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Africa General

4 Feb. 1960

Press conference by D.H. at U.N. HQ
(Re D.H.'s trip to Africa)

UNITED NATIONS

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Note No. 2108
4 February 1960

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AT UN HEADQUARTERS
ON THURSDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 1960

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Ladies and gentlemen, it has been quite a time now that we have not met and the reason, as you know, is a rather long journey in Africa. I guess that you would expect me, first of all, to say a few words about that trip.

First of all, I would like to say a word about the character of the trip. It is now practically a common occurrence that people with political responsibilities travel around. They go around for different purposes and in very different positions. The Secretary-General is in that respect in a rather peculiar position. He is in principle an official on the payrolls of countries he visits as, if those countries are not yet member countries, they may soon become members. That is to say, in a certain sense it is a visit of an official of a country to the government in question for a study of such problems as have arisen in the country in a context which is of relevance to the Secretary-General as this official. It is nothing which has a publicity aspect. It is not a good will trip. It is not something which, so to say, intends to sell either the United Nations or the Secretary-General or the country in question to world opinion. It is, on the whole, a household operation.

Now this trip has been more of that character than practically any trip I have undertaken. It has been a strictly professional trip for study, for information. The result is that there has been practically no time for anything but discussions -- discussions with or without food because, as a matter of course also, social occasions are tied in with this kind of operation. But those social occasions have also a function to fulfill because they give opportunities for a freer exchange of views than is possible in an office.

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(The Secretary-General)

The various areas, countries and regions I visited have used to the full, and very much so, these opportunities for an exchange of views, for studies and for mutual information. Arrangements have been made in such a way that I have had, as I said on my arrival at Idlewild, an opportunity to see, I would say, the majority of national leaders and of government leaders in the African countries and regions which I visited.

It is a very broad range of experience, personal, human and political experience, which I have gathered in that way and, without being presumptuous, I guess that the kind of cross-section I could get, thanks to those arrangements, for which I am deeply grateful, in the course of a few weeks -- the kind of cross-section of every sort of politically responsible opinion in the Africa of today -- is fairly unique.

You can say that to stay in a country one night or two nights cannot give much of an experience. Well, first of all, it can. It can because, if you break through the walls and if you have the necessary background knowledge, even a talk of one hour can tell you more than volumes. It can have great significance also for another reason. I had to put it in this way quite often to people in Africa: "This is not a visit of one day to country 'X.' It is a visit of five or six weeks to Africa, and that includes a visit of one day to this country". You see what I mean. It is not in particular what you can learn in this or that city or from this or that man that gives you valuable understanding of the situation. It is what he says and what you see in one city seen in the light of what you have heard others say and what you have seen in other cities.

Africa today is in one sense a unity. There are some well-known and very deep currents which sweep across the whole continent through all its countries. It is reflected in very different ways indeed in various parts of the continent, but you can never understand the way in which it is reflected at one point without knowing how it is reflected at other points, and you can never evaluate the totality of this remarkable movement without having, so to say, seen it in its various and different facets.

For that reason the period during which I have been away has been one of very intense work with very little glamour and very rich experiences which I am sure

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I can put to the benefit of the operation of the United Nations and, in particular, to the benefit of those old members or new members which we have on the continent.

I may say, trying to sum up the experiences in general terms, that there is nothing new. There is nothing which you do not know and which I did not know. The general trend on the African continent is something which most recently was summed up by Mr. Macmillan when he characterized as his main impression the strength of the awakening of national consciousness on the continent.

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That is what I mean. That is not news, but, just as for Mr. Macmillan it was for me a rather extraordinary experience to see how this awakening, how this new national consciousness was reflected in individuals and by political leaders in their thinking, in their reactions, in their perspective of the future and, not least, in their philosophy regarding the United Nations.

I emphasize again, and for good reasons, the element of personal contact, of personal experience. You can talk endlessly in general terms about Africa, Africans or African leaders, and you do not say a thing which is not, so to say, just banalities, but you can experience the same things in their concrete incarnation, so to say, in this or that man, in this or that people, and it takes on another dimension and presents you both with problems, perhaps with some feeling of concern and also, I must add, with an enormous sense of encouragement.

