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President: Mr. Abdul Rahman PAZHWAQ
(Afghanistan).

AGENDA ITEM 18

Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (concluded)*

1. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly has before it a letter dated 2 December 1966 from the President of the Security Council to the President of the General Assembly. It reads:

"I have the honour to request you to transmit to the General Assembly the following resolution [229 (1966)] adopted by the Security Council at its 1329th meeting, held in private on 2 December 1966:

"The Security Council,

"Conscious of the proven qualities and high sense of duty of U Thant, and believing that his reappointment would be most conducive to the larger interests and purposes of the Organization,

"Recommends the appointment of U Thant for another term of office as Secretary-General of the United Nations.'

"I also have the honour to transmit to you the text of the official communiqué of the Security Council issued at its 1329th meeting, which I shall, with your concurrence, read to the General Assembly this afternoon." [A/6540]

2. I now call on the representative of Uruguay.

3. Mr. BERRO (Uruguay) (translated from Spanish): In compliance with the rules relative to the powers of the General Assembly, Uruguay has the honour to present draft resolution A/L.503.

4. As representative of Uruguay to the United Nations, I am thus privileged also to convey from this rostrum the views of the Security Council, which shares with the General Assembly the responsibility for appointing the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

5. You all know the position taken by U Thant in this matter, as well as the strong wishes of Member States that he should continue to serve as Secretary-General.

6. The Security Council, reflecting this widespread desire, and, above all, considering the needs and

higher interests of the international community, has worked long and hard, without haste but without pause, and has reconciled two somewhat contradictory elements, an achievement which was perfectly possible as both sides were acting on the higher level of mutual consideration and respect and were guided by the interests and needs of mankind, over and above all selfish or lesser considerations.

7. Without in any way detracting from the authority and prestige of the Council and with due regard for the personal wishes of U Thant, a satisfactory solution has been reached as is reported in the following documents: first, we have the statement of the Council (A/6540), which reads as follows:

"The Security Council, recalling its consensus of 29 September 1966 concerning the 'great positive role played by the Secretary-General, U Thant, in the activities of the United Nations', has further examined the question of the appointment of the Secretary-General, and, in particular, the situation created by the impending expiration of the present term of Secretary-General U Thant at the end of the twenty-first regular session of the General Assembly.

"After taking all considerations into account, the members of the Council have agreed that the higher interests of the Organization would be best served if U Thant continues in the post of Secretary-General.

"They are aware of the Secretary-General's intention not to offer himself for a second term and his desire to leave the Council unfettered in its recommendation. They have weighed the Secretary-General's wish that they examine the possibility of another nominee. Whatever their views may be on the observations he made with his announced expression of intention, they fully respect his position and his action in bringing basic issues confronting the Organization and disturbing developments in many parts of the world to their notice, as he has done in his statement of 1 September 1966, to which they accord their closest attention.

"The members of the Security Council would like to ask him to recognize with them that the Organization should continue to be served by a Secretary-General who has the demonstrated capacity to evoke the co-operation and confidence of all Members. The wide support for the present Secretary-General among all Members of the United Nations is an important factor which should be preserved in order to help the Organization continue to face its problems constructively and play its role in maintaining peace and security.

*Resumed from the 1455th meeting.

"The Security Council therefore, conscious of his proven qualities and his high sense of duty, has unanimously decided to appeal to U Thant's dedication to the Organization and to ask him to continue to serve for another full term as Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Security Council hopes that the Secretary-General will accept its appeal, and thereupon it would be the intention of the Security Council to make the appropriate recommendation to the General Assembly."

8. Next we have the statement of the Secretary-General (A/6540), which reads as follows:

"The Secretary General is grateful to the Security Council for the serious consideration it has given to the question of the appointment of the Secretary-General. He is also deeply appreciative of the sympathetic understanding it has shown of the reasons which impelled him to announce his intention not to offer himself for a second term.

"The Secretary-General takes note of the observations made by the Security Council and recognizes the validity of the reasons it has advanced in requesting him to continue to serve the Organization for another full term. He notes with particular appreciation that, for its part, the Security Council respects his position and his action in bringing to the notice of the Organization basic issues confronting it, and disturbing developments in many parts of the world. He hopes that the close attention being given to these issues and developments will serve to strengthen the Organization by the co-operative effort of the entire membership, and promote the cause of world peace and progress. It is in this hope that the Secretary-General accedes to the appeal addressed to him by the Security Council."

