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Address by Rear-Admiral Kaare Olsen, Foreign  
Minister of Chile, at the 10-th Anniversary Meeting  
of the OIC

# UNITED NATIONS

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ADDRESS BEFORE THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE MEETINGS  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

BY H.E. REAR-ADMIRAL KAARE OLSEN, FOREIGN MINISTER OF CHILE

21 JUNE 1955

Mr. President, in this great, historic hall, the international community's basic instrument was considered, discussed and adopted. It is therefore only to be expected that the United Nations should have enthusiastically accepted the city of San Francisco's invitation to commemorate here, in its very birthplace, the tenth anniversary of the advent of the Charter into the judicial life of the world.

The Chilean Government thanks the authorities of this city for their thoughtful initiative and hopes that it will lead to a rekindling of the spirit which animated the authors of the Charter and thus restore its original force.

The United Nations can now look back on ten years of work and experience. During that period we have witnessed the enthusiasm with which the adoption of the Charter was greeted, and have seen that enthusiasm wane, at times to the point of undeserved criticism. The United Nations, the repository of mankind's hopes, is now confronted with a fundamental problem: to nourish that hope and to prevent it from fading. That is the end to which we must direct our main effort, for our faith in it is fully justified.

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When the concept of an organization such as this one first took shape, none could predict the course of events during the ensuing decade. The unity of principle and of purpose which was so forcefully demonstrated in the Declaration of the United Nations, at the Moscow conference, at Dumbarton Oaks and even at Yalta, and later maintained at San Francisco, soon gave way to that ideological cleavage which has so profoundly influenced the life of the United Nations.

Our position, as recently reiterated by the President of Chile, is one of firm opposition to the ideology of communism. Yet we have not lost hope that a common ground of understanding will be found between the two camps which will dispel the spectre of a new cataclysm which is hovering over the present and future generations.

The United Nations is not likely to be directly concerned with the preparation of such an agreement. Yet its flexibility, as demonstrated at the recent Geneva and Bandung conferences, and in the Austrian peace treaty, which have brought about an easing of international tensions and a restatement of the principles of the Charter, allows satisfactory settlements to be reached outside its framework which will have a favorable effect on the peace of the world.

The United Nations was not established primarily to make peace but rather to maintain it. Its statutory provisions were not part of a peace treaty, as in the case of the League of Nations, but were discussed quite apart from the war which was still being waged when the San Francisco conference was held. It is not a purely political body but includes economic and social aspects which are equally important factors in the maintenance of peace. If all the factors which must be taken into account to judge the results of the United Nations were weighed, I am sure that the scales would be so heavily weighted on the positive side as to dispel all doubts as to its obvious usefulness and the undeniable benefits which it has brought mankind.

We must remember that the United Nations is still a young organization established to set up the international community along new and more effective lines.

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The scepticism of Governments and the impatience of the people have been the two negative factors which have impeded its development and its effectiveness. States must be given time to adjust themselves to the Organization for they are reluctant to discard old patterns and to adapt themselves to new standards. Therefore, the criticism to which the United Nations may be subjected should be directed at its Member States. If the Organization is to produce the results expected of it, it must be strengthened, believed in, considered a very part of our being and not something alien to us. Close contact must be maintained with it, because the strength of the United Nations can never be greater than the trust which Member States place in it. More than a mere statement, this should be an axiom and if the day comes when the Chancelleries of the world accept it as such we may say that the United Nations has become a really strong organization which has imposed itself on the conscience of the world. We can then confidently undertake the task of fully implementing the Charter and thus give the Organization the power it must have to impose its authority through its statutory provisions.

The peoples of the world have all placed exaggerated hopes in peace as something automatic. Their impatience is explained by the sufferings to which they were subjected during the war. They must be made to understand that the only possibility of peaceful co-existence lies in strengthening the United Nations. Impatience is the most direct road to despair.

During the San Francisco conference our delegation took the position that the smaller countries should be given some assurance that a few of the provisions of the Charter, including the veto, would be revised in the light of experience. It pointed out that the smaller countries had accepted many sacrifices in the interest of maintaining peace and security and that if at some future date the world situation was such that some of these sacrifices were no longer necessary, the relevant provisions should be revised at a special conference.

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While my Government understands that the time is not yet ripe for a substantial revision of the Charter, it feels nevertheless that a few suggestions might be offered which, at some later date, could be translated into action.

In that connection and in keeping with the position we took in 1945, our first remarks must be concerned with the veto system provided for in the Charter. Throughout the debate on that point we strongly opposed a provision which was both inconsistent with the principle of juridical equality of States and a threat to the very existence of the organization about to be established. Faced with the statement by the Great Powers that "there will be no Charter unless there is a veto" we abstained from voting and hoped that the United Nations would be able to move forward despite the veto. Time has shown that we were right for the veto has on many occasions prevented the work of the United Nations from living up to the hopes placed in it.

While we are fully aware that political realities preclude the Great Powers from fully abandoning the veto, we nevertheless believe it to be a negative factor which paralyzes the work of the United Nations. Even though it might be accepted in certain cases, we feel that it should at least no longer apply to the pacific settlement of disputes, the admission of new Members, and the election of the Secretary-General with respect to which, owing to an inaccurate interpretation, the General Assembly was deprived of a function which it alone should perform.

