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TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE BY SECRETARY-GENERAL BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI

TO ATLANTA CONFERENCE ON 5 MAY

* Revised to include corrections to pages 4, 7 and 8.

Following his message on 5 May to the Fourth World Report Contributors Conference, which was part of a live satellite television conference between the United Nations television studios in New York and the Cable News Network (CNN) in Atlanta, Georgia, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali answered journalists' questions, as follows:

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General for your comments on the importance of the news media. My question is on Cambodia. With the Cambodian elections nearing and the Khmer Rouge showing no end to its efforts to sabotage them, how optimistic are you that the results of the elections will be adhered to by all parties? Secondly, in the event of further turmoil after the elections, what options could the United Nations exercise in Cambodia?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You must not exaggerate the importance of the Khmer Rouge. They represent only 5 per cent of the population and they occupy only 10 per cent of Cambodian territory. But we must not underestimate the destabilization they may provoke. So we have taken all precautions. I was there three weeks ago. We are involved in the redeployment of United Nations forces to protect the election process, and in spite of what may happen between the 23 and 28 May -- the days of the elections -- I am an optimist and I believe they will overcome the difficulties presented by the Khmer Rouge.

Concerning the second question, according to the Paris Agreement, we are supposed to leave at the end of August. But all the different agencies of the United Nations will stay and continue to work in rehabilitation, road construction, reconstruction and technical assistance to the government. And if the new government requests from the United Nations a military presence -- a symbolic one -- and if the Security Council accepts, we will be able to provide a military presence for a short period of six or 12 months, but it depends on the political will of the new government.

But in spite of the difficulty provoked by the Khmer Rouge -- they are meeting today or tomorrow in Beijing with Prince Sihanouk -- I still hope we will be able to contain the Khmer Rouge, at least politically, and obtain, I will not say their support, but at least hope that they maintain a neutralist position during the elections.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, I would like to ask you about the Bosnian Serbs' discussion today of the Vance-Owen peace plan for Bosnia. What measures will you implement if they agree to the plan, which is highly probable, according to my estimation. And what other measures will you take if they reject it?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I share your point of view that they will accept the Vance-Owen plan. I phoned yesterday the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). I had a long discussion with him two weeks ago in Brussels. We have worked together on obtaining the cooperation of NATO for a military presence in Bosnia. But what is very important is that this presence must be under the control of the Security Council because this presence will use the United Nations flag. Secondly, we intend to ask other

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members of the United Nations who are not participants in NATO to take part in this peace-keeping operation. Thus, we will have the infrastructure provided by NATO and we hope to obtain the participation of other Member States, including the Russians. This is in case we have the peace plan adopted, and I share your viewpoint that we will. If they refuse, or a certain difficulty arises at the last minute, or if they do not implement what is in the plan, then the Security Council will have to be consulted, and I am sure the Council will apply very severe sanctions.

United Nations action is based on diplomacy, on negotiation, on dialogue. And in spite of what was said in the last few weeks, that the Vance-Owen plan was a dead horse, it has been proved that with patience, imagination and more negotiation, we have been able to obtain the agreement of the three protagonists to the dispute. It will be a long problem, a very difficult problem; it will need patience -- this is very important -- and it will need hard work. Because it is not only a question of maintaining the cease-fire among the protagonists to the conflict, it is also the return of over 2 million refugees; it is the reconstruction of villages and cities that have been destroyed; it is the hate that exists among this population and we have to overcome this. Hard work and more negotiation will help us to achieve peace in former Yugoslavia, as peace was achieved in El Salvador, Cambodia or different places in the world.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, what concrete measures or attitude do you foresee the United Nations taking if the negotiations in Abidjan are not successful? Do you think the United Nations can maintain its credibility while showing itself to be incapable of defending the democratic process in Angola? What effects do you think the Angolan example will have on the democratic process under way in all of southern Africa, including Mozambique and South Africa?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: You have asked two questions, the first one dealing with Angola. As you mentioned yourself, the negotiations are going on in Abidjan and my Special Representative, Margaret J. Anstee, is working with the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA) and the Government of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and UNITA, the group of Dr. Jonas Savimbi. We are hoping to (1) achieve a cease-fire and (2) once this is finally concluded, to sign an agreement with the two parties on what will be the participation of UNITA in the new Government. And once this is finally concluded, and it is clear that the two parties have accepted the cease-fire, we will then be able to ask the Security Council to allow us to send a group of military observers on the ground to be sure that the cease-fire is respected. But we will not be able to send military observers, or even to send United Nations forces, unless the parties agree to the cease-fire. We have received a message from President Dos Santos and Dr. Savimbi, and both of them want the presence of the United Nations, but we are not able to send United Nations troops unless the two protagonists to the dispute agree on a cease-fire and agree on terms of reconciliation.