I said when I arrived at Idlewild that I was less prone than ever to generalize because another predominant impression was the infinite variety of problems in Africa. The first impression, as I said, referring to Mr. Macmillan, is, of course, the one of the common urge, the common awakening. The second one is how varied the forms this psychological and political reaction takes in various parts. This is natural because historically, economically, ethnically and sociologically/^{indeed} in all usual respects of significance for the evaluation of the situation in a country, the various parts of Africa have had very, very different fates in the past, and for that reason they approach the present phase on very different assumptions. There are also, in the very differences and the varying problems, common elements which should be emphasized here.

There is the problem of personnel. There is the problem of money. There is the problem of education and there is the problem of, let us say, moral support in the reshaping or the shaping of a nation.

I said there is the question of people. There are extremely able people all around the continent in all the various countries, but they are few. The period of growth, of education and of political formation in Africa has been a very short one -- we need not go into the reasons why -- and in such a short period, and with efforts on a fairly limited scale in most cases, it is quite natural that there has not emerged the kind of social grouping, the kind of social classes, from which you can recruit a broad administration and a broad

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political leadership. The countries will have to live with few people, and quality will have to make up for numbers and quantity. But there is a limit to what any man can do, and for that reason, if we are not to overburden these people, if we are not to put them before an impossible task, they must get assistance in human terms, they must get people, experts, technicians, and -- why not? -- officials to the extent that they want, temporarily and transitionally, to employ foreigners.

We have, as you know, in technical assistance and the so-called OPEX scheme certain possibilities to do so, but, alas, how modest -- I would even say how ridiculously modest -- in relation to the needs.

I further said that there is a question of money. In most of these countries some striking investments have been made, and some good development schemes are under way, but it is quite common to note that we lack what I would call the economic infra-structure for a national life as a political unit.

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To such an infrastructure belongs a network of communications, the necessary school buildings, some few basic industries -- I need not prolong the list. You know it well from various experiences and perhaps most recently from the picture we have given you of the situation of Laos, which is a typical case where the first efforts must be to create what I call here the economic infrastructure of the political life of a nation.

I also mentioned education, and education naturally is a key point in the whole situation. It is, if you please, part of the infrastructure, but a part of such significance that it has to be mentioned specifically. Education is not only broad education at the bottom; it is not school teaching and book learning. It is civic education. It is the methods by which you bring people not only to national awareness but to the point where they form as free individuals their judgement on political issues. Education is also the method through which you get the doctors, the engineers, the administrators and, to some extent, of course, also the political leaders, although I do not believe that there, any more than other places, the universities will be the main breeding ground for political leaders; political leaders, after all, are mostly made in the field, in practical life. Anyway, the problem is there on all the levels -- primary, secondary, college, specialist training and so on, and the nuclei are there in several parts of Africa, but insufficient. For that reason, one of the major efforts must be to get this part of the infrastructure developed as quickly and as wisely as possible: wisely because it is a question/^{how}within the framework of limited means, to get the most possible out of those means; wisely also because there must be an adjustment to the specific social traditions, economic life and ideological approaches of each region.

I had the privilege of visiting some few of the great universities in Africa, and I must say that I admire their work. It is, as I said about the chief political leaders and administrators, a question of very high standards indeed, but again quality has to make up for the lack in quantity.

Finally -- and I mention it last not because I regard it as the least significant -- I refer to the necessity of moral support. In fact, I guess that it is the most significant, because people and money and education do not mean a thing unless they are given and provided in the right spirit. By the right spirit,

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by the moral support, I mean such attitudes from the outside and from those who work with the governments which reflect an understanding of the problems facing those countries, a sympathetic understanding, neither a feeling of false superiority, nor a feeling of sterile pessimism, nor a feeling of facile optimism. What is needed is realism and understanding, joined into something which really helps those leaders and those peoples. And why shouldn't it be provided? Why shouldn't it be provided by all the member states of the United Nations and by the Organization itself, which has pledged itself to self-government and to independence as part of the human rights spelled out in the Charter?