Another point which concerns us in connection with a revision of the Charter is the one concerning regional arrangements. Some confusion has arisen which is prejudicial to the prestige of the United Nations. While I shall not refer to the many divergent opinions in the matter, I feel that the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter should be redrafted to dispel any doubt as to the procedure to be applied in disputes between States which are parties to a regional arrangement.

The Economic and Social Council has become the major United Nations organ as far as the smaller countries are concerned. Its activities are followed with

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increasing interest and hope. As a result of the close relationship between economic and social problems, the Council has always been considered a single entity which should not be divided. In point of fact, however, there is an equally close relationship between those questions and political problems and it would be to close one's eyes to reality not to acknowledge the great influence which economic and social factors have on the political structure, particularly of the under-developed countries. There is obviously a close relationship between all United Nations organs and a change in its structure would not unduly affect their work. While we are not suggesting that now is the time to effect that division of the Economic and Social Council which we believe must eventually take place, we feel that some thought should be given to the possibility of dividing the present Council into two bodies: an Economic and Technical Assistance Council and a Social and Human Rights Council. In the meantime, in keeping with the practice which is commonly observed at Council sessions, its work might be allocated to two Committees corresponding to the proposed division.

In concluding these remarks on a possible revision of the Charter, I must add that some of the terms used in it are inconsistent with the facts. For instance, reference is made in some Articles to "enemy" States. Such terms should not be employed in an organization such as this which is attempting to achieve universality. They were quite proper at the time of the drafting of the Charter when a state of war still existed. Today, however, those countries which were the enemies of the States which signed the Charter have been organized along democratic lines, have become full members of the international community, are sovereign and, we are sure, will one day take their place among us.

Mr. President, the authors of the Charter were fully aware that peace is not the end result of purely political factors, and that economic and social considerations exert a considerable influence. In order to maintain peace, living conditions must be established which make peace possible. That is the principle upon which the Charter is based and to which the Economic and Social Council has dedicated its main effort.

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While much has been done to bring that about, there is still a long way to go. The technical assistance programmes which are being carried out in every country constitute one of the most effective achievements of the United Nations. Their contribution to the economic development of the under-developed countries has obviously been a factor in their advancement. Nevertheless, as our representatives have constantly stressed, something more than technical assistance is required. Technical assistance cannot be effectively applied unless capital is available, chiefly for non-profit-yielding projects. Both the Monetary Fund and the International Bank have been unable fully to meet the requirements of the under-developed countries. It is for that reason that in 1948 Chile took the initiative in supporting proposals or surveys aimed at providing financial assistance for the economic development of those countries. At the twelfth session of the Economic and Social Council a resolution was adopted in which it was recognized that the financing of non-self-liquidating projects should be made possible through an International Fund which could provide long-term, low-interest, subsidies and loans to countries which applied for that assistance. While the idea gained acceptance and met with no opposition, it was not applied in practice because some of the countries who would be major contributors to the Fund felt that they could not provide funds so long as they had to bear the cost of military expenditures required in the defense of democracy. It is not for us to criticize the position taken by these Powers. They are aware of their obligations and responsibilities. But since the spirit which animated the authors of the Charter now pervades this hall, this is the best occasion to appeal to them once again to realize the position of the under-developed countries. We do not wish to lag behind in the march of progress. We want to provide our peoples with worthy and adequate living conditions. Until that is achieved, we cannot say that one of the basic principles of the Charter has been implemented, or that one of the conditions fundamental to lasting peace has been met.

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On our continent the Economic Commission for Latin America has worked actively, calmly and constructively. Its economic, technological and statistical surveys have helped our Governments solve their problems. Its fully documented and completely objective reports have provided the most effective arguments in support of our position in international discussions. Established on Chile's initiative, its work has added to the prestige of United Nations activities and we are confident that it will continue to develop its work for the benefit of every Latin American country.

I should also like to refer to the specialized agencies, such as the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, and others whose work has justified and still justifies the sacrifices being made to maintain the efficiency which it deserves.

Mr. President, I must say a few words about something which will have a decisive effect on the future of mankind. I refer to atomic energy.

By mere coincidence, or perhaps predestination, this year also marks the tenth anniversary of the explosion at Alamo Gordo which heralded what we now refer to as the "Atomic Age." The most powerful weapon ever devised by man came upon us shortly after the signing of the Charter at San Francisco. It brought with it hope for the welfare of the peoples of the world. The United Nations immediately considered the new problems which followed in the wake of that invention both as regards its military and peaceful use. On 8 December 1953 the President of the United States of America informed the General Assembly of his feelings in the matter and announced that his country wished to go beyond a mere reduction or suppression of the atomic materials used for military purposes. He added that it was not sufficient to take the weapon away from the military; what should be done was to place it in the hands of those who could transform it into a useful instrument for peaceful purposes. The following year, again in the United Nations, a policy designed to promote the development of atomic energy

for peaceful purposes and the signing of bilateral agreements to that end was announced. That policy was only possible within the framework of the United Nations and constitutes one of the greatest examples of international co-operation. It brings new hope.

The problem is still with us, however, of confining the use of that energy to peaceful purposes so as not to convert it into an instrument of destruction. While mankind expects it to make the greatest contribution to progress, hope is tempered by an equally profound sense of fear as, for the first time in history, force has been discovered capable of annihilating the human race.

May God guide us; we fervently hope that we shall succeed in making the United Nations a body capable of contributing to the welfare of mankind and of ensuring peace and freedom from fear. Thank you, Mr. President.

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