

PRESENTED TO THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY, SHIMLA

BY



Library

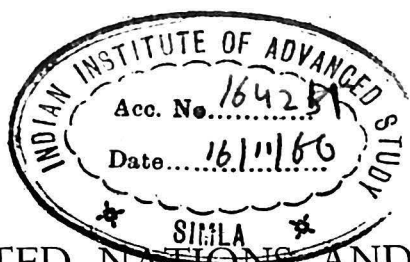
IAS, Shimla

TMP 050.95452 B 532



00016424

050.25452  
B532



7/1/83

## THE UNITED NATIONS AND ASIA

By THE RT. HON. THE LORD BIRDWOOD, M.V.O.

Report of a lecture delivered to the Royal Central Asian Society on Wednesday, February 17, 1960, Sir Olaf Caroe, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: There really is no need to introduce Lord Birdwood to members of this Society; he has been a Vice-President and a member of our Council and is also very active in the Upper House of Parliament. He was during the latter months of 1959 a member of the United Kingdom delegation to the Fourteenth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Lord Birdwood is now about to tell us of his experience and impressions, mainly in relation to Asia.

I FEEL I should begin by saying that although I went as an official delegate with the United Kingdom delegation to the Fourteenth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, it is in a personal capacity that I am now speaking. If it be true that "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing," then the experience of the Fourteenth Session, one session of the United Nations, means a little knowledge; and if you accept the danger of a little knowledge I shall try to paint in a few personal impressions of Asian problems at the United Nations. If any conclusions or opinions emerge, again they are my own personal views.

The Royal Central Asian Society has built up a welcome reputation for conveniently accommodating speakers who have a good deal to say about Arabs, Africans and Europeans but very little to say about Asians, certainly not about Central Asians. We might term the process that of interpreting the international scene with a breadth of vision and depth of perspective, and so on. I have profited from that process in the past and hope to do so again this afternoon. Indeed, I can do so because the label of my talk is a broad and generous one, "The United Nations in Asia" and that entitles one to talk about the ByeloRussian Republic or Haiti. I do not, however, propose to talk about countries so distant. But I have something to say about Africa, and for two reasons.

Firstly, it so happened that, never having been to Africa, I was given the specific task to look after the three South African items, so that it would be unintelligent if I said nothing about African problems. Secondly, it is impossible in these days to discuss the United Nations without considering the position of a large, rather cumbersome but quite effective group—the Afro-Asian bloc—which is increasingly playing its part in the annual round of political poker at the Assembly. At the Fourteenth Session there were some eighty-two Member States; this year there will be eighty-six Member States.

The machinery allows for five main delegates from each State, five alternate delegates and any number of technical advisers. The British delegation are, according to tradition, extremely flexible. If a delegate is missing from his chair in a plenary meeting anyone can sit in it if he so wishes, provided he is a member of the United Kingdom delegation. The

permanent representative, Sir Pierson Dixon, is always in New York, and one or two other permanent representatives can be regarded as available to fill the seats of people like myself who happen to be away on committees. It is all extremely flexible.

Naturally, the United Kingdom delegation is bound strictly by the instructions received from Whitehall. The briefs I received on my three South African items were the result of consultation between the Commonwealth Relations Office, the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, and one has in the nature of things to keep to one's brief. United Kingdom delegates are there as the mouthpiece of the policy laid down by Whitehall; and if a speaker offends do not blame the speaker, blame Whitehall.

It is fair to say that a delegation can exert its influence in an opposite direction; it can offer advice, and some delegations offer more advice than others. In some instances one has the impression that there is little advice given from a particular government to a particular delegation.

The General Assembly has seven Main Committees, and remember I shall be speaking of the Assembly, not of the permanent structures such as the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Health Organization, both operating all the year round in various parts of the world, or the various organs of the United Nations such as the Security Council and the Trusteeship Council which, again, are permanent. The Assembly of which I am speaking can be compared to an attempt at an international Parliament.