9. Finally we have resolution 229 (1966), adopted by the Security Council at its 1329th meeting today, the text of which the President of the Assembly, Mr. Pazhwak, read out a moment ago. As a result of that decision the General Assembly now has before it draft resolution A/L.503 submitted by Uruguay.

10. When I spoke from this same rostrum on 1 November (1455th meeting) to introduce draft resolution A/L.491, under which the General Assembly extended the Secretary-General's term of office to the end of the twenty-first regular session of this General Assembly, I said that what was important in that resolution was not the extension of the term of office for so short a period but the announcement by the Security Council that it would re-examine this question in order to consider the possibility of persuading U Thant to continue in his high office for a further five-year term. I mentioned then that the presence of the present Secretary-General in the further examination of the question of filling the post would depend not on the Council but on U Thant himself.

11. My words on that occasion can be repeated today: (a) gratitude to U Thant, the great Secretary-General, the man of high talent, of penetrating vision, of vast experience, of unshakable impartiality, for having agreed to continue in his duties until the end of the session of the General Assembly; (b) a fervent expression of hope, based in fact on the selflessness,

the sense of duty and the sense of human solidarity which have given U Thant universal authority and prestige, and which justified the faith that he would decide to continue in the post in which the members of the international community so wanted and needed him.

12. All the qualities which we have associated with U Thant have been fully confirmed by his agreement to continue to serve as Secretary-General for another term, thus demonstrating his sense of responsibility and self-abnegation in favour of the United Nations, sacrificing his own personal comfort and ease.

13. The Security Council has done its duty in persuading U Thant to remain in the high office in which he has demonstrated truly exceptional qualities.

14. It is now for the General Assembly to give its decision. On this occasion, the statutory requirement that the vote should be by secret ballot is perhaps unnecessary. Even before the vote, we could announce the result with no fear of error or disappointment. It is an open secret that U Thant's appointment has not depended on his electors, but on his own will.

15. The PRESIDENT: Under draft resolution A/L.503, it is proposed to appoint His Excellency U Thant as Secretary-General of the United Nations for another term of office ending on 31 December 1971. This is the only document before the Assembly on which action is required. I now invite the Assembly to take a decision on this draft resolution. In accordance with rule 142 of the rules of procedure, the vote will be taken by secret ballot. I should like to suggest that the Assembly proceed to the vote by secret ballot in a public, rather than in a private meeting. I take it that that is the desire of the Assembly.

It was so decided.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. J. Riha (Czechoslovakia) and Mr. Hasle (Denmark) acted as tellers.

<i>Number of ballot papers:</i>	121
<i>Invalid ballots:</i>	1
<i>Number of valid ballots:</i>	120
<i>In favour:</i>	120
<i>Against:</i>	0

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

16. The PRESIDENT: I have the honour to announce that His Excellency U Thant has been unanimously appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations for another term of office ending on 31 December 1971. I request Mr. C. V. Narasimhan, Under-Secretary for General Assembly Affairs, to escort His Excellency U Thant to his seat.

Mr. Narasimhan, Under-Secretary for General Assembly Affairs, conducted the Secretary-General to the platform.

17. The PRESIDENT: Your Excellency, I have the honour to inform you that the General Assembly has appointed you as Secretary-General of the United Nations for another term of office ending on 31 December 1971.

18. As you know, on 11 November 1966, I addressed a letter to you. In that letter I tried to express the earnest desires and serious concerns of the Member States both of the United Nations and of the many other institutions interested in our Organization.

19. I ventured to do that in the full confidence that this desire indeed represented the general feeling of all. Your election this afternoon by the unanimous vote of the Assembly confirms all the considerations I brought to your attention.

20. With your permission I should like to refer to the contents of my letter to you in order to convey to the Assembly the fact that I have not failed to bring the feelings and concern of this body to your attention at the proper time in my capacity as the President of this session. That letter reads as follows:

"Only the most sincere and urgent sense of obligation to you and to our common concern for the future of the United Nations would constrain me to address this very direct letter to you. It is my feeling, however, that now is the time to do so because you are fast approaching the moment of decision. I have had several meetings with you since you first announced your unwillingness to offer yourself for a second term, and I realize that this letter may therefore be only a repetition of what has already been said. However, I hope you will agree that repetition is sometimes not only desirable but necessary, because though you have not changed from your original position, the appeals addressed to you have been redoubled.

