

Reorganisation of Secretariat 1960-1961: Reorganisation of Secretariat 1960...

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Reorganization of Secretariat

4 - 23 Oct. 60

Nehru, Jawaharlal (Prime Minister of
India)

- Extracts from CBS-TV interview.
- Extracts from press conference by J. Nehru
- 1 letter from D.H.

L 779: 99a

EXTRACT FROM PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE
PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA, MR. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU,
AT A DINNER GIVEN BY THE
UNITED NATIONS CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION
AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS ON 4 OCTOBER, 1960

I mentioned in my speech that by and large the United Nations structure has functioned well. That is my opinion. When you talk about the Secretariat, remember that it is a large body with many limbs. Of course, to the public on the outside it is supposed to be, as it were, one thing. But the policy of any organization, the foreign policy of any country, is determined by the executive of that organization or country. In effect, however, it is carried out by a host of people at the center, and the general public may not appreciate that fully. Difficulties may arise, some internal conflicts of opinion do arise, but it has to appear as if it is just one solid whole.

I think that the United Nations Secretariat as a whole has dealt with integrity, in this matter of the Congo, with a very difficult and complicated situation. I do think possibly that some particular steps might have been taken a little differently, but that is for the judgment of the man on the spot, whoever he may be. It does not affect the question of integrity.

EXTRACTS FROM A CBS-TV INTERVIEW WITH
PRIME MINISTER NEHRU
ON 8 OCTOBER 1960

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SCHORR: Mr. Prime Minister, Khrushchev has tried to establish the existence of three blocks in the world, what he calls the Socialist bloc, a capitalist bloc and a neutral bloc. By so doing he has apparently tried to call into being what has not so far existed, a block of neutrals. Is there such a block? Is it likely to come about? Do you favor a bloc of countries like yours?

NEHRU: If you mean by a block, some kind of organized, almost party functioning, certainly not, no such thing. Nor do I think it is likely to develop in that way. But, there is certain commonness in thinking among these countries which results in their consulting each other from time to time and cooperating wherever possible, in that sense. Of course, we have - we have this group functioning, but very frequently, because the group goes its own way.

SCHORR: Can they, or should they be represented in the United Nations as such, as a neutral group?

NEHRU: Well, as such, I don't know as a group, but I've no doubt that the so-called neutrals, I don't like the word, I've often said they're not neutral. They're not a neutral. I'm an aggressive person. I dislike passivity and neutrality.

SCHORR: But pleasantly so.

NEHRU: My whole life is a crusading life. And if - but I think that it can serve a very useful and important purpose, the presence of any such person in arguments or talks. Just - well to get the others out of rigid attitudes.

McVANE: I think what Dan may have been hinting at, Sir, was the idea of Mr. Khrushchev, that the Secretary General's post be abolished, and be divided into a committee of three, one from the West, one from the Soviet block, and one from the so-called neutrals, and the other day he expressed the idea that influence up and down the United Nations might be divided the same way with the Soviet block having one-third of the influence, the West one-third, and the neutrals one-third. Do you have opinion on this idea of his, Sir?

NEHRU: Well, yes. I don't see how this kind of thing can function satisfactorily. I don't see how three Secretary Generals with equal authority pulling constantly in different directions would be able to function at all. But the point is that the United Nations right after it was established deliberately took in view, in a sense, the state of affairs in the world, the political state of affairs in the world. There were - not, not this Cold War of this day, but still the fact was - that there were groups of countries thinking differently, and therefore they had their - these rules about permanent members of the Security Council and great power unanimity, so that in this way no great power could be crossed, because they realized that an attempt to cross a great power meant war. So they made that rule which is not logical - it cannot be defended - but nevertheless I think it was right in the circumstances, and even today neither the United States

nor the Soviet Union would be prepared to give up that great power unanimity rule or the power to veto, nonetheless, and therefore, logical or not we accept it. It should be there. But all the time one has to keep in view that there are these different poles, and the United Nations Secretariat must try to function to the best of its ability in realization of these different poles and not on one pole - one side of the pole, because then immediately the basic difficulty comes up and it won't be able to function because one party won't allow it to function.

