

United Nations



Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

*Awards*

TO: Tria Raimundo

DATE: 5 March 2007

A:

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

*Nilima*

FROM: Nilima Silver

DE: 3-2348 - S-3127F

SUBJECT: **Supporting information for log 27-02-617**

OBJET:

As discussed, attached is some background information regarding the proposal for the presentation of the *U Thant Peace Award* to the Secretary-General.

Many thanks for your assistance with this.

**SRI CHINMOY: THE PEACE MEDITATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

85-45 149-Sri Chinmoy Street, Jamaica, New York 11435, U.S.A.



H.E. Mr. Vijay Nambiar  
Chef de Cabinet  
and Under-Secretary-General  
United Nations, New York

13 March 2007

ACTION NYC  
COPY VN



UNITED NATIONS:



the Heart-Home  
of the World-Body

We believe and we hold that each man has the potentiality of reaching the Ultimate Truth. We also believe that man cannot and will not remain imperfect forever. Each man is an instrument of God. When the hour strikes, each individual soul listens to the inner dictates of God. When man listens to God, his imperfections are turned into perfections, his ignorance into knowledge, his searching mind into revealing light and his uncertain reality into all-fulfilling Divinity.

My highly esteemed Brother-Friend Vijay Nambiar,

I wish to offer my sincere congratulations for the growing success and progress that you are bringing to the United Nations in your new role as Chef de Cabinet.

I am writing to respectfully request that the Secretary-General receive the *U Thant Peace Award*, offered to individuals who exemplify the lofty spiritual ideals of U Thant in their distinguished service to the cause of world peace. Previous recipients include His Holiness Pope John Paul II; Nobel Laureates President Mikhail Gorbachev, President Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama; former Secretaries-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and Kurt Waldheim; Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Petrovsky, and a number of Presidents of the General Assembly.

In recognition of His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon's unparalleled dedication to the vision and mission of the United Nations, and for his lifetime of world service, it would be my honour to offer this *Award* at the outset of his most promising tenure as Secretary-General.

I remember with fondness our fellow countryman, and my dear friend, the late Mr. C.V. Narashimhan, who so kindly introduced me to U Thant while serving as his Chef de Cabinet. Now years later, I would be very grateful if you might use your good offices to facilitate this presentation, which would take only 15 or 20 minutes of the Secretary-General's time. And I assure you, both you and the Secretary-General would enjoy seeing the brief but excellent documentary film which provides deep insight into U Thant's inspiring legacy.

Thanking you for your continued friendship and support, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

*Sri Chinmoy*  
Sri Chinmoy

Prev. covers.  
#27-02617 → YTC  
#26-06027  
#26-04712 } declined  
#26-02688 }  
Enclosed: *Award information*

*Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations is an association of United Nations delegates, staff, NGO representatives and accredited press correspondents holding twice-weekly peace meditations and other programmes at United Nations Headquarters.*

## The U Thant Peace Award

The U Thant Peace Award was established by Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations in honour of the late Secretary-General of the United Nations, who was a deeply contemplative world-server. Under the aegis of U Thant, his close friend, Sri Chinmoy began conducting the twice-weekly Peace Meditations at United Nations Headquarters in 1970.

To perpetuate U Thant's sacred memory, the Award is presented to individuals or organisations who exemplify the lofty spiritual ideals of the Secretary-General in their distinguished service to the cause of world peace.

Among the luminaries who have kindly accepted the U Thant Peace Award from Sri Chinmoy are His Holiness Pope John Paul II; Nobel Laureates President Mikhail Gorbachev, President Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama; and former United Nations Secretaries-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and Kurt Waldheim.

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- **Upon receiving the *U Thant Peace Award*, Mr. Waldheim commented,** "I know how much you have contributed to our efforts in the United Nations to work for peace, to work for understanding, to bridge the gap between rich and poor people in the world, to try to improve the lives of so many people..."
- **When Perez de Cuellar received the *Award*, he remarked,** "I am deeply honoured to receive this *Award* from Sri Chinmoy, a very distinguished and loved friend for many, many years. What is happening to me now is that I am receiving the inspiration of Sri Chinmoy, who is actually, I would say, the heart of the United Nations – because in all the years I was Secretary-General, and even before I was Secretary-General, he was always with us. Even if he was not present, his message was with us, and we were, as I said before, being inspired by him."





