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HS L 179:177



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Africa General

11 Feb. 1960

Foreign Report (The Economist)

Mr. M's Other Selves?

Mr. H's Other Selves?

The idea of appointing regional representatives is being discussed at United Nations headquarters in New York. These representatives would be personal delegates of the secretary-general and not of any UN agency or commission. The object of the idea would be not so much that of relieving the secretary-general of his ever growing burden of responsibilities, but of providing governments with UN officials to whom they could turn for uncommitted advice more frequently than they can turn to the secretary-general himself, whose crowded programme limits his availability.

If the idea is adopted, it is likely to be tried out in Africa, where:

1. A large group of new nations is emerging, each more or less distrustful of strings that might be attached to offers of aid or advice from either the former colonial powers or assertive self-styled friends.
2. Local leaders would welcome the presence of international civil servants ready to be consulted.

The second of these considerations is believed to have impressed Mr. Hammarskjöld during the African tour which he completed this week - although he discreetly made no mention of it at the press conference he gave at New York's Idlewild airport on his return.

Two categories of problems stand out as likely to cause trouble in the new Africa of the immediate future:

A. - Administrative collapse. With the end of colonial rule, white administrators depart, either voluntarily or involuntarily; even with the best will (as in Ghana or Nigeria) few can be retained for long, and no more recruited on a career basis. Yet the supply of adequately trained Africans is pitifully small - a fact that nationalists may deny before coming to power, but quickly realise afterwards.

In some African countries, the position is frightening: Tanganyika, Uganda, some French community territories and above all the Belgian Congo are examples. Bloodshed and disorders caused the Belgian government to accelerate the time-table for independence to what seems a dangerous pace; worse disorders may well follow the proclamation of independence on June 30th. Even if law and order are preserved, an administrative collapse is by no means impossible, unless a high proportion of the Belgian officials remain at their posts. It is, however, questionable that they will be ready to stay long under a ramshackle African administration, or even that inexperienced leaders like M. Lumumba or M. Kasavubu will try to retain them. (Belgian business men in the Congo have been professing complete calm). It might be worse than useless, in this instance, for the metropolitan country to say anything. The UN might be able to help and adjust difficulties - and find substitutes of a sort (as it is doing in Guinea, where a team that was sent under the technical assistance fund of the Special Fund has turned its hand to administration).

B. - Frontier troubles arising out of the determination of new African states to remodel the artificial boundaries imposed under European rule. For instance:

1. Dr. Nkrumah of Ghana undoubtedly feels that after Togoland becomes independent it ought to integrate with Ghana. He had reached an understanding on those lines with M. Sylvanus Olympio of Togoland, but M. Olympio has now denounced it. Dr. Jkrumah may decide to engineer a demand for a new "liberation".

2. M. Sekou Touré is already considering how Portuguese Guinea can be "liberated" from Portuguese colonialism and integrated with Guinea.

3. M. Mamadou Dia of Senegal undoubtedly considers that the Gambia should be fairly promptly handed by Britain to an independent Mali (of which Senegal is a part).

4. There is also M. Kasavubu's ambition to combine the Bakongo province of the Belgian Congo with the (French) République du Congo and the Portuguese Luanda province of Angola into a Lower Congo state.

If any of these steps were taken forcibly, trouble could ensue. The danger of headstrong action by certain African leaders is believed to be one of the factors that have influenced Mr. Hammarskjöld to consider the sending of personal representatives to Africa.