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REPATRIATION OF GREEK CHILDREN

Communication from the United States Mission to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

New York, 29 May 1950

The Acting Representative of the United States to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honor to transmit the following message from the Secretary of State of the United States concerning the problem of repatriation of Greek children:

"The United States Government has followed with close and sympathetic attention the laudable efforts of the United Nations Secretariat and of the international Red Cross agencies, in accordance with the unanimous General Assembly resolutions* of 27 November 1948, and 18 November 1949, to bring about the repatriation to Greece of the thousands of children removed over two years ago from that country to eastern Europe by the guerrillas during the Greek guerrilla warfare. My Government has accordingly noted with special concern and disappointment the resolution on this subject addressed to the United Nations and adopted at Geneva on 13 May** by the Executive Committee of the League of Red Cross Societies. It is recalled that the Executive Committee:

"Reports with deep regret that despite these efforts no Greek child has so far returned to Greece and that even elementary indications, indispensable for the solution of the problem, have not been furnished by the Governments concerned;

"Affirms nevertheless the determination of the League of Red Cross Societies to proceed in full accord with the International Committee of the Red Cross with the task which they accepted and worked on in common;

* Resolutions 193 C (III) and 268 B (IV).

** Document A/1257.

/s/ Believes
A/1284

"Believes it to be its duty to draw the attention of the United Nations to the fact that without a greater sense of social responsibility on the part of the Governments concerned, the Red Cross cannot fulfil the task passed on to it;

"Reports to the United Nations that unless the obstacles over which the Red Cross has not control are removed, the mission of the Red Cross cannot be accomplished."

"It is public knowledge that these thousands of Greek children are presently being detained in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Soviet zone of Germany and Yugoslavia. Only the last-named country has permitted a few of the children to rejoin their families in countries other than Greece and has affirmed its intention to expedite the return of the other Greek children in its territory to their parents. The recalcitrant attitude so far demonstrated by the other listed countries, despite two unanimous votes of the General Assembly and the full restoration of peaceful conditions in Greece, must give rise to the deepest anxiety on the part of all Governments and peoples who hold, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that 'the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State'.

"As you are doubtless aware, a number of international, non-governmental organizations, which generally reflect the ideology dominant in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, have designated Thursday, 1 June 1950, as 'International Children's Day' to mark the launching of a campaign purportedly 'in defense of the rights of children'. The appeal issued by the Preparatory Committee for 'International Children's Day' states that this occasion will be one 'of happy Soviet childhood and, in the new democracies, a festival of new successes'. Among its ostensible objectives will be 'to give to the children the joy of living' and 'to bring home to every mother, to every woman, the responsibility she bears for defending the life of our children and for ensuring their proper education'. It is to be hoped that the countries of eastern Europe, in proclaiming their concern for the rights of children, will be reminded of the right of the Greek children involuntarily in their midst to return to the joy of living in their own country, as well as the right of Greek mothers to exercise their responsibilities for the welfare and upbringing of the children they laboured to bring into the world.

/ "The Government

"The Government of the United States considers it appropriate on this occasion to reiterate its appreciation of the efforts of the United Nations Secretariat and of the Red Cross in this matter and to reaffirm the determination of the American people, expressed in formal resolutions by the House of Representatives and other public bodies, and in thousands of spontaneous, individual messages, to support these efforts until the Greek children are back in their homes.

"It is requested that Your Excellency kindly transmit this communication to all Members of the United Nations and to the Governments of Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania for their information and in anticipation of the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, which will again be confronted by this grave humanitarian problem if by that time substantial progress has not been made towards its solution."