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HAMMARSKJOLD PUTS 'NEXT STEP' UP
TO NEAR EAST GOVERNMENTS.

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, MAY 13 — (USIS) — Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold made clear Friday his belief that the next step in creating a better situation in the Near East should be taken by the Governments of the region, rather than by the United Nations.

He told a news conference that he does not think "we help them by telling them from the outside what to do," adding that "the best way to encourage the general will to peace is to lend friendly cooperation to the governments."

He said he feels strongly about this, adding that it is in the hands of the parties directly concerned to advance from "the advantage point" achieved through their full cooperation with his cease-fire mission.

Quite a lot can be done, Hammarskjold said, especially on specific points, to build confidence and create a better atmosphere without prejudicing long-term issues. Hammarskjold said he has no present intention to return to the area although he told a questioner that the Governments there will have his cooperation if they want it.

Regarding a possible Security Council meeting on the report of his mission, the Secretary-General said only the Council can decide that. He strongly indicated, however, that he sees no special reason for a meeting merely to endorse his report, since all Council members already have done so privately.

"A happy solution to the Arab-Israel conflict can only grow out of the thinking of the parties themselves and it doesn't help for outsiders to tell them what they should do," Hammarskjold observed. What can help, he said, is for other governments to encourage the two sides in the conflict to continue the tension-easing efforts recently begun.

The Secretary-General repeated one admonition contained in his report to the Security Council in regard to the possibility of continuing border incidents. Under the circumstances, he said, there may be further incidents, but they will not mean the cease-fire has failed "until they show that governments are not carrying out their agreement to take active measures against border crossings and incidents." The circumstances along the Gaza Strip, while they give no "excuse" for incidents, nevertheless may make "a full stop" difficult to achieve, he said. He cautioned against magnifying the importance of minor clashes.)

In reply to several questions, Hammarskjold merely read portions of his report to the Security Council. When asked if his report had not directed a "warning" to Israel not to resume work on the Jordan River diversion project, he said he thought the report carried "reminders" in both directions.

Asked to expand his finding that "a will to peace" exists in the Middle East, Hammarskjold said only that four weeks of talks with government officials, of the Arab States and Israel had given him certain impressions, but he could not "put them all on the table."

(more)

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The Secretary-General said that it would be impossible to "turn the tide" with collaboration on the part of the great powers, but he remarked that "backstage" talks were sometimes more helpful than public declarations at certain stages.

Hammarskjold told a questioner that what he implied is that a "potential" rather than actual arms race does not, in his view, represent the greatest danger in the Middle East. So far as any arms embargo is concerned, he said he would prefer priority for "measures of a different type".

Asked what overall impression of the Palestine situation he had gained from his long trip, the Secretary-General replied:-

"For the first time in my life I believe I understand it."

He disclosed also that no definite arrangements have been made for his visit to Moscow.

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