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Press Release PM/391
2 June 1947

SPEECH BY TRYGVE LIE, SECRETARY GENERAL, UNITED NATIONS FOR THE
CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MONTREUX, SWITZERLAND
June 2, 1947

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am happy to have another opportunity to speak to members of The International Chamber of Commerce and I am sorry that I am not able to be with you in person.

I recall with great pleasure and satisfaction the meeting on May 14th, last year, when I spoke to the United States Associates of your organization in New York City.

At that time I expressed the opinion that businessmen, as businessmen, had everything to gain from the success of the United Nations in achieving its objectives.

The argument which I used was plain and simple: The United Nations seeks to guarantee permanent peace. Business, whether it be on a local, national, or international scale, requires peace and stability. It is also one of the specific purposes of the United Nations to advance the economic well-being of people everywhere. This purpose, too, is clearly a matter of vital interest to the business communities of the world.

I have been greatly impressed by the manner in which businessmen themselves have accepted this line of thinking. My own observation has been that businessmen regard the United Nations as a practical proposition. They have shown that they believe in the United Nations, and that they regard the United Nations as an organization which can ensure the world-wide political and economic stability which is essential to the expansion of trade.

They have shown a desire to cooperate with the various organs

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of the United Nations in giving practical effect to our concrete program for the improvement of economic as well as political conditions throughout the world.

In the United States, where businessmen are commonly considered to be very practical about things, we have received the full-hearted support of many leaders in many different spheres of business.

In Europe, too, I have found a great measure of understanding among the leaders of business.

It was in the belief that businessmen could play a valuable part in world economic progress, that the Economic and Social Council, on October 1st, 1946, granted consultative status to the International Chamber of Commerce.

I have noticed with pleasure that the International Chamber of Commerce has been quick to take advantage of its new consultative position by presenting us with most helpful statements of its point of view on a number of important economic questions. I have every confidence that you will wish to continue to strengthen the United Nations with your counsel and with your whole-hearted support.

I do not have time today to present a full analysis of the political and economic situation, as I see it. However, I would like to say a few things by way of encouragement and also of warning.

First of all I must say that the political situation is not as pleasant as we would like to see it. Neither is it as bad as some people feared that it would be at this time.

Obviously we are still living and working in a period of post-war disturbance, politically, economically and socially.

Despite many efforts it has remained impossible for the Great Powers to come to full agreement on the major peace treaties. As long as such agreement is not reached the whole tone of the International situation will remain disturbed. The gigantic task of post-war reconstruction will be impeded; so will the even greater task of correcting the chronic economic and social troubles which continue to beset mankind.

As I have said so many times before, the full functioning of the United Nations as conceived in the San Francisco Charter must wait upon the conclusion of the Peace.

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We recognize that this Peace is very difficult to achieve, and we would rather wait for a reasonable and durable peace than be given a hasty and temporary compromise.

But we must insist, and the peoples of the world will certainly insist, that the Powers shall continue to seek agreement with unflagging determination. The hope of agreement must never be lost.

I reject completely the view that another large-scale war is possible in the foreseeable future. I am certain that the peoples of the world would not allow such a catastrophe to occur. There are, it is true, difficulties and frictions between governments. It would be surprising if there were no such divergencies of view. But I have no doubt that on the crucial question of peace or war there is no difference of view whatsoever amongst the Member Governments of the United Nations.

No, it is not the danger of an outright conflict which disturbs me most today.

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The greatest danger - and it is a living, fearful danger for countless millions of people - is the danger of continued economic and social disorganization and progressive misery for the masses of mankind.

We must endeavor to promote political understanding among the nations and a conclusive peace.

But while that Peace is being worked out, steadily and constantly, we must do everything within our power to get ahead with economic reconstruction and the expansion of production and trade.

For some time to come it will be necessary for the nations which can do so to help other nations which are in distress. This relief must be given generously, in every sense of the word. It must be given in the knowledge that the good of the world, and the good of every nation and every community in the world, cannot tolerate the collapse of other nations and other communities into economic chaos and misery. And, above, all, this relief must be given in good time.