# U Thant Peace Award



Presented by Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations

## INTRODUCTION



The U Thant Peace Award is presented to most distinguished individuals and organisations for their exceptional service towards world peace and for the betterment of humanity. The award, which is presented by Sri Chinmoy on behalf of The Peace Meditation at the United Nations, is named for the late Secretary-General of the United Nations. Since 1970, at the invitation of U Thant who was a close personal friend, Sri Chinmoy has offered the twice-weekly Peace Meditation at the United Nations.

The award perpetuates the memory of U Thant and his exemplary devotion to peace in both his personal and his political life. Recipients reflect U Thant's lofty spiritual ideals which are put into practice daily in their tireless service for world peace.

Contained within are excerpts from the presentation of the U Thant Peace Award to six great peace-lovers and peace-servers, five of whom have also received the Nobel Peace Prize. Selections from U Thant's deeply encouraging meetings and correspondence with Sri Chinmoy are also enclosed.



## U THANT

*Third Secretary-General of the  
United Nations (1961-1971)*



Following are excerpts from some of the most  
significant meetings and correspondence  
between Secretary-General U Thant and Sri Chinmoy.

Sri Chinmoy offered a bouquet of flowers to U Thant during their meeting on 29 February 1972, when the Secretary-General said, "Whoever speaks to me about you is all appreciation and admiration, and I personally feel that you have been doing a most significant task for the United Nations. Please feel my sincere respect and sincere concern for what you are doing for mankind."

In a letter to Sri Chinmoy dated April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1972, U Thant commented, "You have indeed instilled in the minds of hundreds of people here the moral and spiritual values which both of us cherish very dearly. I shall always cherish the memorable occasion of our meeting at the United Nations."

The following year, on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1973, U Thant was guest of honour at the premiere of Sri Chinmoy's play about the life of the Lord Buddha. Below are excerpts from U Thant's remarks: "Revered and highly esteemed Sri Chinmoy, and brothers and sisters, it is a great privilege to be able to participate in this spiritually rewarding experience. And for this I am most grateful to our esteemed teacher, Sri Chinmoy, for this innovative undertaking. I also feel particularly moved and touched by his very gracious blessing bestowed on me."

*continued*

"Sri Chinmoy very kindly sent me a copy of the play *Siddhartha Becomes the Buddha*. I have read it with great interest and with great admiration and profit. Of course, it is extremely difficult to depict the important episodes of the life of the Buddha in the course of a few minutes or an hour or so. But I found that Sri Chinmoy has done a most remarkable job in presenting the play in simple language, understandable even to the uninitiated. His stress on the basic characteristics of Buddhism—on compassion, love, renunciation, peace—should stimulate the thoughts of leaders of men and leaders of thought everywhere. As you all are aware, I was brought up as a Buddhist by tradition, by faith and by practice; and I find myself in complete agreement with Sri Chinmoy in his enunciation of the ethical and moral aspects of Buddhism, which in my view should be the basis for each of us in our search for inner light, in our search for truth.

*continued*



Secretary-General U Thant listens attentively as Sri Chinmoy sings a song about the Buddha, "*Buddham Saranam Gacchami*," which he set to music for the occasion and performed, accompanying himself on the harmonium, before the premiere of *Siddhartha Becomes the Buddha* on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1973.



Sri Chinmoy garlands U Thant (left and centre). U Thant offers his soul-stirring reply following Sri Chinmoy's speech of welcome (right).

"Sri Chinmoy in his play also has drawn a very vivid picture of the identity between God and Truth, soul and inner Light, which I very much hope will create an abiding interest in these two great religions—Hinduism and Buddhism—which in many ways constitute the key to all great religions. I feel very strongly, as some of my friends know, that only by the practical application of the teachings of great religious leaders, particularly the development of the moral and the spiritual aspects of life as Sri Chinmoy has stressed in the play—love, compassion, tolerance, and the philosophy of live-and-let-live, modesty and even humility—that only with this approach, only with this method, will we all be able to fashion the kind of society we want, a truly moral society, a decent society, a livable society, which is the goal of all great religions.