How this has to be translated into action is another matter. You have examples of it already in United Nations practices over the past few years. Those examples may not perhaps be repeated in exactly the same form, but similar patterns are possible. It is something very striking that from the far west coast and to the south east coast as a belt all across Africa south of the Sahara, there is one standing demand, one standing hope. It is less for money or for experts, because those countries know very well that we haven't got much money and we are not likely to get much money in this Organization. It is much more for what I have called here the moral support which is expressed even in the most modest action through the right people.

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I will not in this context repeat what is common knowledge. For these countries, it is infinitely easier to receive financial assistance and technical assistance by experts and so on through an international body than on a bilateral basis, and it is infinitely easier for them to receive it through an international body of which they are themselves members than through any other international body of which they are not members. That is to say, internationalization of aid is not achieved by switching from ^{the system of} one country giving another country aid to a system where one group of countries gives a country aid. The bilateral character is then maintained. It is not until and unless the receiving country feels that this is an act of solidarity within an organization where they have equal rights with the donors that you really reach the optimum point not only psychologically but politically and economically.

Under such circumstances, you are not surprised to hear that every place there was one wish reiterated -- that as much as possible of international assistance should be channelled through the United Nations. But, as I said, they looked at it realistically. They knew that the time perhaps was not ripe. I must, on the other hand, endorse their feelings. I understand their motives and I share their conclusions.

I do not think I should go further into this matter. You are certain to have questions and I shall leave you free to take your own initiatives. These various experiences which I have had in general terms, and in very concrete and detailed terms, are now up for consideration, reconsideration and careful study here. They will lead to certain proposals. They will lead to certain initiatives to which I still have to give further thought. The first visible expressions are likely to come at the spring session of the Economic and Social Council.

I cannot end this survey without voicing again my admiration for the seriousness, the dedication, the ability and the perspective of the vast majority of leaders on the continent. I have to add to that an expression of personal gratitude for the exceedingly generous way in which they not only received me and my collaborators but frankly opened their minds and their hearts. I cannot express that to each one of them, but I can do it in this general way through you, ladies and gentlemen of the Press.

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Having said this regarding the African trip, there is a piece of news which I would like to give you because you might find it of interest. You know that shortly the disarmament discussions of the ten will begin, and I know on my side the interest you have taken in the links between the United Nations and those discussions in the Committee. I wish, therefore, to tell you that it is now agreed with the ten that there will be special representation at the discussions for the Secretary-General. It is a system which you know has its precedents in the past. It is repeated here. I am not yet in a position to tell who will represent me at those meetings. For the rest, as usual in these contexts, we will provide meeting rooms and facilities at Geneva in the Palais des Nations and will help them out with interpretation, documentation, translation, and press services, all this on our own budget.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, this somewhat long introduction is, I hope, justified from your point of view because it may have anticipated a few questions. I would like to add, however, that as I have taken very much of the time regularly and normally allotted to the press conference, I do not expect the Chairman to interrupt at 11:30 but to have a full half hour from the moment I stop.

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Note No. 2108
4 February 1960

Mr. SANDERS (Het Parool, Amsterdam): Thank you very much,
Mr. Secretary-General.

On behalf of all of us, I want to welcome you back to Headquarters after your historical trip to Africa. We have been kept well informed of your itinerary; nevertheless, I had the feeling that sometimes we lost track of you, and we did not like it.

After what you have said in your introductory remarks, we understand that there is a great deal in these remarks for us to think about, but, as a father who has been away for a long time is expected by his children to tell many stories and to spread them over a certain period of time, I hope that you will find occasion, in time, to give us some background for a good many stories for us to write.

I wish also to take this opportunity to express our belated wishes to you for a very happy and fruitful year to come.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Thank you. We need not go into that; we shall have an opportunity to discuss it on a later occasion. There is, on a trip of this type, necessarily -- and I have given you part of the reason -- a very considerable problem as regards public relations because it is very introvert by its very nature, and because of its purpose it is indeed something rather different from what you see covered in the reporting on other trips. All the same, there is a problem. I am aware of it, and I can promise you that I will always do my best to fit you into the picture to the extent to which it can be reconciled with the task and with the special forms under which I have to operate. In this case, and without any irony, I would say that any kind of reporter or press representative who would have been on the trip would have had a very bad time -- not because of any resistance from my side, but because of the pace, which went beyond my own previous experience. I do not know when the poor man would have had time to write.

