



CONTENTS

	Page
Tribute to the memory of U Thant, former Secretary-General	1079

**President: Mr. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA
(Algeria).**

*Tribute to the memory of U Thant,
former Secretary-General*

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): It is with great sadness that I undertake the painful duty of announcing to the General Assembly the death today of U Thant, the third Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Waldheim has already been informed and he and I have expressed our condolences to the family of the deceased, who was indeed a great man. After the necessary consultations, I shall announce the decision concerning the date of a memorial ceremony, which will be held after the return of the Secretary-General, who is at present involved in important activities relating to peace in the Middle East.

2. I can announce to the General Assembly now that, by agreement with the Secretary-General, the delegations and persons who so desire may also pay tribute to U Thant at United Nations Headquarters, where his body will lie in state on Wednesday, 27 November.

3. I am sure that the General Assembly would want me, on its behalf, to express to the family of U Thant our profound sorrow and heartfelt condolences on their irreparable loss. In the person of U Thant the international community has indeed lost one of its most outstanding figures and most devoted servants.

4. Before I call on Mr. Morse, who will address the Assembly on behalf of the Secretary-General, and then on the representatives of regional groups and the representative of the host country, I request the members of the General Assembly to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of our colleague and friend.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

5. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mr. Morse, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs.

6. Mr. MORSE (Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs): I have been asked by the Secretary-General, who is at present in the Middle East, to read out the following statement on his behalf:

"I have learned with deep sorrow of the death of U Thant, the third Secretary-General of the United Nations.

"U Thant became Secretary-General at a time when our Organization was going through a period of deep and unprecedented crisis which had produced serious divisions and differences among the Member States. It was his first duty to bridge these divisions and differences and to restore calm and harmony.

"For 10 years he guided the United Nations through a period of change and turbulence. Throughout that time, his wisdom and his calm but resolute personality were vital factors in many critical situations.

"He never hesitated to express himself strongly and forthrightly, especially on matters of principle. Yet he retained the confidence of all Member States throughout his period of service.

"Both in the political crises which occurred during his time as Secretary-General and in the development of the economic and social work of the Organization, he displayed courage and total dedication to the United Nations in disregard of any private interests or even of his own physical well-being.

"Many of us here became his devoted friends. We admired, above all, his humanity, his respect for human dignity and his complete integrity.

"To me U Thant was a personal friend whose wisdom, kindness and generosity I shall never forget.

"We shall all remember him as a man who gave himself unstintingly to the cause of peace, progress and justice in the world."

7. Mr. PENJOR (Bhutan): Today is a sad day for the United Nations. We have lost our esteemed former Secretary-General, U Thant. The news has plunged all of us into immeasurable grief and sorrow. As the first distinguished son of Asia to hold the most important and prestigious office, U Thant discharged his duties to the best of his ability and to the degree he was allowed by the collective decision of this world body.

8. To man an unenviable post for a span of a decade or more was a difficult task. Nevertheless, he accepted the challenge and performed his duty without fear or favour. In every way he was a true international civil servant who worked ceaselessly for peace. In that quest for peace he lost his health and suffered consequently.

9. On behalf of the Asian group and on behalf of my own delegation I wish to convey our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to Mrs. Thant and other members of the bereaved family and also to the Government and people of Burma.

10. May his soul rest in peace.

11. Mr. INGLES (Philippines): My delegation has asked to speak on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations [ASEAN] comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.

12. The ASEAN delegations deeply grieve the passing of U Thant, for although he belongs to the world, he first saw the light of day in South-East Asia. Even now that region is coming to grips with an idea for which he has always stood as a man of peace. I refer to the declared objective of ASEAN to establish a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia.

13. The ASEAN delegations respectfully request you, Mr. President, to extend to the delegation of Burma our heartfelt condolences. We hope that the representative of Burma will convey our sense of profound loss to the Government and people of Burma and to Mrs. Thant and other members of the bereaved family.

14. Perhaps it is no wonder that on the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of the Organization one of its stalwarts—indeed, one of its pillars—should have passed from the scene. Although U Thant stepped down from the high position of Secretary-General soon after the silver anniversary of the Organization, he remained its living symbol, and was affectionately called "Mr. United Nations". His death marks the close of an era in the life of the United Nations.

15. He will be remembered, as will his distinguished predecessors, for upholding the tradition that the office of Secretary-General is one of the principal organs of the United Nations not only by Charter precept but by actual practice and vigorous example.

16. The Organization has survived because it has served not only as a forum for conflicting opinions and ideologies but also as an instrument of mutual understanding, which is the first important step towards conciliation and consensus. U Thant stressed that primary function of the Organization, as the centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

17. We mourn the loss of a great man, for no man is an island and in the case of U Thant, he represented the highest aspirations of mankind with his vision of universal love and brotherhood. May he rest in peace.

18. Mr. SEPETU (United Republic of Tanzania): It is with deepest and most profound sorrow that we have learned of the passing away of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant. U Thant was not only a Burmese but a man of the world; he belonged to mankind, to humanity; he belonged to all of us. We will be speaking for everybody in this Hall when we say that his passing is a great loss not only to Burma but to the whole world community of nations. U Thant was a great man who unreservedly and with immense conviction tried to serve all the people of the world. He was a great statesman who sought, and worked tirelessly, to put an end to injustice and world insecurity. The late U Thant was a qualified diplomat who not only knew the complexities of the world situation but also devoted his energies and abilities to man's constant search for adequate and satisfactory solutions to the world's problems. He dedicated his entire life to the cause of durable peace in the world.

19. On behalf of the African group, Tanzania as its Chairman for this month would kindly request the delegation of Burma to convey our deepest sympathy and most sincere condolences to the Government of Burma and to the members of the bereaved family of U Thant. May his soul rest in peace.