We can have the second round of elections, but this has to be according to the constitution. And I'm sure that President Felix Houphouet-Boigny of

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Côte d'Ivoire, one of the wise men of Africa, is playing a very important role to promote reconciliation between the two parties. What happened was certainly a set-back for the United Nations, but we must exercise patience while seeking to achieve peace in Angola.

Concerning the process of democratization in South Africa, which is your second question, we have more than 100 observers in that country. With the agreement of the Government of South Africa, United Nations observers are cooperating with the local police to contain violence. We have observers to follow the negotiations. I must say that I am an optimist; I am sure we will find a solution. What is important is to encourage the rapprochement between Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi of Inkatha Freedom Party and President Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC). It is very important to avoid a confrontation between those two main political parties.

In Mozambique, the situation is better since the agreement which was concluded in Rome. I was in Rome two weeks ago and I obtained additional assistance from the Italian Government. And the negotiations are going on between the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), and I will say that I am even more optimistic about the future of Mozambique than the future of other situations elsewhere in the world.

QUESTION: Sir, I want to ask you about contradictory United Nations resolutions. For example, Israel has not obeyed Security Council resolution 799 (1992), not to mention resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) ... I could go on. However, elsewhere in the Middle East, Iraq has implemented 90 per cent of the United Nations resolutions. Its people are suffering. When will this double standard of applying United Nations resolutions stop?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The Security Council is a political body, this is very important. In the Middle East, when the United Nations was created, people were under the impression that it was a kind of super tribunal and that the United Nations would always find the way to prevent injustice. Because the United Nations is a political body, it takes into consideration the political interests of Member States. They may be in favour of implementing certain resolutions and may find that it is not in their interest to implement other resolutions adopted by the Security Council. This is a very important element that we must understand. The Security Council is a political organ, thus certain resolutions will be implemented, while other resolutions, for reasons that are related to the positions of the member States of the Security Council, may not be implemented or their implementation may be postponed.

QUESTION: But certain people in the West Bank are suffering because Israel is not applying or abiding by United Nations resolutions. How can you explain that?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: We know quite well that people are suffering in the West Bank. This is why we have a very important United Nations presence, and we hope that in the next week, if the results of the negotiations going on in Washington are positive, we will be able to offer greater assistance to the

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people of the West Bank and Gaza. Because I share your analysis that they are suffering and that we must assist them economically and politically, I hope that in the next few weeks, the next few months, we will have begun many new programmes for the rehabilitation of the people of Gaza and to offer them new job opportunities. This is one of the objectives of the different agencies, and during my last contact with the Israeli leadership, they promised they would welcome any assistance given by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the people of Gaza and of the West Bank.

