOSED ON ALL, INCLUDING THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL.

I HAVE SOUGHT - (WITH THE UNITED SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN AND SOVIET GOVERNMENTS, I MIGHT SAY,) - TO ASSURE STRINGENT ECONOMY IN THE UNITED NATIONS. FOR THE PRESENT BIENNIUM, WE ARE OPERATING ON AN ESSENTIALLY NO-GROWTH BUDGET, NOTWITHSTANDING THE ADDITION OF NEW PROGRAMMES BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE FURTHER INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORGANIZATION. IT WOULD BE RASH TO SAY THERE IS NO WASTE, OR THAT EVERY PROGRAMME IS ESSENTIAL. IT IS ONE OF MY MAIN CONTINUING CONCERNS AND THE LEGITIMATE CONCERN OF MEMBER STATES TO CORRECT THE INSTANCES THAT EXIST. I MUST WARN, HOWEVER, THAT UNILATERAL WITHHOLDING OF ASSESSED FUNDS FOR SPECIFIC PEACE-KEEPING PROGRAMMES BY OTHER COUNTRIES, BROUGHT THE UNITED NATIONS INTO A SEVERE FINANCIAL CRISIS FROM WHICH IT STILL SUFFERS.

UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS IN THE ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OVER-ALL COST OF THE UNITED NATIONS, CAN MAKE ORDERLY ADMINISTRATION IMPOSSIBLE, AND JEOPARDIZE THE CAPACITY OF THE ORGANIZATION TO CARRY OUT THE SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES MANDATED TO-IT, WHICH, I BELIEVE, ARE CLEARLY IN THE INTEREST OF ALL MEMBERS, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES.

THE FINAL QUESTION THAT I WILL SEEK TO ANSWER, BEFORE RETURNING THE QUESTIONING FUNCTION TO YOU IS: ¿ WHY HASN'T THE UNITED NATIONS KEPT THE PEACE?

IN THE MIDST OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, WHEN, HERE IN WASHINGTON, OFFICIALS CAME TOGETHER TO CONSIDER WHAT FORM A NEW WORLD ORGANIZATION SHOULD TAKE, ONE OF THE FIRST QUESTIONS THEY STUDIED WAS, IN A SENSE, THE SAME QUESTION: ¿ WHY WASN'T THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS ABLE TO KEEP THE PEACE?

THEY CAME TO TWO CONCLUSIONS THAT ARE REFLECTED IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER. ONE WAS THAT THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRIES MUST SHARE A JOINT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND, IN RECOGNITION OF THE UNIQUE BURDEN WHICH THIS COULD ENTAIL, SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT OF VETO IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON ACTION RELATIVE TO PEACE AND SECURITY. A SECOND CONCLUSION WAS THAT ENFORCEMENT OF DECISIONS RELATED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE SHOULD BE COLLECTIVE RATHER THAN UNILATERAL, IMPLEMENTED, IF NECESSARY, BY AN INTERNATIONAL ARMED FORCE AT THE DISPOSITION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT POWER HAS NOT BEEN REALIZED. THE UNITED NATIONS, UNTIL NOW, HAS NO MORE ENFORCEMENT POWER THAN THE LEAGUE DID. ALL MAJOR COUNTRIES JOINED THE UNITED NATIONS AND HAVE REMAINED MEMBERS, WHICH IS A VERY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE COMPARED TO THE LEAGUE EXPERIENCE. BUT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN WILLING OR ABLE TO PUT ASIDE BILATERAL DIFFERENCES IN ORDER TO EXERCISE CONSISTENTLY THEIR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE.

THESE ARE MAJOR REASONS WHY THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN UNABLE TO PREVENT THE CONTINUING OUTBREAK OF WARS AND ARMED CONFLICT DURING THE FORTY YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE. YET, THE RECORD OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IS BY NO MEANS ONE OF FAILURE.

