



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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THE SITUATION IN HUNGARY

Statement by Mr. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, in the General Assembly of the United Nations, Monday, November 19, 1956.

In the second emergency session of the General Assembly of the United Nations we have already adopted four resolutions on Hungary, and the Secretary-General, although hard-pressed by many other urgent and vitally important duties, has done all in his power to carry out the various responsibilities assigned to him. The resolutions call for investigation of the situation in Hungary; they call on the Soviet Union to withdraw its forces and cease its intervention; and they provide for, we hope, quick and large-scale relief of the immediate suffering of the Hungarian people as a result of the bloody events of recent weeks.

Following this initial United Nations action, the whole world has waited anxiously for some sign that the Soviet Government and the authorities in Hungary were ready to allow United Nations investigation, and, at the very least, to facilitate the distribution of desperately needed food, medical supplies and clothing. The efforts of the Secretary-General, under our resolution of November 4, to get permission for United Nations observers to visit Hungary have been flatly rejected. The Soviet Government, to which the Secretary-General appealed for assistance in carrying out the task assigned to him, must bear the full and final responsibility for frustrating this investigation. One can understand, if not excuse their attitude. What can they fear from investigation if the facts are as they state them to be.

In spite of this rebuff the Secretary-General has appointed three eminent and impartial persons under our resolution of November 4, to investigate and report on the situation in Hungary. We hope that they will undertake at once whatever investigation may be possible.

Surely those members of the Assembly who may personally have had some difficulty in condemning the Soviet Union and certain Hungarian authorities over what has happened on the ground that authentic information was not available, will welcome and support the steps now recommended to secure that information. What possible objection to this course can be raised except by those who wish to conceal the truth and confuse opinion.

We therefore once again urge the Soviet Government and the Hungarian authorities to admit United Nations investigators. I might remind the Assembly that this would not be the first occasion on which the United Nations has sent investigators into the territory of a member state in order to try to get at the facts of a situation which had been referred to our organization.

On December 19, 1946, the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution setting up a commission of investigation to ascertain the facts relating to a complaint brought to the United Nations by Greece. This complaint concerned border violations along the frontier between Greece and three of its neighbours. The commission was empowered to conduct its investigations in the territory of Greece and of the three Eastern European countries concerned. It actually held meetings in the territory of these four countries, interviewed witnesses, and, eventually, made its report to the United Nations.

The point I wish to make in mentioning this situation which came before the United Nations ten years ago, is that the Government of the U.S.S.R. then agreed to the setting up of this commission of investigation and a Soviet member took part in its work. How, then, can the Government of the U.S.S.R. today, reject such a procedure for Hungary?

I would also remind the Soviet Union of the example set by other member states who have recently accepted the intervention of the United Nations in the Middle East. There is, of course, no parallel between the events in Egypt and the situation in Hungary, but it is of the greatest significance that the United Kingdom and France, upon whom the Soviet Union has tried to fasten the label of aggressor, have accepted and co-operated with the intervention by the United Nations in regard to certain action they have taken and which was condemned by this Assembly.

In the past few weeks we have witnessed in another respect also what "The Times of India" has called "a study in contrasts from which everyone ... will draw his own conclusions". This Indian newspaper on November 9 last contrasted what it called "the uninhibited upsurge of public opinion in the United Kingdom which has no parallel anywhere else at any time" with the total

absence in the Soviet Union of any criticism of that government's action in Hungary. "Does Moscow really suppose", this leading Indian newspaper goes on, "that confronted by as blatant a violation of the Charter as can be conceived, Asian-African powers are so naive as to accept this fiction of so-called independent Hungary under a government established with the support of Russian bayonets?...Where a people can condemn its government there is every assurance of democracy and decency. The awful silence of Eastern Europe as Hungary is pounded by Soviet guns, is something which Mr. Bulganin cannot explain away in his letters to Mr. Nehru".

In the past few weeks here in New York we have also seen the contrast, indeed the contradiction, of a member government of this organization destroying a government with which it had been negotiating even while the means for its destruction were in the process of being prepared and deployed. Having removed this government by force and having set up a more compliant rule in its place, whom the people of Hungary have so obviously refused to accept, the Soviet Government now dare to tell the United Nations that it must not interfere in the internal affairs of other states. It is indeed, as the representative of China said the other day, "an upside down world".

