

From the Office of  
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey  
140 Senate Office Building  
Washington 25, D.C.  
National 8-3120, Ext. 881

For Release: Saturday  
June 25, 1955

U.N. HELPS FULFILL MANKIND'S ASPIRATIONS, SENATOR HUMPHREY DECLARES

Hope has displaced despair for millions of people since the advent of the United Nations ten short years ago, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) declared last night in an address before the San Francisco Labor Council.

"Ordinary men and women everywhere in the world do not demand much of life," Senator Humphrey declared.

"What they seek is a just peace, a recognition of the dignity of man, and his right to the fundamental freedoms and decent standards of living for themselves and their children.

"It is these needs, so simple to enumerate, yet sometimes so difficult to achieve, which led to the establishment of the United Nations here ten years ago.

"They are the same goals of organized labor in America, which democracy has offered us the chance to achieve. They are the common goals of people worldwide, and the United Nations now offers man's best hope of their realization."

Senator Humphrey said organized labor's stake in the United Nations "is its stake in freedom and progress."

"For just as organized labor seeks to exemplify aspirations of its members for a better stake in a better life, so does the United Nations exemplify the aspirations of the world's peoples for a common gain toward these common goals," he declared.

Senator Humphrey, Chairman of the U.N. Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, said that the "underlying theory" of the U.N. was that "if the causes of international tension and disunity can be removed, these basic demands of mankind can be met."

As a result, he said, the long-range goal of the U.N. must continue to be "removing the causes of war, through the creation of conditions necessary to peace and friendly relations among people everywhere -- higher standards of living, improved health conditions, increased food production and adequate distribution, and a broader acceptance of fundamental human rights."

Accomplishments of the U.N. in the social and economic fields, Senator Humphrey said, include:

"Five million children have received supplementary feedings such as milk, fats, fish liver oils and some meat products;

"Eleven million five hundred thousand children have received vaccinations for tuberculosis;

"Four million children will benefit on a continuing basis from imported equipment for drying and pasteurizing milk;

"New homes have been found for 860,000 persons who were displaced and made homeless as a result of World War II, and 71,000 persons have been repatriated;

"Expert advice and training in technical fields have been made available to governments of underdeveloped areas, designed to enable these countries to become at least partially self-sufficient, in such fields as industrial development, development of land and water resources, transport and communications, public health, agriculture, and general economic development."

Senator Humphrey warned that "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere", and declared that "the war against want must be carried forward with unrelenting vigor within each nation".

Address  
by  
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey  
before  
The San Francisco Labor Council  
June 24, 1955

It is a pleasure and a privilege to join with you today in a discussion of the United Nations, in general, and the role of organized labor in international organization affairs, in particular.

We are all aware of the vital role which labor plays in a democracy. We are also aware of the fact that in a totalitarian society the trade unions are among the first casualties when the dictators take over. Labor plays an equally vital role in the conduct of our foreign policy, because no matter how well conceived our foreign policy may be, its success is dependent in large measure on our internal strength. And we are proud in the knowledge that American labor is a vital component of this strength and provides an indispensable source of vigor and support which enables our government to conduct its relations with other nations to the best advantage of our people.

It is, perhaps, startling to realize that ten years have passed since the representatives of 50 nations assembled in this beautiful and historic city to draft an instrument which was intended to represent the culmination of man's

eternal search for peace and security. This instrument was, of course, the Charter of the United Nations. By adhering to it, the original 50 states, together with the ten additional states which subsequently joined the Organization, solemnly pledged themselves to repudiate war and aggression forever after. Equally important was the fact that they established the most promising and potentially effective international organization ever created in the history of the world.

Ordinary men and women everywhere in the world do not demand too much of life. What they seek and yearn for is a just peace, a recognition of the dignity and worth of man and his right to the fundamental freedoms and decent standards of living for themselves and their children. It is these needs -- so simple to enumerate -- yet sometimes so difficult to achieve -- which led to the establishment of the United Nations 10 years ago.

As set forth in its Charter, the major purpose of the United Nations is the maintenance of world peace, security and economic stability by means of international cooperation and understanding. Underlying this objective is the proposition that if the causes of international tension and disunity can be removed or reduced, these basic demands of mankind can be met.

By what specific means did the founders of the United Nations expect to accomplish these fundamental objectives?

First, by removing the causes of war through the creation of conditions necessary to peace and friendly relations among people everywhere -- higher standards of living, improved health conditions, increased food production and adequate distribution, the improvement and expansion of commerce, and a broader acceptance of fundamental human rights.

