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WEEKLY NEWS SUMMARY

(Main developments during week 23-29 April)

EGYPT REPLIES TO INITIATIVE ON FURTHER MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS

At a meeting with the Secretary-General on Thursday, 29 April, Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid (Egypt) handed over a letter from Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy containing the reply of his Government to Mr. Waldheim's recent initiative on the matter of further negotiations towards a Middle East settlement. A United Nations spokesman said that the letter welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative and contacts and stressed the urgency of continuing the negotiating process. It explained Egypt's position on a Middle East settlement, he said, and referred to some procedural aspects of the negotiating process.

The Secretary-General also discussed the Middle East at a meeting with Yakov A. Malik (Soviet Union) on Thursday afternoon. Details were not immediately made public. Earlier in the day, a United Nations spokesman said that the Secretary-General had taken note of the Soviet position as issued yesterday in a Government statement. This included a renewed call for a resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference and said that the work of the Conference could be arranged in two stages.

SECRETARY-GENERAL TO ATTEND UNCTAD IV; VISIT SEVEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

It was announced on Thursday, 29 April, that Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim would go to Nairobi, Kenya, next week to address the fourth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and would then go on to pay official visits to seven African countries -- Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Congo; United Republic of Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria.

Leaving New York on Monday, 3 May, Mr. Waldheim will first stop in Strasbourg, France, to address the Council of Europe on 4 May. He will arrive in Nairobi on 5 May and will return from his African trip to New York on 16 May.

Commenting on the action taken by Ian Smith to bring some black members into his Government in Southern Rhodesia, the Secretary-General reaffirmed in a statement issued through a spokesman that only majority rule by a representative government could be the basis for a solution of the Rhodesian problem. The action taken by Mr. Smith, he said, "cannot be regarded in any way as meeting this fundamental condition".

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL CONCLUDES DEBATE ON DECADE AGAINST RACISM

The Economic and Social Council this week concluded a debate on the Decade for action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, with emphasis on the need to eliminate apartheid and racism in southern Africa. Some speakers also referred to the recent visit of the South African Prime Minister to Israel as an indication of the strengthening of an "unholy alliance" and recalled the General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Sergey Smirnov (Soviet Union) said in this connexion that Zionism was an imperialistic militant ideology of racial hatred which should be universally condemned.

Zakaria Siage (Syria) said that Israel and South Africa had similar ideologies based on oppression of the indigenous population and that their collaboration was endangering United Nations efforts against racial discrimination.

William Scranton (United States) told the Council that his country would never accept the thesis of the resolution equating Zionism with racism "any more than it would agree that other legitimate national liberation movements are to be condemned as forms of racism or racial discrimination". The resolution was "unwise, unjust, and completely unacceptable", he said, and it demolished the United Nations consensus on questions relating to racial discrimination.

Sherif Abdul Hamid Sharaf (Jordan) said that the resolution was "a step in the right direction morally and politically" and that it exposed the racist basis of Israeli conduct in the Middle East region. He said there was an inseparable link between the legitimate demands of the peoples of southern Africa for freedom and dignity in their homeland and those of the Palestinian people.

Chaim Herzog (Israel) said that Arab extremists had brought discredit to the United Nations by forcing it to equate Zionism with racism, and that, while his delegation supported all moves to eliminate racism, it must speak out against the programme as long as "that obscene act" was in any way associated with it. He said that, if the visit of the South African Prime Minister were interpreted as endorsement of his Government's policies, the same conclusion must be applied to all countries where such visits had taken place.

Zedhi Terzi of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) said that the struggle against racism was indivisible and that any victory in Africa was a triumph for the struggle of the Palestinians. The United States, he said, could ask Tel Aviv to become part of the world community, but it preferred to use the United Nations as a public convenience in an election year. The liberation of the African peoples would help the Palestinians to achieve their freedom, said Mr. Terzi, despite the billions of dollars given by the United States to the Zionist regime.

PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CONSIDERS RECOMMENDATIONS IN ITS REPORT

A unit of the Committee on Palestinian Rights this week submitted draft recommendations for inclusion in the report which the Committee is to submit to the Secretary-General for transmission to the Security Council.

One recommendation provides for the exercise of the "right of return" in two stages -- the first involving the return of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the 1967 war, and the second dealing with the return of those displaced between 1948 and 1967. Palestinians not choosing to go back to their homes "should be paid just and equitable compensation", according to the recommendation.

Another recommendation is titled "Right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty". It seeks the establishment of a time-table for complete Israeli withdrawal by 1 June 1977 from the areas occupied in 1967. The evacuated territories, "with all property and services intact", would be handed over to the United Nations which, with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, would subsequently hand them over to the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. Upon the return of the Palestinians and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, according to the draft, the Palestinian people would be able to exercise its right to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

Another provision suggests that the World Court might be requested to give advisory opinions on a number of legal questions -- as, for example, whether certain laws enacted by Israel since 1948, such as the Law of Return, the nationality law, the absentee property law and the development authority law were compatible with the General Assembly's Palestine partition plan.

LAW OF SEA CONFERENCE TO RECEIVE REVISED NEGOTIATING TEXTS

The General Committee of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea was told this week that revised negotiating texts for the projected sea law convention would be ready during the next -- and final -- week of the current session. The Conference President, H. Shirley Amerasinghe (Sri Lanka), told the Committee that, if it were decided to hold another session this year, the possible alternative dates were from 19 or 26 July to 9 September at Geneva. He added that he did not rule out New York as a possible site for the session.

In the course of a Conference debate on the peaceful uses of ocean space, various suggestions were made on how to ensure that the oceans, and particularly the international sea-bed, were used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Semyon Kozyrev (Soviet Union) took the view that this question, including the establishment of zones of peace and security, could not be isolated from other problems concerning disarmament, and that the solution of such complex issues was beyond the scope of the present Conference.

Vincent Learson (United States) said that the use of the oceans for peaceful purposes did not preclude military activities and that any specific limitation on military activities would require a detailed arms control agreement. This, he said, was not within the realm of the Conference.

Lai Ya-Li (China) said that the obstacles to the peaceful use of the oceans came mainly from military rivalry between the two super-Powers and their threats to other countries. He said that the Soviet Union in particular was practicing power politics and reserving to itself the right "to plunder other countries' fishery resources and conduct espionage activities".

Taking the floor in reply, the Soviet representative said that China, while perverting the Soviet position, had rejected all proposals relating to peace and security and the relaxation of tensions.

WFP TO COMMIT \$600 MILLION IN FOOD AID FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The World Food Programme (WFP) plans to commit \$600 million in food aid this year to support projects of economic and social development, and \$40 million to help meet emergency food needs of people affected by calamities. This was announced by Francisco Aquino, Executive Director of the Programme, as its governing body opened a 10-day session in Rome.

Mr. Aquino said that more than three-fourths of the commitments were for least-developed nations or those most seriously affected by balance-of-payments problems. Two of the countries, Cyprus and South Viet-Nam, were hardship cases with special needs.

Other Items

In Geneva this week, Vittorio Winspeare Guicciardi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for East Timor, met with representatives of the Provisional Government of East Timor who were en route back to Dili after attending the recent Security Council deliberations in New York. The meeting was held within the framework of last week's Council resolution asking Mr. Winspeare to pursue his mission of fact-finding and consultations with the parties concerned.

King Carl Gustaf of Sweden visited United Nations Headquarters on Monday, 26 April. His schedule included a meeting with the Secretary-General, attendance at a luncheon given in his honour by Mr. Waldheim, and meetings with the President of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and with Swedish staff members of the world Organization.

A 2,700-year-old statuette of the god Osiris was presented to the United Nations on Thursday, 29 April, by Ambassador Meguid of Egypt. At a brief ceremony, Mr. Meguid recalled that the ancient deity was supposed to have been a prophet who "pacified and civilized the world". It might thus be said, he commented, that Osiris was one of the earliest philosophical harbingers of the United Nations.

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