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Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions (organisation of Secretariat)

L 179: 96a

The Secretary-General welcomed this opportunity to meet again with the Committee and to give his comments on the Committee's draft report. He mentioned the Committee's concern for his heavy schedule and pointed out that an order of priority was given to all these problems. This took us back to the fundamental issue - whether the Secretary-General was the political or administrative head. In this case it meant politics and policy making and he couldn't separate the two sides. He cited the work of this committee as a central place for private opinion and stated that a good Secretariat and good administration/~~are~~^{were} corner stones on which we must build in the policy making field. For that reason he hoped that the Chairman (Committee) would never be too respectful in the future.

The Secretary-General said that the Committee's draft report led to conclusions which differed from his and pointed out that where the Committee represented certain approaches, he necessarily represented others, which was perfectly natural and normal, but they sometimes came out on different sides. This was worrying but the reason was..... that the basis on which the organs on my side and your side were founded differed. He would not like to go to the Fifth Committee and have to stage a debate on fundamentals. He could discuss the relative values but would hope to have a basis in common. He was afraid that for this or that reason this basis had not been mapped out between them to the extent which ~~was~~ it was possible for us to arrive at conclusions and for that reason he would like to go back sometimes in his discussion to fundamentals and if he did that in a way which might sometimes strike them as a little bit blunt, he took it that their contacts would be such that it would not be misunderstood. Some people might think he was

interested in creating the maximum of understanding of their mutual problems in order to make it possible for them to present the maximum of unity of views when they approached the Fifth Committee but he didn't think in that process anything was gained ~~by~~ or by using language in a too diplomatic way. There was one basic consideration which covered the whole field. It was a little bit embarrassing to talk about because it might sound as if he had some high ideas about my views. It wasn't anything of the kind and he knew that basically the views he expressed would be given proper consideration. It was a question of how and where to establish the balance of responsibilities in the administrative sphere. Going back to the question of the constitution of this organization, basically it was framed on the idea that they had the parliamentary power, representing the member governments which was the policy making body. On the other hand they had the Chief Executive with executive power, and with not only the application but the right to decide on administrative matters. They all knew by experience that this sounded grand on paper, but extremely different in reality. But where was the limit really between administration, as the exclusive duty and right of the Chief Executive, and administration as the very basis for the financial ... of the parliamentary body. They were linked together. He would not for a moment like to push (?) the ... to Chief Executive..... theory to any extreme point. That would be extremely unwise but he felt that it would be just as unwise if he were in any way to be soft concerning the privileges of the Chief Executive, ^{OR} /if he were to accept any infringements on what were substantially, and he thought clearly, the constitutional rights of the Chief Executive. In fighting for the rights of the Secretary-General to decide this or that issue, it might be so easily misunderstood but he did it (?) with a feeling of

serving the interests of this organization because he knew the
 incredible (problem) as soon as you had parliamentary control of
 an organization. In this case^{might}/~~may~~ be against the problem
 because this whole survey business was basically pure administration
 but it had very far reaching consequences and he was not one to say
 what the autonomy of the Secretary-General was and what was the
 autonomy of the financial authorities. He thought that was a
 problem which they should endeavour to resolve - it was a problem
 which we should (not) by-pass by having a wide area between^{the} parliamentary
 and the executive spheres. Who had the right to decide? That problem
 should never come up because they should work on a basis of trust and
 then it doesn't matter. That was the reason why this matter had been
 brought before them this way. On the one side, a report which brought
 up the budget issues treats the whole matter from a budget angle. On
 the other hand, as con..... notes, the report of the Survey Group
 was an internal Secretariat document prepared by that Group - in the
 (final) editing of the report he was absent - and covers 90% of what
 is practically consider^{ed} to be inside the sphere of the Chief Executive.

What the lines of authority should be and so on, I cannot imagine
 a good administration functioning with any other kind of control
 than that established by the with the concentration of
 responsibility. I wanted to say this because I would be sorry indeed
 if there were any misunderstandings as to a very firm view. I feel
 I must take on my responsibilities under the Charter. That is the
 view I have had to take in the Fifth Committee and in the General
 Assembly and it is definitely in the interest of all parties in the
 United Nations. I ask you again not to believe that I have any
 emotional but in this case it is just not true. It is too
 much of a conviction in the background of the situation which dominates
 these observations.

