



—Report From the UN—

What Next On Hungary?

—By Joseph P. Lash—

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Where does the UN go from here on Hungary? Republican Senate Leader Knowland wants the U. S. Senate to demand immediate reconvening of the UN General Assembly to act on the special UN committee's report on Hungary.

That devastating 150,000-word exposure of Russia's imperialistic depredations in Hungary has reminded the world that Hungary's tragedy lies heavy on its conscience.

As a result there is a good deal of soul-searching going on at UN headquarters as to how best to discharge the organization's obligations to the heroic Hungarian people.

But that does not mean there is much sympathy for demands by U. S. politicians to call the Assembly back into immediate session. In the absence of any proposals for action that might help the Hungarian people, diplomats see little point in bringing the Assembly back for a propaganda battle.

Most diplomats outside of the Soviet bloc now concede the UN failed the Hungarians in their hour of need last fall. The organization's attention was so focused on the Suez crisis that Imre Nagy's appeal for help could scarcely be heard.

There was a period between the first and second Soviet interventions when the dispatch of a UN observation mission to Hungary might have influenced Soviet policy.

The UN's own committee in its report notes, "It may well be that, immediately before the second intervention, the political and

Max Lerner is en route to Europe. His column will be resumed next week.

military authorities differed regarding the best way of meeting the unusual circumstances which had arisen . . ."

It may well be that had the UN flown in a commission it might have strengthened the hands of those in Moscow who favored a more moderate policy.

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We do not know, and a persuasive case can be made that Russia's policy would have been the same no matter what the UN did short of authorizing a Korea-type action and risking World War III.

But one of the reasons the UN failed to act before Nov. 4 was the preoccupation of U. S. leaders emotionally and intellectually with the Suez crisis. When the time came to deliver on Republican pledges of "liberation" the Administration was busy elsewhere. In light of the autumn fiasco there is some feeling U. S. politicians should temper their rhetoric lest they give the impression of trading on the tragedy of the Hungarian people.

There is more respect for the position of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. This is "a period of convalescence, when it is not a very good idea to stir things up, to make too much noise about the lingering symptoms of the illness," he said this week.

He did not want "in any way," he added, "to provoke new discussions and comments, a relapse into old arguments." The UN rather should try "to heal wounds and to keep the temperature low in order to help the body restore itself." Diplomats took these remarks to mean Hammarskjöld opposed reconvening the Assembly.

Three reasons are cited against bringing the Assembly back into session.

There is little the Assembly could do except provide the setting for another round of speeches and resolutions condemnatory of the Soviet action. Yet such a round might actually detract from the impact of the UN committee's scathing report.

Secondly, a bitter propaganda battle would envenom East-West relations at a moment when there seems to be a chance of a beginning on disarmament. The possibility of freezing the highly dangerous nuclear arms race should not be risked, it is argued, for a diplomatic gambit whose benefits seem dubious.

This argument is advanced even more strongly by those who believe disarmament is the road to disengagement and the withdrawal of the Red Army from East Europe. That with