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Dag Hammarskjöld's samml.

Africa General

2 March 1960

Menzies, R. G. (Prime Minister of Australia)

- speech by R. G. Menzies

(sent to D.H. by J. Plimsole, Perm. Represent.
of Australia)

- 1 letter from R. J. Bunche, 16 March



James Plimsohl

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AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
750 THIRD AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

14th March, 1960.

Personal

My dear Secretary-General,

I have just received a copy of a speech which Mr R.G. Menzies (Prime Minister of Australia) made on 2nd March to the State Executive of the Liberal Party of Victoria. I am enclosing a copy of the portion of it which dealt with Africa because I know your present preoccupation with that continent and you may be interested to see how Mr Menzies is reacting to it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Plimsohl', written in a cursive style.

Permanent Representative
of Australia.

Mr Dag Hammarskjold,
Secretary-General,
United Nations.

EXTRACT FROM SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER,
MR R.G. MENZIES AT MEETING OF STATE EXECUTIVE
OF LIBERAL PARTY OF VICTORIA ON WEDNESDAY,
2ND MARCH, 1960

I think, perhaps, I ought to say a word or two to you first of all about matters outside Australia. I was very struck on this recent journey to Malaya and to Indonesia, by one very significant fact. In Indonesia, Independence was secured as a result of armed conflict and there were, and are, great racial hatreds. It's a very astonishing thing to be in Indonesia and to realise how almost completely the Dutch influence has been expelled, not always to the advantage of Indonesia; though it's their own country and they'll govern it in their own way. But one sees there all the survivals of acute racial cleavage and, as I say, to a degree, hatred. Whereas up in Malaya Independence was achieved as a result of peaceful arrangement between the British and the Malaysians. The whole atmosphere is different; Europeans are going around about their affairs; large and famous business houses in Kuala Lumpur and Penang are conducting their operations. You go up through the country and if you see some big engineering piece of work it's 'a guinea to a gooseberry' that the Chief Engineer is called "Campbell" (Laughter). I didn't find any of this atmosphere of fear of the outside influence or detestation of the Europeans. And the result is that in Malaya the Government, under a most enlightening and sensible man in their Prime Minister, the Tunku Abdul Rahman, is going forward; they know that it's their responsibility to conduct their country and, if I may say so, they seem to be doing it with great efficiency and with high civilization.

Now I think there is something to be learned from all this. The British history and tradition of converting Colonies into independent States is, of course, well known and it deserves to be better recognized all round the world. It's a most honourable history. It is, in effect, a unique history. But there are still some people who prefer to be late rather than early with the creation of self-government. I think I used to belong to the school of thought myself which felt that you must be very, very, very cautious about reaching the right time. Today, I'm not so sure. Today I'm more and more satisfied that the important thing is that people should be able to rule themselves and that if you help them to reach that stage, if you don't hold them back, if you give them every conceivable kind of help and training and encouragement, then when they do

achieve their independence, they will do it on the basis of friendship. And we need that because we're not a very big country. We need it.

That, to my mind was the great genius of Harold Macmillan's visit to Africa - a magnificent journey. It always sounds quite simple - these journeys always do, until you take them yourself - but they're not as easy as all that. And his, of course, was far more difficult than mine because he is the Prime Minister of one of the great powers of the world and, indeed, and I think in the long run, the most influential country in the world. (Applause)

And he goes down on a journey, starting with Gana and ending with South Africa, going through half a dozen different countries each of them with utterly different problems from its neighbour, each of them in a different stage of development; some of them with forceful and even hostile leaders and some of them with friendly leaders and, of course, ultimately, in South Africa, the classic example of a country in which the racial problem has attracted the interest of the whole world, though not necessarily the intelligent interest of the whole world, because it is a tremendously complex matter. And he's gone down there; he's made speeches; he's met people; he's discussed their problems with them and I will undertake to say he has, in this one journey, profoundly influenced the future history of the whole of the African Continent.

Cynical onlookers who think politicians like myself are all words, and take jaunts - what does it matter what they think about me - but I say this about Mr. Macmillan: I think this journey of his has made such a profound impact on the future history of Africa that it will be regarded as an "epoch-making" visit. And the outstanding thing about it is that wherever he's gone he's made it clear when he's talked to Africans, to the indigenous inhabitants of these countries: "We are not your jailers; we are your friends; we look forward to the time when you are going to rule yourselves and we're not going to be too petty about how you come to rule yourself. We want you to know and we want you to feel that you are to come to your Independence with feelings of friendship."

It seems simple doesn't it? I bet a lot of the things he had to say weren't very popular with some Europeans in Africa because whether we like it or not there are always conflicts between the young turbulent native

element, getting education and getting a feeling of freedom and a great ambition for their own country, and the older European inhabitants who feel that things haven't gone too badly and they might, with advantage, be left alone.

And Macmillan's visit has gone like a breath of fresh air on all these matters. He has spoken in South Africa with great frankness but, on my advices, without leaving one ounce of rancour behind him. This is a marvellous combination of firmness and tact and good sense and imagination for the future. And it's important that he should have done it in Africa because though we talk about one hot spot in the world after another - and they seem to change every year - very few people doubt that the developments in the African Continent in the next ten years are going to occupy an increasingly important place in the thoughts of all of us. And of course, will have increasing significance for us.

Don't forget that from our point of view it's a very grave matter that hundreds of millions of people in China should have come under communism; it would be a double tragedy if the Communists, who have their eyes on Africa, should succeed in establishing themselves by capitalising the interests, the enthusiasm, the emotions of the native inhabitants and pointing out that their white colonial powers are being unfair to them and failing to see their point of view. This was a master stroke by Harold Macmillan.

16 March 1960

Personal

Dear Mr. Plimsoll,

I am asked by the Secretary-General to acknowledge your letter of 14 March and to thank you for making available to him a copy of the portion relating to Africa from a speech delivered by Mr. R.G. Menzies, on 2 March, to the State Executive of the Liberal Party of Victoria. Mr. Hammarskjold has noted this with interest.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph J. Bunche
Under Secretary

His Excellency
Mr. James Plimsoll, C.B.E.,
Permanent Representative of Australia
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