You have been placed in exactly the same problem. How far should you go? You have the difficulty of so to say the footnotes in that volume. You felt it is difficult to view the budget implications without having penetrated that stuff and you have understood from the text that such a study is necessary with officials in the staff. You wrote on page 2, paragraph 3: "The Advisory Committee has not attempted in the limited time at its disposal an exhaustive study of the Survey Group's conclusions; such a study would require detailed testimony, both written and oral, on many of the intricate and technical matters which the Group examined." This may be right in two different ways. It may be right in a way which I consider too wide and too ambitious from a budget angle. The intricate and technical angles are purely administration. I feel for that reason that the study that should have been made on the basis of the document should, as concerned budget considerations, be sufficient. Else, as to its problems I refer in a general way, the field which it is my obligation to cover and to define as the area to be covered by the Secretary-General exclusively.

If you permit me to miss this and that but just following the text, there is an observation on page 3 to which I would attach some importance and make comment. It is an educational possibility which is worth considering: "...the Secretary-General may perhaps wish to consider the advisability of setting up a more representative group through the inclusion of a few persons outside the Secretariat of the United Nations, possessing a diverse experience in organization and methods of administration." More representation by the inclusion of people outside of the Secretariat is[?] a diverse experience. I think we shouldn't under estimate that the real problems in the

Secretariat are not something which you can judge in a better way from an outside angle. May I be quite personal. I was for ten years and ran three economy drives. We used administration from experts/ business, professors, public administrators, all sorts of people and I have never seen a less valuable contribution because they knew everything about ideal administration but not how an administration was really run. We had to teach them a good deal and they went back to their universities more knowledgeable and that, after all, was on something so well tried and experience as a national administration. We have to think of an administration where the real problems are new problems and I would not have any help who have not worked in the organization and suffered from the weaknesses or seen the possibilities. What is to be added in general principle and theory. I think we know it sufficiently well. For that reason I do not think that any other people, including people from outside, would be more representative. I do not think that a diverse experience would help us. It would be more pleasant but not worth the money.

Another matter, this Survey Group, which is not strictly to be compared to a committee of any kind because officially, even if a summary was made by the Group to the Secretary-General, the bulk was taken with me in the chair and the group, as such, is a body which were shall we say controllers taking part in discussion where frankly I cannot accept the responsibility of taking the decisions.(?) It is a summary of conclusions I have reached, that - nothing else - that is to say you cannot come to this or that principle and say this is the way it is composed because for good or bad, weakness or strength, this is a report, the phraseology of which the Secretary-General must take personal responsibility. The decisive factor -

what kind of help does the Secretary-General feel in need of. I got exactly the kind of help I was hoping for and I got it in a splendid way and with a broadness of approach that impressed me deeply. I can still speak sometimes like an outsider - I don't know of any operation in the Secretariat where members of the Secretariat have so impressed me with not only their sense of definition but from a truly liberal spirit - their self criticism and their way of putting everything on the table. From that point of view you can easily see that while I have no objection to this very courteous observation, on the other hand I do not feel that it would be of any help, I do not feel that I need anything more, of this or that variety. There is one thing quite important here - the members of the Survey Group were all so steeped in U.N. experience that I never saw any reflection of national traditions. They were all good international civil servants - no British, French, American influence - I was not even alone as a Scandinavian (?)

That brings me however to the first substantive point of significance - dealing with personnel policy. Paragraph 13 - as we discussed before I said I had a completely open mind because there were reasons for and against. There are advantages in a speeding up of the plan and advantages in not moving too quickly. You thought here that the fact that about half of the saving of personnel now envisaged..... The bulk is released. For that reason that will not present a very great problem. But I entirely the opposite conclusion - that we have some 140 posts still to reduce. We have cut down the bulk of the budget in roughly one year. That is to say that we will be out of it within another year. When I have thought it over I have arrived definitely to the conclusion that you find in the.....

I advise strongly against speeding up because experience has shown the disadvantages from a morale point of view and that running it for half a year longer is not in any way to be compared with the principle of firing. Every case has strong repercussions. The ones of 52 and 53 are still remembered. This review.... for more than one year received not one, but several others which represented problems not at all of the nature... but problems because personal interests, possessions Secretariat were involved and over and above all ~~that~~ were the changes I had to comply with in this reorganization business. There is just a limit to which you can go. It should be done as early as possible, - at the same time as you have to build up their morale. We have reached a point where I would not like to take the repercussions of any firing which is not strictly necessary on the basis of the policy I have outlined - that is to say because they are not flexible enough - because that problem will take care of itself, but it is a question that goes deeper down in the ranks, everyone being a member of some kind of group having his friends in that group and where the sound box of the house enlarges every single noise to a real story. It is not that I am in any way scared of breaking (f) up a situation. But there is a point where I feel I should not go any further and that is the point I feel is reached. That is how I look at it and that is the reason why I find it very difficult to give any kind of effect to the recommendation here and as I said, the report is the story (?) to say half a year.