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Mr. CARSON (Jewish Telegraphic Agency): Mr. Secretary-General, I should like to ask a question which refers to perhaps the one stop on your long journey that may not have been merely a household operation but may have involved -- and, according to our information, did involve -- certain discussions and, perhaps, negotiations. I am referring to your visit to Cairo, and, in view of the fact that twenty-five delegations here, during the last session of the Assembly, reendorsed publicly the principle of freedom of navigation through the Suez in the context of Israel's grievance against the United Arab Republic in that regard; and in view of the fact that, after your last visit to Cairo, President Nasser announced that he had no intention of lifting the anti-Israel blockade; and in view further, if you do not mind, of the reported decision by the Captain of the Inge Toft to unload his Israel-originated cargo, would you tell us whether the United Nations has now reconciled itself to permit the UAR to blockade the Canal against Israel shipping and goods, or will the United Nations do something concrete about the matter and, if so, what will that action be and when?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I cannot speak for the United Nations which, in this case, has the General Assembly and the Security Council as its proper spokesmen. A political judgement of this type belongs to them. Their stand remains what it was before and as it is crystallized in various resolutions.

As regards my own stand, it is well known; it is on record; it is not in any way modified. The fact that certain attitudes of Member Governments -- this one or that one -- are not adjusted to what, from my point of view, is the United Nations line does not mean any acquiescence either from the United Nations or from the Secretary-General.

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That disposes, I think, of your question of principle. There is no acquiescence by anybody in anything. The United Nations decisions stand, and the United Nations decisions as they stand are the law of the Secretary-General.

As regards the concrete measures to which this can lead, I think that the fact that this matter has been on my desk practically daily for "X" years is concrete enough. If the concrete measures have not been publicized, it has been in the best interests of the operation itself. If they have so far not succeeded, or succeeded only partly, it is not due to any lack of intensity or energy or consistency in the efforts of the Secretariat. That is what I should like to say regarding the concrete translation of the decisions of the United Nations.

Mr. HARRELSON (Associated Press): Can you tell us anything about the developments on the Israel-Syrian border?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: On the basis of the information we have, I have the impression that things are now gliding, so to speak, into a more quiet period, which I hope will lead to active negotiations between the two parties under some kind of UNISO aegis. Those negotiations should, of course, aim at resolving the underlying problem. The other aspect of the matter is that there has been a military build-up, as you know, and as has been amply shown by the firing from both sides. The line of the United Nations on this point is and must be the implementation of the Armistice Agreement as it refers to the demilitarized zone -- that is to say, a request to both sides to live in accordance with the rules applying to the demilitarized zone, which, as the name indicates, should be demilitarized.

Mr. GABRIEL (Trans-Radio News Agency): There is now a new trend -- one might call it a new armaments race -- to spread nuclear weapons to other nations, in apparent contradiction to Dr. Johnson's definition of disarmament and certainly to the Assembly's position as expressed in scores of speeches and in some key resolutions. My two-part question is this: First, how do you feel about this seeming reverse trend in the world? Secondly, is there anything that the world Organization, possibly the United Nations Disarmament Commission or

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yourself -- and you have now added the possibility of your representative at Geneva -- can do to try to halt this trend, perhaps by an appeal to reason or, more specifically, by some truce or standstill agreement until the disarmament talks can take over?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You raise a question which has a certain emotional aspect from my angle. I am worried by some recent trends. At the same time, I have to confess that I fail to see how the Organization at the moment can do anything except what it is doing. This creates a kind of tension between my basic evaluation and the feeling of, I would not say powerlessness, but uncertainty about how best to act, which justifies what I said first about a somewhat emotional reaction.