"I am aware of all the personal difficulties with which you have to contend. Please believe me that I understand these difficulties to the extent that, as a friend, I cannot but share your feelings about the situation and I am sure this sentiment is common to all your friends.

"Nevertheless it is a fact that, because of your particular responsibilities and position and by force of principle and of history, you are bound to be called upon to make further personal sacrifices beyond those you have so evidently had to make in the past. As an historian, you are more aware than most that without such sacrifices, humanity would not have any great noble achievements to show. History is full of examples of humanity's gratitude, however tardy, to those who have made these sacrifices and of the onus of responsibility laid on those who did not take the decision to sacrifice themselves.

"As an old colleague, you will expect me to realize the importance of the official and political considerations in connexion with your tenure of office. I can assure you that, with the passage of each day, a better understanding of your attitude is developing in the world in general and within the United Nations in particular.

"In the light of what I have just said and after an objective analysis of the situation, it is my duty to go further and to tell you that most of the problems which confront us can be seen only as additional

reasons why you should remain in office rather than leave at this time.

"I sincerely hope that it is clearly understood that it has not been the intention of anyone to exert pressure upon you. The common desire to persuade you to remain is the result of the most serious conclusions reached by all those who have appealed to you.

"I cannot bring myself to accept the argument advanced by some that the appeals directed to you have been mere verbal expressions without substance. On the contrary, these appeals have been made in every forum and at every opportunity by responsible leaders and representatives of Governments who are well aware of the significance and implications of any request they make.

"Since I expressed at the beginning of this Assembly my own pleasure that you might consider serving until the end of the session, and my deep conviction that your experience, wisdom and advice are indispensable to the Office of the Presidency, I have heard all the statements addressed to you by members speaking in the general debate.

"Above and beyond these formal representations in the Hall of the Assembly, I have been most deeply impressed by the many, many expressions of hope and concern regarding your continuation in office which have been voiced to me in private conversations with the Members of our Organization.

"I am sure you must be aware that this profound concern is being demonstrated not only to you directly and to those of us within the United Nations but that it extends to all political circles and to all institutions and individuals devoted to the service of mankind.

"I have tried to voice once again what many others have expressed more eloquently because I am convinced that the evidence that your continued presence is essential at the helm of this Organization now has become so overwhelming that I would be lacking in my duty to our Members and in my friendship for you if I did not speak out.

"I may add that I have become convinced that if no practical measures to meet your point of view have been taken this is only because it is not feasible to do so in a situation of uncertainty.

"It is clear to me that at this moment of delicate balance for the world the peoples and governments of the United Nations have vested in your person a degree of confidence and of support which cannot be transferred or set aside.

"Were the United Nations to be deprived of this universal confidence, not only would your purpose in the cause of world peace and of this Organization remain unachieved but the foundation of hopes not yet lost would surely be shaken. Your philosophy of life and the importance you attach to the virtue of patience—a virtue you have personally demonstrated in practice and not only in the abstract—lead me to believe that you will give serious weight to the universality of the appeal addressed to you.

"May I leave it to you to determine whether to consider this letter as coming from a friend or from a colleague: my views concerning you and the consequences of your decision remain the same whatever my capacity.

"I beg you to pardon my intrusion upon what I fully realise is a personal and most agonizing decision."

21. I wish to take this occasion to thank the Members of the Assembly for having authorized me on their behalf to commend you on your reconsideration of your position and on your positive response to the wish of the Members of the United Nations. This you have done by your recognition of the validity of the reasons upon which the Security Council's recommendation to the General Assembly was based, a recommendation which the General Assembly has just approved.

22. Mr. Secretary-General, I now invite you to make a statement.

23. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Mr. President, distinguished delegates and friends, I accept today a fresh five-year term as Secretary-General of the United Nations, in response to the wishes of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Ever since I announced, on 1 September, my unwillingness to offer myself for a second term as Secretary-General, I have received many insistent requests to reconsider this decision. I have indeed been deeply touched by the warm personal references made to me by heads of delegations in the course of the general debate. I must also acknowledge with gratitude the numerous letters addressed to me from all parts of the world, by people high and low, urging me to stay at my post.

