

No. 61/9 Partial Text of a Statement on September  
11, 1961, in the House of Commons by Mr.  
Wallace Nesbitt.

... This morning I should like to confine my remarks in this debate to two subjects. I should first of all like to make some observations regarding the future of United Nations, and second concerning the present crisis in Berlin and NATO.

First of all, regarding the United Nations, during the last few years there have been many changes, as all members appreciate. Having had the opportunity and honour of attending the United Nations in various capacities in the last number of years--I first went there as a Parliamentary Observer... I can assure you the changes have been many. When I attended its deliberations originally something over 50 countries had membership in the United Nations, while there are now almost 100.

Accompanying this change in the membership of the United Nations have been a great many attendant problems. I think all will agree that the United Nations is the best organization that man has been able to devise to date, and that it must continue its operations in the future.

There are many dangers which confront the United Nations at the present time. There are many faults which exist in the United Nations itself. However, I suggest there is no advantage in acting like an ostrich, with our heads in the sand, pretending these faults do not exist. I suggest the best approach is to recognize them and attempt to correct them.

The first and principal danger to the United Nations is the present attack by the Soviet Union in respect to its organization. I suggest one does not have to look far to see the reason for this. The United Nations has quite clearly on many occasions frustrated the ultimate designs of the Soviet Union. It was quite clear at the fifteenth General Assembly last year that one of the principal objectives of the Soviet delegates was to destroy or at least emasculate the United Nations organization. This was attempted in several ways, first of all by personal attack on the Secretary-General, Mr. Dag Hammarskjold, and second by suggesting changes in the structure of the United Nations.

The personal attacks on the Secretary-General were not successful last year. Toward the end of that General Assembly, I believe in March, a vote was taken, the details of which are not important but which in effect turned out to be one of confidence in the Secretary-General, with the only delegates voting against him being those of the Soviet bloc. I feel safe in stating that so far these attacks upon the Secretary-General by the Soviet Union and satellite delegates have been unsuccessful.

However, that does not mean they will not be successful in the future, because the Soviet Union, as I am sure all Members know, is a very determined country. Time does not mean the same thing to Russians as it means to the people of the West. We are accustomed to accomplishing objectives within a matter of months or a few years. On the contrary, the Russian concept of time certainly appears to be much different. There is ample indication that the Russians are prepared to wait five, ten or fifteen years, and perhaps longer, to attain their ultimate objectives. Last year no horses were spared, so to speak, in making these attacks upon the Secretary-General. Even when misprints appeared in United Nations documents, Soviet delegates suggested they were manifestations of the inefficiency of the Secretary-General. That is an example of the type of thing which occurred last year.

The other principal method employed by the Soviet delegates involved attacks upon and suggested changes in the structure of the United Nations. The suggested changes gained certain sympathy among other delegates to the United Nations chiefly because of the great enlargement in the number of organizations within the United Nations and because they had not expanded as perhaps they should have. I will have more to say in that regard in a few moments.

The Troika Idea

The suggestion by the delegates of the Soviet Union involved a tripartite leadership or "troika", a three-headed affair much like Cerberus in mythology, the three-headed dog who guarded the gates to Hades. This suggestion sounded very logical, there being one head from the West, one from the Soviet bloc and one from the neutrals, whoever they may be. Under this set-up there would be three Secretary-Generals each with a veto power. Recently, Mr. Khrushchov informed Mr. Sulzberger that was not the meaning of the suggestion. However, in view of Mr. Khrushchov's recent statement that the Soviet Union would never be first to resume nuclear testing, I do not think much weight can be placed on his undertakings.

The effect of a three-headed organization for all branches of the United Nations is pretty obvious. The Secretary-General's duty is to implement resolutions passed by the General Assembly. In regard to the establishment of three Secretary-Generals, I do not think I need go further than point out that the difficulties would be almost insurmountable in view of the difficulty experienced on the part of one Secretary-General in implementing some resolutions in the past. If we had three Secretary-Generals attempting to implement resolutions, I suggest the Russian delegates would be successful in accomplishing their intentions, and completely stultifying the work of the United Nations. If this three-headed monster were to be duplicated in all branches and organizations of the United Nations, I suggest the chaotic results are very obvious.

The Soviet Union has not succeeded so far, but that does not mean it will not succeed; because the election of a new Secretary-General comes up before long and the Soviet Union, with veto power in the Security Council, will not agree to the appointment of a Secretary-General. They can hold up the appointment until they get their own way or partly their own way, and that is a very great danger to the United Nations at the moment.