On the point of comparison of top level posts before and after the reorganization, I take note of your observation that not really

"direct access" concerns you, but the size of the top level posts next to the Secretary-General. But even if you look at it in that way, I can't help feeling that this comparison is misleading and would have been seriously misleading to anybody who does not know the real story of the organization of the Secretariat. Because on the one side you have ASG's plus a Director of Co-ordination ~~and~~ ~~Principal Directors (2)~~ and on the other you have the Under Secretaries and Heads of Offices, Deputy Under Secretaries and Social Counsellor. The Social Counsellor is nothing more than a D-2 because as he will be personal help to me, he will have more direct access. The main matter is this one: that if you make a comparison as to the matter of function you have to add all the Principal Directors because there is not a single case where my daily operations with Principal Directors are not at least as intense as with ASG's and at least as intense with the new Heads of Offices. There has not been any difficulty in that respect since I came. But if you take the posts that exist you have to add some eight and subtract one on the other (and then I have the figures) 10 - 60, 8 - 15 gives a fairly good description before and after. To that should be added one thing which is essential. There will be clear^{er} cut lines of authority with the 16 than there have been with the 18 because the inner lines of authority will not sit so loosely - instead of talking to one I have to talk to two or three. What I gain by this system is a somewhat smaller group which I have and it is clearer cut. I will have to talk to one person and not X, plus Y plus Z. If I were an outside critic this would be curious. The Secretary-General increases his own burden by adding^s to it. The true story is that the contacts will be simpler than before. On the other hand it should be recognized that the creation of the

~~does not~~

Hheads of Offices/means that the burden of the Secretary-General is increased. That is the real increase. Keeping closer personal control over financial, personnel and legal matters. So if I were to present that for your consideration it puts the stress on the wrong side of the change in the burden of the Secretary-General. He can take over more direct responsibility because his contacts with departments will be easier and simpler because of fewer contacts. That is how it looks to me - somehow we have been talking about different matters. I know how difficult it is to read out of text. Because I have to implement it not quite forgetful of self-interest and self-protection. I am not so much of a slave of work that I increase it voluntarily even though it is a little more than ...

This really indicates to you...taking into account what I said... this comparison that is a dangerous one without further comment.

On page 10, paragraph 19 reads "The Secretary-General's definitive proposals (A/2731) provide, however, for the following modification:" - This possibility was in the report last year. The Heads of Offices are not new - it is not a new invention so I just wonder if the dictation should not be considered as it gives the impression that these are all new bright ideas but it is the implementation which is new.

The key question.... that I have somewhat the feeling that I had not managed to make my own approach to this matter sufficiently clear. Forgetting about the text of the draft, I would like to say how it looks to me. There are two kinds of administration - one having an overwhelming spirit and tradition because it is in a certain sense easier to run, the other perfect only through fairly good personal administration. The first, the hierarchy type with one person at the top and those who do the job

four steps down and everything has to pass (listener) time, etc.

The other technically is the one where you get people more or less on the level with the Secretary-General, the only difference ~~being~~ between the Secretary-General and those with whom he operates being that the Secretary-General has to take responsibility and have the vision to see to it that decisions coming out of the house are decisions on his responsibility but representing the mature decisions of the group.

If you run ~~on~~ that way, the only difference being the responsibility, the others are merely put up on the level where they have responsibility of great significance. It is, you might say, a heavy method. You arrive at results jointly and you request the others to react and respond. You force them to a kind of activity ~~where~~ which is too often forgotten in the hierarchy, where they are never put under pressure of open debate. I must say what I have seen of this organization that on the top level here, to come back to the jobs, to give sufficient interest, sufficient validity (?) to those holding jobs, it is necessary to maintain very much this team approach. People must be in the picture with freedom of expression and views. It is not just the question of direct access but a question of free criticism at a level. I have so far referred this problem to the Secretary-General and I know exactly how I will run it with those with whom I have to co-operate. ~~(Some you have submitted)~~ Decisions will be better implemented ~~and~~ in the interests of others and of the organization because I know that I will keep them more open minded and broader in approach and generally more active in the realization of their problems. There is an administrative philosophy expressed in this. This system after all is not a brand new creation. It is something which has been tried-which I have tried myself in various

fields. I must say that sometimes it is more time consuming and a greater burden but is the better one as to morale, results and preparation of work. And if I am willing to run it in this way I should be given a chance to run it in this way! It is not good in an administration of this size unless the same pattern is reflected and is represented on the next level, because how much can do, attending committee meetings, etc. It is very limited indeed. The pattern must be taken up by Under Secretaries, Heads of Offices, etc.