24. At the same time I can well understand that my final acceptance of a renewed term of office and the prolonged responsibilities it brings may have caused some surprise among those who believe that a change of Secretary-General at this stage would hasten a reappraisal of the issues before the United Nations and other grave international problems and thus help the cause of peace. During these past months, as many of you are aware, I too have shared that belief. Today, however, I am confronted by an overwhelming weight of opinion that, under present circumstances, my continuance as Secretary-General for another term would best serve the higher interests of the Organization and thus represent a positive factor in the current international situation. Not without apprehension, however, and regardless of my personal preferences, I feel I have to accept that evaluation.

25. At this point, because of the personal stand I have taken, I should like to make it clear that my present decision is not based on any new element which has developed in recent weeks or on any fond hope for the foreseeable future. On 1 September I thought it my duty to draw attention to some of the basic issues before the United Nations and the disturbing developments in many parts of the world. The observations I made then still represent my conviction today. My concern for the lack of advance in international co-operation and in making this Organization

more truly representative of the state of the world remains. At the same time, I have noted with particular appreciation that the Security Council respects my position in bringing these issues and developments to the notice of the Members of the Organization, and I earnestly hope that these problems will continue to receive close attention.

26. I am well aware that, in some respects, the present session of the General Assembly has made some real progress. I have also been encouraged to believe that, in the near future, the financial situation of the Organization will be greatly alleviated by actions under consideration by some Member States. From my private consultations, I am also confirmed in my belief that there is a sincere desire to reach an agreement on a mutually acceptable basis in regard to the main principles of peace-keeping operations.

27. Mr. President, the threats to peace in many parts of the world, and more particularly in Viet-Nam, are for me a continuing source of anxiety and even anguish. I was glad to know a few days ago that there is general agreement in regard to a brief pause in the fighting in Viet-Nam on the occasion of Christmas and other holidays. Is it too much to hope that what is made possible for just a couple of days by the occurrence of common holidays may soon prove feasible for a longer period by the new commitments that peace requires, so that an atmosphere may be created which is necessary for meaningful talks to be held in the quest for a peaceful solution?

28. The imperative necessity of undertaking new efforts for peace is being underlined by the continuing intensification of the war. This problem, as you all know, has been uppermost in my mind for a long time, and I need hardly add that it will continue to be so in the months ahead. I shall seize every occasion to recall that this war must be ended, and I will continue to regard it as my duty to make every effort on a personal basis to help promote a solution which will bring peace and justice to the people of Viet-Nam.

29. Notwithstanding some hopeful signs, we must all recognize that a difficult, indeed a crucial, period lies ahead for this Organization. All of us must surely realize what a dangerous disillusionment would inevitably follow today's comforting consensus if we were not to give our close attention to the basic problems that the world faces today and if renewed and sincere efforts towards peace and progress were not soon to be undertaken through a revived respect for the high purposes and principles of our Charter.

30. And yet, although little has happened to brighten the outlook for the months ahead, my conviction stands undiminished that the United Nations remains the best instrument by which nations may co-operate for the development and peace of their people. My acceptance of an extended mandate today stems out of this deep conviction as much as out of a sense of duty; and I assure Members of this Organization that all my faith and all my efforts are unhesitatingly pledged to maintaining and developing this Organization as an indispensable centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of our common ends and as an increasingly effective instrument for peace and development.

31. In this task I have the considerable asset represented by the Secretariat which I am proud to head. All the organizational or other administrative improvements that are necessary will be undertaken with the assistance of my colleagues so that all Members may continue to rely upon the efficiency, competence and integrity of this body of dedicated servants of the Organization.

32. Fully conscious of the indispensable support which close consultation with members of the Security Council and the General Assembly has brought to me during my last term, I shall continue to seek extended advice and co-operation from them in the discharge of my responsibilities.

33. I also take this occasion to reaffirm my oath of office, and I solemnly swear to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions en-

trusted to me as Secretary-General of the United Nations, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other authority external to this Organization.

34. Before I conclude allow me, Mr. President, to express my very sincere thanks to you for your gracious words, to the members of the Security Council for their unanimous recommendation and to the Members of the General Assembly for the unanimous extension of my appointment as Secretary-General.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.