Second, by providing a mechanism for the adjustment of differences which endanger international peace, and security when normal diplomatic intercourse has failed; and

Third, by providing the means for building collective security against acts of aggression, threats to and breaches of the peace, and for using diplomatic, economic, and, ultimately, military, military measures when it became necessary to prevent the outbreak or spread of hostilities.

The United Nations is not a super-state. It is composed of sovereign states which have given it only limited powers, under which the UN Organization may impinge upon the sovereignty of its members only to the extent that they have voluntarily permitted by their adherence to the Charter. Since the United Nations is not a super-state, it cannot, without the cooperation of member nations, settle disputes, safeguard collective security, maintain peace, or launch economic and social programs

and projects designed to eliminate the tensions and unrest which often lead to war. A further consideration is the fact that the United Nations was not designed to make the peace following World War II, but rather to maintain the peace once it was established.

The United States supports the United Nations because the Charter expresses our fundamental principles and objectives in this very difficult and complicated world. Fulfillment of the aims declared in the Charter will best advance the interests of the United States -- for these aims -- peace founded on justice; freedom, economic and social progress for ourselves and for all peoples -- represent and summarize the domestic and foreign policy goals of the United States. It is because realization of the aims expressed in the United Nations Charter will materially advance United States interests that support of the United Nations is a fundamental element in our foreign policy.

Let us examine briefly the machinery which was created to enable the United Nations to accomplish its objectives.

The United Nations was established with six principal organs: (1) the General Assembly; (2) the Security Council; (3) the Economic and Social Council; (4) the Trusteeship Council; (5) the International Court of Justice; and (6) the Secretariat. Each of these performs important functions.

The General Assembly, consisting of all of the members of the United Nations, was designed as the center or core. Although the General Assembly was originally designed as a forum or "town meeting" of the world, it has developed very considerably following the paralysis of the Security Council by the Soviets.

In any event, I believe that the greatest value and importance of the General Assembly lies in the fact that any point of trouble or discord in the international scene may be brought out into the open. The Assembly is not paralyzed by the veto power. Because in the limelight of public opinion, even the most powerful states do pay heed to the conclusions reached in such public discussions, the General Assembly has assumed far greater importance than was originally envisioned by the founders of the United Nations. In fact, it may be said that it has assumed an entirely new role.

The Security Council has, as its basic function, the maintenance of international peace and security, including the regulation of armaments. It is concerned primarily, according to the Charter, with disputes or situations which may endanger peace and security, or which actually result in the occurrence of violence. In the first circumstance, its function is to conciliate differences; in the second, to repress or check any resort to force. It also exercises

a watchful eye over international relations for any evidence of a dangerous situation, and was designed, under certain circumstances, to be the enforcement arm of the General Assembly.

The inclusion within the United Nations structure of its third organ, the Economic and Social Council, is a recognition of the fact that conditions of stability and well-being are necessary for friendly relations among nations and that the achievement of these conditions is conducive to peace. Within its orbit are the promotion of higher standards of living; full employment; conditions of economic and social progress and development; solutions of international economic, social and health problems; and universal respect for the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without discrimination as to race, sex, language and religion.

Because international economic and social problems are so complex, ten agencies and a number of functional and regional commissions were established, charged with important duties in the social and economic fields. Of the remaining principal organs -- the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat -- their titles indicate their functions.

It is indeed unfortunate that until the Korean conflict, the efforts of the United Nations in pioneering for peace have not been as well known as the Great Power disagreements.

International disunity and conflict inevitably receive greater attention and publicity than do harmony, unity and cooperation. As a result, the East-West conflicts and disagreements over political and security matters have monopolized public attention and have tended to obscure the many important, but unspectacular United Nations' achievements which have done much to promote peace and stability in the world.

When one considers the deep antagonisms which rend this world, it is remarkable that the UN exists at all. But what is even more remarkable is that it not only exists; it lives, it thrives as a positive, creative force.

Looking backward, we cannot fail to be impressed by the ability which the UN has shown to adapt itself to changing, unforeseen circumstances. It has demonstrated to a marked degree the flexibility which is characteristic of the most valuable and enduring human institutions. It has likewise shown a high quality of courage and a remarkable singleness of purpose.

The United Nations is in fact a declaration of interdependency. The charter of the UN, conceived and written in the United States under the auspices of our government, is the twentieth century proclamation of peace, freedom and security. It represents for the world what our own Declaration of Independence and Constitution means to America.

But liberty and justice are not attained by their mere proclamation. Surely we Americans know that freedom and security represent the continuing challenge to liberty-loving people in every generation. We Americans should be proud of our role in the UN, and our active participation within its councils. Our traditions, our history, have uniquely prepared us for a role of leadership in creating a world order based on the enduring principles of freedom, justice and equality. It is to these principles that the United Nations is dedicated.