QUESTION (Galina Starovoitova, member of the Russian Parliament): Mr. Secretary-General, do you, the United Nations think-tanks, try to work out some definitions, some pre-conditions and some criteria for self-determination of the emerging independent States? What is your opinion about the possibility of recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state and in such a way to stop this war in Azerbaijan?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Both Armenia and Azerbaijan are Members of the United Nations. Thus, we have recognized the territorial integrity of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh is a part of Azerbaijan, so the United Nations cannot promote the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. But if Armenia and Azerbaijan decide together to find a solution to the problem, certainly the United Nations will endorse this solution. Furthermore, we have sent a fact-finding mission both to Armenia and Azerbaijan, and we are following the situation with great attention. A resolution was adopted a few days ago by the Security Council; we are waiting for the results of the fact-finding missions and are cooperating with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) -- the regional organization. The cooperation between the United Nations and this regional organization is a new approach in solving certain problems of the former Soviet republics. We are doing exactly the same in Tajikistan, and we have sent missions to the Baltic States. The United Nations and the CSCE are cooperating to diffuse the tension in these countries and to find solutions to the problems.

QUESTION: Good morning, Sir. Let me ask you about a subject which very often goes unreported, and that is East Timor. You invited the Portuguese and Indonesian Foreign Ministers to New York and Rome for talks about East Timor and they seem to be deadlocked. If the deadlock continues, are you prepared to seize the initiative? And if yes, what will you do?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, we are not in a deadlock; on the contrary. I had negotiations two weeks ago in Rome with the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal. After the negotiations, I immediately telephoned President Mario Soares of Portugal to bring him the results of the negotiation, which were quite positive, quite constructive. We agreed on different measures to create a new climate in East Timor, and we will have a new round of negotiations around 15 September here in New York. So we are working on the subject. I sent a mission, headed by the Attorney General of Kenya, Amos Wako, who went to East Timor, met everybody and who has written a long report. We are now studying that report. I was in contact with Mr. Wako. I received him in Rome, before the meeting of the two Foreign Ministers, and we are progressing. I certainly hope that we will find a

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solution to this problem, taking into consideration the different resolutions that have been adopted by the General Assembly, as well as the importance of putting an end to this conflict which complicates relations between two Member States of the United Nations, Indonesia and Portugal.

QUESTION: You are giving me some news. What are the initiatives that were agreed in Rome that I don't know about, and what does Mr. Wako say in his report about the situation in East Timor?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Quiet diplomacy is a must. I cannot mention the details of what we agreed upon, but I can confirm to you that the negotiations were constructive and positive, and the two Ministers made the same declaration. But I cannot enter into the details and mention what was agreed upon as the agenda of the next meeting of the Ministers in New York.

QUESTION: Mr. Boutros-Ghali, multiparty democracy in Africa is a subject that is not yet very well understood largely because of the low level of literacy and because at the time of independence most political parties were based on sectarian considerations, such as religion. Today, many African countries are evolving their own types of democracy. However, the Western countries are now imposing the acceptance of Western-style multiparty democracy as a condition for aid. What do you think can be done to overcome this problem?

The SECRETARY GENERAL: I do not believe that multiparties are a condition for aid. What is a condition for aid in the interest of the African countries is democracy. Because, as I mentioned in my speech, you cannot have sustainable development without democracy. You may have a short development, but to have continued development you need democracy. Furthermore, a democratic country is a country that will not easily enter into a military conflict, like an authoritarian country. So it is in the interest of the different African countries to adopt a democratic system. Secondly, the United Nations has created a special department to give assistance regarding democratization. We have received in the last 12 months more than 40 demands for assistance, including requests for observers, and the demands come not only from Africa, but from Central America and Asia as well. Countries ask for our presence before the elections, during the elections and after the elections; or to offer technical assistance to register people to vote, as was done in Cambodia with 5 million electors; or to offer technical assistance to help a party, as is being done now with RENAMO and FRELIMO in Mozambique; or to offer a legal adviser to draft a constitution. We are doing our best to promote the democratization of the different countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

The multiparty system is the most important element for democratization, but it is not the essential one. If you have a free press, and real participation of the people in the political process, these are also democratization. So what is important is the participation of the population in the process. During the cold war, it was difficult to provide this assistance because the United Nations had been accused by the socialist camp of intervening in internal affairs. But now there is a common denominator

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after the cold war. Everybody agrees that democracy is a must, that democracy is a prerequisite for continued democracy, a prerequisite to an atmosphere of peace, to avoid more confrontation. So, we do our best, if a Member State asks for our assistance to promote democracy, to promote a multiparty system. And not assistance only for a multiparty system, but for a free press and in the holding of different referendums to know what is the position of the population.

