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The Editor  
The Washington Post  
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Sir: In Praise of America

Under the above caption you printed on December 13 a radio broadcast by Gordon Sinclair, in which the United States was lauded as the benefactor of mankind, whilst the rest of the world was blamed for being ungrateful or unfeeling, apathetic to America's woes and given to kicking America around at all times.

Mr Sinclair says, "I can name you 5000 times when the Americans raced to the help of other people in trouble. Can you name me even one time when some one else raced to the Americans in trouble?" Had he been present in Appalachian State University the other day he would have heard Burmese premier U Nu recount one such incident in which, unbidden by the Americans, he raced to Peking to speak in defence of America.

The speech he made at the official dinner given by premier Chou En-lai (as reported by the American William C. Johnstone in his book "Burma's Foreign Policy," pp 94-95) said: "The United States is a nation of great men and women capable of making the world a better place . . . heroes who saved the world from the scourge of Nazism and Fascism . . . playing the unprecedented role of benefactors showering the needy with gifts, when most countries are indulging instead of giving."

The year was 1954, a time when anti-American feeling in China was at its worst, with daily demonstrations in the streets. It was also a period when the amount of American economic aid to Burma was exactly nil.

Two days after this speech, U Nu received a cabled request from Britain's Foreign Secretary, Sir Anthony Eden, to use his good offices in an attempt to secure the release of six American airmen held in China as prisoners of war. The moment the message was received U Nu, against the advice of the Burmese delegation, again raced to premier Chou En-lai to register his appeal, the outcome of which was that the airmen were released shortly afterwards, with U Nu being the first to know of the Chinese decision.

If I were asked to name other world statesmen who by word and deed can justify themselves against the implication of "benefits forgot" or "friends remembered not" the task would not be overwhelmingly difficult. It just so happens that commentators like Mr Sinclair do not know of these events because they are unpublicized. Also, most of those well-intentioned towards the United States work behind the scenes with no thought of recognition or recompense.

In U Nu's case, the only time he met the President of the United States (Eisenhower) he asked for no gifts or favours but, instead, presented him with a cheque for \$ 10,000 as a token of gratitude for



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American GIs who served in Burma during World War II. Incidentally, the same U Nu has been five months in this country running around in circles, trying to get permits for a dozen Burmese refugees to enter the United States -- so far without success.

Yours faithfully,



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from the scourge of Nazism and Fascism . . . playing the unprecedented role of benefactors showering the needy with billions worth of free gifts, when most countries are indulging instead of giving."

The Prime Minister then gave a much longer eulogy of Communist China praising the "courage" of the regime and extolling its merits for what it was giving to the Chinese people. U Nu then concluded, "Therefore, we feel that as neutrals in power politics we ought to do something to enable both America and China to achieve their ends without resorting to bloody warfare."

After giving some very general and vague advice as to how these two great nations should conduct their affairs, he concludes,

Hydrogen and atomic bombs will have one result. If these weapons are resorted to, of course countries will be laid waste. Out of the ashes will grow the inevitable hatred against the Anglo-Americans who wield the terrible weapon, and out of these ashes will grow Communism which thrives on destruction and poverty.

Therefore a Southeast Asian today requests that his voice be heard by those who are principally concerned so that a worldwide conflagration does not break out.

I pray that the United States of America and the People's Republic of China may be able to work jointly and with understanding for world peace and progress.

U Nu attempted to bring the two nations together through public speeches and private talks first in Peking at the end of 1954 and then in Washington during his visit in the summer of 1955. In the course of his long five-hour speech on September 27, 1957, over a fourth of which was given to a report on Burma's foreign relations, in this section of his speech, U Nu described his efforts at mediation between the United States and Communist China and concluded:<sup>23</sup>

The reception which was accorded me in both these countries was most heartening, and spoke volumes for the deep seated desires of their people for peace. I cannot and do not claim to have performed wonders. In any event the attitudes of both sides have hardened to such an extent that it would be unrealistic to expect spectacular results. But this does not absolve us from the responsibility of doing all that is humanly possible to reduce these dangerous world tensions, and even if I have achieved nothing I have the satisfaction of knowing that the Union of Burma has done all that lies in her power to save mankind from the threat of extinction, and to this cause I shall devote all my energies.



U Nu's private talks with high Chinese Communist officials were reportedly more specific and to the point about his attitudes toward both the Communist Chinese government and the United States than what he said in public. Although Prime Minister Nehru took the lead in the negotiations at the Bandung Conference, U Nu shares a great deal of credit with Nehru and others for whatever success the Conference may have had. It was U Nu who used his acquaintance of Chou En-lai and his position as head of a small nation to persuade the Chinese Communist Premier that he had little to gain by bluster or threats and much more to gain by a posture of "sweet reasonableness" at Bandung. The resulting agreements between the United States and Peking regime to open talks on certain questions in Geneva between official representatives was credited in Burman eyes to U Nu's efforts.

Apart from this slight progress, however, U Nu's one venture in the role of active mediator between two great powers cannot be counted a success. It is important only because the Burman leaders and many of their supporters believed it was important. For them it marked in many ways the point at which Burma, even though weak and small, came of age in international affairs and achieved recognition as an equal of even the greatest nations — a position which had been the goal of every independence leader in Burma since colonial days. Regardless of whether U Nu's efforts on the world stage bore lasting fruit, he and his AFPFL colleagues from 1955 on exhibited a greater degree of self-confidence in directing the foreign relations of their country. Their experiences in world capitals, their talks with world leaders who came to Rangoon, and their participation in the Bandung Conference and other international meetings convinced them that the foreign policy concepts they had formulated were workable. They generally believed that these principles gave to their nation a position of dignity and stature that could not have been achieved by any other course. What was most important in their own thinking was the fact that the basic principles of their foreign policy had preserved the Union in times of great internal difficulties and external threats. These principles, therefore, were fixed enough to steer a course by, but were flexible enough to enable their government to shift and change the course of its foreign relations in accord with changing circumstances and changing needs, thus avoiding the rocks and