

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

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Reorganization of Secretariat

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Organization of the Secretariat
at the top level (draft No. 16)

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Organization of the Secretariat
at the top level

1. The Committee considered the organization of the Secretariat at the top level. The Secretary-General had transmitted to it a report by three past-Presidents of the General Assembly whom he had asked to advise him on certain weaknesses which he felt existed in the organization of the Secretariat at the Under-Secretary level. The text of the report is reproduced in Annex ...
2. The Committee was impressed by the fact that the problem of the organization at the top level is not solely or even primarily a matter of administrative organization. There are important political considerations, and although these are outside the strict terms of reference of the Committee, they cannot be ignored in any study of an organization established to assist Member Governments in the maintenance of international peace and security and the development of international co-operation. It was political considerations of this nature which influenced the initial distribution of the top level posts.
3. The Secretariat was initially organized on the basis of two top echelons under the Secretary-General, one echelon of Assistant Secretaries-General and one of Principal Directors. Under that scheme, there were eight Assistant Secretaries-General, each in charge of an important area of work of the Secretariat. The main areas from 1946 to 1953 were grouped in Departments as follows:
 1. Security Council Affairs
 2. Economic Affairs
 3. Social Affairs
 4. Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories
 5. Administrative and Financial Services
 6. Legal Affairs
 7. Conference and General Services
 8. Public Information

During this period, a Technical Assistance Administration was added. It was headed by an official of the same rank but with the title of Director-General of Technical Assistance.

4. The first Secretary-General proposed to the seventh session of the General Assembly the creation of three posts of Deputy Secretary-General, each of whom would be placed, under the Secretary-General, in charge of a group of Departments. The General Assembly never considered this proposal.

5. In 1954, a reorganization took place under which the two echelons of Assistant Secretaries-General and Principal Directors were replaced by a single echelon of Under-Secretaries. There are now at Headquarters fourteen officers of the rank of Under-Secretary. There is also an Under-Secretary in charge of the European Office of the United Nations in Geneva.

6. The organization of the Secretariat and the office of the Secretary-General became a subject of discussion at the fifteenth session of the General Assembly. Certain delegations made proposals and suggestions on this matter.

7. The three past-Presidents considered the problem more from the point of view of the need stated by the Secretary-General in the Introduction to his Annual Report on the Work of the Organization, 1960, namely, for a sufficient number of highly qualified senior officials for all the new tasks that faced the Organization. The past-Presidents considered that an increase in the number of Under-Secretaries for Special Political Affairs would greatly assist in meeting these needs. They, therefore, recommended the addition of three new Under-Secretaries for Special Political Affairs. This would also make it possible for a more equitable application of the principle of geographical distribution of staff at the top level. Under this proposal, the present organization into Offices and Departments would remain unchanged except that

the Secretary-General would have at his disposal a total of five Under-Secretaries for Special Political Affairs.

8. The Committee observed that the membership of the United Nations had nearly doubled and that the scope and character of its activities had developed substantially during the last six or seven years. In their view these trends would continue, and what had met the needs of the past would not necessarily best meet those of the future.

9. The Soviet expert, Mr. Roshchin, pointed out that international events in recent years, and in particular the events in the Congo, had shown that the structure of the Secretariat and the direction of its activity did not correspond at present to the changed balance of forces in international life, if account were taken of the establishment of a world socialist system, the collapse of colonialism and the declaration of independence of many former colonies and dependent countries.

10. He referred to the statements of many delegates to the fifteenth session of the General Assembly drawing attention to the serious flaws in the structure and in the activity of the Secretariat and the important declarations on this subject by N.S. Khrushchev, President of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

11. The Soviet expert considered that under the existing conditions of international life, the most essential reorganization was that of the Office of the Secretary-General in order that the head of the executive organ of the United Nations should be not one person, the Secretary-General, but three persons who would represent the three basic groups of States existing at present - "the socialist States, the neutralist States, and States members

of Western military blocs." He urged also that the entire structure of the Secretariat should be reorganized along similar lines in order that these three fundamental groups of States should be represented within it on a basis of equality, and that all practical measures for the reorganization of the separate parts of the Secretariat should be directed towards the realization of this aim.

