

U Thant Praises U.S. Restraint Over Downing of Navy Plane

By Robert H. Estabrook
Washington Post Foreign Service

UNITED NATIONS, April 17—Secretary General U Thant today praised American restraint in the plane incident with North Korea but declared no useful purpose would be served by bringing the issue to the United Nations.

He said he had been "encouraged" by a statement yesterday by Secretary of State William P. Rogers which indicated that the United States would not act rashly.

There has been no indication of a U.S. wish to call a meeting of the security Council, although some less formal protest is considered possible.

Thant told correspondents at a luncheon that he has begun to pin "very great hopes" on the success of Big Four talks on a Middle East solution.

Ambassadors of the four powers — the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France—conducted their fourth round of discussions in morning and afternoon sessions today at the Waldorf towers apartment of American Ambassador Charles W. Yost.

The four will hold their next meeting Monday at 3 p.m. at French Ambassador Armand Bernard's apartment on Park Avenue.

Although Thant denied that the mission of United Nations' Middle East representative Gunnar Jarring has been shelved, Thant asserted that Jarring would not want to repeat the experience of the past 1½ years with "no perceptible progress."

Jarring, who had been conducting talks with Israel, Egypt and Jordan, has temporarily resumed his regular post as Swedish ambassador in Moscow.

What Thant was saying, in effect, was that while Jarring has not quit, unless the Big Four can add some new element to the situation there will be no point in his resuming his efforts in the area. The United Nations, nevertheless, informs Jarring daily of Middle East developments.

Thant declined a direct answer to, a question whether

Palestine liberation groups should be brought directly into any Middle East peace talks, but warned that when a solution is too long delayed "extremes frequently come to the surface and dominate the scene" and voices of moderation are stilled.

In broad-ranging answers to questions, Thant also rejected criticism that he had not been active enough in efforts to settle the Nigerian-Biafran civil war.

No member of the United Nations "has the courage" to inscribe the question on the agenda of a U.N. body in view of the opposition of the Organization of African Unity to any international involvement, Thant asserted, adding that any such move would be defeated in any event.

He praised the willingness of the Nigerian federal government to expedite relief flights to Biafra as "very reasonable," implying that the impediments are raised by Biafran leader Col. Odu megwu Ojukwu. He noted that U.N. agencies are very active on a humanitarian basis.

Opposes Article

Thant said it is "very undesirable" for Secretariat members to write magazine articles purporting to present national views of the United Nations and said that carried to extremes it would result in the collapse of "the very concept of an international civil service."

This was a reference to an article written by Vladimir F. Petrovsky, a Soviet official of the Secretariat, for Vista, the magazine of the United Nations Association of the United States, summarizing Soviet views. U.N. official said

the article, originally prepared for use in a university seminar conducted by an American official of the Secretariat, John G. Stoessinger, had not been cleared for publication.

Thant is known to be upset also at the extracurricular activities of Stroessinger, who in addition to teaching also conducts a book column in Foreign Affairs Quarterly.