

# UN-Secretariat matters - Committee of Experts 1960-1961 and Appointment of ...

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Dag Hammarskjöld's samt.

Appointment of senior staff

7 July - 1 Aug. 61

Lloyd, Selwyn (Chancellor of the Exchequer,  
Treasury Chambers, London)

- 2 letters from D.H.

7 July 1961

Dear Selwyn,

You may have heard that in response to the need for an adjustment of the organization of the top level of the Secretariat to the new composition of the General Assembly, I have recently put forward various proposals. In the main they are political, but I have used the occasion also for some improvements which are purely administrative and independent of this need for adjustment. On the administrative side, the most important change would be the integration of the Controller's Office and the Office of Personnel into one single department.

At present, the two offices are headed each one by an Under-Secretary, the Chief of Personnel being Hamilton, of the United Kingdom, the Controller being Turner, of New Zealand. The distinction between the two Offices has proved to be slightly artificial, as all staffing questions naturally are within the range of budget considerations, while the remaining personnel questions, like recruitment policies, promotions, dismissals and so on, are quite distinct from the budget. As it is run at present, the tasks of the Office of Personnel ride across the border between financial and personnel problems. The need for an integration of the two offices has been discussed again and again, although in a somewhat different form from what I have in mind.

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What I propose now is that the two Offices be headed by one Under-Secretary for Administrative Affairs, who would have in his department another man, of the same formal rank, in charge of personnel questions in the narrow sense indicated above. This new arrangement, which I think is highly rational and likely to prove most helpful, would mean that the new Under-Secretary will have a very important position as a kind of "Minister of Finance" with broad overall responsibilities; in fact, the Committees have previously regarded such a post as ranking on a Deputy-Secretary General level. This is an added reason for me to make the change, because it has proved quite essential to get a man in charge of the financial operations which has sufficient status and personal authority to be a negotiator directly with Governments, instead of being primarily a good technician in charge of the budgetary questions. Also his assistant (of Under-Secretary rank) for personnel matters should be chosen with a view to qualities somewhat different from those which have been considered natural with the present set-up of the Office of Personnel.

Neither one of the two present incumbents at the Under-Secretary level seems to be the right choice for any of the new posts. Specifically, I would like to say that Hamilton would not be able to take over the new post as Under-Secretary for Administrative Affairs, and on the other hand, he has not shown the specific qualities desirable for personnel negotiations. Having in view the desirability of a Britisher as Under-Secretary for Administrative Affairs, I would, in the circumstances, like to terminate Hamilton's contract and to recruit from you somebody who would be the right man for the new top post. The earlier the change could take place the better, as the new

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man should step into Hamilton's shoes as soon as possible and prepare himself to take over the combined top post either when the Assembly has taken its stand or, in anticipation of that, when a shift on the Controller post anyway becomes indicated. I hope that there will be no major difficulties for Hamilton, who has been here on secondment, to go back now to his old career. My real worry is to get speedily a new Under-Secretary of the right human qualities and on the right level. And this is a matter I wish to take up with you personally most urgently.

It has struck me that Hillis, who has until now been your representative on the Advisory Committee for Budgetary and Administrative Questions, and who has just been recalled, would be an excellent choice. He has the qualities needed and in addition a deep knowledge of United Nations affairs. I do not know at all how he would look at such an assignment himself, as, naturally, I have not raised the matter with him before having approached you. Nor, of course, do I know what your plans may be for him when he returns to the Treasury. My suggestion may not be very practical from your or his point of view, but if so, it may instead serve the purpose of indicating to you what kind of man we would need and what his general qualifications should be. Although previous status (inhome service does matter, the decisive factor is, of course, quality.

May I ask you to give this matter some urgent thought, keeping in mind the very great significance of the post at the present juncture in the United Nations' life as well as, of course, the

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desirability for the United Kingdom to put in a highly qualified man now, especially when it is indicated to start a general drive for a lifting of the quality on the Under-Secretary level. I would appreciate it if you would give thought in the first place to Hillis, but if, for some reason, his name does not strike you as the right one, to anyone who would be fully qualified for this responsibility. The sooner you could let me know how you look at the matter, the more helpful it would be to me.