This team,
 /The Economic and Social problem - at the first level where the Under Secretary sits with the chief experts giving direction, background for ~~the~~ policy formulation, he will have to sit with two or three people with different accounts of economic trends and I would be very disappointed indeed if he did not sit with them the same way I sit with him. It is just to illustrate my point. This team approach is one aspect. The other is ... if you take the man in the Economic and Social Department, he must necessarily concentrate on certain matters. He can delegate the rest of what he is doing downwards but it is really in the delegation downwards - it is the division between him and someone else of the responsibility but it is the fact of responsibility divided. If you look at it that way I would say there is an Under Secretary - he will have a man at his side - that man should be able to take over this or that department and run it as if he were Under Secretary in order to liberate the Under Secretary from too much of a job but he should be at par in discussions with the Under Secretary. Then why should he be subordinate? There is a very good reason. I would hate to have a man with those responsibilities at low rank. It is the expression of shared responsibility. From there it does not follow that he should have

the same emolument. The Deputy is a Deputy - he should have the rank and position. The division of responsibilities should be the matter for current decision but he does not have the responsibility so his salary is lower. Last year..... to find a formula to differentiate (?) his emolument. So when I come down to your considerations here, I would say that I have strong, purely administrative reasons for my attitude. I do not in any way differ from you on the emolument question. I may sum up the special position of Deputy cannot be justified but I have a conviction. It is a very practical. I have had to play this kind of game both as....

...2 Deputies in Economic and Social Department - one Deputy is somewhat of a strange bird and does not fit..... it just so happens the present Co-ordination of Specialized Agencies sits better in the Economic and Social Department and transferring that Department is practical. It is the same post with slightly wider responsibilities and as the whole thing comes under a Principal Director with ^{an} increase of responsibility, he should have that level. There is a second reason why he should have that rank. You may find that a little bit amazing but we have to take it seriously. The Specialized Agencies insist in principle in maintaining contact only with the Secretary-General. Already the fact that they should switch to an Under Secretary level is alarming to them, but if we were to switch to anything less than an Under Secretary, they would try to press upward. For that reason too, that specific post has to be on that level, whatever you call it. It is really outside the pattern of Deputies as an administrative solution but there are other reasons. The other Deputy is typically the kind I have characterized. From good personal (personnel) administration, if a Deputy should function with all the advantages.... for that reason I do not think it is a good idea for me to sit..... You put them in the same boat and suppose

they will row in harmony. If the Deputy is established in that Department, the other posts should depend on the decision of the new Under Secretary who will be dependent indeed on his Deputy and is likely to find that he would like to run everything to begin with and will try out his nearest collaborators as to the possibilities of that free co-operation which is the key to a good Deputy. If he finds somebody, he should not be barred from having that help. If he does not, I would never, for the sake of consistency, insist on one. One sees that experience is certainly needed and it may well be in that year that in principle we should have one, but cannot find one. But again, I would say, in a target manning table I would like to have the post although it should not be filled until or unless we have the man who can establish the right kind of relationship both with the Under Secretary and with me. As concerns the other Deputies, the problem of responsibilities is slightly different. I can forecast what is likely to be the outcome - you mustn't overlook two entirely different things are required. On the other hand I know of few such jobs where if we are to maintain the right standard. I do not believe that we should ~~expect~~ accept anybody unless he is^a rather unusual type - good rudder of the ship and at the same time the man who manages to give the right character. For that reason I have felt all the time that in DPI there was a need for this kind of team relationship - people operating so closely with one leadership of the Department where one had time to think and one to run the ship. That leaves us with the Conference Department where doubts have been expressed here. The Conference Department is a curious story. I agree with what is written here about the possibility of running it. Nine out of ten of our administrative problems arise in that Department because there we

have Russian, French, Spanish etc. You can say the Bureau of Personnel should take care of them. They can on certain issues but in the daily operation it is the leaders of the Departmentand run it in an entirely patriarchal way. I am not criticising those who have run it if I say that present conditions are still not satisfactory though improved and I would like to have leadership which is not only administrative but has the time to go into group problems and disentangle them and stop that Department from being a centre of trouble, for which I would feel ~~responsible~~ I were to blame for, if I did not give the organizational backbone so as to minimize the trouble.

You can easily guess that I have not hesitated to get those \$50,000. That is a fly on an elephant in comparison to the \$2 million which is the first realization of this policy. That being so I think you can see that the expression of the conviction... this is something I had need to be on the right side of an administration operation which will need all the help he can getting into administrative trouble which ~~was~~ could have been avoided with strong relief at the top.