Of course, I'm conscious that people's opinions are inclined this way or that way. That's a different matter. You can't get - get rid of your background of your thinking. Therefore what I think is - what these people are doing - I don't think that particular proposal is feasible. Mr. Khrushchev said the buttress structure of the U.N. has been the same the last twelve or 14 years while the world has been changing, Asia, Africa, other things - Cold War - everything happening, and to some extent an attempt should be continuously made to keep in touch with this changing reality. Again, I don't want an attempt being made to change the charter and end it, because that would raise - invite so many controversies that in the interim we'd go into the background. But, as I suggested, some things and much can be done by the Secretary General himself.

...

SCHORR: I should like to pick you up, Sir, on your last words that something can be done by the Secretary General himself without changing the Charter. Have you something specific in mind?

NEHRU: Well, what I had in mind, was that among his advisors in the U.N. he could easily have senior people, people of status and position, and his position would remain where it is, but he'd have the benefit of advice, different points of view which he may not always have otherwise. You'll remember that Trygve Lie's time, had some what were called I think, Deputy Secretaries General,

SCHORR: Yes.

NEHRU: ... Some such thing. I don't exactly remember how they functioned, but anyhow there were some people there and a more or less senior position under them. Something of that kind might be helpful. Also, these tremendous responsibilities that are coming now like the Congo, and the Congo is not only a present responsibility, but a tremendous in regard to development, and politically we - settle the question, but to develop a huge country on behalf of the U. N. is a tremendous job. And fourth, suppose, disarmament is agreed to. Who's going to take charge of it? Department individual countries? Why I can't imagine one man sitting here and taking charge of the disarmament of the world. You have to create powerful commissions and this and that under or within the United Nations or functioning under it, in this sense a certain diffusion of responsibility, though the Secretary General would remain the highest executive authority of the United Nations.

McVANE: Well, they have in the past, Sir, in various emergencies created various ad hoc bodies for this or that or the other thing, and for instance, UNEF, the emergency force in Egypt, they have an advisory committee which in effect sets policy for the Secretary General in that line.

SCHORR: Your thought, Sir, sounds perfectly feasible if only it would be acceptable to the Soviet group.

NEHRU: That I can't see, of course. You see, what I'm troubled with is not actual procedures, although they're important, but the whole atmosphere which makes them feel unhappy. (laughter) That's not the best, certainly, in this conception of going for each other hammer and tongs. It doesn't help.

BOURGHOTTZER: Mr. Prime Minister, the proposals that Mr. Khrushchev has made for revising the structure of the United Nations has been - as he's expressed it - to reflect the change in the growing power of the Socialist world or the Communist world, and seems to have come about as a direct consequence of the frustration of that group's desires in the Congo and his particular disenchantment with Mr. Hammarskjold personally. Do you feel that this is the - is the real motive for such a change and that it's an acceptable motive? When you speak of recognizing the world situation do you include this growth of power of the Communist world about which Mr. Khrushchev has dwelled at such great length?

NEHRU: That has nothing to do with the Congo, that I can see. It's not related directly to this. It's a - you may say it - in the last ten years it has grown. The Soviet Union has grown in power because of various advances in atomic - nuclear forms of energy and all that. That is true. And I'm quite convinced that Mr. Khrushchev wants disarmament - does not want war - wants disarmament, whatever the reasons may be, and I think it is correct to say that he has a feeling of frustration that this matter doesn't go forward, and some people are - some people are obstructing it.

PERSONAL

23 October 1960

Dear Mr. Nehru,

I have received from Mrs. Pandit a letter containing certain questions regarding my suggestion that I consult with her and two other ex-Presidents of the General Assembly on the organization of the top echelon of the Secretariat. I understand from her letter that those questions had as their background certain doubts in your own mind. In the circumstances and in order to save time, I take the liberty of sending a copy of my reply to Mrs. Pandit directly to you.

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It was a pleasure for us all to see you here. I am sorry that time was so occupied for everybody that there was no occasion for further talks, for example regarding the matter to which this correspondence refers and on which an exchange of views giving you full inside information might have been of value.

Dag Hammarskjöld

His Excellency
Shri Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister and Minister
for External Relations
New Delhi
India