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THE ACCRA ASSEMBLY
THE WORLD WITHOUT THE BOMB
P.O. Box 1627
ACCRA, GHANA

December 18, 1962.

Your Excellency, The Rt. Hon. John George Diefenbaker:

Allow me to address you personally as leader of one of the non-aligned nations to whom related matters of world peace, security and economic development are of increasing concern.

The non-aligned nations, non-aligned individuals and non-aligned organizations everywhere, today share a task and play a special mediatory role on the world scene. There is need to make a closer link between them.

These urgent times repeatedly are presenting opportunities for constructive action by non-aligned governments, organizations and individuals able to rise above artificial barriers of nation, race, class, color and creed to think and act in terms of this planet's one essential - humanity.

Until now, many of these opportunities for purposeful and co-operative effort have been lost simply because there has been no suitable centre through which contacts could be made on a world-wide basis, and effective communication established at many levels for the consideration of problems common to all; no platform from which proper cognizance could be taken of both world public opinion and official viewpoints so that attempts could be made toward a synthesis for constructive action.

But the times call for new approaches, new ideas, new methods, new efforts. And here in Accra, Ghana, this year, something entirely new came into being - a non-aligned, non-governmental international organization to bridge the gap between individuals, organizations, governments and the United Nations. This is of very special import to all non-aligned nations.

This organization is The Accra Assembly, initiated by the President of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who sponsored its first meeting on "The World Without the Bomb" during the final week of June. To it were invited as participants 130 highly qualified non-aligned individuals and some experts and observers from all over the world. Their dedicated work during that week, to find fresh and valid approaches to some key problems of our time, clearly demonstrated that competent non-aligned thinkers can indeed suggest means to assist the great powers to find a way out of their present world-threatening impasse, and to initiate new efforts in many directions. A copy of their "Conclusions of The Accra Assembly" is enclosed for you herewith.

To begin at once to implement these proposals and to continue to seek among the world's best minds for new ideas in line with developing world events, The Accra Assembly set up a governing Council and a permanent Secretariat charged also with making plans for future meetings of The Accra Assembly to be held in other countries in other years. Wholly uncommitted, this organization is non-aligned with any government, ideology, or group concerned with peace and development, although it seeks support and cooperative effort among all agencies and governments working for peace and development, anywhere in the world, regardless of outworn divisions encouraged and maintained by the "cold war". In turn, it supports and encourages their efforts.

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To non-aligned governments such as your own, The Accra Assembly presents an alternative and/or additional channel through which to work constructively for positive world aims without being caught up in cold war manoeuvres. To peace and developmental organizations, such as those in your country, it offers a suitable focal point or platform from which fresh proposals for resolution of international tensions, or new developmental plans, can be put forward without being tagged as a part of the ideological conflict, for The Accra Assembly stands above it.

For all of these reasons we now ask your personal interest and invite the support of your Government for the work of The Accra Assembly. This work is now accelerating daily and already - in six months - a number of its proposals are before the United Nations, others are being studied there, and work is going on in at least a dozen different directions, all in line with the interests and the stated objectives of the non-aligned nations, and therefore meriting their serious financial, political and moral support.

Your consideration is invited, too, because at no time in history has there been such an urgent need for peace, nor a period when peace was so illusive. We all know that in this generation man's destructive capacity has reached a zenith and the whole world is threatened with total annihilation in the event of an outbreak of war. The recent crisis over Cuba has demonstrated how real and how close is the danger, and has emphasized the urgency of reaching agreement on total and complete disarmament. Even assuming that good sense some-how prevails and no war occurs, humanity still is in deadly danger from constant pollution of the atmosphere by radio-active fallout - a situation calling for an immediate test ban. And finally - this generation has seen numerous less developed countries attaining independence and urgently in need of wide-spread economic development. With poverty, hunger and disease the lot of a considerable percentage of the world's population, can resources be wasted on the continued production of armaments? Billions are now being spent annually as the incredible arms race continues unabated in its intensity.

