
Report of the Secretary-General

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EGYPT

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In the course of his long history, man's yearning for tranquillity and safety has been consistently frustrated. Ambitions and antagonisms by his fellow men continuously thrust upon him still another war and there always remained a better peace for him to reach for and to secure.

The United Nations was born out of the most global, the most ruthless and the most total of all wars. Its intent was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and promote social progress. The principle of the non-use of force in international relations was established and adhered to by all. The law of the jungle was to be irrevocably replaced by the establishment of conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law could be maintained.

The peoples of the United Nations are more than ever looking upon their Organization as embodying the hopes of mankind for international peace and justice. They consider it to be the universally recognized forum where all States, on the basis of sovereign equality, partake in carrying out its primary political function, which is to maintain and promote international peace and security and eliminate all threats thereto. They recognize that only in a world genuinely at peace could justice and equality for all nations be achieved in the political, economical and social sense and thus universal progress be attained.

Man's hopes have not, however, materialized. A morally strong United Nations, motivated by the vision of a world living in peace and contentment and armed with an equitable sense of justice for all, has not as yet emerged amidst the never ending play of outdated power politics.

It is a matter of record that States Members of the United Nations have, on many occasions to achieve advantages of their own, departed overtly from the purposes and principles of the Charter to which they had committed themselves. Likewise, many other important international instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, have continuously been violated.

The permissive trend which has thus emerged over the years, when overlooking or ignoring such violations, remains the responsibility of the Members of the United Nations. Fault does not lie with the Charter, nor can the rapid and succeeding changes on the international scene be evoked convincingly as a pretext for inaction. If the United Nations has failed to live up to the expectation of mankind, it is not due to an inherent defect in the Charter, which remains a dynamic
constitutional instrument capable of potential evolution and adaptation to changing circumstances, but because Member States have preferred to remain silent and passive when its provisions were flouted and ignored.

It must be realized that a defiant attitude to the Charter without an adequate reaction by the Members of the United Nations could encourage others to behave likewise. This would not only undermine the foundations on which the contemporary international security system was meant to rest but could even bring about its total collapse.

Medium and small countries placing their faith in the United Nations have welcomed the marked improvement in contemporary relations between the greater Powers since they expect that détente would eventually positively affect the activities of the United Nations and be conducive to enhancing anew the authority of the Organization, which suffered greatly as a result of global rivalries and competition.

At a time when its membership has become more representative of the power realities of the world, thus rendering the United Nations more capable of a balanced judgement of events, the persisting tendency by some great Powers to depoliticize or to bypass the United Nations is to be deplored. Such endeavours can only be understood as an attempt to evade and circumvent the application of Charter principles on matters affecting the peace and security of a wide number of countries.

In an increasingly interdependent world, where many issues affect lasting and long-term global interests, all countries have the right, indeed the obligation, to participate within the framework of the United Nations in efforts towards solving conflicts the perpetuation of which endangers international peace and security.

The Security Council, the organ vested with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should not be prevented from shouldering its full Charter responsibilities. In this respect, the exercise of enlightened and moral leadership by those entrusted by the Charter with a particular position of responsibility is called for. Added to this, it has become necessary that appropriate and unequivocal decisions, firmly anchored in the principles of the Charter, be adopted by the Security Council and that compliance with such decisions be ensured.

The General Assembly of the United Nations, as the universal forum in which all Member States participate and express their views on the basis of sovereign equality, has acquired increased relevance and significance which would seem to exceed that of a frustrated and paralysed Security Council.

With the emergence of many new States and their application for membership in the United Nations together with the restoration to the People's Republic of China of its rights in the Organization and, lately, with the admission of the two Germanys, the General Assembly possesses more than ever before the moral, political and juridical claim to pronounce ultimate judgment on international issues.
This Assembly, representing almost all peoples and States of the world, is the true parliament of the international community and the most representative among all the organs of the United Nations. It is able, and capable if it so wishes, to take necessary and swift action to check any State violating the rule of law, regardless of the support and encouragement which such a violator might receive from a powerful Member of the United Nations. Resolutions of the General Assembly, reflecting as they do the will and aspirations of the community of nations, should therefore be taken account of and acted upon with more vigour and determination. The strengthening of the role of the United Nations necessitates increasing co-operation between its Members. This should be done on the basis of equality and full respect for sovereignty. It should also be based on a sincere attempt at a better understanding of mutual problems and their underlying causes coupled with a sincere spirit of assisting in their effective solution.

This is particularly necessary where issues of colonialism, racism and foreign domination and occupation are concerned; where there is need to protect and safeguard human rights, and where the apparent unsurmountable challenge which the ill-equipped developing countries, through no fault of theirs, are all facing, is awaiting an urgent solution. While it remains true that one of the basic purposes of the United Nations is to be a centre for harmonizing decisions and resolutions of nations, all actions in the implementation of these must, as of necessity, become more positive and effective than has been hitherto the case if it is to deal successfully with the serious problems confronting the world of today.

It should not be forgotten that when Members of the United Nations committed themselves to the Charter they, at the same time, yielded a portion of their sovereignty for the benefit of setting up this community of nations. It therefore stands to reason that whatever decisions or resolutions are taken by the United Nations, Members should abide by them and seek, as a matter of policy, their full application as well as ensure, in their bilateral relations and contacts, that others do so too.

Any and all digressions from the purposes and principles of the Charter should not be allowed by Members of the United Nations to go unchallenged and unopposed. It is in the response and reaction of the United Nations towards those that persist in conducting their affairs in contradiction to Charter principles that the United Nations will, at last, find its strength and play the role that the greater majority of States wish it to assume.