Mr. HOROWITZ (Heruth, Tel Aviv): Part of my question has been answered. However, I was wondering whether you would care to provide clarification on the issue of the Greek vessel that has not been permitted to go through the Canal. My impression is that there is a misunderstanding as to its passage. In Israel, it was understood that some permission or some go-ahead signal had been given, that it would be possible for the vessel to go through the Canal. Mrs. Golda Meir expressed that. I am just wondering whether, in your recent visit to Cairo, there was some sort of clarification or some understanding on this point, whether the clouds might be cleared away on this issue.

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There is no lack of clarity as to the principles which both sides wish to apply regarding the Canal. There is, however, as regards the facts in this specific case, insufficient information, and I am not in a position to say anything more about it until I have the additional information needed. I have requested such information from both parties.

Mr. PERSON (Radio Netherlands): Reverting to your African trip, could you tell us anything from personal observation about the specific situation in the Belgian Congo? This morning's New York Times contains a letter revealing a controversy between the Editor and the Belgian Commissioner of Information in New York, who reproaches the Times with having written in an editorial that the African population has no experience in local government and for having stressed the impossibility for the Congolese to create next 30 June a stable nation and which further accuses the Belgians, the Commissioner says, of "throwing in the sponge with a rashness suggesting that they have also thrown over their responsibilities." Is there any comment you would care to make in the matter?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That is a judgement which stands for the writer and the paper; of course I dissociate myself from that as from any kind of judgement on the situation in one of the territories. It is not for me to evaluate it in such terms at all. It is a matter of course that in all regions where the present development raises the kind of problems to which I referred, pessimists are likely to blow them up into obstacles and optimists are likely to disregard them. My plea, as you will remember, was a plea for realism, and realism in full recognition of the strength of the present urge, which in itself is a very important political fact. I would like to say what I have had to say on a few occasions to the pessimists, and that is that, if you look back at the way in which various countries in Europe or on this side of the Atlantic came into being as independent States, it happened with very few people, with comparatively small local political experience, and even on an economic basis of the greatest modesty.

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Mr. BEER (Neue Zurcher Zeitung): There are stories going around since yesterday that there were negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union about the Outer Space Committee, to the effect that the United States wanted an early meeting and that the Soviet Union thought the meeting should take place only in March. This information speaks only about negotiations between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Is this a matter to be decided by only two members of the Outer Space Committee? Where does the Secretariat come in in this matter?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The Secretariat is most fully briefed by the two parties you mentioned about their time-tables and possibilities of providing the right people for this kind of meeting. As we know, the two countries have and must have a decisive role in this Committee, because they are the countries with the immeasurably greatest know-how. In such circumstances it seems to me quite natural that one first tries to find out what time-table would suit those countries in view of the availability of experts and so on and so forth. It does not exclude a general kind of referendum to all the members of the Committee on what time-table they finally would like to see established. As a matter of course, the two parties you mentioned are in consultation with the others. The others are in no way excluded from the present sounding out on possible time-tables.

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Mr. KRISHNAYYA (News Service and Publications): In the general debate Mr. Krishna Menon stressed the growing importance of the Secretariat and proposed that it should be charged with producing the blueprint of what may be called a world plan of development which will face up to a universe which today has 2,800,000,000 people and by the end of this century will have 5,200,000,000 people. So Mr. Menon charted a course for you, Sir, your successors and the whole Secretariat for the next forty years. May I have your views on this not only as the Secretary-General but also as a leading economist?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I do not claim to be a "leading economist," but I claim to know a little bit about applied economics in the field of planning. I am afraid that both the character of the problem and the quality of present economic knowledge is such that we have to be a little bit more pedestrian.

Mr. LASH (New York Post): While you were in Africa Sir Anthony Eden was publishing his memoirs, more or less recollections, in more or less tranquility. One of the points he made was that he felt that after 6 November, the cease-fire, it should have been possible to shape a lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and get some secure guarantees about freedom of passage through the Suez Canal; that he never would have anticipated that the cards that were in the hands of the UN and the United States would have been thrown away as they were in that situation.