Rather than withdraw from the responsibilities and task of achieving the hopes and aspirations of the United Nations charter, we should declare to the world, day in and day out, that the United States will proceed with confidence, with determination, and with perseverance to the end of strengthening the UN and all of its agencies. We are people of peace. Ours is a government of law. Ours is a society of equal opportunity. Surely these credentials qualify us as an active participant in the greatest international organization the world has ever known.

The singleness of purpose of the UN is worth emphasizing. The discordant clatter of the Soviet bloc sometimes tends to drown out, but never to destroy the underlying harmony of the overwhelming majority of the members of the United Nations. This underlying harmony, this fundamental singleness

of purpose, has been demonstrated time after time on crucial votes which have seen 45 or 50 or 55 nations of the world aligned on one side and the five Soviet bloc members braying to themselves on the other.

It is this singleness of purpose, I believe, which has enabled the UN not only to hold together but to grow in stature and prestige despite the trying events of the last ten years -- events which no one could have possibly foreseen ten years ago.

The fundamental difficulty which the UN has had to survive and which its founders did not foresee has been the cold war. The UN was founded on the premise of Big Five unanimity. Rarely, perhaps never, in the history of human affairs has an institution built on such a shaky premise flourished so mightily.

The fact that the UN has flourished is in itself the most eloquent and impressive testimony to the need for the UN and to the determination of the people of the world to make it work.

It is important to recognize that in its fight to survive during the cold war, the UN has gone through structural and institutional changes which make it something different from what it was ten years ago. As the Security Council has been frustrated by Soviet abuse of the veto, for example, the General Assembly has gradually and of necessity assumed certain functions which the Charter contemplates should be

performed by the Security Council. The Uniting for Peace resolution which the Assembly adopted in 1950 established a procedure whereby if the Security Council is unable, because of a veto, to act on a threat to the peace, the Assembly itself may take the matter up immediately -- in emergency session on 24 hours' notice if necessary -- and recommend collective measures, including the use of armed force.

Let it be noted that the word "recommend" is used. The Assembly cannot compel action. But the action will be taken if the governments of the world want it to be taken. An Assembly recommendation can be effective to the extent that the UN's members are willing and able to make it so.

This is just another way of saying that the United Nations is what its members make it. Those members are all sovereign nations in their own right, and they lose none of their sovereign capacities by participating in UN proceedings.

There are some people who profess alarm over the changes which have taken place in the UN as a result of the cold war. In my judgment, the changes, on the contrary, are cause of satisfaction. What sort of human institution is it that does not change in the course of time to adapt itself to changes in its environment? The fact that the UN has changed has nothing to do with any imaginary, Machiavellian plot to subvert the sovereignty of the United States; it is, instead, indicative

of a healthy vitality on the part of the UN. And we should all rejoice that this is so.

The member nations of the UN have had the courage and the wisdom to meet collectively a series of crises and challenges which in their gravity and complexity far surpass the events which led to the failure of the League of Nations. The list of accomplishments of the UN in keeping the peace is impressive. I shall name only a few of the most outstanding.

The UN was scarcely a year old when it was confronted with the refusal of the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Iran. The UN met this challenge to its authority and Soviet troops were withdrawn.

The second major problem involved Syria and Lebanon. Both of these countries requested the immediate withdrawal of British and French troops from their territory. Although the Soviet Union blocked by the veto the Council's proposal for a gradual withdrawal of these troops, both France and Great Britain announced that they would abide by the expressed desire of the majority of the Council and the troops were withdrawn.

When Greece complained that her independence and territorial integrity were being threatened by neighboring states the Security Council appointed a commission to make an on-the-spot investigation and to report back to the Council.

When the Commission reported that the Greek complaints were justified, the Council's efforts to carry out the recommendations of the Commission were frustrated by Soviet vetoes. The matter was ultimately transferred to the General Assembly on the proposal of the United States. The Assembly adopted a resolution calling on Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia to cease their activities, and then established a Special Committee to keep the situation under continuing surveillance and to keep the General Assembly informed of all developments. The moral pressure of this action by the rest of the organized world, acting in concert gave strength to the Greek Government.

In Indonesia, the United Nations first succeeded in obtaining a cease-fire in the fighting between the Dutch and Indonesian forces. Through the efforts of the Security Council, a truce was secured and agreements were made terminating hostilities and affording full independence to the 76 million people inhabiting Indonesia.

In India, large-scale war was averted as a result of the efforts of the Security Council with respect to the Kashmir Question which involved a dispute between India and Pakistan. The Council established an on-the-spot commission and obtained a cooling-off period. Ultimately a cease-fire was arranged and open warfare was terminated.