International economic cooperation is also badly needed in many other fields at the present time. Let me instance the need for the reconstruction of the economies of the war devastated areas, and for the hastening of the economic development of backward countries. It is possible that nations which are faced with problems of economic reconstruction or development will, if necessary, find their own individual solutions to these problems without help from others. But there is no doubt, equally, that such a process must take an unnecessarily long period of time and might embitter international economic relations. It has been said that fascism anywhere means the danger of war everywhere. It might equally well be said that poverty anywhere means the danger of economic crises everywhere. In these days of economic interdependence, every country has the strongest possible stake in the prosperity of every other country.

In speaking to the International Chamber of Commerce, I need hardly dwell on the advantages to be gained by the business communities of advanced industrial countries in lending aid to backward and devastated areas. The productive power of many countries has grown enormously in the past decade, but we may well ask ourselves whether the world's markets have grown in step. Impoverished peoples are bad buyers. The expansion of international investment, under appropriate

political safeguards, can bring great benefits to all.

On the one hand, the borrowing countries will be enabled to raise their productive capacities, and hence the standard of living of their peoples. At the same time, the lending countries will profit from the new and greater markets which their investments will generate.

It is sometimes argued that the United Nations is not as yet equipped to take practical steps in the solution of international economic problems. I cannot agree.

One of the first tasks of the United Nations, for example, has been to prepare for the establishment of an international organization concerned with trade and employment. Preparatory meetings have already taken place in London and New York. And now in Geneva, as you know, an unprecedented series of negotiations are in progress, aimed at freeing the channels of international trade. Problems of international trade, however, cannot be isolated from those of full employment and economic development, and it is in recognition of this important fact that the preparatory meetings, to which I have referred, have occupied themselves with questions of employment and development as well as with those of trade.

It is hoped that these preliminary meetings will lead the way to a great conference, which will take place in due course, and which will establish an International Trade Organization. This body will take its place amongst the other Specialized Agencies, which, together with the Economic and Social Council and its Commissions, will complete the structure of international organizations working for economic progress. It is within the power of Member Governments, if they so choose, to make of this great structure the most powerful, versatile and flexible international economic machinery that the world has ever seen.

It will be asked: "How could this international machinery be employed?" I should like to answer by drawing your attention to two of the many organs of the United Nations which will be of particular interest to you on this occasion.

The fair city of Geneva, not many miles from where you are now meeting, has recently seen the inaugural session of the Economic Commission for Europe, established by the Economic and Social Council on 28 March 1947.

One of the most important of the duties of the Economic Commission for Europe as defined by the Council, is to:

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"initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic reconstruction of Europe, for raising the level of European economic activity, and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of the European countries both among themselves and with other countries of the world."

A similar Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East will shortly be holding its first session at Shanghai.

In my opinion, these Commissions, within their terms of reference, can render great service to the world, provided that there exists amongst all nations the will to use international machinery for the solution of economic problems, as prescribed in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter.

I must repeat that these, and any other measures which ^{we} can take, will depend for complete success upon the ability of the Powers to settle the major differences which now exist in the political field.

We look forward to the day when we can proceed with our work unhampered by these strong, delaying forces. I ask you to recognize the difficulties, to do your best to help in eliminating them, and to maintain your loyal support of the United Nations in its efforts to overcome them.

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6 June 1947

CAUTION--ADVANCE RELEASE

The following is an advance text of
a speech to be given by the Secretary-General,
Mr. Trygve Lie, before the Winnipeg United Nations
Society, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Wednesday, 11 June 1947

It must be regarded as
confidential and not published or
quoted from before delivery which will be
approximately 9.00 PM, Winnipeg time.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Tonight I am realizing an old ambition.

Although I have visited Canada on several occasions, this is the first time I have been to this part of Canada and it is the first opportunity I have had, as Secretary General of the United Nations, to talk about the United Nations to a gathering of Canada citizens.

It is an inspiring experience for me to find so many of you, here in the heart of this vast country, so deeply interested in what the United Nations is doing.

One of the fine things about being Secretary General of the United Nations is that I am entitled to feel at home wherever I go. This is my privilege because, as Secretary General, I am the servant of all of the nations which belong to the organization.

I feel especially at home tonight, not only because of your kind reception but because I have come to know this country so well through the War and through the many representatives of Canada whom I have had the good fortune to meet outside your borders.

As a member of the Norwegian Government during the War I had many opportunities to appreciate the contributions which Canada made to our common victory.

Many of my young countrymen enjoyed Canadian hospitality while they were training for the Norwegian air force at Little Norway.