Thus the question of world peace and security has now become the concern of all nations great and small and of every single individual. No one can now be unaware that distrust among the big powers has given birth to the cold war which, more often than not, has frustrated hopeful international negotiations and prevented realistic and objective examination of issues. The big powers, against all counsels of wisdom, have manoeuvred themselves to the edge of a precipice from which they dare not move forward and from which they fear to turn back.

To this generation is given the responsibility and the opportunity to change this situation, to safeguard not only itself but the future generations for whom we hold the world in trust. The immediate problem of the cold war is not the emotional one it seems. It is not even ideological or political. It is so universal a problem - the problem of sheer survival - that emotion, ideology and politics cannot be allowed to divide us in our cooperative efforts to resolve it. This problem, as well as all others, can be solved if there is the enlightened will and fixed determination to do so.

So in this critical world period, the non-aligned nations, non-aligned organizations, and non-aligned individuals throughout the world can supply this will and determination, rendering invaluable service to humanity and accurately reflecting the demands of world public opinion.

It was with all this in mind that the non-aligned Government of Ghana, under the inspiration of President Nkrumah and with the whole-hearted support of its people, re-allocated roughly £80,000 from its Defence Budget for the establishment of The Accra Assembly. In addition, Ghana has provided offices for the Secretariat, seconded a number of its top officers to the Assembly work and paid their salaries, and further has made an initial contribution of £5,000 to assist in maintaining the Secretariat during the first crucial months of its work.

From the beginning, however, it has been felt that because of the non-aligned character of The Accra Assembly, which makes its work acceptable to both sides in the world conflict, it is neither desirable nor appropriate for one Government - Ghana - to continue maintain the Assembly single-handed, even if capable and willing to do so. To carry on its work, The Accra Assembly must have participation and backing from a variety of non-aligned governments and groups and individuals in all parts of the world.

In September, an initial appeal was addressed to non-aligned Governments through their diplomatic representatives in Accra, asking for financial grants and for consideration of sponsorship for future meetings of The Accra Assembly. No doubt these are being studied in normal diplomatic channels, as we have been informed; but due to the urgency of the world situation and the need for immediate and consistent constructive moves which require long-range planning, I have taken the liberty of putting the story of The Accra Assembly before you today in the context of world events, and I appeal to you personally to move your own Government toward an immediate financial contribution to the urgent work going on here.

Hardly any of the non-aligned nations are rich, we all know. We do not ask for huge sums; even token grants of only a few thousand pounds would help immeasurably in this phase of the work. Yugoslavia already has been of great assistance in sponsoring and underwriting the cost of the Pre-Accra Assembly planning meeting in Zagreb earlier this year, and the Czechoslovakia Peace Committee has contributed £2,300. The Government of Tanganyika was the first to make a contribution of £500 immediately after the close of The Accra Assembly meeting in June. If the work that now has been solidly started here is to go boldly forward - as it must - then Governments sympathetic to this work will realize that slow bureaucratic procedures cannot possibly move fast enough to be of any help, and they will, we hope, take immediate steps to grant whatever funds can be made available now.

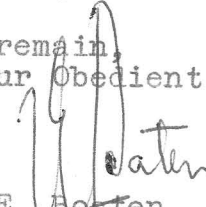
Contributions are accepted in local currency if made through Ghana missions where they exist.

It would be strategic wherever possible to have such grants diverted from Defence budgets in the various non-aligned countries following Ghana's example. This would demonstrate to world public opinion the acceptance of the practical idea of "putting first things first" and underscore the concern for peace, security and world development of the non-aligned countries as well as their willingness to give encouragement to and help take responsibility for work toward this end. When the very existence of humanity is at stake - as it is now - the size, prosperity or special problems of the non-aligned countries should not weigh in the decisions to contribute to this effort, for it is of special value to contributors themselves as a powerful addition to their own efforts and as safeguard of their own interests and the interests of the majority of the peoples of the world.

We await, Your Excellency, indication of your pleasure in this important matter.

Meanwhile, please accept the assurances of my highest esteem.

I remain,
Your Obedient Servant,


F.E. Roeten
General Secretary
The Accra Assembly.

His Excellency, The Rt. Hon. John George Diefenbaker,
Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada,
His Excellency's Office,
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Canada.

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