The first happening in the Assembly is the election of a President for the year, and thirteen Vice-Presidents, and also seven Chairmen of the seven Main Committees, those twenty-one together forming the General Committee or the Steering Committee. The task of the General Committee is to allot out to the seven Main Committees the seventy or eighty items on the agenda. The election of the General Committee is no mere formality; it must be of a "representative character." It would be rather disastrous if it were, shall we say, to have an Iron Curtain bloc bias, because one would never then get such items as Hungary on the agenda.

I have time only to outline the more interesting features of one or two of the Main Committees. There is the Social Committee much concerned with human rights, sometimes known as the "Girls'" Committee, presided over in 1959 by Mme. Ciselet of Belgium, and discussing social and educational matters. That Committee spent a good deal of time discussing somewhat obscure items in connection with the rights of the child. When asked how it was progressing we discovered that the Committee had not decided when the rights of the child began. On going more deeply into the question it was found that the ladies were wondering whether the rights of the child were to be post-natal or pre-natal. It does seem that one is in a topsy-turvy world when one notices a delegate from a certain Middle East country puzzling over this obscure subject, when it might be said that in his own country adult men and women had not yet received any rights at all. The Fourth Committee, the problem child of the United Nations, is perhaps the most interesting. It is sometimes known as the Trusteeship Committee and it deals with non-self-governing territories and colonial problems generally.

As the elections proceed so the General Debate starts up, providing the opportunity for any State to get its particular obsession out of its system. In the case of the Irish, the partition of Ireland; in the case of the Arabs, the existence of Israel; in the case of the Soviet Union, the non-representation of Communist China at the U.N. There is a tendency to regard the General Debate as of not much importance. In fact, it is very important because by listening carefully one can get an idea of the various attitudes States will take up, when they come to discuss matters in a Committee.

I shall hope to touch on the particular position of the Commonwealth bloc within the United Nations, but at this stage in relation to the General Debate I would only say that we obviously were waiting to hear what would be the attitude of India towards Tibet. Would Mr. Krishna Menon condemn China's action in Tibet and expose India to criticism of her part in Kashmir? Would Pakistan be prepared to keep Kashmir in cold storage for a little longer? As you probably remember, in 1954 India had signed her agreement with China renouncing extra-territorial rights in Tibet; therefore India's abstention when it came to the Tibetan item was not altogether unexpected.

Concurrently with the winding up of the General Debate, the seven Committees are starting their work. As my first preoccupation was with the item "S.W. Africa" in the Fourth Committee, it may be useful to say something of the work of that Committee, since it faithfully reflects much of the position of Asia at the United Nations in a general sense. The Fourth Committee is generally regarded as the focus of all anti-colonial obsession. For years we have attempted to resist extension of the recognized legitimate field of enquiry of the Committee into activities which are not recognized under the U.N. Charter.

For example, Article 73(e) requires that we submit information on non-self-governing territories (for information only) concerning statistical, technical, economic and educational conditions, but *not* political information.

There was a resolution in 1959 sponsored by Guinea (which in 1959 could be regarded as the *enfant terrible* of the Fourth Committee), a resolution calling on administering countries to name a date or set up a timetable for independence to be achieved in all non-self-governing territories. That resolution was resisted by certain adult countries who perhaps four or five years earlier would have supported it. In that way there is constant pressure to extend the authorized activities of the Fourth Committee into the political field and to call for action which would suit the less responsible delegations.

Hitherto we have been remarkably successful in resisting such moves and I attribute that during the last three years largely to the influence and prestige of one man, Sir Andrew Cohen, whose method is not to shun an issue. One usually associates an abstention with complete silence. In contrast, I recall an occasion when on abstention by the United Kingdom, Sir Andrew Cohen made an explanation lasting over an hour. As the result of the position Sir Andrew has built for himself, I would claim that the United Kingdom stock in the Fourth Committee is extremely high; and I claim this in spite of criticism of the United Kingdom in relation to the way in which we registered our vote last year on South African items.

