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REMARKS TO THE PRESS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
AT THE LUNCHEON GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR
BY THE UNITED NATIONS CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION
ON MONDAY, 20 JUNE 1966

The PRESIDENT OF UNCA: Mr. Secretary-General, Under-Secretaries, members of the United Nations Correspondents' Association and distinguished guests and friends: We are very honoured and privileged today to have as the guest of UNCA the Secretary-General. Obviously it is not necessary for me to introduce him as, in fact, you all know him very well. He will speak to us briefly and then reply to questions. At the end of the questioning period we shall have the usual 30-minute embargo on what has been said here.

Now, if I may, it is my honour to present to you the Secretary-General.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Mr. President and friends: I am very glad to be able to be with you once again at this annual luncheon. I am grateful to all of you not only for your hospitality on this occasion, but also for your friendly co-operation with me at all times.

As you may know, I plan to visit Europe towards the end of this month. I propose to attend a meeting to be held in Turin, Italy, on the thirtieth of this month, where I shall meet Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Owen and all the Resident Representatives of the UNDP at their first global meeting. Then I shall be in Geneva for a few days to attend meetings of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, the Special Committee on the Co-ordination of the Economic and Social Council, and the Economic and Social Council itself. I also propose to hold a Press conference in Geneva. Then on 7 July I shall pay an official visit to Iceland. I shall be back at Headquarters on 9 July.

You will recall that at our last Press conference on 6 April, I stated that I might have to make my decision known one way or the other about my availability for the second term before the end of June. The same considerations which prompted me to make that statement are still in order, but I feel that as I have to visit Europe toward the end of this month, I should defer the announcement of my decision until I return to Headquarters.

I would be very glad to answer questions.

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QUESTION: We have some questions regarding your announcement plans which might bear on what you have just told us, Mr. Secretary-General. Do you feel that the three months' advance notice is sufficient? What is your appraisal of the importance of the timing with respect to the amount of time between the end of your term and the time of your announcement?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Some friends and colleagues with whom I have discussed this question felt that perhaps a four months' advance notice was too long. They have suggested, of course with the best of intentions, that perhaps a couple of months' prior notice would be quite ample for the Security Council to take the necessary action in case I decided not to offer myself for a second term. This is also one consideration in my decision to defer my announcement.

QUESTION: In making your decision about another term as Secretary-General, will you take into consideration the needs of your own country? The questioner refers to a report in today's newspaper about economic plans and the need in the Government there for people with experience in these and other matters.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No. My decision, of course, will necessarily be governed by several considerations, both official and personal. As most of you are aware, for the past four or five months I have given a good deal of thought to these problems. My decision will be guided not by two or three considerations, but by many considerations, including political and official considerations and personal considerations. The substance which is brought out in this question does not apply to my considerations.

QUESTION: There are some questions about your travel plans. Do you think that a visit by you to Moscow before the General Assembly will be useful?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think that a visit by the Secretary-General to any capital of a Member State at any time is sure to be useful. If the Secretary-General has the opportunity of exchanging views with the leaders of Member States on topics of mutual interest, I am convinced that the outcome can be very useful both to the Secretary-General and to the Government leaders concerned.

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QUESTION: Here is another question about your travel plans. The questioner points out that His Holiness Pope Paul VI, during his visit to the United Nations, may have extended an invitation to you to visit him. Could you tell us when you plan to return the visit of His Holiness?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I shall be very delighted to have the earliest available opportunity of paying my respects to His Holiness, but for the moment I have no plans to visit Rome.

QUESTION: We now have a number of questions on Viet-Nam. The first one points out that when Prime Minister Kraag of Denmark was here in April, he said that he had encouraged you, on behalf of his Government, to make concrete proposals for the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam when the time was right. Have you submitted such proposals, and could you comment on this question of the timing, when the time is right in terms of developments in the Viet-Nam situation?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As you will recall, the Prime Minister of Denmark had very kindly endorsed my proposals, even publicly. I think it is worth reiterating some of the proposals which I have been presenting to some of the parties principally concerned and which, of course, have been made public.

