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Tribute to Dag Hammarskjöld by Mr. Howard Green  
on September 20 in the United Nations General  
Assembly.

This afternoon I am privileged to speak on behalf of Australia and New Zealand as well as for my own country of Canada. I propose to say just a few words about this tragic incident which has taken the lives of our Secretary-General and also of other faithful servants of the United Nations, including one from Canada.

During the last two days I have wished that all citizens of every country could be here in the United Nations building just to feel and sense the impact of the death of the Secretary-General. This impact, I am sure, reflects a spontaneous response of peoples in all the lands who have come to regard this dynamic and dedicated servant of the United Nations as the key figure in contemporary international affairs. For Canada his loss is a terrific one. We have worked very closely with him down through the years, and in particular in connection with the United Nations Emergency Force in the Gaza Strip and more recently in the Congo operation.

We have admired so much his dedication to duty. The journey during which he met his death is just one more example of this man's dedication to duty. We remember how he flew to Laos in 1959. Wherever there has been trouble he has gone as quickly as it was possible for him to go regardless of the danger incurred. We have admired his impartiality. We have not always agreed with his decisions -- how could any nation expect that the decisions would be as they would wish them to be. We have admired his goodwill for all the people of the world.

We believe that he has given inspiring world leadership. Critical circumstances in world history have produced an élite corps of great men who met the challenge of their time by putting above all devotion to duty and the pursuit of an ideal. Dag Hammarskjöld was clearly of this select company. His influence on the organization may not be fully measurable until well in the future, when historians have been able to assess this period of such rapid change. But even today we are conscious of the significant contributions which he made.

To my mind, three of these contributions are outstanding. First and foremost, he gave substance to the concept that the United Nations is the dynamic instrument of international diplomacy and action. In doing so he sought to create an organization which had vitality of its own and strength beyond the simple sum of its parts. In the complexity of the present-day world, with its continuing tensions and strife, there is such a clear need for allowing this organization full scope for discharging its Charter responsibilities. Today, the United Nations is the principal remaining hope of mankind. In fact, I believe it is today the only hope of mankind.



Then, Mr. Hammarskjöld developed with great skill and perseverance his own brand of quiet diplomacy within a United Nations framework. He searched tirelessly for peaceful solutions through negotiation, mediation and conciliation. He did not seek to replace traditional diplomatic methods but to supplement them by making the United Nations available to governments as an independent and impartial means of pursuing and facilitating settlement.

Finally, Mr. Hammarskjöld was acutely aware of the need in a world of emerging new nations -- and after all this is the age of emerging new nations -- to accomplish a twofold objective: first, to use the United Nations presence to insulate local disturbances from the potentially greater dangers of great power rivalry. And secondly, to bring to bear the influence and resources of the United Nations to create political and economic stability in the newly-independent nations.

His inspiration lives on. Let us retain his objectives of world order and betterment of the lot of people everywhere. If we remember this great man of peace and remember what he stood for as we carry on our deliberations in this sixteenth General Assembly, we may well earn the everlasting gratitude of mankind.



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