

# **“RUSSIA AND CREATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS”**

Alexander Churilin

Mankind is celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations. The birth of the United Nations was a result of the victory of freedom-loving people over fascism and militarism. The Organization was created in order to pool the political will and potentials of states with a view to maintaining international peace and security.

The experience and consequences of the bloodiest and the most devastating war in the history of mankind were very real for the UN founders. The main lesson of the war was that states should join their efforts in preventing future wars. Therefore, it was only logical that in the first lines of the UN Charter entered into force on 24 October 1945 the peoples of the United Nations proclaimed their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another.

The idea of creating an international organization of states to prevent wars and maintain peace was not entirely a new one. But earlier attempts to that end proved ineffective in solving the problem of ensuring international peace in the global context. Thus, the League of Nations created after the World War I failed to prevent the new international crisis. However, the idea of establishing an organization of states to maintain international peace and security was reinvigorated after the start of the World War II.

It took some time for crystallization of that into practical deeds. In the British-American declaration of 14 August 1941 (the so-called Atlantic Charter), the two powers expressed hope “to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of

dwelling in safety within their own boundaries”. The Soviet government supported the main principles of the Charter at the Alliance conference in London. In doing so, it emphasized the extreme importance of organizing the post-war international relations in such a way as to save “our peoples and our future generation from fascism”. It is at that time that we set forth the democratic principles of the post-war world and drew attention to need for collective actions to maintain international peace and security.

A more detailed statement concerning the need to create an organization for maintaining universal peace was made in Moscow on 4 December 1941. On behalf of the Soviet government it was stated that just and lasting peace “can only be achieved through a new organization of international relations based on a strong alliance of democratic countries” and that “of paramount importance in establishing such an alliance should be the respect for international law supported by the collective military force of all Allied States”. However, in 1941 and 1942 the international and military situation did not allow the participants of the anti-Hitler coalition to tackle the task of building an international security organization in practical terms.

It was only after the turnaround in course of the war brought about by the victories at the Eastern Front that the task became relevant and feasible. In October 1943 the participants of the Moscow conference of foreign ministers of the USSR, the US and Great Britain expressly affirmed the unity of great powers on issues related not only to waging the war but also to establishing peace in the post-war period. In a joint Declaration they recognize “the necessity of establishing, at the earliest practical date a general international, organization, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace loving states and open to membership by all such states, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security”.

To put it on practical footing during the conference, our delegation suggested that representatives of the three powers should hold “a preliminary exchange of views on establishing an international organization to maintain international peace and security...” Referring to the Soviet proposal, US Secretary of State Cordell Hull said that it was of considerable interest and a practical step towards international cooperation. Formally, the work began in August 1944.

Obviously, from the Soviet perspective, the international organization would provide an essential mechanism for post-war reconstruction of the world according to principles that the Soviet leader spoke of in much detail in his statement on November 6, 1943. More particularly, Moscow believed it necessary to liberate the peoples of Europe and help them rebuild their national states ; to give the liberated peoples full authority and freedom to determine their form of government ; to severely punish the instigators of war ; to create conditions to prevent a new aggression by Germany ; to develop long-lasting economic, political and cultural cooperation between peoples of Europe based on mutual confidence and mutual aid.

This shows that our government believed that the cooperation within the anti-Hitler coalition should be pursued during peacetime both to address the issues of peaceful settlement and to maintain lasting peace on the whole planet. The Soviet Union regarded this cooperation as long-term and useful for settling all problems and disputes through negotiations rather than conflict.

The idea of establishing an international organization was further developed during the Tehran conference between the Soviet, US and UK leaders in the fall of 1943. In the course of the meeting, the three powers developed a common vision on how to ensure international security and lasting peace after the end of the war. That meeting in many ways determined the future of the United Nations. The declaration signed by the three powers reads, in particular : “We express our determination that our nations shall work together in war and in the peace that will follow...