"I want to thank particularly those friends who are participating in this play. I wish all of you peace of mind and eternal joy, and particularly the inner joy. Thank you very much, Sri Chinmoy."





## POPE JOHN PAUL II

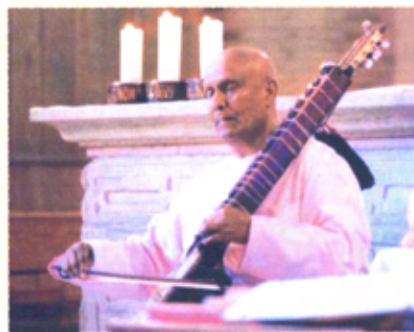


*Sala Clementina, The Vatican  
May 17th, 1998*

On the eve of Pope John Paul II's 78th birthday, Sri Chinmoy prayerfully offered the U Thant Peace Award to the Holy Father on behalf of himself and the Peace Meditation at the United Nations. The Pope was deeply moved and affectionately placed his hand on Sri Chinmoy's left hand. He lovingly and compassionately blessed the award three times with his hand. This was Sri Chinmoy's fifth of six audiences with Pope John Paul II.

On May 18th, Sri Chinmoy offered a Peace Concert of his soul-stirring musical compositions to commemorate the Holy Father's 78th birthday inside the Vatican at the Church of Santa Maria.

*Sri Chinmoy:* "Today's Peace Concert we are most devotedly offering to the Holy Father. We are praying to the Holy Father to bless us all on this most auspicious occasion. May his birthday illumine each and every human being on earth. Each day the Holy Father brings to the world a new hope and a new promise for the betterment of humanity. May we all feel our Holy Father's blessingful presence as we dedicate prayerfully and soulfully our Peace Concert to him."





*Sri Chinmoy's third audience with the Pope took place inside the Vatican on November 30th, 1988. Soon after Pope John Paul II's passing in April 2005, the Zambian Government requested the Vatican to send them a few most significant photos from the Holy Father's nearly 27-year papacy. From the hundreds of thousands of photos in their archives, the Vatican officials were inspired to send the above photo. The Republic of Zambia then issued this commemorative stamp (above right) on October 1st, 2005.*

#### *Pope John Paul II*

"I am very grateful for your visit. May God bless you. God bless you and all your contemplative activities."

November 30th, 1988

"I salute the runners of the Peace Run, who are carrying a Torch as a testimony to peace through the streets of the world."

May 31st, 1995

This immortal message of Pope John Paul II from St. Peter's Square was also published the following day in the Vatican's official newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, as the inset to the large photo of Sri Chinmoy offering the Peace Torch to the Pope for his blessings (below).



## MOTHER TERESA



*Missionaries of Charity House  
adjoining the Church of San Gregorio  
Rome, Italy, October 1st, 1994*

*Sri Chinmoy:* "You are the Mother of Compassion. You are the Sister of Affection. You have conquered the hearts of all the poor and needy people you have served. You have not only conquered them, but you have conquered India. Not only India, but the entire world. The entire world has boundless gratitude to you. You have elevated the consciousness of the entire world."

### *Award Declaration*

"This U Thant Peace Award presentation by members of Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations is to Mother Teresa, Compassion-Heart and Service-Life of India, whose loving tears and blessingful touch have assuaged the agonies of countless human lives and whose devotedly, radiantly and unreservedly self-giving example has kindled the flame of self-dedication of world-serving brothers and sisters everywhere.

"Presented to Mother Teresa: Nobel Peace Laureate of sacred humility, prayerful server of Divinity, and soulful lover of humanity."







