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*Agenda item 5:*

*Letter dated 13 June 1967 from the Minister  
for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet  
Socialist Republics (A/6717) (continued) . . .*

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115. Mr. MORO (Prime Minister of Italy):<sup>11/</sup> This is the first time that I have had the honour to take the floor in the General Assembly of the United Nations. I do so not without emotion, conscious that it is the highest embodiment of the world Organization. This is the furthest point that has been reached in the evolution of the international community, under the impulse of the political and moral thought of our countries. The world looks to the United Nations, and the peoples place their hopes in it, both in times of peace and in times of crisis. It is incumbent on us to ensure that it discharges its exalted tasks effectively.

116. The hour is grave and our first duty is to set forth and compare our ideas and views on the situation in the Middle East, hoping, and indeed confident, that the dialogue now taking place and the consultations accompanying it will bring about a favourable climate for formulating the recommendations and taking the decisions which the situation demands.

117. But first, Mr. President, permit me to convey to you the congratulations of the Italian Government for the decision of the General Assembly in calling upon you, for the third time, to preside over its work. Your name, and the role played by you at the twenty-first regular session and at the fifth special session, now form part of the history of the United Nations; we are therefore more than happy to associate ourselves with the congratulations and good wishes which have been offered you from this rostrum.

118. It is also my duty to express the sincere appreciation of the Italian people and Government to the members of the Security Council and its President who last month, and in particular during the last few weeks, together with the Secretary-General, joined in a supreme effort to preserve peace in the Middle East and who, when armed conflict unhappily broke out, endeavoured to obtain a cessation of hostilities, calling on all the belligerents to comply with the wishes of the United Nations.

119. Our gratitude goes likewise to the representatives of Argentina, Brazil and Ethiopia who introduced a resolution with the humanitarian purpose of ensuring the protection of the civilian populations.

120. I can assure the representatives of the fifteen States which are members of the Security Council that the Italian people followed their deliberations anxiously, hour by hour, and are grateful to them for the high sense of responsibility which they showed and for the success which they achieved.

<sup>11/</sup> Mr. Moro spoke in Italian. The English version of his statement was supplied by the delegation.



**FIFTH EMERGENCY SPECIAL SESSION**

121. The recent tragic conflict which we saw building up, becoming more threatening and finally erupting in a region so close to us, profoundly shocked and disturbed the Italian Government and people who are well aware of the historic spiritual values of the Israeli nation and of their sufferings during the Second World War. Israel's statehood has been recognized by the United Nations of which Israel, together with all of us, is a Member. The Italian Government and people are also aware of the movement for renewal and development among the Arab peoples, a movement to which Italy, together with many other Members of the United Nations, has offered understanding and friendly co-operation.

122. It was with deep distress that the Italian people and Government, which have not forgotten the horrors of war, followed the tragic developments, shared the sorrow of the populations involved, feared a widening of the conflict and—most of all—felt acutely conscious of the tragedy of an armed confrontation between Members of the United Nations which, by their acceptance of the San Francisco Charter, are committed "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

123. The Italian Government, as soon as the crisis began to develop, took every possible step, both at the bilateral and at the multilateral level, to support the efforts of the United Nations, to interrupt the chain of actions and reactions, to defuse the explosive elements and to bring about a breathing spell which might have prevented the outbreak of hostilities.

124. When, alas, the armed conflict which had been feared became a reality, the Italian Government redoubled its efforts in the capitals of the belligerent countries, with the Secretary-General and with the members of the Security Council in order to see to it that every attempt was made to limit the scope of the conflict, to issue a cease-fire appeal and to obtain prompt compliance by the parties with the decisions of the United Nations.

125. Once the cease-fire was achieved, the Italian Government took initiatives for the speedy relief of the victims on all sides and promoted at the international level, both in the United Nations and in the European Economic Community, measures of organized assistance.

126. The task now, as the Secretary-General stated in his report to the Security Council of 26 May, is to lay the foundations for "reasonable, peaceful and just solutions"<sup>12/</sup> to the basic problems which have beset the Middle East for so many years. The task is to settle a conflict, while safeguarding the rights and expectations of the parties concerned and of the international community and to create, with the free acceptance of the parties, the necessary conditions for co-operation and the development of the whole region.

