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THE PRESENT -DAY SITUATION IN THE WORLD

The failure to solve political, economic and cultural problems means a step towards the threat of war.

The horror of war has fallen on yet another part of the world. Thousands of human lives have been axtinguished, towns and villages burnt, personal aspirations trodden down, and whole nations exposed to the worst misery. At this moment, when the victors' fanfare can be heard and calls for reprisals are being made, we cannot but express our horror and our deepest sympathy for the suffering victims.

In this world of ours, filled with explosives and historical oppositions, any irrational, fanatical or intolerant force becomes fatally dangerous. This was what prompted the United Nations - faced with the dilemma of choosing between a general nuclear catastrophe and general progress - to adopt the principle of co-existence as its fundamental policy. Still, although none of the super-powers actually wants the Third World War (which would probably be the last), the policy of pressure is still applied to gain advantages without the direct confrontation of the super-blocs but with constant threats of total war. After Vietnam, it is mostly the non-aligned countries that become the victims of such aggression. Internal difficulties in small countries and unsettled antagonisms between them are like "barrels of gunpowder". Assuming the role of self-styled guardian of the "free world", following the dissolution of the British colonial empire, the governmental circles of the United States are following a very dangerous road of expansion.

One can only regret today that the political détente and reconciliation - started by the Moscow Test Ban Treaty negotiations on general and complete disarmament and the lessening of bloc tensions - have not continued. Instead of finding collective security within the United Nations and accelerating the development of underdeveloped regions, small countries have found themselves in a desperate position between the frozen positions of the super-powers. Intervention in the internal affairs of different countries, with the purpose of replacing their governments, has especially affected several countries in South America, Asia and Africa, and recently even Greece. Global catastrophe is thus brought nearer and will become inevitable unless the entire world community and all reasonable political forces are mobilized to prevent it. The crippling or debasing of the highest democratic institutions of a nation must result in fatal consequences. A resolute condemnation of the military regime and



the pressure of international opinion can at this point most help the Greek people to restore their personal freedom and democratic institutions.

The outbreak of war in the Middle East is another grave warning of the ill effects produced by failure to resolve acute and accumulated problems, persistently nourished by opposing views and unacceptable attitudes. Israel's invasion of the Sinai and other Arab territories, accompanied by the inhuman treatment of refugees and civilians, has only made it more difficult for the peoples in this part of the world to live together. Since the Security Council resolution on cease-fire is only the first step towards peace, it is now necessary for Israeli forces to withdraw to their starting positions, so that negotiations between the two sides are not be affected by any pressures or results of aggression and the people may regain their peace. When peace is reached under the auspices of the United Nations, definitive solutions should be sought for the accumulated problems in this part of the world, respecting the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all countries involved.

In order to eliminate another dangerous source of conflict and international tension, which threatens to escalate into a major war, it is important that the bombing of North Vietnam should be immediately stopped, all military activities discontinued, and the withdrawal of American troops begun. The people of Vietnam should be given full rights to self-determination; their non-aligned stand would certainly ease the removal of tensions and conflicts in that part of the world.

Nuclear weapons threaten the security of the whole world. A nuclear non-proliferation agreement is an indispensable step towards global security, and would be an important move towards general and complete disarmament. By signing the Moscow Test Ban Treaty, practically all small countries have demonstrated their awareness of the fact that an increase of the "nuclear club" would further endanger their own and general security. International co-operation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy would help small countries to develop more rapidly. It would be best if this co-operation was organized within the framework of the United Nations.

It is a world of horror and apocalyptic portents in which political reason and words of caution are suppressed by hazardous war gambling and radical fanaticism. Now that we have reached the brink of disaster, it is most urgent to strengthen the democratic bodies of all nations and their international ties. Despite all its failures and all attempts to dominate it, the United Nations Organization remains our greatest hope. It is in this august body that all grave crises should find their solution.