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Africa General

19 May 1960

Owen, David (Exec. Chairman, TAB)

- Memorandum to D.H.

UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

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REFERENCE:

MEMORANDUM.To : The Secretary-General
United Nations

Date: 19 May 1960

From : David Owen
Executive Chairman, TAB.

1. I am leaving to-morrow morning for Jamaica and Trinidad, at the request of the Governments of the West Indian Federation and of the United Kingdom, to work out an agreement for handling our programme in direct relationship with the Federation. It will not be plain sailing for some of the unit governments of the Federation, notably Jamaica, wish to establish a direct relationship with us (rather than working through the Federation). I hope to be able (with Arthur Lewis's help) to persuade Manley, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, to accept an arrangement similar to the one I negotiated with the Regional and Federal Governments of Nigeria in February. I shall be in Jamaica until Sunday, when I go to Trinidad. With luck I shall finish the business by Wednesday, but I am anxious to get a few days leave with my wife who has not been well. She is joining me in Trinidad and I hope we may be able to stay until next week-end. If necessary, of course, I could leave her behind and come home a few days earlier, but as it is our only chance of a holiday together for some time, I hope I shall not be needed in New York next week. I shall leave a cable address in case of need for urgent recall.

2. I have nothing of immediate urgency to take up with you, but think it would be desirable to have a meeting of the Policy Board during the week commencing May 31st, before Philippe de Seynes and Henry Bloch leave for Europe on June 6th. (My own plan is to leave on June 19th as the Technical Assistance Committee has been scheduled a week in advance of ECOSOC).

3. I have been discussing field appointments with Paul Hoffman, C.V. Narasimhan and Philippe de Seynes, and we feel a particular sense of urgency about the Belgian Congo. The appointment of the high-level United Nations official to attend - before, during and for a short time after - the celebration of independence seems to be essential. We are sure you have given some thought to this, but it has occurred to us that Tuomioja would do it well and that he might be attracted by the challenge of the job despite his wish to return to Finland for a time. Spinelli would, of course, be excellent. On the other hand, the gravity of the internal political situation in the Congo does raise the question in our minds

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that the presence of Ralph Bunche, with all that he symbolises for Africa, as well as the United Nations, might be a factor of great weight at such a time.

We are, in any case, ready to send out someone who would take a first look at our technical assistance programming and administrative interests, to accompany the senior representative whoever he was.

The question of a permanent mission and its leadership would remain to be settled. My own preference would be Linner, even if he had to return to Sweden for a little while later on. I know it would appeal to him and I think he would do well.

Ambassador Loridan tells me that he has not received final instructions about the proposed preliminary mission. This may be just as well for I am sure that we should be thinking about a 'Spinelli-Togo' type of operation rather than a technical assistance or economic mission.

4. The news from Canada about George Davidson is sad, but I have not lost hope and I am, informally, discussing the prospects of getting him released in six or seven months time. To re-insure, however, I asked Mike Pearson (whom I met at the recent World Tensions Conference at Chicago) to make a few alternative suggestions of suitable Canadians on an informal basis. He knew all about the Davidson case and much regretted the way it had gone.

4. Mlle. Granger will be in New York on May 31st for briefing before departure to Laos.

5. Everything is arranged for the Willard Thorp mission to Cyprus.

6. We have not found a suitable candidate to replace Rosenberg.

7. Our suggestion for the TAB man in Somalia is Copeland K. Robinson, but this presumes a 'Zelwegger' type of mission chief, on which we need your guidance. I have been discussing some Indian and Pakistan possibilities with C.V. Narasimhan and he has some interesting suggestions.

David Owen.