

Historical Profiles of Mayo

The United Nations and Dr. Charles W. Mayo

In the summer of 1953, Dr. Charles W. (Chuck) Mayo, son of Dr. Charlie, was asked by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to serve as a member of the US delegation to the eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Dr. Chuck joined Rev. Archibald J. Carey, Jr., Henry Ford II, Mrs. Oswald B. Lord, and James D. Zellerbach as one of the five alternate US delegates for that session.

As he later recalled, Dr. Chuck initially thought that his duties at the United Nations would be like the duties of the other alternates and would require little time. He quickly discovered that more was expected of him than simply filling the momentarily vacant seat of a regular member of the delegation. The agenda of the UN General Assembly contained 73 subjects, and the United States held memberships in 10 committees. The alternate delegates were assigned to these committees. They had to attend regularly, had to become knowledgeable about the agendas, and were expected to prepare major speeches on one or more vital issues.

Dr. Chuck was assigned to the UN Political Committee and the UN Third Committee. He was given the responsibility of writing and delivering one of the key speeches for the UN Political Committee. In March 1952, Russia had accused the United States of using germ warfare in the Korean War. As proof, the Russians presented 36 confessions signed by captured American aviators.

After careful preparation, on Oct. 26, 1953, Dr. Chuck delivered an address to the UN Political Committee that countered the Russian accusations by charging the Communists with brainwashing the captured aviators. With clinical clarity, he described the physical and mental torture imposed on the aviators before they were willing to confess. His presentation effectively nullified the Russian incriminations. Afterward, he was caught in a flurry of attention from the media. Headlines such as "Major Surgery on Reds: Dr. Mayo Creates Stir After Atrocity Speech" appeared. Russia's Joseph Malik and Dr. Chuck then became involved in a series of counter-charges. When these verbal battles were completed, the United States won in the UN Political Committee by a vote of 47 to 0; this victory sidetracked the Russian accusations.

As a result of Dr. Chuck's successful efforts, President Eisenhower asked him to run for the US Senate in Minnesota against Hubert Humphrey. Dr. Chuck declined. Nonetheless, he served the American Association of the United Nations as its president; he traveled often with Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt as she spread the message of the United Nations throughout America. Dr. Chuck remained a staunch supporter of the United Nations until his death in 1968.

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