Among the Powers which control colonial territories, the United Kingdom is obviously the one which commands the most respect.

As an example, there was last year a typical Fourth Committee resolution to set up a Committee of six to study the principles which would guide members in determining whether an obligation exists to transmit information called for under Article 73(e). It was aimed at the Portuguese. The Committee was to consist of three Member States who administered non-self-governing territories and three who did not. Of the three administering Powers we well headed the poll, in spite of having abstained on the resolution, which shows the influence one good man can have.

Therefore I stress that, in spite of what I have said as to delegations being guided by the policies they receive from their Governments, there is an anomaly, in that personalities do play a tremendous part in a curious manner which seems to be detached from the policies that they are instructed to present. It may be that on occasions certain delegations—and this may apply to the Afro-Asian bloc—allow their leading delegates a fairly free hand. We have sometimes had that impression over Mr. Krishna Menon. Nevertheless, certain men at the United Nations have their following and influence in a way which tends to put the personal influence within the United Nations far ahead of the normal channels of diplomacy, where we feel our way forward in international relationships through Embassy exchanges and the great traffic in telegrams. Krishna Menon, Dr. Tsiang of Formosan China, a gentleman known as “the Arab baritone” and in their quiet but persistent way, men such as Sir Pierson Dixon and Harold Beeley are constantly exerting influence, reflecting for better or worse their country’s position and prestige at the United Nations in their different ways. Frequently one encounters a single individual in rather a small obscure delegation who plays his part out of proportion to the physical size of his country. Mr. Dorsonville of Haiti and Mr. King of Liberia are examples.

In regard to the position enjoyed by the United Kingdom delegation in the Fourth Committee, we are in some ways affected obliquely by the growing pains of the Afro-Asian bloc itself and its internal troubles in trying to digest the views of Africans, Arabs and Asians; people who are none too sure of their own group relationships. For example, those Siamese twins, Ghana and Guinea, are today not very happy in what seems to have been a rather hastily conceived union. Within the Arab fold the shifting twists and tugs in the Middle East, of which we are all aware, are at play, though curiously not so prominent as I had expected. But when we come to consider the slightly artificial efforts to present a common view over the whole field of Afro-Asian affairs, then the cracks under the paper become very noticeable indeed.

I think it true to say that India’s initiative to some extent dominates the Afro-Asian bloc, and it is an initiative which is not always welcomed by other members of that bloc. I can recall a certain occasion in the S.W. African debate in the Fourth Committee when there was very nearly an explosion between Mr. Krishna Menon and a forceful lady, Miss Angie Brooks of Liberia. And so a fair conclusion is that the Afro-Asian bloc is really too large a unit to represent a permanent united political pro-

gramme and is really a rather hasty get-together of convenience, to present a vague common approach concerning the sharing out of a past history of colonial status by most—but not all—of its members. Turkey and Thailand, for example, have no colonial complex.

A further conclusion might be that as time passes the bloc will splinter into its more logical three components—African, Arab and Asian—and then the internal pains of each component will perhaps be more pronounced. For example, this year when Nigeria arrives it will be exceedingly interesting to note to what extent Nigeria may affect the position hitherto regarded as the prerogative of Ghana.

I have mentioned the Commonwealth bloc. Once a fortnight a meeting is held of the heads of the Commonwealth delegations. Such meetings in my view are more useful and effective than other more numerically powerful gatherings on a geographical basis of Latin-Americans, Afro-Asians, Western Europeans. The reason for this is obscure, because on no occasion I know of have those meetings resulted in a unanimous Commonwealth vote on any resolution. But there is an atmosphere of relaxation and friendship and an exchange of ideas which is free and frank, and this implies that although our decisions may not be the same, the thought processes by which we reach those decisions *are* the same. At those meetings nearly every item on the Agenda of the United Nations is covered. Occasionally if there is an item recognized as too prickly and charged with explosive material for any particular delegation, it is avoided. Otherwise we discuss most things; and the Asian members are usually prepared freely to help us in presenting the views and voting intentions of the Afro-Asian bloc.