My question is whether you feel, in the light of the difficulties you have had in the past year with respect to the Canal -- and I am sure you have worked very hard on it -- whether the cards were not perhaps thrown away at that time; and what you think about the general merits of Sir Anthony's observations.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, I would like to turn the question back to you. What were the cards that the United Nations had: the presence of French and British and Israeli troops in or close to the Canal Zone regarded as enemies by the country through which the Canal runs -- regarded as enemies by the whole Arab world. Is that a card which is a useful one for a negotiation about peace if it is not an imposed peace, and do you believe that any peace imposed on the Middle East would be a lasting one?

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Mr. KESHISHIAN (Al Ahram, Cairo): Sir, the United Nations is actively taking a role in the Algerian problem by aiding the increasing problem of the Algerian refugees. The Asian-African group seems to put great hope in you to be of assistance in solving the Algerian political situation, and especially when you visited Tunisia and Morocco you had a better chance to see how this situation is. Do you think that after all this the Secretary-General will be able to aid in the Algerian problem in some way?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The possibility for the Secretary-General to be of any use in this situation depends entirely on the reactions among the parties most closely interested, and that is, first of all, France and the people of Algeria. It is a matter of course that the Secretary-General never can make a useful contribution unless his contribution is asked for and welcomed. I do not think we have reached a stage in the development where for that reason your question is a practical or relevant one.

Mr. MALLEY (Le Progrès Egyptien): My question is in regard to your trip to Africa. You spoke a while ago about the ideology in Africa and I wonder whether you could assess for us what the ideological trends are today in Africa, whether they stem from the inner realities facing African life today or whether they reflect the often repeated clichés of foreign ideology.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I do not think that the rights of man is a foreign ideology to any people and that, I think, is the key to the whole ideological structure in Africa at present. It may be that the most eloquent and the most revolutionary expressions of the rights of man are to be found in Western philosophers and Western thinking, but that certainly does not make the idea a Western idea imposed on anybody.

I would like to add one little story which illustrates, I think beautifully, what I mean by present African ideology, apart from whatever traditions there may be of a Moslem nature or a Christian nature or a tribal nature; I leave that aside.

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The story runs as follows. At one of the universities I had a few words with some of the students and I said to one of them -- which seems rather natural -- that it must be something extraordinary to be a student here at this fine school at the present juncture preparing yourself for active life in a new independent country in the new Africa. He gave me the following reply: "Sir, I regard myself first of all as a citizen of the whole world, but, that being said, I am rather proud to be an African."

Mr. SANDERS (Het Parool): Is there any possibility that, outside of the four -- or with the Congo, five -- countries that will probably be members of the United Nations this year, Madagascar and Mali will also be candidates for admission?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It is quite possible. It depends, of course, on negotiations which are still going on, but if those negotiations lead to what seems to be indicated by the news we hear, of course, they may lead to independence for the two countries you mention of such a nature that admission to the United Nations would be, I guess, a foregone conclusion.

Mr. LEICHTER (German Press Agency): You endorse strongly the principle of channeling aid through the United Nations, but I suppose you are probably aware that as much, or at least as much, as the role of the United Nations is being undermined in the political field it is more actively even being undermined in the field of giving economic aid. One of the two world powers -- a latecomer in economic aid -- the Soviet Union, is more than ever devoted to bilateral aid. The United States, which has more experience, is switching to multilateral aid, but outside the United Nations. My question is this. Are you aware of this -- for the United Nations -- very dangerous trend and would you consider an appeal to the Heads of State meeting in May in Paris for a joint enterprise in this very important field which, at the same time, could be a very important if not the only topic on which they might agree?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I am very well aware of the trend you mentioned. I think less in terms of that trend as a danger to the United Nations -- the United Nations, as I have often said, is not an end in itself -- but I think of it as something which really reduces the usefulness of the aid from the point of view of the receiving countries. That is to say, the billions put up would be better billions in terms of peace and world progress if they were put up in a form which was more adjusted to the real political needs of the receiving countries. However, I take the situation less dramatically than you do because if I look at it from the angle of the United Nations the United Nations has possibilities and, I would not call them arguments, but tools which put it in a position where it can never really lose its ground if we live up to our responsibilities.