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Norwegian ships called at your ports throughout the war and our seamen, who fought the battle of the Atlantic from start to finish, found comfort and friendship here.

From the early days of the war I met many of your fighting men in Great Britain.

As a member of the fighting United Nations Canada proved to be a brave and generous partner. The distance which separated this country from the centers of the conflict was never used as an excuse to prevent you from giving up to the limit of your energy, your wealth and your blood. We were proud of Canada as a fighting ally.

I am happy to be able to say the same of Canada and the Peace.

From the beginning of our efforts to form the United Nations the Government of Canada and Canadian citizens have played an eager and energetic part in our work. Even during the last month one of your outstanding citizens, Mr. Lester Pearson, has made a great contribution of skill and understanding in a special meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, devoted to the Palestine question.

The generosity of Canada as a fighting nation has been duplicated by Canada during the difficult early days of the Peace. You have given, time and again, to relieve the suffering and misery of Europe. Such contributions to the well-being of your fellow men will not be forgotten.

This community, which acts as the nerve center of one of the greatest wheat producing areas in the whole world, has had the honor to play a vital part in this magnificent effort.

So tonight, when I speak to you about the United Nations, I feel that I am among friends and allies, who know what war means in terms of sacrifice, and who are fully prepared to make the sacrifices which we must all make if we are to have a decent peace.

The fact that many of you in this community come, originally, from countries which have been devastated by the War, gives an added touch of realism to anything that I may say.

I am sure that this audience does not expect me to make any excuses for what the United Nations has done or has not done. I certainly do not expect to waste your time by glossing over any of our difficulties.

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What I do want to do tonight is to explain to you what our difficulties have been and the problems which are going to confront us in the future and to show you, if I can, how you, in this community and in this country can help to make sure that the United Nations will be a success.

The first thing to be borne in mind, in judging the work of the United Nations until this time, is that we are still living in the aftermath of the war.

The major peace treaties have not yet been signed. Many of the most basic questions regarding those treaties are still outstanding. The Great Powers are responsible for making those treaties and the negotiations which they have conducted so far make it clear that very important differences still exist.

As long as these differences exist between the Great Powers we must expect two consequences.

First, we must expect these differences to be reflected in the deliberations of the United Nations organs; such as the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The result is an atmosphere of disagreement which is bound to confuse and to discourage the public mind.

In the second place, this lack of agreement is bound to delay and complicate the work of reconstruction. We know, only too well, how these differences have hampered the revival of Europe and what widespread misery has resulted.

In this situation it seems to me that our attitude must be the following:

First of all we must be realistic but not pessimistic.

We know--or we should know -- that no country in this world is able to contemplate another general war. The aggressors of the Second World War have been laid in ruin; for the moment a re-birth of militarism in those countries has small, if any, hope.

The victors, themselves, are faced with enormous problems of reconstruction and reconversion. Many of them find it difficult to cope with the simple problem of keeping their people supplied with food and clothing. Their leaders are deeply pre-occupied with economic and social problems greater than their countries have faced at any other time in recent history. Even the most fortunate of the victorious countries are busily engaged in paying for the most costly war of all time.

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I ask you to believe that no responsible government in this world seriously believes that anything can be gained by a new war.

I do not need to tell you that the people themselves shudder at the very thought of another conflict. It is not only a question of their hating war; they would not even stand for another war.

For this reason alone we can look forward to a period during which War, in the classical sense, is so improbable that it is practically unthinkable. And for this reason, too, it would be non-sensical for us to waste our time and our energy thinking and talking about another war in the period immediately ahead of us.

The matter was put frankly and clearly by the Honorable James F. Byrnes, former United States Secretary of State, in a recent speech.

The people of the World, Mr. Byrnes said, "are disturbed, because both in the Soviet Union and in the United States there is too much talk about War and too little talk about Peace. The people of the Soviet Union do not want War. The people of the United States do not want War."

So as the old disputes continue and fresh ones arise, let us regard them coolly and with perspective and without losing our balance.

At the same time we may, and we must, insist upon one thing.

We know that it is difficult to make the peace. Many important issues and many important national interests are involved. We have been patient because we have not wanted the powers to conclude a hasty Peace which would not be durable.

But we must insist that the Powers shall continue to seek agreement and shall never stop seeking agreement, in the spirit of agreement, until agreement is found.

So much in regard to the one great difficulty which has handicapped the proceedings of the United Nations during the two years following the signing of the San Francisco Charter.