A word about Asian Commonwealth delegates and their delegations. I, of course, felt very much on the home ground with both the Indians and the Pakistanis. Not knowing Ceylon well I would only say that the wisdom and moderation of Sir Claude Corea, whose friendship in London many of us came to value, was a constant factor in modifying extreme attitudes, and he was always ready to take the initiative in putting forward proposals. That at least was my impression at our fortnightly meetings. Of Mr. Krishna Menon one could say that he never provided a dull moment. I had no experience of the old days when five- or six-hour speeches on Kashmir were the fashion, with consequent anxiety on the part of his doctor in the wings. But at the Fourteenth Session (if the previous reports one heard were true) Mr. Krishna Menon was a much mellowed man. His approach to a problem might seem sometimes Machiavellian, sometimes puckishly mischievous, but never dull.

I do not know how Mr. Krishna Menon's own delegation view his habit of turning up in any Committee at any time to assume charge of the presentation of the Indian delegate's view. That sometimes resulted in a certain seeming confusion of papers with muttered imprecations which invariably came over the ear-phone system to the entertainment of the Committee. But there was often much to be admired in Mr. Krishna Menon's handling of the Indian attitude in regard to certain resolutions and items. For example, in sponsoring the annual resolution on Apartheid (in South Africa) he was skilful enough to present an extremely mild resolution, and

thereby made it all the more embarrassing for those intending to oppose him. He declared—and I personally believed him—that he did not wish to convey the impression of a pointed and concentrated attack on South Africa—a sort of vendetta. Indeed, he paid tribute to South African achievement, with particular reference to Field Marshal Smuts. He was insistent that he did not recognize “Apartheid” in reverse. So much for Mr. Krishna Menon.

Behind him is a powerful and capable delegation: sturdy men such as Mr. Jha, an administrator raised in the old tradition of the I.C.S., and with him a number of much younger men of ability, in my view, well above the average of the majority of Asians at the United Nations. The Pakistanis were again led by Prince Aly Khan, again also a man who displayed, to my mind, much more ability and enthusiasm than one might have associated with a great expert on racehorses, and who did ensure that all was well on the hospitality front. The Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Manzur Qadir, only put in an appearance in the first few days; but his speech in the General Debate was quite outstanding. After he left much of his work in the first two Committees fell to Mr. Baig, again, in my view, one of the clearest and most effective of advocates.

With two such powerful delegations at the United Nations one must always hope for a close working understanding between them. Unfortunately, the factors which make for estrangement on the Indian sub-continent are effective enough in New York; not that Indians and Pakistanis studiously avoid each other, but there is a lack of common interest which should be there.

Of our Fourth Asian Commonwealth delegation, the Malaysians, under their charming leader, Dr. Dato Ismail, I would only say that they seemed to remain happily outside controversy, until, of course, with the Irish they tabled the item, “The Question of Tibet.” They then attracted the black looks of the Soviet bloc and some of their Asian disciples. In fact—to break down the voting—the resolution was carried by forty-six to nine, with twenty-six abstentions. Of those twenty-six, sixteen were members of the Afro-Asian bloc; and seven of the sixteen were Asians.

You will recall that the United Kingdom delegation voted for the inscription of the Tibetan item and then joined the abstainers on the resolution itself. In regard to that position I wish to be quite objective and factual—in fact I must be. We were able in a speech to condemn, and did condemn, the physical acts of the Chinese in Tibet. By abstaining we intended to convey the impression that we were in doubt as to the legal implications, and the application of the controversial Article 2(7) of the Charter. That Article is the one which reads: “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.”

In the case of our relationship with Tibet and China, I think it could be shown that until 1951 we were in direct relationship with a Tibet which we regarded as autonomous. In May, 1951, Tibet signed, under duress, the seventeen-point Agreement with the People’s Republic of China. In the first clause of that Agreement there occurs the following passage: “The



Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the Motherland—the People's Republic of China." In the fourteenth clause there is the sentence: "The Central People's Government shall have centralized handling of the external affairs of the area of Tibet."

