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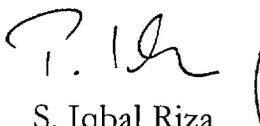
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Note to Messrs. Prendergast and Tharoor

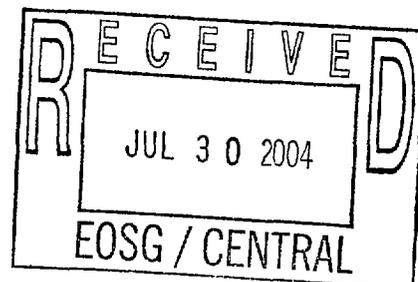
Follow-up on Anti-Semitism Seminar

1. With reference to your notes on the above, the Secretary-General has made the following observations:
 - He agrees with the content of Mr. Prendergast's note but points out that he has designated Michael Møller as the focal point only;
 - The Secretary-General indicated that Mr. Amre Moussa had told him during his recent visit that the Arab Group was not opposed to a resolution condemning anti-Semitism provided it covered Islamophobia and other forms of intolerance. The Secretary-General felt that there might be an opening here. He also said that Mr. Prendergast might wish to explore those issues with the Irish PR who had made a valiant effort in the past year.
 - The Secretary-General has agreed to address the upcoming seminar on Islamophobia.

Thank you for your prompt attention to the above.


S. Iqbal Riza
29 July 2004

cc KSK



24-10665

NOTE TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Anti-Semitism seminar: Follow-up

Our seminar of 21 June 2004 on *Confronting anti-Semitism: Education for Tolerance and Understanding*, which inaugurated the Department of Public Information's "Unlearning Intolerance" series, was a successful first step in improving relations between the United Nations and Jewish communities around the world, thanks especially to your well-received statement. The series intends to examine different manifestations of intolerance and explore ways in which education and civil society can work to help overcome them.

More than 600 people attended the seminar, reflecting an overwhelming response from non-governmental organizations and interested individuals. The seminar, which was broadcast over the Internet, received important global print and online media coverage, with over 300 articles appearing in multiple languages and countries. Video of the seminar proceedings have been made available through CD-ROMs and video cassettes to interested panelists and Jewish organizations.

The Department received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the anti-Semitism seminar from both panelists and members of the audience, which included representatives of major Jewish organizations. In short surveys distributed at the venue, on a scale of 1 - 5, with "1" being "not useful" and "5" being "very useful", participants rated the seminar very useful overall (4.38). Most also said that the information presented was useful (4.19) and that the seminar covered the subject matter of the programme well (4.24). In addition, numerous individuals and Jewish organizations wrote or called to thank the United Nations and the Secretary-General for bold leadership. Several panelists informed us of the positive reactions that had been communicated to them by various groups and individuals. I understand you heard personally from the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Israel.

A constant refrain has been the need for follow-up so that the sentiments expressed, not least by yourself, do not remain at the rhetorical level. I have therefore compiled for your reference concrete suggestions made by panelists, often echoed by audience members. (In the interests of completeness, I have made no judgment about the feasibility or appropriateness of these proposals.) I have categorized them according to actions to be considered by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, by Member States of the United Nations and by DPI.

Proposals for possible action/consideration by the Secretary-General:

- Appointment of a special representative or focal point in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, to be charged with monitoring and combating anti-Semitism and to serve as a contact for Jewish organizations and communities. (Felice Gaer of the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights of the American Jewish Committee suggested similar mechanisms for monitoring and combating anti-Semitism in other bodies of the United Nations;)
- An annual report of the Secretary-General tracking anti-Semitic trends and measures to combat them;
- Presentation by the Secretary-General of his 21 June statement at the seminar to the 59th General Assembly session.

Proposals for possible action/consideration by Member States of the United Nations:

- The General Assembly should follow the lead of the Secretary-General, who in his statement asked Member States to take action comparable to resolutions they have adopted in the past on apartheid, and adopt a resolution to "unequivocally condemn" anti-Semitism. (In his address, Elie Wiesel appealed to the world's leaders to use their political and moral authority to outlaw anti-Semitism;)
- Ensure equal and unbiased treatment of Israel by the General Assembly;
- Appointment of a human rights special rapporteur on anti-Semitism;
- Put an end to Holocaust denial by representatives to the United Nations;
- Adopt an anti-hatred index to examine anti-Semitism and hatred against other groups.

Proposals for possible action/consideration by the Department of Public Information:

- Highlight the contributions and achievements of the Jewish people;
- Examine education curricula regarding Jews and Judaism;
- Facilitate inter-faith talks at the level of civil society;
- Consider a permanent display of a Holocaust Memorial in the United Nations Lobby.

In conjunction with the conference, DPI's Outreach Division has already undertaken a number of measures. The UN Cyberschoolbus has launched a new curriculum on discrimination based on race that includes an examination of the Holocaust. In collaboration with New York's Center for Jewish History, DPI also mounted an exhibition, "Diaspora: Homelands in Exile", of the work of the French photographer Frederic Brenner, who over the course of 25 years chronicled the faces and the cultures of Jewish communities in over 40 countries. The *UN Chronicle* magazine's upcoming issue examines in its cover story the theme of the seminar and of the Unlearning Intolerance series, asking "How Do We See Others?" We are also working with the International Auschwitz Committee on an exhibit to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the concentration camp's liberation on 27 January 1945. Among its many activities related to the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, the Department is working to mount an educational installation "I was 20 in 1945" that will include materials on the Holocaust and genocide. I would also note that earlier this year, the NGO Section arranged a well-attended briefing on anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and racism.

Our "Unlearning Intolerance" series will next explore Islamophobia, and preparations for this seminar are currently underway. It is scheduled, in principle, for 30 November and I would be grateful if you would consider opening this meeting, as you did the first in the series. Should you prefer a different date, please let me know.


Shashi Tharoor
16 July 2004

cc: Mr. Riza
Mr. Prendergast
Mr. Moller
Mr. Mortimer