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CONSIDERATION OF PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW CONCERNING
FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION AMONG STATES IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Note by the Secretary-General

ADDENDUM

NETHERLANDS

Additional comments

[Original: English]
1 November 1966

The question of the desirability and practicability of establishing a permanent United Nations organ for fact-finding, as a means of promoting friendly relations among States, was first suggested by the Netherlands at the seventeenth session of the General Assembly when the item "Consideration of principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations" was discussed by the Sixth Committee. In its written comment in pursuance of resolution 1815 (XVII), which was adopted as a result of the discussion of the item, the Netherlands Government submitted explanatory observations with regard to the function of a fact-finding organ and proposed further study of all the relevant aspects of the matter, on the basis of a report to be made by the Secretary-General.

After discussion at the eighteenth session in 1963, in the Special Committee on Friendly Relations at Mexico City in 1964, and at the twentieth session of the General Assembly in 1965, resolutions 1967 (XVIII) and 2104 (XX) were adopted inviting Member States to submit written comments on the subject and requesting

the Secretary-General to report on the relevant aspects of the subject, in particular as regards past United Nations practice. Written comments, in which the question of methods of fact-finding was referred to, were received from fourteen Governments, and two studies were prepared by the Secretary-General (A/5694 and A/6228).

These studies were for the most part purely descriptive in their account of the fact-finding activities of various international bodies, most of them ad hoc. The Secretary-General's reports did not attempt to evaluate - nor did most of the comments received from Governments - whether it might now be possible to proceed to a further stage so as to consider, in accordance with resolution 2104 (XX), what institutional developments might be feasible at the present time. For that purpose, a number of observations and suggestions were submitted by the Netherlands Government to the present session of the General Assembly (A/6373).

The Netherlands Government earnestly hopes that the proposals which it has made will receive serious consideration, as a small but distinct advance in the progress of the international community towards securing and maintaining friendly relations between States. It is the belief of the Netherlands Government that more ambitious plans will prove illusory, even to their most fervent supporters, unless some practical means can be found which would aid States in the difficulties they encounter in ensuring respect for the principles of the Charter and of their rights as States. Whilst the mere existence of a permanent United Nations fact-finding body would not, of itself, resolve all the world's political ills, acceptance of the principle involved would undoubtedly be enormously beneficial in the daily lives of States.