Finances

The second matter I mentioned in this regard is the question of United Nation's finances. This has become most serious. Last spring the United Nations came within hours of closing its doors because financial arrangements could not be made. Probably the public is not aware of this, and I should like to take a few moments to deal briefly with the subject.

The legislative processes of the United Nations are somewhat different from those in this Parliament or elsewhere. You have the strange situation in the United Nations that the General Assembly can pass a resolution and it will be accepted by a two-thirds majority, but at the same time there are no financial arrangements to carry out the resolution. The arrangements are made in advance each year by the Fifth Committee reporting to the General Assembly. This peculiar arrangement, where resolutions are passed with the finances to carry them out not provided for, has caused a great deal of trouble in the UN. The particular difficulty in this regard has to do with the peace-keeping arrangements of the United Nations. The United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East has had its problems. The trouble is that those peace-keeping arrangements are not regular budgetary items in the UN. Arrangements were made to provide finances for the United Nations Emergency Force, and those were not contributed to by all the countries. The Russian excuse was that it was an illegal undertaking, and they have never contributed.

The Congo

The present peace-keeping arrangement of the United Nations which has been in the public eye a great deal is the question of the Congo. Again we ran into the problem of how to finance this particular arrangement. To date the results in the Congo have been a great success for the United Nations. That force cannot be continued unless a permanent financial arrangement is made. In this regard, and it is no secret at all, that France has said she will not contribute to this arrangement, and so have certain other states. The Soviet Union, of course, says it will not, and certain other countries have also said that they will not contribute to it because they felt the money required was too much, they could not afford it. Many other reasons have been given.

It is a very serious matter. If permanent financial arrangements cannot be made for the UN, it will not be able to carry out its peace-keeping function. If this is not done the United Nations might just as well close its doors. If I may say so, ... last year this temporary disaster was averted thanks to Canada. We came very close to having to close the doors of the UN. The Secretary-General had used up all the cash on hand to carry on the Congo operations and he had borrowed from various other UN organizations. A temporary arrangement was made.

At the present time, again thanks to the initiative of Canada, a 15-man committee representing 15 countries is studying the whole question of how to provide finances for the UN operations, including the operation that is going on at the present time, but it is going to be a very difficult problem to work out. Many countries feel they cannot afford it, and other countries will not contribute because they have no desire to see the United Nations succeed in these fields.

There is a great danger here again. It is well known that the United States and certain other large countries have agreed to "pick up the tab", so to speak, for a number of these efforts. Of course many people feel that that would play right into the hands of the Soviet Union, because if Western countries finance those operations then the Soviet can turn around and say, "He who pays the piper calls the tune, and we told you so all along." This is something that I think should be avoided. Every country in the United Nations should contribute its own reasonable share to the conduct of those operations of the United Nations.

Now, strange as it may seem, a number of countries of the United Nations are not worried about certain large Western countries footing the bill. The representative of one country, I shall not say which one, said to me, "Well, we do not see anything wrong in the United States paying the bill for this United Nations operation. After all, they supply the money and we supply the ideas". The remark was not made in jest; it was made in all seriousness, much to my surprise. But this is a thing we have to watch. In any event, the financial question before the United Nations is a very serious one, and something which should be watched with the greatest care.

The UN Councils

Another great danger to the United Nations is the question of expansion of the Councils. I refer to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The Security Council consists of 11 members, five of them being permanent and six elected, of whom three are elected each year. The Economic and Social Council has 18 members. These Councils have not been expanded since the United Nations first came into being.

As I have already pointed out, we now have almost 100 countries in the United Nations. Naturally the newer countries of Asia and Africa feel that they should have adequate representation on those Councils. The Western countries, Canada included, have taken the lead on various occasions to try to expand those Councils or inflate them in some way to provide quite adequate representation of Asians and Africans without giving up seats already held by the countries of Latin America, the Western world, and so on. The Soviet Union has steadfastly refused to permit expansion of those Councils on the ground that it will not agree until the credentials of the representatives of the Peoples' Republic of China have been accepted by the Credentials Committee, and in effect Communist China has a seat in the UN.

At first glance you would think that the Asian and African countries in the UN would be irritated by the Russian stand, refusing to give them adequate representation on those Councils, but I have found at the United Nations that things are not always what they seem. Instead of being annoyed at the Soviet Union over this, those countries have exerted a great pressure on the West to dilute Western representation on the Councils and give up seats to the Asian and African countries. As a temporary measure this may seem reasonable, but again Soviet intransigence is evident. On the last two or three occasions temporary compromise arrangements have been made to give additional seats to the Asian and African countries at the expense of Western representation. I think the Soviet Union know this very well. But continuing to refuse to allow expansion of those Councils they are being very effective; their objective of reducing the number of representatives of the West and of countries friendly to the West on those two Councils is being achieved. This is something that should be watched with the greatest care.