For example, just two weeks ago, we participated in the referendum in Eritrea to measure public opinion concerning the independence of Eritrea. So I believe, in spite of the difficulty, and I know Africa very well -- I have spent more than 40 years working with African problems -- I recognize that there is the tribal system and that a multiparty system can be based on tribal lines, which creates distortion throughout the Member States. What is important is the creation of a nation and to have an inter-tribal connection in the political parties. But I believe that democracy is very important, and that related to democracy is the protection of human rights. Democracy is the system that protects human rights, that will lead to the institutionalization of human rights. So, to sum up, we are offering technical assistance and political assistance to any Member State of the United Nations that asks to participate in a democratization process.

QUESTION: Good morning. The United Nations Organization has been deeply involved in the peace process in my country. We all know how successful it was. After the war, what is now the main challenge for the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) during the rest of its mandate?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The main challenge is the success of the next election which will be held next year, if I am not wrong, in March. We will be there to assist the Government of President Alfredo Cristiani in the election and we hope the election will be a success of all the processes which have been initiated in El Salvador. I am very subjective concerning El Salvador, because my first mission when I was elected Secretary-General was to go to Mexico to sign the peace agreement, which was negotiated, by the way, by my predecessor; but my first experience in the United Nations was when we signed the peace agreement between President Cristiani and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN). I believe that what we have done in El Salvador is a great success; I was there on 15 December last year to participate in the ceremony, and I hope the process will continue and that you will have elections in March and that this election will be a new expression of the democratization of El Salvador. Meanwhile, as you know, we are offering assistance in the creation of the new police academy and in the redistribution of lands. We are offering technical assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of El Salvador and El Salvador is a success story for the United Nations.

QUESTION: There has been a lot of controversy over Security Council resolution 799 (1992) about the deportees. The head of the Security Council made a statement saying that the Council endorsed the American-Israeli plan

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which called for the return of 100 of the deportees and the return of the rest by the end of the year. Do you consider Israel to be in violation of resolution 799 or not?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: First, I do not believe that the Security Council has endorsed the American-Israeli plan. Secondly, the resolution asks for the immediate return of all the deportees and this has not happened. But I do believe that the contact now established between the Palestinians on one side and the Israelis on the other side, under the supervision of the two Co-Chairmen -- the United States and the Russian Federation -- is something very positive. Maybe they will be able to find a solution within the framework of this negotiation. But 799 is there, and in case they are unable to find a solution, we still have to implement 799.

QUESTION: But the Israelis consider themselves to have complied with 799. Is this your understanding, or do you consider them in violation of this resolution?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have already answered this question by saying that 799 calls for the immediate return of the deportees. We could have a long discussion on what you mean by immediate return. The Israeli side may say that all the deportees will be back before the end of this year -- in the next few months -- so for them the resolution has been implemented. The other side will say: No, immediate return means return in the next few days. But this is not the real problem; the real problem is to continue the dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis. Through this dialogue, they will be able to find a solution to the Palestinian problem based on the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, I have a question on Liberia. It looks like the Liberia problem has been left for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States' Monitoring Observer Group (ECOMOG), that is, troops of some of the West African countries. But we all know what has happened: there is actually no peace. What prevents the United Nations from intervening and working out a workable peace plan?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: First, we have a Special Representative who is there on the ground and who represents the Secretary-General. Secondly, we are cooperating with ECOMOG, which has received a mandate, so it is very difficult for the United Nations to interfere; that would be like going directly to the Supreme Court instead of first going to a tribunal. You cannot go to the Security Council before having solved the problem at the tribunal of the first instance. Nevertheless, we are cooperating with ECOMOG, we have a Special Representative on the ground, and we are trying to help ECOMOG to achieve a solution. What is important is to accept the different agreements which were adopted at Yamoussoukro -- I, II, III and IV.