127. This is an immense task in which all of us without exception must join, in proportion to our means and capacities. It will be necessary, however, to avoid all elements which may divide us and to concentrate rather on what unites us, namely, the

<sup>12/</sup> Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1967, document S/7906, para. 19.

principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, our common faith in the capacity of peoples to live and advance together and, above all, the deep conviction that peace is a prerequisite and precondition for the pursuit of all other significant objectives. For us it is essential to reaffirm the great principles contained in the first two Articles of the San Francisco Charter which have been accepted by all Members of the United Nations. We therefore feel that it would not be worth while to indulge in recriminations and condemnations; we must look resolutely to the future and make this emergency session of the Assembly an Assembly of peace.

128. The Italian Government pledges itself today to strive for the solution of the problems which still confront the Middle East and which indeed have become more acute; and it intends, through both multilateral and bilateral channels, to lend its determined and concrete co-operation for the progress of a region which is so burdened with difficult human, economic and political problems and whose peaceful development is so important for the peace of the Mediterranean and of the world.

129. The problems are well known to all of us and are in all our minds. There are immediate needs which urgently require appropriate measures: relief for the wounded, for the new refugees and for the populations so heavily tried. Then—once this urgent task of human solidarity has been fulfilled—the more basic unresolved problems must be attacked. The General Assembly will have to concentrate its attention on these, resuming earlier efforts and endeavours, wherever necessary and possible.

130. First of all, the Assembly must reaffirm that, under Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter, every Member State has the right to political independence, territorial integrity and protection against the threat and use of force, which is incompatible with the principles of coexistence on which the United Nations is based.

131. This is the framework in which we must deal with the problem of disengagement and withdrawal of troops and that of an equitable territorial settlement in the region, which ought to be freely accepted by the parties and be permanent in nature.

132. The withdrawal of troops is certainly a necessary step, but it is not sufficient. If the United Nations confined itself to this, it would share the blame for a return to the situation which has been the cause of two wars in two decades. It should instead give thought to creating the necessary conditions for a settlement which will at the same time protect the Middle East and the world from the danger of a new regional conflagration which might even expand into a general war. If the United Nations should shirk this responsibility, it would be compromising its very reason for existence.

133. The Assembly will also have to tackle the long-standing problem of the Palestinian Arab refugees. Their presence and their tragic situation constitute one of the factors of the existing instability and tension in the area. This is a human, social and political problem the solution of which demands generosity, imagination, and courage.

134. There are, moreover, questions which affect the more general interests of the international community. I have in mind the problems of international waterways, the freedom of which is guaranteed by international law and is a matter of primary interest for the whole world and particularly for those countries which, like Italy, are separated from the oceans by canals and straits. A similar problem exists with regard to the Holy Places, which have long awaited a special status that will guarantee free access to them. Jerusalem should be not a cause of division but a centre of high spiritual value that can promote reconciliation.

135. Even broader problems are those of the economic development of the entire Middle East. This economic development, transcending all national barriers, seems to be one of the elements which not only would meet the legitimate aspirations of the peoples concerned but also could contribute to the peace and stability of the area.

136. I have mentioned only the most important problems; the list is far from complete. Perhaps the time has not yet come to offer specific solutions or formulæ for dealing with these problems. The Italian delegation, at the proper time, will state its views and offer a contribution of ideas and initiatives.

137. For the time being, it seems to me that the essential prerequisite for the establishment of peace is the creation of conditions which will enable the Arab States and Israel freely and without reservations to recognize each other's existence, independence and territorial integrity, and to agree to live in peace with each other, as prescribed by the Charter of the United Nations. This will depend, to a great extent, on the spirit in which the parties tackle the problems confronting them and on their readiness to reconcile their legitimate interests. If the settlement which we all desire can be freely negotiated and accepted by the parties, it will certainly be possible to provide whatever international guarantees may prove necessary.

138. I should like at this point to try to outline the role which the United Nations may be called upon to play in the long and difficult process which, we all hope, will lead from the situation as it exists today, after the close of the military conflict, to genuine peace.

139. To begin with, I should like to say that the United Nations ought to play primarily a political and subsequently an economic role. This Assembly is familiar with the Italian position concerning peace-keeping operations, which we regard as a valid instrument for discharging the Organization's responsibilities. These operations have ensured peace in the Middle East for ten years, but experience has shown how short-lived their usefulness can be if there is no clear determination by the two opposing parties to take advantage of the respite they provide in order to settle their differences. Peace-keeping operations are, by definition, provisional measures, whereas what we are seeking in the Middle East is a lasting settlement.

140. In our view, therefore, the United Nations has a fourfold role in this field.

141. First, the United Nations is the forum in which it should be possible to secure a solemn pledge from

all Members of the Organization to facilitate the process of rapprochement and détente between the parties. I think it would not be unreasonable to call upon all the Powers, great and small, which are engaged in Geneva and in New York in a search for general and complete disarmament, to see to it that what they are trying to accomplish over the entire globe and in outer space is not frustrated by an arms race in the Middle East.