20. Mr. JACKSON (Guyana): On behalf of the Latin American group I wish to state that it is with a deep sense of shock that news of the death of U Thant has been received. U Thant, who served with such distinction as the Secretary-General of this Organization, was a man dedicated to the cause of peace among States of the world and harmonious relations between peoples. Many of us had the pleasure of working with him and were thus able to observe and appreciate his deep commitment to principles, his keenly acute sense of purpose and his devotion to the loftiest of ideals. His death is a great loss to all mankind, for he in so many ways symbolized our deepest yearnings for a world free of conflict, a world based on equity and justice. We today pay tribute to the memory of a truly great man.

21. May I, on behalf of all the States and all the peoples of Latin America, convey to the Government and people of Burma and to his sorrowing relatives our most sincere condolences.

22. Mr. INGVARSSON (Iceland): On behalf of the group of Western European and other States I wish to join in honouring the memory of U Thant, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. During his 10-year tenure of office as Secretary-General, U Thant earned great respect as an outstanding and dedicated statesman and as an honourable man. U Thant had high hopes and expectations for the United Nations, and he worked tirelessly to promote the highest ideals and principles of this Organization. We are all grateful to his country, Burma, for having made his services available to this Organization for such a long time. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the Government of Burma at this great loss. Our tenderest feelings of sympathy and compassion go also to Mrs. Thant and to the immediate family of the deceased.

23. Mr. ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia): It is with deep sorrow that we have learned of the death of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant. This unexpected news has moved us deeply.

24. Speaking as the Chairman of the group of Socialist countries of Eastern Europe, I wish to associate myself with the expressions of profound sorrow which you, Mr. President, and representatives have just pronounced in memory of U Thant. The important role played by U Thant over the many years he devoted to the service of the United Nations as its third Secretary-General will not be forgotten either in the United Nations or elsewhere in the world. An intellectual of the highest calibre, U Thant gave totally dedicated service to the United Nations and to humanity as a whole. His dedication to international peace, peaceful coexistence and co-operation among countries, irrespective of their differences and socio-economic systems, to the promotion of over-all progress in the world, and his devotion to the ideals of the Charter, made him an outstanding figure in the history of our Organization. For many of us here who had the honour to be personally acquainted with U Thant, he has been a great encouragement and inspiration.

The Socialist countries have always had the highest esteem for his personality, his most distinguished statesmanship and his tireless dedication to the service of the United Nations. He will be remembered with affection and respect. The world can never forget the extraordinary mind and quality of service given by this great man.

25. I wish to convey, on behalf of the group of Socialist countries of Eastern Europe, our sincerest condolences to U Thant's family and to the Government and people of Burma.

26. Mr. ABDEL MEGUID (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Today we learned with deep sorrow of the death of U Thant, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations. I find it difficult to take the floor today to speak in tribute to his memory. On behalf of the delegations of the Arab countries, I wish to convey my sincerest condolences to the international community, to the Government of Burma, to the United Nations family and in particular to the family of the deceased, who was indeed a great man.

27. I believe that the best tribute we can pay to the memory of U Thant is to continue to work in accordance with his methods and the principles to which he dedicated his life as a true servant of the cause of progress and peace in the interests of all the world's peoples.

28. In taking the floor on behalf of my country and of the Arab nations, I should like to express our deep appreciation of the remarkably courageous role played by U Thant, particularly as regards the problem of peace in the Middle East. In the course of his term of office he made tireless efforts to bring about the necessary conditions for the maintenance of peace, in conformity with the political and ethical principles upon which the United Nations was founded and in the service of which the Organization was created.

29. U Thant laid down the basis of international work, and the methods of international action, and those foundations have proved to be solid indeed. It may be said that the different cultures of the world, when they are represented in international activity, can help to enrich our ideas about peace and to hasten the approach of that peace. U Thant was a living example of the culture of the peoples of Asia, and reaffirmed that phenomenon.

30. The only thing that can alleviate the pain of any peace-loving man is the fact that, as can be seen in the United Nations, peace efforts are continuing on the

basis of the principles for which we owe much to the deceased, and whose purpose is to enable the international community to maintain and to strengthen peace and to act in conformity with the Charter and the principles of the United Nations, keeping the memory of great men ever alive.

31. Mr. SCALI (United States of America): Today we have lost one of the great men of our age. U Thant served as Secretary-General of this Organization through 10 of its most tumultuous years. His tenure marked the full emergence of the nations of Africa and Asia into the international community and their entry into this Organization.

32. A man of peace and moderation, U Thant contributed much to the achievements of the United Nations at a time when there were important changes in the world scene. Throughout his life, U Thant remained dedicated to the principles which established this Organization. He was a staunch defender of the Charter of the United Nations; as Secretary-General, he sought always to strengthen this essential foundation of our Organization. As a statesman, diplomat, journalist, educator and author, U Thant worked ceaselessly for the cause of world peace, freedom and the brotherhood of man.

33. We can best honour his memory by continuing to promote the ideals which inspired his life. Certainly, if there is to be a more just world, it will be because gifted leaders such as U Thant helped to guide the way.

34. U LWIN (Burma): This afternoon we received with profound sadness the news of the death of U Thant. On behalf of the Government of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, and of the members of the Burmese delegation, as well as on my own behalf, I should like to express our sincere thanks and deep appreciation for the kind words of sympathy extended by various delegations of United Nations Member States. I should like also to assure you, Mr. President, that the messages of condolence will be conveyed to my Government and to members of the bereaved family.

35. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): After consulting the Chairmen of the regional group, I find that the Assembly feels it would be paying further tribute to the memory of U Thant by adjourning this meeting and holding over until tomorrow the work that had been scheduled for this afternoon.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.