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What I have said on this subject must not be taken as an excuse or as re-
crimination but simply as an explanation.

Now I would like to say something on the brighter side.

Peace Treaties or no Peace Treaties the United Nations has already developed
into a going institution.

The organization has 55 members including the Great Powers of the world.
All of these members employ the United Nations as a place where they can discuss
their differences freely in public forum. It is the first time in the history
of the world that all of the Great Powers have joined with the smaller nations in
an organization of this kind.

Less than two years from the signing of the Charter in San Francisco the
whole organization outlined by the Charter has been created.

The Secretariat of the United Nations is fully manned. The General Assembly
has met three times, including the special session held last month in New York.
The Security Council has met at regular intervals - at least once every fort-night
during the last 16 months. The highly important Economic and Social Council has
had four full sessions and will meet again next month. The Trusteeship Council,
which was the last main organ to be established, recently held its first session
and organized itself for future operations.

Many different problems and situations have come before these bodies and
decisions of great importance have been taken. Most important of all, these
organs of the United Nations have developed methods of procedure and operation
which will stand them in good stead during the decades to come.

This young offspring of the war has learned to walk and to talk and to
think. It is growing up.

At times the United Nations has had to consider problems which some people
may have felt should not properly be imposed upon a new organization. Some of
these problems have been connected with the Peace Treaties themselves and others,
it might be argued, could best be settled by direct consultation and arbitration
between the countries concerned. Yet the United Nations has taken them as they
have come, has done its best to solve them, and on many occasions has met with
success.

In the first place the Economic and Social Council has eleven Commissions and three sub-commissions, which act as working teams. In the second place it works in harmony with a large number of specialized agencies. Working agreements have already been made with the Food and Agricultural Organization, with the International Labor Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and UNESCO. Agreements are now being negotiated with no less than six other Specialized Agencies, which, as the name indicates, cover special fields.

One of the difficulties of the United Nations has been to impress the importance of this type of work on the minds of the general public.

There is nothing very glamorous about most of it; just as there is nothing very glamorous about a loaf of bread.

Somehow or other we have got to drive into peoples' heads the realization that the economic and social work of the United Nations is the finest and the most truly interesting thing about the organization.

This is where you men and women, living here on the prairies of Canada, can do a vital service to the United Nations and to the world.

Repeat to yourselves, and to your neighbors, day in and day out that we are now engaged in the greatest and the most glorious war of all time — A World War against misery.

Any victories that we can gain in this war will save lives, instead of costing lives. They will destroy misery, instead of creating it. By contributing to human welfare in the less fortunate lands we will be worthy of our own good fortune, and in the long run we will improve our own well-being, material as well as moral.

In the tiny world in which we live today it is evident, beyond all doubt, that the welfare of one nation must contribute to the welfare of all nations. It is even more clearly evident that distress and misery in one nation or in one part of the world quickly infect other nations and other sections of the world.

Even though the bitter experience of the past and wise statesmanship may prevent such distress and misery from leading to actual war, they are bound to lead to social unrest and disturbance. Such things do not know any geographical boundaries.

MORE.

Lie

FM/396
6 June 1947

I have said that it is the duty of the Economic and Social Council to make studies and recommendations regarding economic and social matters.

The fact remains that it is up to the member nations themselves - in other words the governments - to decide what positive action shall be taken in any field. I ask you to remember this when the question arises of whether or not the United Nations has succeeded or failed to live up to expectations.

Some uneasiness has been caused in the recent past by the feeling that the United Nations is not performing all of the functions which it can properly be expected to perform or that certain measures taken by individual members of the United Nations have intruded upon its sphere of activity.

I shall only say this in regard to what the United Nations is now doing and what it can be expected to do at any time, under the terms of the San Francisco Charter.

The United Nations is an organization of 55 sovereign states. What the United Nations does in any field is determined by those nations. They take all important decisions regarding the activities of the United Nations organization and they are called upon to finance those activities. The Secretary General of the United Nations and the Secretariat of the United Nations are simply the instruments by which the decisions of the General Assembly, or the Councils, are put into effect.

I feel that it is only fair to say in this connection that the Secretariat of the United Nations has never failed to put into effect any orders issued to it.

It must also be borne in mind that the financial resources of the 55 member nations differ greatly. Consequently their financial obligations to the United Nations also differ and the contributions which are expected of them in connection with any great and costly scheme which the United Nations may consider are also unequal.

