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HS L 179:177



Dag Hammarskiöld's saml.

Africa General

20 May - 18 June 1960

Nehru, Jawaharlal (Prime Minister of India)

- 2 letters from D. H.

20 May 1960

Dear Mr. Nehru,

You are aware of the tremendous political developments that are taking place in Africa and I know that you have every sympathy for the aspirations of the newly independent countries in Africa. During my extended tour of African countries at the beginning of this year, I was impressed by the value that these new countries attach to their membership of the United Nations and the high hopes that they have for assistance from the United Nations. They are aware that our resources are limited but they still look to the United Nations, not only to provide moral support but also to play a positive role in assisting their economic development and thus making a reality of their political independence.

It is my hope, especially in the early stages of the new countries, to have top level United Nations representation in these countries. These high level United Nations advisers can render a variety of services to the new Governments and might often be turned to for advice in fields not entirely restricted to the field of economic development. For these countries, therefore, I need the services of senior officials with considerable diplomatic experience. From the point of view of nationality also, in many of these countries, Asians, and particularly Indians, would be eminently suitable and acceptable.

I now write this letter to seek your assistance in filling some of the short term top assignments under the United Nations in Africa. Recruitment to such top posts is usually on the Ambassadorial level. The officials so designated would most often be designated as representatives of the United Nations Technical Assistance Board but they would also serve in fact, if not in name, as representatives of the United Nations and of the Secretary-General.

In respect of one or two of these countries we look for people with a certain kind of experience as well as linguistic ability. In this connexion, from my personal knowledge and from such discreet enquiries as I have been able to make, I feel that some of your

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Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs
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envoys representing India abroad at the present time could fill such posts with distinction and I would hope that you would find it possible to spare one or more of these officials for this purpose.

In the light of the qualifications which I have already set out, I feel that an envoy like Mr. Kewal Singh, at present the Indian Ambassador to Sweden, might be a very good choice, in view of his experience in Pondicherry and his distinguished record in Cambodia as also his linguistic abilities. Another possibility which occurs to me is that of Mr. S. Sen who I believe is, at present, your High Commissioner in Australia. His considerable experience and involvement in the work of the ICSC in Indo-China would, I am sure, be of great help in one or two assignments in Africa that I can think of. Similarly, the name of Mr. R. S. Mani, who I believe is your Ambassador in Chile and who was one of the members of the United Nations Salary Review Committee and who has also been your Ambassador in Italy, occurs to me as being quite suitable.

Apart from the above names, which I have listed in my own order of preference, there might be other senior officials of your diplomatic service, with the right qualifications and experience, whom you might be able to think of. If so, I shall be very happy to have your advice. I do not know if you would be able to spare the services of more than one of these officers; but even if you could spare one of them, I would be most grateful. I am sure we can work out scales of remuneration in consonance with their status and their salary and allowances under the Government of India. We would have to borrow such services, as envisaged at present, for a maximum period of six months.

I have explained my need at some length and I have no doubt that, as in the past, your response will be ready and generous. I am also aware that there will have to be some consultation with the officials concerned, but in any case I would hope that the consideration of my request, and the consultations that might follow, could be completed expeditiously and that it might be possible for you to give me a reply within a few weeks.

With respectful and warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

Dag Hammarskjöld
Secretary-General

cc: H.E. Mr. C.S. Jha
Mr. David Owen

18 June 1960

Dear Mr. Nehru,

Thank you for your letter No. 324-PMO/60 of 7 June.

I quite appreciate your difficulty in sparing senior diplomatic officials for top-level, short-term assignments with the United Nations, in view of your own shortage of personnel for senior diplomatic posts.

May I also say that there would seem to be a slight misunderstanding of my position with regard to the role of United Nations representatives of this kind in Africa. I have noted the views which you have expressed that it is preferable to channel economic assistance to the less-developed countries through the United Nations, and that the United Nations can, through the Technical Assistance Board, perform useful services in the planning and executing of United Nations schemes in Africa. The usefulness of the United Nations in this field has been increased by the availability of funds out of the resources of the newly-established United Nations Special Fund. The Resident Representatives of the Technical Assistance Board represent also the interests of the Special Fund in the countries to which they are accredited.

What I had intended to convey in my letter was that the advice of these representatives is recognized as being completely disinterested and is therefore in some countries sought on matters not strictly confined to the narrower issues of technical assistance in the economic field. When such demands must be anticipated, we naturally wish that the officials are of reasonable seniority and have experience in handling economic development problems as well as a sound political sense, if possible acquired in diplomatic service. Obviously, this does not imply

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that we wish to establish any local political representation of the United Nations in the Member countries concerned. We have, however, cases where the Member Governments concerned specifically request representation with this kind of personal competence, and then I feel it is our duty to respond positively while carefully avoiding to give the representation any political mandate.

When Mr. Narasimhan was in New Delhi in February, I understand that he made it quite clear to those with whom he talked that I am not in favour of any combination of political functions with the functions of the Resident Representatives of the Technical Assistance Board. I believe this position was well understood by your officials, and it is, of course, basic to the practical arrangement we have made in New Delhi and which your Government accepted.

With respectful and warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

Dag Hammarskjöld.