12. The Soviet expert argued that the basic political forms and the direction of political questions had without justification been moved from the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs and concentrated in the Office of the Secretary-General. In his view, one of the indications of the incorrect and unhealthy system and organization was the concentration in the Offices of the Secretary-General of seven Under-Secretaries out of a total of fourteen Under-Secretaries at Headquarters. He considered that a situation in which one-half of the Under-Secretaries were working in the Offices of the Secretary-General could not be considered as normal nor as meeting the needs of a proper administrative organization of the Secretariat. In his view, it was necessary to terminate without delay the improper handling of political affairs in the Secretariat; namely, their removal from the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs and their transfer to other units of the Secretariat for the purpose of concentrating the direction of political affairs in the hands of citizens of the United States and its allies. He urged the necessity for concentrating the implementation of decisions of the Security Council in the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. Such a method of handling political affairs would, in his view, undoubtedly be more effective.

13. Three members of the Committee, Mr. Quaison-Sackey, Mr. Loutfi and Mr. Venkatachar, favoured the maintenance of the present structure at the Under-Secretary level, subject to an important change in the handling of

political affairs. They proposed that in order to enable the Secretary-General to discharge his political responsibilities, there should be at the top level three Deputy Secretaries-General, who will be primarily concerned with political, diplomatic and ad hoc functions of special character including administrative and budgetary functions. The three Deputy Secretaries-General are to be chosen by the Secretary-General, taking into account the main political trends in the world today. For these three posts, it is necessary to seek men of eminence and high attainments, distinguished in public affairs. As a general rule, there should be no recruitment save in very exceptional cases from Under-Secretaries. The Deputy Secretaries-General should serve for one term only. The existing posts of the two Under-Secretaries for Special Political Affairs should be abolished. One Deputy Secretary-General will take over the duties at present performed by the Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General. He will have supervisory charge of the Offices of the Conference and General Services. The second Deputy Secretary-General will be the head of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. The third will be in charge of special political affairs as well as administration and budget. The existence of these three posts will not prejudice the right of the Secretary-General to invite highly qualified men of eminence from outside the Secretariat for special ad hoc assignments.

14. Other members of the Committee considered that there would be practical advantages in a grouping of activities which would reduce to not more than eight the number of officials in the grade immediately below the Secretary-General. Each of these senior officials would be in charge of an important segment of the work of the Organization and, as a group, they would act as the Secretary-General's advisers in the discharge of his responsibilities under the Charter. This would not preclude the possibility of the Secretary-General's being able to call upon highly qualified men of eminence from outside the Secretariat for special ad hoc assignments.

15. The areas of activity of these eight officials would be as follows:

- (a) General Assembly and General Committee activities, co-ordination of the necessary services for these bodies, and general co-ordination within the Secretariat.
- (b) Political and Security Council Affairs, and as soon as feasible, the political responsibilities of the Trusteeship Department.
- (c) Economic and Social (including technical assistance, Human Rights and Narcotics, and as soon as feasible, the economic and social responsibilities of the Trusteeship Department.
- (d) Administrative and budgetary, comprising the Office of the Controller, the Office of Personnel and the Office of General Services.
- (e) Conference Services
- (f) Legal Affairs
- (g) Public Information
- (h) Trusteeship (temporarily)

In connexion with the grouping of functions proposed above, the Committee wishes to draw attention to its observations in paragraph 16 of the chapter of the Report on Budget Stabilization.

16. The object of the grouping suggested in paragraph 15 above, which is not necessarily in its details the only one which could be adopted, is to bring together like or related activities. The title of senior officials should reflect the importance of their responsibilities.

17. Mr. Goodrich and Mr. Urrutia were of the opinion that in addition to the above, a limited number of top officials of his own choice ought to be available to the Secretary-General to assist him in discharging the personal responsibilities placed upon him by the Charter or by resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. These two experts believe that it is unrealistic to expect the Secretary-General to rely exclusively on the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs for advice or implementation of his political activities.