This means that the consent of certain powers is necessary in determining that any plan calling for heavy expenditure shall be undertaken by the United Nations as an organization.

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It is a matter of judgement for the powers concerned whether or not the United Nations shall do the job. If the assignment is given to the United Nations then it is up to the United Nations to carry it out in a satisfactory manner. I do not know of any such assignment which has been given to the United Nations which has not been carried out properly.

In the long run it is up to the people themselves to determine what shall happen. An enlightened and sensible people, with wide vision, will inspire the government of its country to take active and progressive action in the councils of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. A short-sighted people may actually prevent its government from taking the action which is required for the common good.

Likewise, the enlightened attitude of one people, converted into an enlightened policy on the part of its government, has contagious qualities.

The history and the present position of Canada and the Canadian people qualify them to play a leading role in the vast program which confronts us, out of all proportion to the size of your population.

I beg you to make the most of this opportunity.

Canada and the Canadians, I am sure, will be worthy of themselves and of the United Nations.

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between the countries concerned. Yet the United Nations has taken them as they
have come, has done its best to solve them, and on many occasions has met with
success.

The latest major problem to come before the United Nations is an outstanding example of the kind of problem with which we may be expected to deal, and with which we will have to deal, during the future. I refer to the Palestine Question.

This is commonly accepted as one of the most-controversial and complicated issues of the day. Many attempts have been made to settle it in the past and all have failed. Now the matter has been referred to a special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Assembly has appointed a Commission of eleven members to investigate and report back to the Assembly itself in September.

Here again the United Nations has accepted a very serious task which is full of potential pitfalls. We are determined to do our very best to see that justice is done, within the framework of the Charter.

This type of political question is bound to arise from time to time throughout the history of the United Nations, and there may be many more which will be even more difficult. After all the United Nations is destined to live and to grow throughout the generations to come and we cannot even begin to foresee the problems that will arise as time goes on.

What we can do is to build firmly, to perfect our machinery, and to instill the high principles of the Charter into peoples' minds. If we do this properly we will not need to worry about the future. We will be able to take our difficulties as they come.

So far tonight I have dealt very largely with the purely political aspects of the United Nations. Yet the last thing I want to do is to leave the impression in your minds that the United Nations is concerned entirely with strictly political questions.

It would be erroneous and dangerous for anybody to feel that the United Nations can accomplish its purpose in life only by dealing with political controversies between the nations and preventing those controversies from leading to war.

True enough, it is the first purpose of the United Nations "to maintain international peace and security".

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But when we assembled at San Francisco two years ago it was clear in our minds that we could not "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" simply by dealing with open and outright threats to the peace.

We know that war does not come of itself. We know that the seeds of war can grow and flourish only when they are planted in the soil of human misery. Given a fair chance to live a decent life and to enjoy the advantages of civilization, mankind does not willingly go out to massacre his fellow-men and to be massacred himself.

Desperation leads men and nations to gamble away their own lives and the lives of others.

With this clearly in mind those who met at San Francisco decided to make the United Nations a constructive instrument through which the nations could tackle the very roots of war.

In the preamble of the Charter itself we announced our determination "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" and "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples."

As the central clearing house for all economic and social questions we established the Economic and Social Council. This council, which has 18 members, has the authority to originate studies and reports on international "economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters."

It may make recommendations regarding such matters to the General Assembly.

It may also make recommendations regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

You can readily see that the field covered by this mandate is practically unlimited.

In actual practice the United Nations deals with these many different problems through a large number of different organs. The Economic and Social Council serves as a supervisory body and a nerve center for all of them.

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MORE.

June 23, 1947

W. N.

Honorable Trygve Lie,
Secretary-General
United Nations
Box 1000,
New York 1, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Lie:

Thank you for your letter of June 19th.

I deeply appreciate your courtesy in sending me the copies of your speeches.

I would like to be put on the mailing list for the text of all of your speeches and statements.

May I extend my best wishes and I will look forward to seeing you again personally.

Sincerely,

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July 21, 1947

Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to inquire whether or not the classified status of the various memoranda, reports, working papers and minutes of the United States Delegation at the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations has been removed.

My particular reason for inquiry is my desire to place my own personal files in the Stanford University War Memorial Library for their proper preservation.

Sincerely yours,

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