

United Nations

The New U.N. Secretary General, Black America and The Third World

By Curtis T. Perkins

As a black American, my appreciation for the United Nations grows. As I get to see and understand its intricacies, my admiration for this world forum of democracy flourishes. There are achievements, hopes and efforts here — which exist no where else, yet failures and set backs abound also on a daily basis in this gleaming citadel on New York City's East River.

For, out of my concept of survival along with my many friends throughout our United States, I share this strange perception that we black Americans may have to look and go to this United Nations one day to plead our case for existence. Slowly the ultra-conservatives — high and low — religious fanatics, bigots and the "meanies" of our country have given the Reagan crowd a license to slowly garrot American blacks to total powerlessness. Our smiling, affable, ex-Hollywood President Ronald Reagan is the tool for these sinister forces who have schemed for years to execute the demise of the American egalitarian ideal. They are on their way in a deliberate and highly articulate course. Their successes grow each day.

Therefore, the top leader at the United Nations should be of the most consequential value for black America.

Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru is the new Secretary General of the UN. He began work January 1. I saw him on the job at the Security Council for the last few days as Syria's complaint of Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights is debated.

Let's take a brief glance at the history of the personalities who have occupied this prestigious post and look at Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

Twenty years ago, upon the tragic death of the late Dag Hammarskjold in an air crash over Africa,



DR. CLOVIS MAKSOD, Ambassador, League of Arab States to the UN. Dr. Maksoud seeks respect for and return of Arab lands by Israel and a greater role for the PLO in all matters involving the Palestinian people. The new Secretary General must face this vexing problem.

the nations of the world faced the task of naming his successor. Hammarskjold, the UN's second Secretary General, and also his predecessor, Trygve Lie, were both Scandinavians. This time the nod went to an Asian, U. Thant of Burma, who became the third Secretary General and the first from the then emerging Third World.

As 1981 drew to a close, once again the UN faced the job of electing a new leader, this time the fifth Secretary General and the first from the then emerging Third World. As the procedure got under way in the fourth quarter of '81, the Security Council was forced into an unprecedented seventeen ballots. Even from the first ballot all hopefuls had conceded that the contest was between the incumbent, Kurt Waldheim, seeking a third five-year term and the younger African Foreign Minister of Tanzania and former President of the General Assembly, Salim Ahmed Salim.

However, from the first ballot on through ballot number 16, China held a veto over Waldheim. At the same time, the United States consistently vetoed Salim.

UN rules say that no candidate's name can go forward to the General Assembly for approval if there is a single veto. Also each candidate must receive at least nine votes in the Security Council which is the first stage of the election for Secretary General.

Eventually, it was clear that China and the United States would not withdraw their vetoes. The deadlock was irreconcilable. President of the Security Council for the month of December was the brilliant 31 year old Ambassador from Uganda, Olara Otunnu. At this point, he strongly urged both men to withdraw and open the race to others. First, Waldheim agreed to Ambassador Otunnu's design, then five days later, Salim announced his withdrawal. Both contestants informed the Council that they would be willing to return to the contest if asked to do so.

Within a matter of a few days, a new list of candidates had come forth as the Security Council went



FRANK O. ABDULAH, Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago, is chairman of the Special Committee on Decolonization. His Committee is fighting the racist policies of South Africa.

into closed sessions. Each day, hundreds of newsmen waited anxiously outside the Council chambers. Eventually, it was announced that the Security Council had chosen the fifth Secretary General of the UN, a surprise "dark horse", a compromise candidate, Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru, South America.

Peru happens to be listed among the group of more than 100 developing nations. This made the new Secretary General also the second UN chief to come from those countries referred to as the "Third World".

To many at the UN and in world diplomatic circles, Javier Perez de Cuellar is no stranger. His elevation to the number one post in the world's most powerful and prestigious international organization climaxed a long, brilliant and productive career. Mr. Perez de Cuellar came to this position with an enviable record of 42 years of meritorious service as a lawyer, diplomat and skilled negotiator.

He first joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at his home, Lima, Peru, in 1940. In 1944, he began his first assignment in the foreign service of his country. He served as Secretary in the Peruvian Embassies in France, United Kingdom, Bolivia and Brazil. He was also Counsellor at the Embassy in Brazil.

In 1961, he returned to the rank of Ambassador. He was then assigned to successive posts as Ambassador in Switzerland, Venezuela, Soviet Union, Poland and also became Peruvian Ambassador to the United Nations in New York.

Javier Perez de Cuellar has held positions of distinction also within the United Nations. The highest post was his assignment as Under Secretary for Special Political Affairs, May 31, 1981. Mr. Perez de Cuellar has also presided as President of the UN Security Council. When the Russians marched into Afghanistan, he went to Kabul as Personal Representative of the Secretary General of the UN. In this capacity he also went into the crisis between Pakistan and Afghanistan to continue discussions which the Secretary General Kurt Waldheim had personally begun.

He is a former professor of Diplomatic Law at the Academia Diplomática del Peru and Professor of International Relations at Academia de Guerra Area del Peru. He is also author of *Manuel de Derecho Diplomático (Manual of International Law)*.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar was born in Lima, the capital of Peru, January 20, 1920. He is married to the former Ms. Marcela Temple and has two children.