I feel very strongly that without a spirit of give and take on the part of the parties primarily concerned, there will be no negotiations leading to the return to the Geneva Agreements of 1954, on which everybody seems to agree now. As you all know, I have been proposing three steps to bring about a situation congenial for discussions and negotiations. Firstly, the cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam; secondly, the scaling down of all military activities in South Viet-Nam, which alone could lead to the bringing about of a cease-fire; and thirdly, the willingness by all sides to enter into discussions with those who are actually fighting. I think these three steps alone can create conditions conducive to the holding of a conference and to the creation of conditions for a peaceful settlement of the problem of Viet-Nam. I have not made any new proposals in the last few weeks, since I feel that these proposals are still as applicable today as they were six months ago.

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QUESTION: With respect to the question of timing, are you suggesting that these de-escalation steps should begin immediately?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As for the timing, the sooner the better, of course. As I have been saying all along, the longer we wait the worse will be the war situation. What was possible in 1964 was no longer possible in 1965, and what was possible of achievement in 1965 is no longer possible today. Therefore, the situation is very urgent and very critical. People are being killed by the hundreds every day and, if I may say so, the war in Viet-Nam is one of the most barbarous wars in history. I think the sooner the parties involved sit down at the conference table after these conditions have been met, the better it will be not only for Viet-Nam but for the rest of the world also.

QUESTION: Have delegates from Asian countries in which there is strong Buddhist influence discussed with you the possibility of again sending a United Nations fact-finding mission to South Viet-Nam to check on the violation of human rights?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There have been no discussions between me and any delegation of the Buddhist groups in any part of the world.

QUESTION: Recently you had a private conversation with Secretary of State Rusk at the White House. Is that conversation likely to lead to new initiatives in the Viet-Nam situation?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: During my last visit to the White House, I had a few moments with the Secretary of State. Of course with the background of the reception, our conversation was more or less very informal and, if I may say so, even casual. We covered a lot of ground, including the problem of Viet-Nam. Nothing of substance was discussed. We just exchanged views on our respective understanding of the developments.

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QUESTION: Do you expect the Viet-Nam case to come before the General Assembly in whatever form?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: To my knowledge, there has been no move by any Member State to bring this item before the twenty-first session of the General Assembly.

QUESTION: We now have two questions on the financial situation. Mr. Secretary-General, would you care to comment on the financial status of the United Nations, with regard both to the deficit as well as to your budget plans for next year?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This question, as you all know, is before the Special Committee of Fourteen. I have been informed that the Special Committee of Fourteen will be able to present its final report some time in July. Until its report is published, I do not think that I shall be in a position to discuss the actual financial situation of this Organization. Of course, inevitably the Committee of Thirty-Three has to take up this question along with other aspects of peace-keeping operations, I understand in August, as the Committee of Thirty-Three is also expected to submit its report to the twenty-first session of the General Assembly. Therefore, the financial picture will be much clearer after the Committee of Fourteen has submitted its report in July and after the Committee of Thirty-Three has considered this question in August.

QUESTION: You may already have answered these next two questions, which concern the future of peace-keeping operations of the United Nations in view of the uncertain financial situation. Do you feel that the United Nations can continue to vote for peace-keeping operations without a stronger financing arrangement?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The Committee of Thirty-Three, of course, has to be concerned with all aspects of peace-keeping operations, including the financial aspects. The report of the Committee of Fourteen will be only one aspect of the activities of the Committee of Thirty-Three. With respect to the functioning of

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the Committee of Thirty-Three, I had several meetings with its Chairman. As I indicated in my speech at Windsor University a few weeks ago, the prospects are not very bright regarding the future potential of this world Organization in the sphere of peace-keeping activities. There is, to my knowledge, a mood of disappointment and even of frustration among many Members of the United Nations with respect to the very slow progress of the discussions in the Committee of Thirty-Three, particularly among those who believe that the United Nations must develop into a really effective instrument for the performance of all the functions envisaged in the Charter. Those who want to see the United Nations develop as a really potent force for peace believe that the United Nations must have the tools to perform its work. Without the proper tools, many Members with whom I have discussed this question feel that there is going to be a stagnation for some time to come, and this is definitely not in the interests of this Organization or of world peace. Therefore, from time to time I have urged the entire membership to be more energetic in trying to find a formula by which the United Nations could be involved usefully and effectively in future situations in which the Organization might be called upon to perform certain functions which regional organizations or individual States could not perform. I think this is a very serious problem before the Organization, and I very much hope that the entire membership will take a closer look into this aspect of United Nations activities. I propose to elaborate on this point in my forthcoming introduction to the annual report.