*Mother Teresa*

"Thank you, Sri Chinmoy. Thank you. I have heard so much about your work all over the world. I am so pleased with what you are doing for so many people in so many countries. May God bless you, Sri Chinmoy, and all your wonderful work for peace. May we continue to work together and to share together, all for the glory of God and for the good of man."  
October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994

"Thank you for all you are to God, for the beautiful work you have done for the glory of God and the good of souls. I keep you in my prayer and I count on your continual support through your prayers and sacrifices that we may do God's work with great love for His greater glory."  
From Mother Teresa's final letter to Sri Chinmoy, New York,  
June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1997



## PRESIDENT MIKHAIL GORBACHEV



*New York, New York  
October 16th, 1994*

*Sri Chinmoy:* "Beloved President Gorbachev, you have brought to the fore the inner freedom of humanity. You have liberated much of the world from bondage-division-night. Therefore, both the ascending cries of humanity and the descending smiles of divinity you embody. God has chosen you to be His choicest instrument to sumptuously feed the inner world and safely lead the outer world."

### *Award Declaration*

"Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations gratefully presents the U Thant Peace Award to President Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev whose perestroika-vision-light ended the cold war and sowed the peace-seeds inside the heart-garden of the world-home for the transformation of the human mind and the perfection of human life."

### *President Gorbachev*

"I am very deeply moved by this meeting with you, esteemed Sri Chinmoy, and at this time receiving this very meaningful award named after a person whom I remember very well and whom I recognise as a man who made a great contribution to mutual understanding and peace in the world—indeed, a man with a great philosophical vision, who undertook a great responsibility of building international relations in a very difficult world as it was at that time.

*continued*

“Receiving this U Thant Peace Award I regard as a kind of relay from U Thant, a relay in serving people. Even though people pray to different gods and have different religions, all of them are human beings and all of them are God’s creation, God’s creatures; and they must strive to understand each other to work together with each other. That is the only way to save all our souls, to live in harmony with nature and in harmony with the skies. This is a very important honour that will figure prominently in my life.

“Sri Chinmoy, you have a wonderful soul and you can express it in your thoughts, in your words and in your art.”

October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1994

“Dear Friend! Throughout all these years your noble peace mission has met with response in the most distant corners of our planet. Today, when blood is being shed once again in the world, your humanitarian activities take on a particular value for all people of goodwill. I wish you and all your students more successes in your work to the benefit of peace and all the best.”

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2003





## PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA



*National Headquarters of the African National Congress  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
January 29th, 1996*

*Sri Chinmoy:* "Highly esteemed and beloved President Mandela, it is the greatest honour for me and my students to offer you our most profound and soulful appreciation in the form of our U Thant Peace Award.

"Dear President Mandela, yours is the life of a supremely chosen instrument, embodying both the excruciating bondage-pangs and the soaring freedom-dreams of your nation. The sweet hopes of your innocent childhood you unhesitatingly surrendered to Destiny's challenging call. The loftiest goal of universal liberation you wholeheartedly embraced. Impossibility, defeat and bitterness are words never to be found in your oneness-heart-dictionary. Unfathomable courage, unparalleled determination and indomitable strength radiate on every page.

"Your life of unconditional sacrifice and your beloved country's miracle-transformation are inseparable. Sleeplessly your life-boat is plying between Africa's bleeding heart-shore and Africa's smiling soul-shore. Your triumphant peace-loving and oneness-building spirit the entire aspiring world shall forever love, cherish and adore."

### *Award Declaration*

"The U Thant Peace Award is presented to President Nelson Mandela: South Africa's visionary oneness-leader, epitome of humanity's nobility-aspiration-height, radiant patience-embodiment, illumining forgiveness-ocean, glowing humility-servant of your suffering and striving people, towering majesty-king of their blossoming unity-victory-destiny. With our deepest appreciation, admiration and gratitude, Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations."





*President Mandela*

"This is a wonderful honour. I do not have the words to express it. This award from you is one that I am going to respect a great deal and which encourages me in the difficult work that we are doing. It is not easy to preach the message of peace and reconciliation in a country which for more than three centuries has been divided by racial conflict and tensions, and where many people have lost their lives because of torture and persecution. It is not very easy, but we are trying.

"This award makes it possible for us to be able to do this work. To be appreciated by an organisation like yours is a real shot in the arm, and I am very grateful to you."

January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1996

"My Brother, I applaud your lifetime of service to humanity in the great cause of world peace. You have been travelling throughout the world for more than 40 years to offer a message of peace and hope to our young people. Your worldwide Peace Run, lifesaving humanitarian service and Peace Concert series are a few of the many, many ways in which you counter the terrible cycle of hatred and cynicism with love and hope...May you continue for many more years, my youthful Brother, in bringing new encouragement for world peace and goodness to our brothers and sisters all over the world."