And as to the peace we are sure, that our concord will make it an enduring peace. We recognize fully the supreme responsibility resting upon us and all the United Nations to make a peace that will command the good will of the overwhelming masses of the peoples of the world and banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations... We shall seek the cooperation and the active participation of all nations, large and small, whose peoples in heart and mind are dedicated, as our own peoples to the elimination of tyranny and slavery oppression and intolerance. We will welcome them as they may choose to come into a world family of Democratic Nations...”

Russian researchers found the first ever document concerning the United Nations prepared by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in December 1943. The document was entitled "Guidelines on the Status of an International Organization for the Protection of Security and Peace". Naturally corresponding work was under way in the western Powers, but this document reflects the Russian vision of the Organization at the time.

The document restricted the scope of the new organization solely to matters of collective security. Both economic and humanitarian matters and issues related to the mandate system of the League of Nations would be beyond its competence. The organization would consist of a General Assembly, a Council and a Secretariat. The General Assembly would include all member states of the United Nations and hold annual sessions to discuss issues submitted or approved by the Council. The mandate of the Council would cover all aspects of maintaining international peace.

All decisions taken by the organization would be subject to approval of the Council, which would also have the sole authority to apply and implement military sanctions. The Council would consist of four great Powers –the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain and China. Differently from the General Assembly whose decisions would be taken by a two-thirds majority, the unanimity principle would apply to all votes within the Council.

At the same time the Council was to report annually on its activities to the General Assembly. In case of a conflict between the Council and the General Assembly, a specific procedure patterned after the parliamentary practice was proposed, which consisted in establishing a conciliation commission of four Powers and the same number of members of the General Assembly to elaborate a compromise settlement formula.

The Secretariat was in a more dependent position, which was imposed by the necessity to deprive this body of an opportunity to become a self-sufficing political structure. It was proposed therefore to choose the secretary and its deputies among the citizens of four great Powers. The staff of the Secretariat was also appointed by consent of the Council. The document efficiently outlines the future United Nations.

After the second front was opened in Europe, the contacts between the allies concerning the establishment of an international security organization became especially

intensive. As it was agreed in Tehran, the relevant conference for elaboration of basic principles of its structure and charter was held in Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C. It was attended by delegates from the USSR, USA and Great Britain and a representative of China to the later stage.

When determining the nature of the future international organization, the Soviet party paid paramount importance to the role and functions of the Council as well as the scope of its responsibilities. The directives adopted by the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) for the head of the Soviet delegation A.A. Gromyko stated that the “proposals related to the mandate of the governing body (Council) were of supreme priority”. As to the aggression prevention and suppression, it was therein emphasized that “the Council should take the decisions by the majority of votes provided that the consent is given by the representatives of all permanent member states of the Council.

In the context of today the most important outcome of the conference of Dumbarton Oaks was the agreement of purposes, principles and main bodies of the international security organization. Moreover, on the initiative of the Soviet delegation, the draft Charter of the United Nations included reference to such terms as “aggression” and “disarmament”.

The composition, main functions, powers and work procedure of the Security Council were also agreed by the conference. However, the Allies failed to reach an agreement on the voting procedure in the Security Council. Amazingly, even the top-level communication channel between Joseph Stalin and Franklin Roosevelt proved ineffective in this regard. Mutually acceptable solution to this problem was found only in February 1945, at the Crimea (Yalta) Conference of the USSR, the USA and Great Britain leaders.

The Soviet government argued that the original United Nations founding members should be the states that signed the United Declaration on January 1, 1942 or subsequent adherents, namely the USSR, the USA, Great Britain and allied states, participating in the war against the aggressor coalition. Moreover, the Soviet delegation suggested that all the Union Republics of the USSR be included as original members of the organization. The delegates of Western states maintained that the adherent nations included not only the states that had declared war to Germany, but also those who had ruptured diplomatic relations with it.