142. Second, the United Nations should provide the first meeting-ground for the parties, for it is incumbent on this Assembly, as the embodiment of the world community, to promote a just and lasting peace in the area. Some interesting ideas have already been advanced in the Security Council with regard to methods and instruments that could facilitate a resolution of the present impasse and permit a return to normality. The representative of India has advanced a proposal, taken up and expanded by many other speakers, to appoint a special representative of the United Nations for the region, with the task of assisting in reducing tension and restoring peaceful conditions, while the United Kingdom representative has suggested a mediator who could facilitate the starting of discussions with the Governments concerned, with a view to laying the foundation of a just and lasting peace.

143. These points deserve to be explored by the interested parties as well. The work done by the United Nations personnel thus far in connexion with the cease-fire has been commendable; they could therefore be assigned to carry out such further tasks as may be found desirable in the present circumstances.

144. Third, the United Nations can and should have a part in the settlement of those problems which, while having their geographical basis in the Middle East, affect interests which are important to the international community as a whole.

145. Fourth, the United Nations can serve as the instrument for dealing with the problems of humanitarian assistance arising out of the recent conflict or originating in the unstable Middle Eastern situation.

146. Moreover, the United Nations should take the initiative in setting up a broad plan for the economic development of the entire region. To this plan all the States Members of the United Nations should, with the assent of the peoples of the Middle East, contribute their technical skills, their economic resources and their physical and spiritual energies.

147. I have outlined the steps taken by the Italian Government first to prevent and later to contain the crisis caused by the armed conflict; I have stated our views concerning the problems of the Middle East, the best course to follow towards a solution for them, and the part which the United Nations should be called upon to play.

148. I should like, in conclusion, to reaffirm the all-important need for peace, and therefore to make an earnest appeal to the Arab States, Israel and all the Members of this Assembly. We believe not only that peace is the supreme good and a historical necessity, but also that it can be achieved provided that there is the will for a courageous step, a constructive initiative which will open a new path before

us. Reconciliation between peoples who were in conflict until yesterday can be attempted and achieved if everyone is prepared to lay down not only the weapons of war but also those of intolerance and recrimination.

149. We are confident that Israel and the Arab States will be able, after their recent tragic experiences, to adopt a highly humanitarian and civilized outlook and to build, on the ruins of war, a peaceful and equitable settlement, which is an essential prerequisite to their peoples' welfare, development and security, and to co-operation among them. It is incumbent on all of us to promote and facilitate such a turn of events in a spirit of friendship, and we are certain that all peace-loving peoples will be able to answer this call of conscience.

150. Mr. CHAGLA (Minister for External Affairs of India): Mr. President, we have met here in this emergency special session of the General Assembly to discharge the responsibilities of the United Nations, in what you yourself, in your opening statement called "a crisis of world proportions". It is significant that ten Heads of Government and eighteen Foreign Ministers from all over the world have considered it their duty to come to the United Nations Headquarters at very short notice. Even in this gloomy hour it should perhaps hearten us that the international community has so spontaneously, and with such a measure of unanimity, agreed that the United Nations is the proper forum for arriving at decisions which ensure that the principle gets established that in the second half of the twentieth century, aggressors are not permitted to retain the reward of their aggression, however successful on the field of battle they might be. It would be an understatement to say that peace in West Asia is in peril. Barely a week ago a short but savage war in that area was brought to a halt by continuous and persistent efforts of the Security Council, and unless the world community can arrange—and arrange firmly and speedily—a durable and just peace, it is not inconceivable that a world conflagration may follow. We therefore hope that the return of peace to the area will be such as to guarantee that there shall be no recurrence of war again; that the human problems created by this war, further compounding the tragedy which already existed in the area as a result of the happenings in 1948 and 1956, will be redressed with the help of all men of goodwill, all over the world, and through the instrumentality of the United Nations.

151. Conditioned by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi during our struggle for independence, and conditioned earlier, through the centuries, by the tradition of the deep and abiding philosophy of humanism, centuries that produced Buddha and Ashoka, our land has been a crucible for integrating people of different faiths and diverse ethnic origins. For centuries, people have lived in India who practised all the major religions of the world: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism. To us, therefore, the philosophy of tolerance, peace and co-existence is natural and the ideas of violence and war repugnant. Settlement of international disputes through peaceful means, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of States, the right of all