

UN-Secretariat matters: UN-Secretariat matters - 16

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Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

UN/Secretariat matters 1956

Petrov case

11 Sept.

Aide - Memoire conc. reaction of Sec. Gen. on Soviet,
statement of 31 Aug. 56.

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FILE NO.:

CONFIDENTIAL

11 September 1956

AIDE-MEMOIRE

The Secretary-General has read with surprise certain statements in the aide-mémoire of the Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 31 August 1956, No. 394, and particularly the statement that "because the Secretary-General insisted that Mr. V. I. Petrov should resign, the latter was obliged to do so."

The Secretary-General, as stated in his aide-mémoire of 22 August 1956, received certain information relating to Mr. Petrov. This information constituted, according to the principles the Secretary-General has to apply, prima facie evidence of activities contrary to the Staff Regulations. The Secretary-General, after preliminary study of the case, informed the Mission of the U.S.S.R. that unless the information received were to be disproved by Mr. Petrov, the Secretary-General would ask him to submit his resignation as a member of the Secretariat.

A prima facie case having been presented, the complaint made clearly required some explanation or refutation. The reference to the possibility of resignation in the informal message to the Mission of the U.S.S.R. was intended to give in advance an indication of what would be the consequences, if a satisfactory refutation were not forthcoming after Mr. Petrov had been approached on the subject by the competent authorities of the Secretariat. In view of the seriousness he attributed to the matter, the Secretary-General considered it both appropriate and courteous, on this occasion, to inform the Mission of the U.S.S.R. about the situation.



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In fact, there was no opportunity to approach Mr. Petrov, and he made no effort on his own part to disprove the allegations. Instead, by letter of 23 August 1956, Mr. Petrov applied to the Secretary-General to consider "his request for separation from the United Nations Secretariat starting August 25th, 1956". Moreover, at the time that the Secretary-General received this letter on 24 August 1956, Mr. Petrov in fact had left his post and was no longer in the country. The Secretary-General, therefore, sees no grounds or justification for the particular statement made in the aide-mémoire of 31 August 1956 which must have been based on a misunderstanding of the situation.

The Secretary-General has to give consideration to every complaint, officially and in due order submitted to him by a Member Government with respect to a staff member. In examining such complaints - except, of course, in those cases in which there has been an obvious mistake - it is the established practice to invite the staff member to give his comments on the information received. Decision will, thereafter, be taken on what further procedure should be followed in conformity with the Charter and the Staff Regulations, if the staff member's reply is not fully satisfactory.

The Secretary-General wishes to assure the Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that he has in the past taken and will in the future take all appropriate steps to protect the members of his staff against any threat to their independence or to their position as international civil servants. The Secretary-General is also ready in appropriate circumstances to assist members of delegations when so requested. On the other hand, he must ensure that staff members observe their obligation under the Charter and the Staff Regulations and refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization. In fulfilling this duty the Secretary-General naturally expects full cooperation from any Government concerned at all stages.

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