The Magnanimity of Africa Toward Mr. Perez de Cuellar

It must be understood that Africa took the loss of its candidate, Salim A. Salim, for Secretary General with a sense of frustration. But when their cause evaporated because of American racism and Soviet opportunism, they accepted their loss with grace.

The pledge of all of Africa to the success of Mr. Perez de Cuellar is unanimous.

The Arabs and the Africa Third World know that they must look to the UN and this Peruvian Secretary General for the resolution of aggression against them and for the economic guidance and salvation of their urgent needs.

What Mr. Perez de Cuellar Faces For Now

An array of diplomats head special committees, commissions at the UN. As Mr. Perez de Cuellar seeks their advice in his consultations, he will face these determined and capable personalities who want to see progress made in their areas of UN responsibility in 1982:

—Ambassador Paul Lusaka of Zambia is chairman of the Commission of Namibia. He feels independence for Namibia (a UN mandate) from racist South Africa must be achieved soon. Theo Ben Gurirab of Namibia is the Permanent Observer of the South West Africa's People's Organization. SWAPO has been designated by the UN as the of-



EDEM KOJO of Togo is Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Most of Africa is underdeveloped. Kojo sees new Secretary General, if dedicated to change, as being helpful to Africa.

ficial representative of the Namibian people. Augustus F. Caine of Liberia is executive director of the Commission of Namibia. Mr. Caine has an excellent record for hard work and directness. These three distinguished Africans will be pushing the Secretary General on this vital matter — the issue of Freedom for Namibia. It has the highest priority of the OAU which is chaired by Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi. Ambassador Charles Gatere Maina of Kenya represents his President here on this and other matters at the UN. H.E. Oumarou Garba Youssoufou of Chad is the chief spokesman and representative of the OAU at the UN.

—Ambassador Massamba Sarre of Senegal chairs the UN Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Mr. Sarre knows that the Palestinians must have their own homeland. He sees no peace unless this matter is honored by Israel and her supporters. Zehdi Labib Terzi, with Hasan A. Abdel Rahman, run the Palestine Liberation Organization at the UN. They are true persuasive spokesmen for their cause and have won friends for the PLO both inside and outside the UN. The PLO is authorized by the UN as the sole representatives of the Palestinian people.

—The UN Committee Against Apartheid has Dr. Alhaji Yusuf Maitama-Sule as its UN Chief Representative of Nigeria to the UN as chairman. Ambassador Sule whose country is the largest in Africa, states time and time again that South Africa must cease its racist policies as world peace is in the balance. He is ably assisted against South African policies by Dr. O.O. Fafowora, his deputy.

—Algeria has been credited with freeing the American hostages in Iran. One of the architects of this accomplishment is Mohammed Bedjaoui the Algerian Ambassador to the UN. Mr. Bedjaoui now heads Group 77 (100) of the underdeveloped nations. Ambassador Bedjaoui who has a facile and creative mind washed with pragmatism blames many world problems on the disparity between the poor countries and the industrialized West. He persists in a dialogue between the two. He is dedicating his energies to a "new economic order" through the UN mechanism. A pleasant man, this Algerian can be a tough and persistent negotiator and the Secretary General will be compelled to give his objective support.

—Israeli intransigence and aggression and intra-

Arab conflict has made the duties of Dr. Clovis Maksoud, Ambassador of the League of Arab States, an almost impossible task. But Dr. Maksoud has been able to get along well with the individual countries of his organization plus put the continual conflict with Israel in a lucid and effective manner at the many meetings of the UN Security Council on resolutions against Israel. Marwan Kanafani directs the Arab Information Center with excellent results. Dr. Anis Moh'd Barghouti is counsellor to Dr. Maksoud. Together, these three Arabs have won many world diplomats to their cause. They have also made tremendous progress for a fairer understanding of Arabs in the United States. The Secretary General will have to devote a good deal of time to Arab matters. Dr. Maksoud sees solutions with dedicated UN implementations of the resolutions already passed.

—Ambassador Frank Owen Abdulah of Trinidad and Tobago to the UN is chairman of the UN Committee on Colonialism. Mr. Abdulah, who was a protégé of Sir Eric Williams, the deceased Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, see colonialism in other forms although most nations are free from its yoke. This Trinidad diplomat and his committee will be monitoring these trends and will keep the new Secretary General informed.

Other Urgent Matters

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar has a turbulent world swirling around him. Although the challenges listed above have strong and respected leadership on the vital problems of concern for all, the Secretary General has other demanding questions which he must attend:

There are the Russians in Afghanistan, the African refugee problem; conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia, hunger, the Law of the Sea agree-



DR. MOHAMED BEDJAOU, Ambassador of Algeria to the UN. He is chairman of Group 77 which is seeking talks leading to new economic balance between underdeveloped countries and industrialized nations. Economic growth of the Third World is considered essential to peace.

ment, nuclear proliferation, disarmament, communications for the Third World, aid to the underdeveloped, the sharing of technology, UN military peace missions, energy, the elderly, children, women, the freedom movement of South Africa and the Spanish Sahara, etc. All of these are taxing and time consuming and the Secretary General will need the unstinted good will of his over 154 constituencies.

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AMBASSADOR PAUL LUSAKA of Zambia is chairman of the UN Commission for Namibia. The Secretary General will be pushed to help free this UN Mandate from racist South Africa.



AMBASSADOR MASSAMBA SARRE of Senegal is chairman of the UN Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. He works very closely with the PLO Representative at the UN and Arabs and other involved in this urgent question.

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