There is another and very urgent matter which we cannot ignore; relief for the Hungarian people, who after the legendary courage which they have shown now face a winter of terrible hardship. The present Hungarian authorities have sent to the United Nations a grimly eloquent list of supplies they need as a result of the harsh and destructive intervention of Soviet troops and Soviet tanks. Here the response from the authorities in Hungary has been somewhat less disheartening. The Soviet delegation, however, was again completely negative in its response to our appeals for co-operation. It voted against one resolution dealing with relief and abstained on another, two purely humanitarian moves that might have been expected to win active and wholehearted support from any normal person or any civilized state.

We are happy to note some indications that the Secretary-General or his representatives may possibly be allowed to participate on the spot in Hungary, in the distribution of these medical supplies, food and clothing which are so urgently needed. Surely no consideration of ideological prestige or power politics of any sort will be permitted to interfere with this part of the United Nations response to the situation in Hungary.

Mr. President, we now have before us a fifth resolution on the situation in Hungary. As we have watched the news from Budapest these last few days, a new and still more horrible development has become apparent. Far from complying with the United Nations resolution, ending their

intervention, and permitting impartial investigation, the Soviet authorities have once again resorted to one of the most horrible devices of frightened dictatorial regimes, the mass deportation of persons whose only offence is that they are not regarded as politically reliable. We had heard much of this frightful device during the regime of Marshal Stalin, and many charges made at that time - and rejected by Soviet spokesmen in those days as "slanderous fabrications" - have since been confirmed by the present Soviet leaders themselves in Moscow. We had hoped that at least this evil aspect of Stalinism would never again be practised by a Soviet Government. But these hopes have been smashed. The reports of deportation of Hungarian men, women and children to the U.S.S.R. may be denied, but the denial is hollow and false. The volume of eye witness accounts already available, the detailed reports, the pathetic evidence of farewell notes dropped from the trains, are all sufficient to show beyond any reasonable doubt that mass inhuman deportations have, in fact, taken place.

As a result of this further tragic development we are meeting again to make one more attempt, through this General Assembly of the United Nations, to get the Soviet Government to heed the wish of all the world that it stop its torment of Hungary.

If it does not heed this call, its reactionary colonial purpose will once again be exposed for all the world to see. Although it may succeed for a time in stifling the independence of a small neighbour by the crushing power of tanks and by the midnight terror of the secret police, even the interests of the Soviet Union itself, to say nothing of its prestige, will be defeated. Already we have seen the condemnation by President Tito of Yugoslavia of the Soviet policies which led to the Hungarian tragedy, and the leaders of some of the great countries of Asia have added their voices to the demand that the Hungarian people be allowed to decide their own future and their own form of government without external intervention.

How was it described by the Prime Minister of India on November 19? Mr. Nehru said it is a national outrage against the will of the people.

We have heard communist talk here of this heroic Hungarian uprising being merely the work of reactionary and fascist gangs; the Moscow description of any move for freedom against its iron control.

But how was it described, not by a "capitalist warmonger" or a representative of a "ruling clique", but by this communist leader of a socialist but a nationalist state, President Tito. He said on Friday last:

"Just see how a bare-handed and poorly armed people resisted terribly when it had one aim - to free itself and be independent. It was no longer even interested in what sort of independence it would achieve - whether the bourgeoisie and a reactionary system would be restored in the country - but only interested in being nationally independent. This took hold of its mind....not only Horthyists, but also workers from factories and mines are fighting here - the entire people are fighting."

One disillusioned British communist put it this way in a letter on November 3 to the editor of a well-known British weekly: "The events of the past week are enough to make any honest communist hot with shame and anger." What, then, must the feelings be of any honest and patriotic citizen.

Mr. President, the Canadian delegation has given strong support to the other United Nations decisions designed to help the Hungarian people, and we shall also wholeheartedly support the present draft resolution dealing with the cruel deportation of men, women and children from their native land. We can pray that by focussing the spotlight of world opinion on this cruel and inhuman operation we may help to bring to an end the martyrdom of a brave people.

S/C