In 1948, when the Soviets engaged in their unlawful blockade of Berlin, war clouds gathered rapidly and ominously

and it began to appear that armed conflagration would break out at any moment. As a result of a meeting of the parties in the forum of the United Nations, a truce was worked out and the matter was ultimately settled without armed conflict.

In Palestine, when full-scale war broke out between the Arabs and the Jews, the United Nations stepped in, obtained a cease-fire and ultimately an armistice, supervised by a Mixed Armistice Commission. Two years later, again as a result of the United Nations action, the new state of Israel was born and a serious threat to the peace of the Middle East was averted.

In Korea due to the failure of Soviet-American negotiations concerning the establishment of an independent government for Korea in 1947 and 1948, the United States submitted the problem to the General Assembly. Under United Nations auspices, elections were held and an independent democratic government was established in South Korea.

The outbreak of hostilities in Korea during the summer of 1950 put the United Nations to its first real test. Lacking the armed force which was envisioned by the Charter, as a result of Soviet refusal to cooperate in its creation, the Security Council, in the absence of Russia, immediately took the only action possible under the circumstances. It adopted resolutions declaring North Korea's invasion of South Korea to be a breach of the peace and called for the immediate cessation

of hostilities and the withdrawal of the North Korean forces to the 38th parallel. This action was based not only upon the complaint of the United States, but upon the report of the United Nations on-the-spot Commission on Korea. The resolution also called upon members to lend every assistance to the United Nations and to refrain from giving any assistance to the North Korean authorities.

The subsequent events are now history. We all know that the United States carried a greater part of the burden. However, we also know that armed forces of 16 other member nations fought with our forces and that never before had the principle of collective security been so firmly established; never have so many nations acted together in defense of that principle; never have the rights of the weak against the strong been so stoutly protected.

For one reason or another, some people in the United States have sought to distort history on this point. Let us keep the record straight.

The United States did not fight the Korean war under either the compulsion or the direction of the United Nations. The truth of the matter is that United States forces had already been ordered into Korea before the United Nations intervened. And despite all the hue and cry which we heard later -- after the going got tough -- no voice was raised in serious protest at the time of the decision to fight in Korea.

The principle of collective security was at stake in Korea, and both the United States and the United Nations rose to meet the challenge. But also at stake in Korea were the vital interests of the United States -- to a greater extent than those of any other UN member and so much so, in fact, that no less an authority than Secretary of State John Foster Dulles recently told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in regard to our intervention in Korea:

"I believe that the vital interests of the United States would have justified our taking this action alone, if we had had to."

After all, it was United States forces in Japan which would have been threatened by a Soviet-dominated Korea. It was the United States defense line in the Western Pacific which would have been breached.

Nor is there any basis for the complaint that American troops were sent to fight in Korea under United Nations command. There was a United Nations command, true; but from the beginning to the end of the Korean fighting, an American general was at the head of it, and he got his orders, not from UN headquarters in New York, but from the Pentagon in Washington.

Now, it is fashionable to criticize other members of the United Nations for not putting more troops into Korea.

We all hope they will do more in the unhappy event that such a situation arises again. But the constant repetition of this complaint, like a broken phonograph record, obscures the contribution which other UN members did make to the Korean action. Ambassador Lodge has estimated that if it had not been for these contributions, the United States would have had to put two additional divisions of its own in the field. American casualties in Korea were tragically high; but if it had not been for the UN, they would have been even higher.

It seems to me that the real significance of this action is first, that it constituted the first collective international force and action in support of United Nations principles; second, it stimulated the United Nations to develop new machinery and better methods for meeting future threats; third, it aroused the free peoples of the world to the necessity of mobilizing their strength for defense; and fourth, it strengthened the will of small nations to resist by proving that they will not have to stand alone against aggression.

Important and impressive as it is, peacemaking is only one of the accomplishments of the United Nations. The flexibility with which the UN has met the demands of Asia and Africa for political independence and economic development is only slightly less remarkable than the manner in which it has coped with the exigencies of the cold war. And in the

long run, this phase of UN activities may be even more significant and productive of international peace and prosperity.

The United Nations Expanded Technical Assistance Program is perhaps the best known of these activities, but it is only one of many things the UN is doing to promote human welfare and economic development. There is, in addition, the whole area of specialized agencies -- the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Labor Organization, the Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the International Telecommunications Union, the Universal Postal Union, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

But apart from these efforts, vast progress has been made in a number of fields, particularly in regard to technical assistance. In this country, for instance, where many of us are inclined to take our living standard for granted, not many realize that out of the world's two billion four hundred million inhabitants about one out of every two persons lives where there is generally not enough food. That his daily diet is only 400 calories above starvation level and 750 below that enjoyed by the more fortunate one-third of mankind. Every day, there are an additional 80,000 new mouths to feed in a world whose farmlands have not yielded enough

food to keep pace with population growth.