AS I HAVE POINTED OUT AT THE BEGINNING OF THESE REMARKS, IT HAS REPEATEDLY HELPED TO RESOLVE OR RESTRICT CONFLICTS, AND PROVIDED TIME AND A MECHANISM FOR CRISES TO BE DEFUSED.

THESE ARE NO MEAN ACHIEVEMENTS, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN INSUFFICIENT TO AVOID THE VAST SUFFERING CAUSED BY RESORT TO ARMS OR TO GIVE ASSURANCE THAT THE ULTIMATE DISASTER OF NUCLEAR WAR, WILL NOT OCCUR IN THE FUTURE.

IN CONFRONTING THIS SITUATION, I WOULD REFER AGAIN TO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. A WEAKNESS OF THE LEAGUE, MORE FATAL, I THINK, THAN THE TWO TO WHICH I HAVE REFERRED, WAS THE FAILURE OF THE MEMBERS TO IDENTIFY INTERESTS COMMON TO ALL WHICH TRANSCENDED PURELY NATIONAL GOALS. THE CO-OPERATION OF COUNTRIES WITHIN UNITED NATIONS BODIES DURING THE PAST FORTY YEARS, IN PURSUIT OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, OF THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL PROGRESS AND OF THE ALLEVIATION OF HUMAN NEEDS SUGGESTS THAT A CHANGE HAS OCCURRED; THAT THERE IS NOW INCREASED, IF STILL INADEQUATE, RECOGNITION OF OVER-RIDING INTERESTS, COMMON TO THE MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES. THE SUCCESS OF MANY UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES, IN IMPROVING THE GLOBAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE, REFLECTS THIS.

SURELY THERE IS NOW A UNIVERSAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUPREME INTEREST SHARED BY ALL NATIONS IN AVOIDING NUCLEAR WAR. WHAT THE WORLD COMMUNITY HAS FAILED TO DO UNTIL NOW, IS TO PURSUE THIS UNDERSTANDING TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION BY STRENGTHENING ITS CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH THREATS TO THE PEACE, WHICH COULD LEAD ULTIMATELY TO THE UNTHINKABLE CONSEQUENCE THAT ALL AGREE MUST BE AVOIDED.

THE UNITED NATIONS EXISTS AS A PRACTICAL, ESSENTIALLY UNIVERSAL INSTRUMENTALITY FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THESE COMMON INTERESTS, MOST IMPORTANTLY THE PREVENTION OF WAR. IF, AS I BELIEVE, THESE COMMON INTERESTS ARE INCREASINGLY RECOGNIZED, THEN IT SURELY MAKES SENSE TO WORK TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, RATHER THAN TO DIMINISH ITS POTENTIAL BY DISINTEREST, DIMINISHED SUPPORT, OR TENDENTIOUS CONDEMNATION.

I HAVE SPOKEN OF THE UNITED NATIONS TODAY, PRIMARILY IN THE CONTEXT OF AMERICAN QUESTIONS AND AMERICAN INTERESTS. I MUST ADD THAT THE UNITED NATIONS WAS NOT CREATED TO SERVE THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF ANY ONE COUNTRY. ANY SUCH EXPECTATION IS BOUND TO LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT. ANY EFFORTS BY ONE OR MORE COUNTRIES TO EXPLOIT THE UNITED NATIONS FOR SELF-SERVING PURPOSES WILL WEAKEN THE OVER-ALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ORGANIZATION.

THE UNITED NATIONS IS AN INSTRUMENTALITY BELONGING TO ALL, FOR USE IN PURSUIT OF THE OBJECTIVES DEFINED, FORTY YEARS AGO, IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER, AND STILL VALID TODAY. THEREIN LIES ITS ENORMOUS POTENTIAL TO SERVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF EACH MEMBER STATE. IT NEEDS, AND MERITS, THE STRONG SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT, ESPECIALLY OF ITS MOST POWERFUL MEMBERS, IF ITS EVIDENT INADEQUACIES ARE TO BE OVERCOME AND ITS POTENTIAL, FULLY REALIZED.

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