I have, of course, informed Pat Dean about the fact I intended to write to you regarding this matter.

It was great fun to meet you again and I was most pleased to see you in such excellent form. I have already told Home that I felt that you and I jointly, in the spirit which we had developed over the years, perhaps to a certain extent were running away with the seriousness of the discussion, but personally I found the evening as useful as it was delightful.

Kindest regards.

Dag Hammarskjöld

1 August 1961

CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you for your kind letter of 13 July regarding the recruitment of a suitable man to fill the new post of Under-Secretary for Administrative Affairs. I am grateful to you for your interest and for leaving the matter to me for discussion with Mr. Hillis.

You say in your letter that if Mr. Hillis took this job at the United Nations, it would, as you understand it, be to his financial advantage. Hillis has himself gone into the matter and worked out a comparison with some care. It appears that in real terms he would be a lot worse off by accepting the offer. This fact -- which by the way throws additional light on our salary scale and on the basis for our efforts to recruit first-rate people -- does not seem to worry Hillis over much as he is rather keen on making a contribution at this difficult juncture at the U.N.

What I understand to create a real difficulty is that the Treasury does not consider it possible to let him come to us on secondment terms, that is with the right of return to his own department and of remaining in his own superannuation scheme, but would require him to retire now from the British Civil Service, with a pension based on his previous service but 'frozen' until he reaches the age of 60 (or later retirement from the U.N.). Obviously, he would have no expectation of further employment in any event with the British Government.

I agree with him that this is a proposition which a reasonably prudent man would find it difficult to entertain in view of the uncertainty which necessarily casts its shadow over any senior employment with the U.N., especially at the present period of crisis and with the change of Secretary-General, before too long, as a certainty. I believe that you share my view that in the circumstances it is quite natural that Hillis feels that he has no choice but to return to his own service.

However, what is true of Hillis, both as regards salary and as regards his position in the British service, may be true of other people of the same seniority, and if so, the prospects for the U.N. to maintain the proper standard are grim indeed. Of course, if we were competing for somebody in the diplomatic service, our chances would be even less favorable on the salary side while there might perhaps be somewhat brighter possibilities as regards the status, if I am to judge from the Trevelyan experience.

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You certainly appreciate that in the circumstances I find it necessary to raise the whole issue with you again. I find it most regrettable if Hillis, who would undoubtedly be a very good choice, for reasons of normal and very understandable prudence would consider it impossible to come here. May I hope that this somewhat unprecedented situation may be reconsidered with all the generosity which I know that you want to show to the Organisation and also taking fully into account the unique circumstances which should give the Treasury the consolation that whatever arrangements they make, they cannot represent any dangerous precedent.

At best this is an up-hill fight, and it is ironical for the Secretary-General to be desperately dependent on first-rate collaborators, criticized for not having the right quality of collaborators and barred from getting them by on the one side the less than favorable conditions he is permitted by Member Governments to offer, and, on the other hand, the strict administrative practices of Member Governments.

To these comments to the Hillis problem I wish to add a word about Hillis himself. I have already told you how highly I think of him, and I am glad to hear that my view is shared by you. He would undoubtedly be extremely well qualified for the exacting task for which I would like to get him. But there is something to be added. In the course of his few years here he has built up for himself a position which is rather unique. He is very highly respected by everyone for his professional and human qualities and he is very well liked by all he had to deal with. The natural and well deserved authority which, thus, he will have from the very beginning, combined with his intimate knowledge of the administrative and financial problems of the Organisation, make him so obviously the first choice that I feel that it would be a bit irrational for you or for me to go out looking for another candidate who will come here without any background knowledge, who will have to build up his position and who, whatever his personal qualities, may not fit into the picture in the way of which we may feel certain in the case of Hillis.

Writing to you, may I also remind you of the fact that the whole arrangement is built on the assumption that Hamilton, when released by us, will be able to go back to British service. You do not say anything about this matter, but I hope that it is in order. At all events I feel certain that you will do your best for the necessary mutual adjustment just as we tried to do when you wanted to get Trevelyan back.

I hope that in spite of all your worries and duties you will have had, or will have some time off for your usual swim, although the waters of the Mediterranean this year have very treacherous currents.

Dag Hammarskjöld