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QUESTION: Continuing on the subject of peace-keeping, and regarding Cyprus, in your latest report on Cyprus you appear to rule out the financing of future peace-keeping operations by voluntary contributions. What would you consider the ideal way, and what do you consider possible in the present political climate?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: From our experience of financing the UNFICYP, I have come to the conclusion that the method of financing a peace-keeping operation on a voluntary basis has been unsatisfactory. That has been my conclusion for the last two years, and I have stated this publicly in my reports to the Security Council. Of course, my considerations alone and my conclusion alone should not influence the entire membership in their decisions on these matters. But for the benefit of the entire membership, I have to say that the United Nations experience of the voluntary financing of a peace-keeping operation in Cyprus for instance, has been unsatisfactory. So it is for the entire membership to devise ways and means of financing future peace-keeping operations on a more satisfactory basis.

QUESTION: Some members of the Security Council have hinted that this was the last time they would renew the mandate for UNFICYP. What bearing should this have on the search for a solution?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As I have also stated in my report to the Security Council, I do not think the United Nations should be involved indefinitely with its peace-keeping functions in Cyprus, as the United Nations has been in the case of UNEF, for instance. Apart from other considerations, there is a very important financial consideration which is a very heavy strain on the United Nations, particularly on some of the Members. And that is the reason why I have been trying in the last few months to present some ideas, if not proposals, to the parties primarily concerned, to bring about a peaceful solution of the problem. So far, my efforts have not been conclusive. But I very much hope that the parties primarily concerned will exert their utmost effort to find a peaceful solution to their problem before the end of this year.

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QUESTION: What sort of United Nations presence do you envisage for the Thailand-Cambodian border area? Would it be a team of observers or merely your personal representative?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As you know, the Government of Thailand requested me to take certain actions, and on the basis of that request I had contacts with the Government of Cambodia. I have been in consultation with the two Governments on how to initiate steps in order to ease tensions between the two countries, and I have suggested that the revival of our previous arrangement, by which the Secretary-General sent his special representatives to the two countries so that he might be able to have contact with the two Governments and bring about the easing of tensions and the settlement of outstanding problems, could be very useful. I am awaiting the replies regarding this idea. I have very good reasons to believe that both Governments will be agreeable to such an initial step.

QUESTION: Have you had any recent indication that Indonesia plans to rejoin the United Nations in the near future?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: So far I have no official word from the Government of Indonesia regarding its intentions, but as I have stated on a previous occasion, there are indications, mostly from the Press, that the Government of Indonesia is seriously thinking of coming back to this family of nations. Of course, if the Government of Indonesia decides to do so, I am sure the entire membership will be delighted to have Indonesia back in the United Nations.

QUESTION: There seems to have been a lessening of the hostility of Peking towards the United Nations in recent months, at least in public statements. Is it your impression also?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I do not want to assess the mood of the leaders in Peking vis-à-vis the United Nations. I do not think it would be very proper on my part to try to interpret the attitude of the Chinese leaders towards this Organization.

QUESTION: Many observers hold that the question of the representation of the People's Republic of China and the question of disarmament are interdependent. If that is so, why should not the United Nations be more concerned with seating China than with planning a world disarmament conference that Peking, as an "outsider", may well refuse to attend?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, this is a question to be dealt with by the entire membership. The question will inevitably be coming up before the twenty-first session of the General Assembly, and I think it is primarily a matter for the entire membership to discuss and debate and decide upon.

