



Carl Bildt: Tal vid minnesceremonin för Dag Hammarskjöld

Talare
Carl Bildt
Utrikesminister

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Plats
Ndola, Zambia

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

It is a solemn occasion for me to be in Ndola today to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld.

When a Swedish aircraft disappeared while approaching Ndola airport in the middle of the night half a century ago, few at first could grasp what had happened.

Some wanted to believe that the pilot had changed course. But when the morning mist cleared, and the plane was eventually found crashed on the very ground where we are assembled here today, the world slowly began to understand what it had lost.

Sixteen people died in the crash. Nine were Swedish citizens.

Among them was Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN's second Secretary-General and one of the greatest international civil servants of all time.

As we gather today – Swedes, Africans, UN officials – we remember why we see him that way.

It was Hammarskjöld's own courageous decision to fly into the African night to seek a cease-fire and settlement in the Congo. It was his unique brand of direct diplomacy that shaped this mission to ease the twin crises unfolding in the Congo and in the UN itself.

And it was an effort marked by the very characteristics that made Dag Hammarskjöld an exceptional leader.

Among these characteristics was Hammarskjölds' courage to act on his convictions.

His conviction that he had a duty to do what he believed was right. And his conviction that the very purpose of the UN was at stake in the fragile, newly independent nations of Africa.

In the five decades that separate us from Hammarskjöld's death, the world has changed profoundly.

We have seen the end of the Cold war, the advance of globalization and the spread of democracy.

We confront collective challenges posed by poverty and disease, terrorism and environmental degradation.

The nations of Africa have achieved growth, gains in economic and social development, and a voice to channel the hopes and aspirations of their peoples.

The acacia trees that were broken and torn when Hammarskjöld's plane descended into the jungle stand firm and tall today.

And in this world of changes, many of Dag Hammarskjöld's achievements are still with us today.

Dag Hammarskjöld was not only the architect of peacekeeping as we know it. He also built the first complex peace operations, including what we now know as peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Hammarskjöld championed the practice of direct and discreet action by the Secretary-General as a problem-solver and mediator.

Hammarskjöld reformed and shaped the UN largely into what we know today, including entities dedicated to development as well as to peace and security.

Hammarskjöld developed the concept of an independent international civil service, beholden to no nation and wedded to the principles of the UN Charter.

Hammar skjöld pioneered the concept of the Secretary-General working with the Security Council and the General Assembly to overcome lack of consensus.

The media of those days even coined a phrase they used every time the member states of the United Nations were deadlocked: 'Leave it to Dag,' they would say.

In sum, he defined the role of UN Secretary-General and set a standard for successors to aspire to.

Throughout his eight years at the helm of the UN, Hammar skjöld asked a great deal of others. But he asked even more of himself.

"Do not seek death," he wrote once. "Death will find you. But seek the road which makes death a fulfillment."

Dag Hammar skjöld's own road ended here – much too early.

In his efforts to win peace he paid the ultimate price.

But as we mark this occasion – here in Ndola today, at home in Sweden and in New York in the days to come – we know that the spirit of Dag Hammar skjöld is still very much alive.

He set the rest of us on a path that he charted. He saw himself as a servant as much as a leader, and for that reason, he was followed by many.

He knew and loved his own country deeply, and was inspired by its ideals to work in the service of the world.

We remember his service to the world.

And we honour his memory.

In the name of his native and beloved Sweden.

And in the name of all around the world for whom his name still symbolizes the dream of a world fulfilling the noble goals of the United Nations.

Taggar

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