Those two sentences seem to constitute the background to the legal doubt which we have said attaches to our own view of the status of Tibet, subsequent to the 1951 Sino-Tibetan Agreement. When one plunges further into this particular wood, the trees become very thick indeed. For several reasons I do not intend to follow up a comment made only on the fringe of the problem.

But as we are anchored to the United Nations, I would like, within the context of the Tibetan problem, to touch briefly on a matter which must be included in any discussion on Asia and the United Nations. I refer to the non-recognition of China at the United Nations.

For several years past India has proposed that the item "Question of the representation of China in the United Nations" be placed on the Agenda. India has hitherto been defeated, largely due to the United States' initiative, with resolutions rejecting India's request, and deciding not to consider any proposal either to exclude the representation of Chiang-kai-Shek's representative or to seat the representative of the Central People's Republic (C.P.R.). And so Dr. Tsiang, an attractive gentleman of some personal influence at the United Nations, continues to speak on behalf of the Chinese; in other words, to represent Formosan China.

This year the tendency was to ask: Why admit Communist China at the moment of their rape of Tibet? Is that not to yield to blackmail? Alternatively, Communist China, is enabled to ask: On what grounds is the United Nations interested in the action in Tibet of a State they do not recognize? The United Nations does not accept the Peking Government; why should the Peking Government accept the United Nations?

Various expedients have been suggested for overcoming this international dilemma, not within the United Nations so much as, I believe, in Asia itself. I speak not as a United Nations' delegate (and indeed even if I did, I have no particular inside information), I speak merely as a student when I assume that one day within the next few years the United States' resistance to the seating of Communist China must be withdrawn. For the moment, one of the expedients spoken of is to seat two Chinas as representing China at the United Nations. If that was ever possible in the General Assembly, what would happen in the case of the Security Council seat? Meetings of the Security Council would, I anticipate, be stimulating, to put it mildly, with two gentlemen, who according to alphabetical seating would presumably have to sit next to each other, and yet who would with equal certainty never exchange so much as a glance at each other's profile, let alone the spoken word!

It will be interesting to note India's intention next year. In view of the present temperature of public opinion in India over China, I doubt if the Government of India could, at this moment, table a resolution to seat Communist China at the United Nations. Quite a lot could happen before next September. So we will just have to wait and see.

But suppose for a moment that Communist China is there in that trium-



phant mood of Power politics which has brought her over the Indian frontier, are there not some very interesting situations which might arise at the United Nations? There is, I think, general agreement that we live at a moment when China and India are struggling in rivalry for the moral and political leadership of Asia. India may be unconscious of the process. She may be the victim rather than the initiator. But the process is there. And it would be of intense interest and significance to see it fought out on the more concentrated international stage at New York. In those circumstances, it would seem to me that some of those new nations now apt to think of the world in terms of two communities, the rich imperial "haves" and their poor victimized "have nots," would be reminded that in inverse proportion to the manner in which colonialism by the mere process of time recedes, so do new and just as fundamental problems arise. To simplify the matter, there are reasons to suppose that a Power such as the United Kingdom might welcome rather than regret the arrival of Communist China at the United Nations.

Finally, a word with regard to East-West relations at the United Nations. I had the impression, on the whole, that the Soviet Union were on the defensive. One can usually gauge whether sentiments are defensive or offensive by the way in which a Power such as the Soviet Union treats an item when it comes before the General Committee, not for debate but merely for decision as to whether it should be inscribed or not. If a Power starts to make the speech which it would make in a plenary session discussing the substance of the resolution at a time when the decision is only as to whether or not the item is to be inscribed, one can be fairly certain that that Power has a "guilt" complex. That was evident when it came to discussing Hungary and Tibet in the General Committee.