I guess that aid through the United Nations to countries will always be only a fraction of aid received from big powers or from power blocs, but that does not mean that it cannot be decisive. It depends entirely on where we put it in and under what kind of leadership. Eight hundred thousand dollars does not mean the same as 80 million dollars from the point of view of investment, but from the point of view of what I call moral support it may be used in such a way as to carry greater weight.

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That leads me to one aspect which I should perhaps mention, because it is essential for an evaluation of technical assistance through the United Nations at the present juncture. I have already referred to the interest taken by the African leaders and the African regions and States in the United Nations. Why this interest, as we are, from their point of view, poor as concerns finance and not very rich when it comes to the question of the number of officials and technical experts? The reason is quite obvious. The United Nations is now, or will be, their Organization. The United Nations can give them a framework for their young national life which gives a deeper sense and a greater weight to independence. The United Nations has not had a past in any of these regions in the sense that any one country necessarily has had. The United Nations, for these reasons, without pushing, without, so to say, becoming a party in their development, can through proper means, even on the basis of fairly small amounts of money, come into the picture in such a way as to help considerably in the framing of ^{their} political life after independence and in the building up of the national state.

That is a role which cannot be taken over by anybody else, and I see our technical assistance, even with modest means, as part of the pattern which naturally follows from this role and from the philosophy of African leaders when they look at the United Nations in this light. This applies, of course, especially to areas which have been Trust Territories, because there we have had a continuous experience, but I would not like to exaggerate the difference between trust territories and other territories.

We have responsibilities which I think we can carry out, and if we carry them out it is not decisive that tens or hundreds^{of}/times more money will come through other channels; although frankly I would, as I have said before, prefer to see it go through United Nations channels because it does make the money more effective, it does help the receiving country by more than the money. It helps it also in its effort to find its place on the world map.

Miss WEILL (Agence France Presse): Mr. Secretary-General, you have received a letter from the countries members of the Afro-Asian group expressing concern over the projected French tests in the Sahara. Does your answer to Mr. Keshishian, that the Secretary-General can act usefully only if his services in a certain case are welcomed by the interested parties, also apply to this situation?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I can always express views unofficially and informally, but effective action, when it is action somewhat outside the formal competence laid down in the Charter, necessarily requires full co-operation from the other party.

Mr. LEICHTER (German Press Agency): You have spoken about the economic aspects of Africa here, and it seems that you are fully in support of multilateral economic aid to Africa, possibly through the United Nations. I was wondering about the other side, that is, the receiving end in Africa. I had the thought, as I was reading your speech to the Economic Commission for Africa that you would like to see some kind of an economic federation on that continent, so as to make the aid more effective in larger terms than just in small national units. Is that thought a correct one?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You think in the right direction, but I would not use the words "economic federation". Economic co-operation, which reduces the weaknesses characteristic of any limited market, can take many forms. Thinking back to my own native country, I must say that economic co-operation in Scandinavia is very intense, as you know, and very fruitful, although it has never found any formal expression in any kind of constitutional terms. What I hope for is that soon, in the spirit of fundamental unity which does exist among the African peoples, especially in West Africa and South of the Sahara, they will find various means through which they can reach an economic co-ordination so as to overcome some of the inherent weaknesses in their present economic position.

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I have no views as to the forms. They must grow organically out of their own thinking and their own problems. For that reason, when you indicate the direction I am in full agreement with you and I think that direction is a must for the future.

Miss FREDERICK (National Broadcasting Company): A moment ago you spoke about the uncertainty as to what else the United Nations could do to stop the spread of nuclear weapons among nations which do not have them now. Two questions: In the present climate of rearmament, or at least discussion of rearmament, what are the prospects for any really useful work by the new ten-nation Committee? Second, can there be any real progress in this whole subject of disarmament without the People's Republic of China?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: On the first point, I think that if any organ can do a useful job in the disarmament field at present it is the Committee of Ten as it has been established and in the circumstances under which it is supposed to work.