August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005



## ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU



*Residence of the Archbishop of Cape Town  
Cape Town, South Africa  
December 20th, 1995*

*Sri Chinmoy:* “Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Father Tutu, your life of unswerving faith represents the enduring love of the Divine for your cherished country—a land richly blessed by the Creator yet, for so long, torn by the strife of separation. Throughout long decades of struggle, yours was the eloquent voice of unity, of reconciliation, of tolerance, of patience, of forgiveness and of conviction. At the same time, it was a compelling call to action. Finally, your voice proclaimed the destined victory of justice, peace and oneness.

“Father Tutu, according to me, you are a soul-diamond, a heart-diamond. We know that diamonds are formed by intense pressure. During the years of your ministry, you experienced and expressed all the excruciating sufferings of the black people of South Africa. At the same time, as a chosen instrument of God, you courageously, devotedly and tirelessly fought against the appalling ignorance of apartheid, while praying for the transformation of its perpetrators. Placed by the Hand of God between the unstoppable freedom-surge of the oppressed and the fearful aggression-retaliation of the oppressor, you emerged as the brilliant diamond of unity, reflecting the Oneness-Light of the Creator. In you, all the rainbow-colours of God’s children find their true home.

*continued*







“Father Tutu, you perfectly embody both contemplation and action, and thus you serve as a radiant example for God-lovers and peace-seekers everywhere in today’s world. In your compelling words: ‘The most important, the most cardinal fact about our life is the spiritual—that encounter with God in prayer, in worship, in meditation.’

“Father Tutu, your illumined wisdom proclaims that separation is the greatest suffering and the root of conflict, whereas oneness is the greatest joy and the wellspring of peace. Your heart of faith, your life of humility toward God and man—which is nothing but oneness itself, your towering intellect surrendered to the service of God, and your eloquent voice of all-embracing love make you a shining harbinger of tomorrow’s peace-flooded oneness-world. Today, therefore, we wish to present to you our U Thant Peace Award.”

#### *Award Declaration*

“The U Thant Peace Award is presented to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, devoted messenger of the divine unity of the Creator’s rainbow-children, eloquent voice of humanity’s suffering and Divinity’s Compassion... With our deepest appreciation, admiration and gratitude, Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations.”





*Archbishop Tutu*

“Thank you very, very much. On behalf of all of us, we are enormously grateful that you have taken the time to come here to spread this message of love and harmony and peace. Thank you for honouring me and honouring us here.

“You have come with wonderful timing, because I have just recently been appointed to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which we all hope is going to assist our country in the process of healing all the trauma that has been caused by apartheid’s injustice in the past. We hope that you and your students will uphold us in your prayers as we set out on this momentous journey in our country. Thank you very much for all your work.”

December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1995

“Looking on all the spiritual work that you do for peace here in the United Nations and in other parts of the world, God smiles saying, ‘Thank you! You are vindicating me!’ You are part of the spiritual force of Love that emanates from God and which will transform the evil of this world into its counterpart. Thank you for persisting and going on, going on. The world continues its existence only because of people like yourselves who help to hold it in being...Thank you so very much for all you mean for God’s world and God’s children. God bless you richly.”

March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004



## THE DALAI LAMA



*Fishkill, New York  
May 28th, 1997*

*Sri Chinmoy:* "You are the most beloved child of the Lord Buddha. From the Buddha we received the message of peace. We are extremely grateful to you for accepting this humble U Thant Peace Award which you so richly deserve."

### *Award Declaration*

"We are most grateful and honoured to be able to offer the U Thant Peace Award to His Holiness The Dalai Lama. You so richly deserve this award for many, many reasons..."

### *The Dalai Lama*

"Thank you very much. This is very, very good. Thank you!"

May 28<sup>nd</sup>, 1997

"I am confident that your Peace-Blossoms dedication will help in making the people and their leaders more aware about the importance of peace...Peace comes from a genuine sense of brotherhood and sisterhood that is based on love and kindness."

November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1992