It turned out to be a difficult issue. Joseph Stalin addressed this issue in his letter to Franklin Roosevelt of September 7, 1944 pointing out that the matter of the Soviet Union republics' membership was of major importance. Finally, it was decided at Dumbarton Oaks that membership in the United Nations is open to "all peace-loving states". However, all the former Soviet Union republics joined the United Nations much later.

It is notable that Moscow did not dramatize the differences that had surfaced in Dumbarton Oaks. Speaking about the outcome of the Conference, Joseph Stalin remarked on November 6, 1944 that "the existence of differences was not surprising ; what was surprising, in fact, that there were so few of them and that almost every time they were settled in the spirit of unity and conformity of actions of the three great Powers".

The Crimea Conference sealed the decision to establish the United Nations. It was then decided that with a view to preparing a charter for a general international organization for the maintenance of international peace and security the United Nations conference should be convened in San Francisco on July 25, 1945. The nations that were at war against their common enemy as of February 8, 1945 or would declare war to it by March 1, 1945 were invited to the conference. It had one item on its agenda, that is development and adoption of the United Nations Charter.

The discussion in San Francisco was built upon the proposals brought forth in Dumbarton Oaks, the Yalta Conference decisions and a few supplements thereto. Speaking at the Conference first plenary meeting on April 26, 1945, Vyacheslav Molotov, head of the Soviet Foreign Service, announced that the "our government sincerely and firmly supported the creation of a strong international security organization and would fully cooperate in fulfilling this great task with every government that was truly committed to this noble cause". The Soviet delegation took on active and constructive part in the following discussions.

Thus, amendments and proposals submitted by the Soviet delegation in the course of discussions on Chapter 1 of the charter Purposes and Principles served as the basis for including in the Chapter new important provisions to the effect : that peaceful settlement of international disputes should be brought about in conformity with the principles of justice and international law ; that friendly relations among nations should be developed on the basis of respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples ; that international cooperation should be achieved in solving international problems of an economic, social,

cultural, and humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion...

Yet, the final agreement of the powers of the General Assembly and the Security Council in San Francisco was not easy to achieve. A number of countries sought to change the previously agreed relationship of those bodies insisting on equalizing the rights of the General Assembly and the Security Council and on subordinating the latter to the Assembly. Also, there were heated discussions at the conference on issues related to the powers and working procedures of the Security Council, with the principle of unanimity among its permanent members being the central point. The Yalta formula eventually prevailed, defended by the Soviet the US and British delegations.

Of course, the world has become different in the last sixty years. The rapidly changing realities of the global community highlight the need to reform the United Nations which, in fact, was in the focus of attention of almost 170 heads of states or governments participating in the 2005 Summit just held in New York. But decisions to that end only confirm the everlasting value of the purposes and principles the United Nations Charter. The adoption of the outcome document of the Summit is, in itself, as sound evidence of the importance and relevance of that principal international organization in the modern world.

Russian historians continuously pay close attention to the creation and activities of the United Nations. A number of very interesting works on the subject have been published in the country, including those by a former representative of the USSR to the United Nations Security Council V. Zorin, a well known Russian political analyst V. Berezhkov and many others. A significant contribution to and assistance in the preparation of those works have been provided by the Department of History and Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia.

The Department has issued a number of publications containing an extensive collection of materials related to the creation and evolution to the United Nations. They included two volumes of personal correspondence between the leader of the USSR and US presidents and British prime ministers during the World War II (1941-1945), volumes of materials on Soviet-British and Soviet-American relations in that period, comprehensive

publication “The Soviet Union at the International Conferences During the Great Patriotic War” (Moscow, Teheran, Dumbarton Oaks, Yalta, San Francisco), - Altogether 14 volumes.

There are also a lot of publications concerning our participation in the United Nations activities (more than 12 collections). And it is only due to technical problems that we have been unable to present here in Paris our new publication entitled “Statement by Heads of the USSR/Russian Federation Delegations at the sessions of the United Nations General Assembly”.