One is apt to give way too hastily and become extremely frustrated and angry when listening to a country such as Roumania delivering a homily on primary education in colonial territories on human rights. But I had the impression that inside the United Nations all nations, the smallest and the newest, are developing a sense of discrimination. Here is the only forum in the world in which all the great Powers can be studied side by side and judged on their merit. Although a new nation in its first flush of independence may arrive with some sense of suspicion and may fall for the Soviet line that only the Soviet Union and its associates are the champions against the monsters of imperialism and that kind of talk, they fall less for it in the second year and still less in their third year. An outstanding example is India who when that country first entered the United Nations was not unaffected by such influences; but which today is an effective and balancing influence in world affairs so far as the United Nations' organization is concerned.

As to the Soviet bloc itself, of course the heavens would fall if there was any deviation from the dictated attitude to be taken on a particular item. When one speech has been heard, all have been heard. Any one of us could have written their speeches for them; I knew exactly what the delegates were going to say. I recall in the Fourth Committee, when a vote was taken on a resolution there were eight No's registered from the Soviet bloc instead of nine; whereupon the leader of the Soviet delegation

called for a recount. For once the little Indonesian Chairman stood his ground and said: "I am sorry; the vote has been taken and we are not counting again," one of the distinguished representatives from the Soviet bloc—and we are all distinguished at the United Nations—raised his yellow pencil and said: "I voted No; I was a good boy." Of course the others then took their cue from him: Bulgaria, Roumania, Poland and the rest one by one said "No," and when added up the No's came to nine. By that skilful means the leader of the Soviet delegation got his point; nevertheless, it indicates the degree of servility to which those particular people will descend.

An interesting question sometimes asked is: To what extent is there a long-term intention on the part of the Soviet to gain control of the United Nations? It seems to me that that is putting the matter far too precisely. If one accepts that there can only be a long-term intention, where a leader is a Communist brought up on Marx-Engels as interpreted by Lenin—one day to see the whole world, by a mingled process of persuasion and coercion, brought into the Communist fold, then the United Nations is as much a goal to be achieved as any institution or nation in the world.

As to the United Nations itself, we make the mistake—I made it when I first arrived there—of believing that it is the answer to all lost causes in the world, believing that it can protect the weak, punish the aggressor, that it can restrain the tyrant and bring enlightenment to Darkest Africa.

There is a story which puts the position of the United Nations fairly aptly. A very undeveloped country at the United Nations applied for aid and the form it required was to ask for the improvement of its cattle. So the United Nations sent a bull to that undeveloped country; but after two years the breed of the cattle there had not improved. Neither had it increased. So the country being backward, decided to send a soothsayer along to the bull to find out what had gone wrong, and the soothsayer whispered to the bull and said: "Tell me, what has happened," whereupon the bull replied: "I am a true servant of the United Nations; and am only here in an advisory capacity!"

Criticism of the United Nations might be regarded as inherent in the manner in which it expresses its conclusions; and I refer to the resolutions, around which the life of the General Assembly revolves. I calculated that some 200 or 300 resolutions come up during the session. Is it better to go for a mild resolution which will secure the necessary two-thirds majority or better to have a tough resolution, which may be much nearer the truth but which would not receive such a majority? Is a mild resolution with teeth put into the speech better than a mild speech on a tough resolution? Mr. Krishna Menon on one occasion made an extremely conciliatory speech and then produced a resolution which had not a hope of being looked at by the South Africans.

Such are the tactics surrounding this crossword puzzle of resolutions, and they involve many huddles in the lounges and corridors, private drink parties in hotels and so on. The question posed to me was: "Does all this admirable zeal and skill, and mental horse-power and time lavished on resolutions, lead to anything realistic? Is the United Nations living in an Alice-in-Wonderland world of its own, unrelated to the affairs of

the millions outside? Are the obsessions about the vote on resolutions producing results? Is the game of resolutions becoming an end in itself rather than the means to the end?