We are very much aware of what is going on in Liberia, and we have taken different resolutions in the Security Council. As Secretary-General, I am following with great attention the developments, and I receive regular reports from our representative. You see, any dispute, any international dispute,

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cannot be solved in a few weeks or in a few months. It will take years of hard labour, years of negotiation. And, unfortunately, this is a problem which I mentioned in my introductory speech: public opinion wants to have quick results. You cannot solve an international dispute in a few days; it will take years and years of hard work. And once it is solved, you have to take precautions -- what I call peace-building operations -- to be sure there will be no return to a new confrontation between the two former protagonists. It is like a disease: you are in a hospital and if you leave the hospital before you are supposed to, then you will return and spend two months more in the hospital. It is exactly the same for Liberia: it will take hard work to find a solution and we are cooperating with ECOMOG and with the OAU.

QUESTION: Sir, good morning. There are forces in Israel who claim that an incredible, an extraordinary imbalance is in place in terms of United Nations resolutions condemning Israel and against Israel, perhaps completely out of portion to the Mideast Palestinian issue, while other issues are hardly taken care of or attended to. This, in turn, has led to a wariness of United Nations involvement in the Mideast conflict. Could you comment on that?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: When I was elected Secretary-General, I sent a message to the Prime Minister of Israel and I told him that I had contributed to, I am not saying that I have done everything; everything was done by President Anwar Sadat, Prime Minister Menachem Begin and President Jimmy Carter, I contributed to the conclusion of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, and that now, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I wanted to contribute to a new peace relation between Israel and the United Nations. I sent this message to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. I received no answer. When the new Labour administration came to power, I gave the same message to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. One of the results is that we now have good relations between the United Nations on one side and Israel on the other side. And we have been invited to participate in the multilateral talks being held under the co-sponsorship of the United States and the Russian Federation. I know that this is the perception in Israel, but it is not so in the United Nations. What is the United Nations? It is the sum of the Member States. When you have a condemnation of the policy of Israel, it is the condemnation of the international community, not of the United Nations. But, as I mentioned, I recognize that there is a crisis between the United Nations and Israel, yet it is in the interest of Israel to trust the United Nations.

You have a very good example in the case of South Africa. South Africa had a very difficult relationship with the United Nations. In spite of this, a few months ago South Africa accepted the presence of 100 observers representing the United Nations and who are cooperating with the South African police. There is a new relation between South Africa and the United Nations, although you cannot say that the relation is a good one; relations between the two have been very difficult. So, as Secretary-General, I will do my best to improve the relation between the United Nations and Israel, but you also need political will from the Israeli side, and I believe that the new Government is ready for it.

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QUESTION: Dr. Boutros-Ghali, do you think there is any role for the United Nations against the increased terrorism all over the world?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Certainly, international terrorism is one of the new problems, and we will have more and more global problems. What do I mean by global problems? Problems which cannot be solved by one country or by two countries or by a small group of countries; but which can be solved only within an international forum.

The Rio Summit helped us to create a sensibilization and mobilization of international public opinion, dealing with the problems of environment, which are global. One of our new global problems is international terrorism. And here again, this means the United Nations has to decide to adopt a certain resolution to be able to cope with international terrorism, international drug trafficking and the environment. I am sure that in the coming years the United Nations will adopt regulations and legislation to cope with international terrorism, which represents a danger for stability, a danger for peace. If a group of States complains about terrorism, I am sure the Security Council will take it into consideration and may adopt a resolution to contain this terrorism or even participate in the eradication of terrorism, of international terrorism.

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