Finally, concerning the Transport and Communications Department. There is one thing in the Transport field operations - it should be entirely two different kinds, - the European area and then work in Transport Economic development. I would like to put the economic development away from Transport and either to Economic Development or Technical Assistance. I would like to leave the inherited League of Nations operation in that particular sense and that has a very natural home in Geneva. That means that part of the Communications to which the Committee has brought attention will not arise because there will be a tidying up of the tasks at the same time there is the division.

There is a complication to which you draw attention - the Director. That does happen when you make an economic drive - you have to force a man to carry two heads and it can be done. I don't think there will be any confusion of authority and the burden will be more normal than is at present if we join the two jobs.

I excuse myself from..... but in the spirit which I have tried to explain, at the beginning I felt that I had not only the right and privilege to speak to you very frankly and give you as much inside thinking as I could in order to see to it that the maximum,..... arrive at our conclusions - what is the background, the worries, the wishes.

The Chairman -

We think we are a modest Assembly Committee trying to serve the United Nations. I think I can say with reasonable sincerity we had no axe to grind. I had the impression you said with heat..... I would say that you were mistaken on one very important point.. when you made it clear about the duties of the Secretary-General and the right to defend his own feeling.....with the utmost sincerity of all of us how often it has been said that the Secretary-General has certain rights and we must see to it that no one can take any of it away. He has the responsibility of the organization.....I think with alarm of the possibility of your taking any other view.....I know your attitude. You are too liberal in this respect.....

....that phrase about the inclusion of outsiders....Why did we put that in? ..I thought that the Secretary-General would have almost an obligation to build up some other body so that they can listen to some other body, exchange ideas and views. Not that we have any doubt about the people who took part in the survey - they are our friends. We thought that some

outside fresh air coming into this, would be good.....unwittingly a man who is a product of an organization may have some subconscious slants of which he may not even know.

We wanted to hear your side of the problem and I for myself have learned many things. I thought I would say these things to dispel any feeling that we were taking the law into our hands.

The Secretary-General:.....

One further observation - part of our reorganization is to do it as
and quickly
simply/as possible. It may sound like extra wisdom from me but I
feel I should run it with as little administrative ado and fuss as
possible, and that makes it cheaper and simpler. With this whole
survey we couldn't have any extra friction. I mentioned before I
think that we met some 75 times at two or three hour meetings.

As an additional observation why I have this reluctance - it's just
because I want to get it done and that leads to certain implications.
I know it leads to certain risks because certain comments will be
unfavourable.

Notes for the Chairman

5 October 1954, p.m.

Organization of the Secretariat

(Draft Reports: Number 7)

1. Welcome to the Secretary-General.
2. Mr. Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee is most anxious that on so important a matter as the organization of the Secretariat an opportunity should be given to you to examine the Committee's report while still in draft form, and to present to us whatever comments on our recommendations you may wish to make. The text of the draft report was sent to you last evening, so you have had little time in which to study it. This I much regret, although at the same time I may, with reason, plead force majeure. The Committee has had to work under extreme pressure in order not to retard the work of the Fifth Committee on the item now under consideration and on the related item -- the 1955 budget estimates.
3. Before inviting you, Mr. Secretary-General, to offer your observations on our draft text, there are just two points which I should like to make:

The first concerns the number of Deputy Under-Secretaries. Department of Economic and Social Affairs -- Your budget submission for 1955 includes provision under section 8 -- for two such posts. We have, however, been given to understand that, in fact, you may possibly decide to dispense with one of these two posts. I wonder therefore whether you are in a position to

throw light on this point, and whether we might make reference to it in our report -- in the event, of course, that the one post is to be dropped?

The second point is related to paragraph 17 and to the comparative table attached thereto. I wish to make it clear -- beyond the possibility of doubt -- that what the Advisory Committee had in mind was not, of course, in any way either to contest or to circumscribe the right of the Secretary-General to arrange for any member of his staff to have direct access to him. That is obviously not only an elementary but a cardinal principle of administration. It is clearly implied in Staff Regulation 1.2 which states that "staff members are subject to the authority of the Secretary-General... and responsible to him in the exercise of their functions....". Obviously also, even if the Staff Regulations were silent on the subject, the principle would remain unimpaired. I make this observation only to make it clear that we approached this matter of "direct access" solely and exclusively from the point of view of the organizational structure, and subsidiarily of the implications which the proposals in question may have on the already heavy burden which the Secretary-General is called upon to shoulder.

I have thought it right to make these few observations in case our text may, by reason of faulty presentation, have given rise to any doubt on this point. What we really had in mind was the number of posts at the top rather than the number of persons having direct access to the Secretary-General.