That is putting it very forcibly, and to restore the balance I must put up the defence. The defence would be that in fact these resolutions are recorded. The French may be absent when a Sahara bomb explosion is debated; the South Africans when Apartheid is debated, the Soviet may resent Hungary being debated, but the fact is that the results are registered and when they return to their countries the delegates are asked what has happened. I am told that the Soviet Union are extremely sensitive to what is said about them at the United Nations through the resolution and its implications.

A more tangible claim might be that the United Nations is exerting an educative effect, is acting as an educative agency in the art of Government, in the conduct of Parliamentary affairs, and indeed in good manners in Parliamentary affairs, because whether it be owing to the limitations of language conditions which have to be imposed, the fact is that the behaviour in Committee is extremely good, certainly better than one notices in the House of Commons.

Away in the distant background one is aware of remote and efficient control. Very few ever meet or talk to the Secretary-General. We are told that he is a man of austerity dedicated to his purpose and ideals and one naturally associates certain features of the United Nations with him; because the administration *is* efficient. The people who open and shut doors; the girls who answer our stupid questions at the Information Bureau in the lounge, the men who hang up coats, the service in the restaurant and the good food there—all these reflect a remote but very efficient control and have the effect, to my mind, of creating some sense of a family all living together. A thousand or so delegates and members share in a good Club; and we must not think of the Club as only a Club for the good boys. We feel frustrated when we walk into our own Parliament and see a particular side which we do not like airing its views. In exactly the same way we become frustrated when we enter Committees of the United Nations and see the same thing happening.

Of one thing I am fairly certain, that if there were no United Nations there would very soon have to be something to take its place. The story goes that a senior General, when the Suez crisis took place, was asked what he thought when he saw the United Nations' Emergency Force, comprising miscellaneous small forces from different parts of the world, arrive; a cynical answer was expected; but instead his reply was: "This is a 6-lb. baby and it is going to grow." And I think that is the only intelligent way in which to approach an unknown future of the United Nations.

The CHAIRMAN: You will all agree that we have listened to an eloquent and fascinating talk and one that has instructed us on many matters about which we were ignorant. Can Lord Birdwood explain a little further the difference between inscription and voting on resolutions? I have read Sir Pierson Dixon's speech, and I noticed he voted for inscription, and that the speech condemned China on the human rights issue; nevertheless on the substantive resolution we abstained.

LORD BIRDWOOD: When voting on an item in the General Committee for or against inscription one is not supposed to discuss the substance of the matter being inscribed or opposed. It is necessary merely to record whether one is going to vote for inscription or not and objectively give a very brief reason. Once you launch into elaboration of reasons you are discussing the substance of the resolution; in other words, you might be accused of saying: Well, I know this item is not going to be inscribed and, therefore, I get off my chest what I can say now. Of course, when the particular item was inscribed, Sir Pierson Dixon took the opportunity to project the Whitehall view, which was that while we could condemn what had happened in Tibet, we should avoid anything that might encourage the raising of the legal aspect of the position of Tibet—the constitutional side.

Mrs. ST. JOHN COOKE: Is the language difficulty very serious?

LORD BIRDWOOD: The language problem is overcome very ingeniously. There are five official languages, English, French, Russian, Spanish and Chinese and three termed "working" languages, English, French and Russian. Every speech and all proceedings are put into five languages, in any Committee there are interpreters who are able to deliver a running interpretation, so that with the earphones on one is only about half a sentence behind the speaker, having tuned in to the language one wants. Of course the process does mean a certain slowing up in that in Committees there cannot be a sort of free-for-all, give-and-take brawl between a couple of delegates. The Chairman has to call on any speaker who wants to intervene. That is due to the language difficulty, in that the translation facilities could not compete with a kind of slanging match. A delegate speaking in a language other than the five official languages is responsible for making his own translation arrangements.

Dr. BRAMLEY: I do not understand whether or not the United Nations have any power over an aggressor. The Suez Canal and the passage of Israeli ships; Nasser says he will not let the ships through. Hammarskjöld goes out, gets rebuffed and returns to the United Nations. Nothing happens. Could the lecturer elaborate on that?

