

October 13, 1969

Aide-Memoire: Meeting with Hamdi O. Mouknass

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Summary:

Hamdi Ould Mouknass praises Zhou Enlai as "a great statesman" and suggests that the People's Republic of China ought to gain entry into the United Nations.

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Aide-Mémoire

On 13 October 1969, at 11 a.m., the Foreign Minister of Mauritania, Mr. Hamdi Ould Mouknass, paid a visit to the Secretary-General. He was accompanied by Mr. Bal Mohamed El Moctar of the Permanent Mission of Mauritania to the United Nations.

In the course of the meeting, the Foreign Minister, replying to a question by the Secretary-General, said that during his recent trip to China he had had an opportunity to confer with Prime Minister Chou En-lai.

The general impression he had gathered from that meeting was that, while the People's Republic of China was anxious to assert its lawful rights, it was showing some desire to soften its attitude towards its immediate neighbours, particularly the USSR. Soviet leaders were no longer referred to as "traitors". While stressing its historic rights in the area, China was showing some goodwill and was ready to consider all its border problems with the Soviet Union. A general atmosphere of détente seemed to prevail.

China was willing to play an international role, especially in respect to the Third World. It was fully aware of the importance of small independent countries within the United Nations and was anxious to respect their sovereignty and dignity.

Regarding the question of the representation of China in the United Nations, the Prime Minister had made a direct reference to the importance of the restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the Organization. Representatives of friendly countries, such as Pakistan and North Viet-Nam, who had visited China at the same time as the Foreign Minister, might have obtained the same impression.

In conclusion, the Foreign Minister said that he considered Prime Minister Chou En-lai as a great statesman who personified the views of his country and that, if there were a proper response from the other side, positive results might be achieved.

13 October 1969