Of course the Western countries which dominated the United Nations when it was first formed no longer do so. It used to be that the Soviet and some of her allies and friends from time to time came close to mounting what is known at the United Nations as a "blocking third". That is, any important resolution before the General Assembly must have a two-thirds vote. Now the situation is that very often the Western nations have difficulty in acquiring a blocking third for resolutions put up by Asian and African countries, and often supported by the Soviet Union. You may say, "What do you want with a blocking third?" Resolutions put up from time to time by other countries may be very good, but from time to time some of those resolutions are by no means the wisest, and this brings in the next two points that I should like to touch on briefly. I refer to two broad influences which are at work in the United Nations all the time. One is the anti-colonial influence and the other is the cold war influence. These two influences seem to permeate virtually every debate and every resolution at the United Nations.

Anti-colonial feeling we can all understand. Every one of us can understand why people in Asia and Africa should have a strong anti-colonial feeling which reflects against the Western powers. That we can understand, but often this influence is not manifested by means of logic at all but rather by emotion. In due course this situation will probably clear up, but at the present time it presents a very serious danger to the United Nations.

### Anti-Colonialism

I should like to give a brief example of this influence. There is a resolution before the United Nations involving a plan put forward by the United States called, I believe, "Africa, a plan for economic and political development". This emphasis on this plan has been somewhat altered to overemphasize political development, and the particular emphasis has been that of setting target dates for the independence of a number of new states. On the face of it that sounds fine, but for very obvious reasons-- for instance, to avoid a situation such as arose in the Congo-- it is not desirable to set a specific date until the people in the area are able to take over the government of their country themselves.

The United Kingdom, of course, has been remarkably successful in this field, and it has been explained at the United Nations that the matter of target dates is not directed at the United Kingdom but rather at certain other countries. That may well be the case but once target dates are fixed they must be accepted by all and these are very impractical for the reasons I have pointed out. A number of countries in Africa and elsewhere have pointed out to me privately that they realize this is an impractical idea, but one of the less responsible countries has brought it forward and these governments naturally have to pay attention to the views of the electorate at home or, if there is no electorate, the people who live in the country. The result is that one country in Africa makes a matter an emotional issue on anti-colonial grounds and these other countries virtually have to go along, even though they really do not think the idea is sensible or practical.

That is the type of thing we have to watch there. A great many of the resolutions at the United Nations have become more and more dominated by emotional feeling rather than by logic. I think this is a matter that will clear up in due course, but at the present time it is a very great danger.

Together with the growth of the organization itself, we also seem to have had a growth of long, repetitious speeches and other things. This again will have to be dealt with, and perhaps some time when the United Nations organization is streamlined it will be possible to do something to restrict the number of times a person can speak in a debate. This will have to be worked out, but the present practice tends to bog down the work of the United Nations. People tend to lose interest, and I am afraid that sometimes a very bad appearance is presented to the public whose support is necessary for the continuance of the United Nations. I am sorry to say also that some countries seem to have personalities representing them whose views do not always accord with those of their governments. There is a tendency for a number of so-called personalities at the United Nations to put on shows of exhibitionism which certainly in no way assist the United Nations.

### Baleful Effect of Cold War

The last thing I should like to mention in this regard is the question of the cold war influence. Again, this is an influence that interferes with virtually every subject that comes before the United Nations. You will find that the cold war always creeps in in some way. You will find that some countries always vote one way and other countries always vote the other way, while a large number of countries will never stand up and be counted at all. We have seen some evidence outside the United Nations recently of how a number of neutral countries have behaved. I wonder what would have been said by some of these countries if the United States had been the country to start nuclear tests again, but when another country did it nothing much was said in that regard.

I have other comments on the cold war influence which I will make later. As I have pointed out, a number of countries will not stand up and be counted. It has been said that Canada and a number of other countries should lead a crusade for world peace and get things started. For goodness sake, no one has tried harder to do this than the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Let me give one example. Last year Canada had a moderate, sensible resolution concerning disarmament before the United Nations. Hardly anybody disagreed with its substance even publicly, although one or two said privately that they could not agree publicly although they agreed privately. When we tried to get a vote on it we could not do so, because such a large number of countries felt that the Soviet Union did not approve and therefore they would not even vote on whether a vote should be taken on the resolution.

That is what you encounter at the United Nations. It is very frustrating to find that many countries will not do anything unless it has the approval of both the United States and the Soviet Union. I do not wish to present too gloomy a view of the United Nations, but I think these are home truths that must be faced, and if the organization is to succeed we must find some way to get around these difficulties ...

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