QUESTION: The best informed and most realistic of the China scholars admit that small, isolated United States gestures towards Peking will be meaningless as long as the status of Taiwan, the real issue, remains unresolved. What are your feelings about this?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As I have said on many previous occasions, on such questions there are two U Thants: one U Thant representing his Government and his country -- and on that question he has made several statements in the past; another U Thant, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, is not supposed to have any views of his own except in the context of the various General Assembly resolutions. So I do not think it would be proper on my part to comment on this aspect.

QUESTION: Following up on your announcement at the beginning, one of our members would like to know exactly when you are planning to return to Headquarters and whether you intend to make the statement about your future plans in the middle of July, or do you leave the timing open?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: For the moment I would prefer to leave the timing open. I have to take into consideration many aspects and many factors. Of course, as I have said on many previous occasions, I will be very happy if the Security Council is in a position to find somebody to succeed me. I do not agree with those who maintain that it will be very difficult for the Security Council to find somebody if I do decide not to offer myself for a second term. I think this is not an insurmountable problem. Of course, I do not mean to imply that I have decided one way or the other. But in case I decide not to offer myself for a second term, I am confident that the Security Council will be able to find somebody to succeed me. If necessary, I will be very glad to help the Security Council in finding someone, provided, of course, the Security Council so desires. But I do not think it is a very big problem.

The PRESIDENT of UNCA: If I may interject a personal note, many of us feel it is a very big problem and we hope that you will stay with us.

QUESTION: Recently, the President of Nicaragua announced, during a Press conference at this Headquarters of the United Nations, his determination to offer Nicaraguan territory to a second attempt to invade Cuba "at any moment, in any circumstance". What would be your comment on this announcement in this place by the President of Nicaragua?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I do not believe the questioner really wants me to answer that kind of question.

QUESTION: It is hoped that the Legal Sub-Committee of the Outer Space Committee will meet in July. Do you feel a round of Soviet-American talks should precede any United Nations discussions? I might ask whether you have any further comments on this development of progress towards a treaty?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: There are indications that a very substantial degree of agreement will be reached very soon between the United States and the Soviet Union on this question. The Chairman of the Outer Space Committee has been involved in discussions with the members concerned about the convening of the Legal Sub-Committee of the Outer Space Committee, and I believe there will be very positive steps on this matter in the very near future.

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QUESTION: It has been said that the blocs in the United Nations may gradually become less closely knit, as individual interests come to the fore, and some consider this a good thing. Do you consider that signs of disintegration in the military alliances in the world are also a positive thing?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would answer that question with the reiteration of one of my pet beliefs that humanity is marching towards a great synthesis. The future is for the elimination of differences and the eradication of diversities. Of course, it is going to be a very long process, I believe, but there are unmistakable signs that humanity is marching towards a great synthesis. In this context, I think we have to view the recent developments both in Eastern Europe and Western Europe.

QUESTION: Is the debate over the structure of the United Nations Organization for Industrial Development of relevance to the industrialization process? What do you expect from the Economic and Social Council with respect to UNOID?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I think the proposed functioning of UNOID is quite relevant in the context of the Development Decade and in the context of the United Nations activities in the economic and social fields. As you know, the matter is coming up before the summer session of the Economic and Social Council, and I have to present my views at the beginning of that session, most probably on 5 July.

QUESTION: Will you send a mission to Aden as requested by the Committee of Twenty-Four? If so, how big, how soon and for what purpose?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Mr. Omar Adeel, my Special Representative, came back from Cairo last Thursday night. He reported to me last Friday. I am taking immediate steps to implement the resolution of the Special Committee of Twenty-Four regarding Aden. Of course, I have to be in close consultation with the Special Committee of Twenty-Four, the Sub-Committee on Aden and the Administering Authority, that is, the United Kingdom, before I make a move. But I am in complete agreement with the resolution adopted by the Special Committee of Twenty-Four in Cairo.

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QUESTION: Do you think that UNRWA should issue rations to refugees in training for the Palestine Liberation Army for the stated purpose of invading Israel? Can it do so and will it do so?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This matter was brought to my attention a few days ago. I have asked Mr. Laurence Michelmore for a complete report. Before I receive a report from him, I do not think I can comment on this.

The PRESIDENT OF UNCA: Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General for your wide-ranging and informative answers to our questions.

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