One person in eight suffers from malaria. More than 8,000 a day die from it, on the average. Even more suffer and die from tuberculosis. In many sections of quite a number of countries, 250 or more children out of every 1,000 die before they reach the age of one year. Sometimes this infant death rate may be as high as 400 per 1,000 a year.

About 50 percent of mankind can neither read nor write. Earnings are also extremely low. Two out of every three people earn, on the average, less than \$200 a year, or its equivalent. Of these, half earn less than \$50 a year.

These are ugly, indeed dangerous, facts about the Twentieth Century, which so often has been called an age of progress. These deplorable facts represent the urgency of our challenge and responsibility.

In large part following American leadership and inspiration, the members of the UN in 1950 put in motion an action programme to send experts from the UN and its family of Specialized Agencies into farms, homes, hospitals, schools, workshops, and government offices in the less developed countries throughout the world, to help peoples to help themselves. It also sends young men and women to study and to be trained abroad.

The UNETAP in 1954 sent more than 1500 experts of 63 nationalities to 71 countries and territories and awarded more than 1500 fellowships or scholarships to nations of 86 countries and territories.

The problems of the less developed countries are by their very nature slow to resolve. There are no miracles that can be wrought. It takes time and patience to train teachers, doctors, fishermen, foresters, farmers and technicians to grow more food, to produce more goods, to use natural resources more efficiently. It obviously takes time to reach people who cannot read or write how to grow more food or to use modern machinery. This is a long term job. It must be tackled vigorously and supported with capital investment to make a lasting impression against age-old primitive conditions and inertia. The UN technical assistance programme offers one of the best ways in which nations can work together to help people help themselves.

Through Labor, Agricultural, Commercial Attache specialists and other Officers in our Foreign Service, through economic aid and our Mutual Security Program, through the Technical Assistance Program, through assisting the development of international labor standards, and in many other ways, our Government is constantly seeking to aid our friends and allies to develop conditions within which accelerated

progress for all elements of their populations will be possible.

Let us examine briefly at this time, the vital mission and wonderful record of accomplishment of the International Labor Organization which is one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, although it ante-dates that organization by some 26 years.

In its original statement of purpose, contained in the preamble to its Constitution, the I.L.O. was to deal with the regulation of hours of work, including the establishment of a maximum working day and week; the regulation of the labor supply; the prevention of unemployment; the provision of an adequate living wage; the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment; and many other matter which today are common-place in many countries of the world.

In 1944, after a quarter of a century of successful operation, the International Labor Organization, meeting in Philadelphia, reaffirmed its program for peace in what became known as the "Declaration of Philadelphia."

Among the ringing statements included in this Declaration was the statement that "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere." This Declaration was said by the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt to sum up "the aspirations of an epoch which has known two world wars"

and "may well acquire" a historical significance similar to that of the Declaration of Independence of the United States.

The Declaration reaffirmed the fundamental principles upon which the International Labor Organization was founded, citing in particular the following:

That labor is not a commodity.

That freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress.

That poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere.

The basic aim of the International Labor Organization is to promote social justice in all countries, and to this end, it collects and disseminates information about labor and social conditions, formulates international standards and supervises their national application. It also provides technical assistance in carrying out social and economic development programs.

The record of the International Labor Organization in steady, solid achievement and progress toward the accomplishment of its basic aims and objectives is truly outstanding. In fact, I believe that any objective appraisal must lead to the conclusion that of all the organized international cooperative efforts now going on, the I.L.O. has clearly traveled the greatest distance in the achievement of its goals.

Of course, we know that in social and economic affairs, the ultimate goals are never fully achieved. However, we

know and recognize solid progress when we see it, and I am proud of the fine record of this great Organization in improving conditions of labor and labor's status throughout the world, and I am proud of the role which organized labor, in general, and American organized labor, in particular, has played in the achievement of this great progress.

We know that our great labor federations and international unions have long been in the vanguard of those who understand the strategic importance and implications of the labor factor in the struggle against Soviet Communism. Through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and personal representatives abroad, American labor has been active, in helping free unions around the world to gain in strength, and responsibility. In this task, it has not only stressed to brother workers the treachery of Communism to the working man and the emptiness of its promises, but has also proved an effective proponent of democracy and the ideals of human dignity and freedom on which our nation was founded.



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)