On the other point, I can refer you to a discussion which has been running here, and I would not like to add my word to the judgements of others.

Mr. SCHORR (Columbia Broadcasting System): Can you clarify your expression of hope for active negotiations between the UAR and Israel? Specifically, has there been a proposal to that effect? Under whose aegis would the negotiations be held? Would they be limited to the specific dispute about the demilitarized zone or would you hope for wider negotiations?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It is an operation in the field and strictly limited in the sense you indicated -- that is to say, an invitation by the Chief of Staff for joint discussion of the specific problem that has arisen, not in general terms but in quite precise terms.

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Mr. GABRIEL (Trans Radio News Agency): I have a point of clarification with regard to your special representative at the Committee of Ten. Have the terms of reference in which he will function or sit there been determined or does it remain to be determined by the Committee? For instance, will he be merely a political observer on the sidelines taking down notes and transmitting them to you or will he have the powers, very minimum powers, that are accorded even to an NGO organization in the formal meetings of United Nations, perhaps to read a statement, perhaps to make a suggestion, to play some active role there, however minimum, that might express your mind in the negotiations?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I don't think we should formalize this problem at all, and I have not in mind any specific terms of reference. If it is a good man and a good spirit, I think he can exert roughly the same kind of influence I hope I would be able to exert if I were there. I don't think you need to put in writing exactly what rights I would have and would not have, because it is all finally a question of human relations and the total spirit in which the work is conducted.

Mr. SCHNEIDERMAN (Omer, Tel Aviv): Mr. Secretary-General, can you tell us from your observations in Africa about the specific contribution of neighboring and far-away nations in giving technical or other assistance to the new African states?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, I would say every contribution is valuable and welcome. Of course there is a dire need for money for the reasons I gave. There is a lack of the necessary infrastructure, and that has to be established as quickly as possible. But I have also underscored the hope to see that aid from wherever it comes channeled in such a way as to give it the best possible use and greatest possible usefulness. In expressing that, I have not wished to reduce the value of anything sent in a situation with enormous investment needs.

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There is one thing I hope we will be able to avoid, and that is a competition, because a competition does not help either one of the two competitors, and certainly not the country receiving the aid.

Mr. TRAN VAN KY (La Vérité): Sir, I had quite a number of questions to ask you after your trip to India, but almost all of them seem out of date now since you have become the world's greatest globe trotter. It is a widely recognized fact that thanks to you the situation in Laos, which looked very bad indeed a few months ago, appears to have been stabilized, at least on the surface. Also you have been credited, while the army was seizing power, with having restored political order and a democratic regime in Laos with a mere telegram to King Savang Vatthana.

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My question is: Many observers believe that the Laos Government finds itself in a tragic dilemma because, on the one hand, it is doubtful that it can have peace until it has settled its political problems with the Pathet Lao, and, on the other hand, an agreement with the Pathet Lao can only mean the return to power of its leaders and their taking over the whole country in the long run. Do you agree with that view?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As to the first part, your writing of history, I have some strong reservations. As to the second part, you will excuse me. The question is what quite properly can be called a leading question and you will have no reply.

Miss Mary Frances HARVEY (Quincy Patriot Ledger): I should like to return to the situation on the Syrian-Israeli border. There have been conflicting reports, among them a report that a United Nations observer was with some farmers on the Syrian side and was shot at. I should like to know whether a United Nations observer was there with this group during the initial firing incident. I should also like to know whether we will have a report from Von Horn similar to those we used to have from his predecessor on this particular series of incidents.

Also, last year about this time you said that you had the promise of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and of President Nasser regarding the marking of an area just to the north of where this incident took place and, so far as I can determine, of course with different reasons from both sides concerned, I cannot establish that there has been a setting up of these markers.

One other question. They tell me that no one can answer these things but you. There was an UNRWA resolution referring to the PCC. The last report sets forth a detailed analysis of the way in which the land tagged by the PCC is to be evaluated. Do you have a figure as to what the evaluation is now in terms of the Arab-owned land? When will the PCC have one? And can you say anything about the scheduled meetings of the PCC?

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