LORD BIRDWOOD: The speaker is right; the United Nations have no power over an aggressor. The only power the United Nations as a body possesses is the power which the Member States are prepared to give it; in other words, acceptance of the United Nations' resolutions means giving that body a certain amount of power. The United Kingdom, of course, accepted the United Nations' verdict in the case of Suez; the Russians did not, and have not, accepted the United Nations' verdict in the case of Hungary. The United Nations have no power of enforcement whatsoever.

The CHAIRMAN: Can we be told the difference between the Security Council and the General Assembly? The latter was not, I believe, originally conceived as the body competent to deal with great political problems?

LORD BIRDWOOD: No. The role of the Security Council is to deal with all problems concerning security and disarmament; and its importance is that it is available all the year round. Now, more and more there seems to be the impression that the Security Council is becoming rather impotent and the General Assembly's powers are accordingly being increased. I

do not say that the Security Council has become a complete anachronism; not yet; but its power has dwindled since the days of San Francisco. The Security Council gets bogged down because of the veto. But under the Resolution known as "Uniting for Peace," an emergency meeting of the General Assembly can now be called and action can be taken on a two-thirds majority vote.

Mr. HAMILTON: How was the cost of the Emergency Force worked out between the nations?

Lord BIRDWOOD: I believe I am right in saying that there is a quota worked out according to a formula based on population, revenue and that kind of thing, and a scale of contribution is produced by every single Member State. Whenever a United Nations' Emergency Force has to be paid for, the matter is referred to the scale of contributions to the United Nations as a whole for administration purposes in order to work out the smaller contribution which is called for.

The CHAIRMAN: The two-thirds majority is not conceived in relation to all of the Member States? Forty-six is much more than two-thirds of the number voting.

Lord BIRDWOOD: An abstention does not count; it is two-thirds of those present and voting.

The CHAIRMAN: Forty-six to nine then does provide a two-thirds majority?

Lord BIRDWOOD: It provides much more.

The CHAIRMAN: Then it was in this case a two-thirds majority which would have, in principle, enabled action to be taken?

Lord BIRDWOOD: In principle, yes.

The CHAIRMAN: No action was taken—so there you are.

Lord BIRDWOOD: Action was not called for in the resolution. The Irish reduced the terms of the resolution considerably as a result of all the jockeying that goes on behind the scenes when the Irish were given to understand that such-and-such a power would abstain instead of voting unless such-and-such a clause was watered down. Thus the resolution when it came up was fairly innocuous though for certain reasons was not entirely acceptable to us.

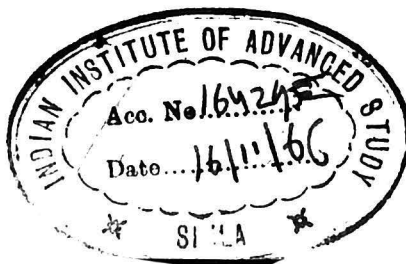
Dr. BRAMLEY: Is Egypt represented at the United Nations?

Lord BIRDWOOD: The United Arab Republic is represented; not Egypt.

Mr. WHITTERON: Does the United Kingdom permanent representative function on the Security Council and on the General Assembly?

Lord BIRDWOOD: Sir Pierson Dixon represents the United Kingdom on the Security Council and leads the United Kingdom delegation at the Assembly when the Foreign Minister is not present. The Foreign Minister usually remains about ten days and when he disappears his place may be taken by a Minister of State. In 1959 it was taken for a month by Mr. David Ormsby-Gore.

The CHAIRMAN: I feel sure all present wish me to indicate to Lord Birdwood how very much we have appreciated the extraordinarily informative and eloquent address he has given us and also we are appreciative of the way in which he has answered the questions. (*Applause.*)





## I.I.A.S. LIBRARY

Acc. No.

This book was issued from the library on the date last stamped. It is due back within one month of its date of issue, if not recalled earlier.

~~21 JUN 2014~~

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|