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Last letter to Stevenson
11 Sept. 1961

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PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Adlai,

The other day I sent you a letter proposing discussions regarding the implementation in practice of the Headquarters Agreement with a view to forestalling incidents of a kind which seems now to be all too frequent.

I tried to get in touch with you today in order to discuss the next steps but I learned that you and your close colleagues are all in Washington, and as I shall have to leave tomorrow, this makes it necessary for me to put my thoughts in writing.

After having taken the temperature of various delegations, I must conclude that the issue is very hot. Confidentially, I can mention that delegations of such a comparatively conservative brand as that of Pakistan and Nigeria show an especially firm attitude.

In the circumstances, I believe that it is essential that the matter be straightened out before the General Assembly gets under way so that new additional arrangements have been brought about which justify the critics to give us all the benefit of the doubt and to avoid raising the issue in open debate.

For my part I have assigned Mr. Karacimhan, with the assistance of Mr. ^{Wasserman} ~~Schacter~~, to take the matter up with those from your delegation whom you assign for the task. My hope would be that in the course of this week they would be able to agree in a preliminary way on the texts of an exchange of letters spelling out an understanding regarding the way in which "privileges and immunities" will be protected.

These first drafts should have only the character of proposals to the United States authorities and the Secretary-General, and would

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serve as a basis for informal discussions with various representatives of the Afro-Asian group. In the light of their observations the text could then be made ready and the exchange of letters - which preferably should be between you and me - could be published some time next week.

Once this exchange of letters is brought about, I feel that the next stage should be talks between your Mission (and/or us) with the city authorities, as it finally boils down to the question of the instructions given to the police and the briefings by which such instructions are accompanied. I hope it will be possible to arrive also at a text of such instructions which could be rendered public.

Finally, in an understanding between us and the city authorities we would make an arrangement here by which some two or three people were assigned to receive complaints which, on a confidential basis, would be brought to the attention of the Police Commissioner, as simple information but for such action as he might find appropriate.

You may feel that all this together is to make too much of the matter, but I am afraid that it is not so, and that even with these arrangements incidents will occur, explained by misunderstandings combined with deep undercurrents of a psychological nature, having, alas, also a racial element.

It is in order, if possible, to keep this delicate question out of public debate in the United Nations that I feel that it is necessary to have a generally known system which is recognized as providing all safeguards which can be devised. If that has been done, what remains is a human problem which, I think, we may get to be treated as such.

In my absence I would be happy if this matter could be followed up by your Mission directly with Mr. Narasimhan. This letter being in lieu of a talk, I suggest that we both treat it as personal and strictly confidential.

Dag Hammarskjöld