PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, MR. HAMMARSKJÖLD

Palais des Nations, 9 July 1954

(5.30 to 6.15 p.m.)

OPENING REMARKS

(Interpretation from French) - The SECRETARY-GENERAL -

[Several sentences inaudible for mechanical reasons] .......

It is impossible for me to enter into a discussion of political matters, that is to say, "political" in the broadest sense of the term. Any comment on my part on the main political issues would add nothing and would be of no interest to me, to you, or any country engaged in those discussions. For this reason, what we can discuss here will be limited to those questions which may be regarded by some people as uninteresting matters - administrative matters, that is to say, matters of organisation. It may be, however, that those questions would have more interest to you and particularly in so far as your interest in problems pertaining to Europe is concerned.

Before I ask you to put questions to me, I might indicate that I will take advantage of this opportunity, which does not occur very often, to tell you that I propose to pay a visit to Berne. There are no political considerations involved, but because I happen to be here in Geneva for some time I must take advantage of such an opportunity for establishing contact.
with the Swiss Government. This being said, please put your questions. I do not know what sort of language you would prefer, French or English, but in any case I suppose that we could change from one to the other depending on the discussion.

**Question:** Is it possible to ask you whether an American commission is coming to Geneva in order to scrutinise the past of various American officials in the United Nations and if this is the case, have you any comments to make?

**The Secretary-General:** I can clarify the situation I think, and in order to do so I have to go back to the Executive Order which established the present American procedure concerning security and corresponding problems for international organisations. That Executive Order, which dates back some time, in fact to June last year, established a special Loyalty Board. Now you know the procedure is that American citizens who maintain their legal relations with their own Government, even if they are international civil servants, are asked to reply to certain interrogatories, certain questionnaires, which brings up certain issues concerning previous employment and so forth which the American Government consider to be of importance. If any doubts arise and any unfavourable comments are registered, it is the endeavour, under this Order, to clarify them and if possible to get them out of the way. For that purpose, this Loyalty Board was established whose task it is to clarify points which may be brought up
against somebody and I would say that this task should be considered as helpful in clarifying the situation just as much from the staff point of view as from the international and any other point of view.

You certainly know from news releases and otherwise from New York that this whole American procedure has not been completely concluded, and that there are cases which have not been cleared yet for purely administrative reasons, so to speak. Sometimes it takes a rather longer time to find out and check, especially those people with an international career. In very few cases, I believe, has this Board itself found any need to ask for clarification or qualifications from the man or woman concerned.

It is true that this Loyalty Board is coming to Europe. I do not think it is coming to Geneva. I cannot say anything definite concerning the extent to which they find that they have anything to ask anybody here in Geneva but I do not think I am going too far if I guess it will not come to Geneva. But whether it will come or whether people will go some place, the operation will be of a very limited size indeed, and I want to stress again that the main task of this Board is not to serve as any kind of court judging this question but much more as a board which has to find out if anything is behind what may be said in an unfavourable direction and to evaluate it on the basis of a fair hearing with the man or woman concerned.

Therefore, in reply to your question, I say I do not think it will come to Geneva; I believe that if Geneva is in any way concerned, it would be on a very limited scale indeed; and
further, the operation should primarily be considered as one which, in the conduct of general philosophy, serves the interest of the people concerned.

**Question:** I would like to ask the Secretary-General another question linked up with the previous one. There have been American newspaper reports that the security checking of State Department personnel has affected the recruitment of personnel for the State Department.

My question to the Secretary-General would be whether any kind of blow has been dealt to the recruitment of international civil servants of American nationality as a result of the constant security checking that they have had to undergo.

**The Secretary-General:** My reply would be "no", but I would like to be more specific. First of all, as you know, in view of the "streamlining" of the Organisation, there has been a kind of freeze on recruitment, the permanent recruitment of staff, for over a year. The recruitment question has not come up as a serious problem in any but some very few cases - the recruitment on the regular basis. For this reason, this activity has had no impact because it is on a limited scale.

There is another problem and that is with temporary personnel drafted for short periods where special arrangements have been made. Special arrangements are further developing in order to see to it that these procedures do not apply from the United Nations point of view or for the necessary arrangements for providing this or that meeting with temporary
personnel which we may have to add to the regular staff. Those, I think, are the two main considerations which justify my reply "no".

As concerns the impact in specific cases, for example, when there is a question of sending someone out on mission, when it is unavoidable, especially if a new case has arisen it has caused some delay. I would not say, however, that those delays have been of such a nature as to cause me any serious worry.

**Question:** I should like to ask what changes, if any, the Secretary-General has in mind for the European Office of the United Nations.

**The Secretary-General:** Well, you see, the new Organisation, or rather, the revised Organisation of the United Nations, aims at establishing a more closely-knit system of responsibilities and lines of communication. We would have at headquarters, (apart from certain administrative offices for finance, personnel and so forth, the strictly administrative offices), five departments. I would like to get back to that word "department" which has caused some concern. It has been copied from other European administrations as well as American ones. It just means "ministries" in national administration. Those five departments cover the three Councils - the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council. Then there is one department covering the servicing of the General Assembly, and one department for Public Information.
Those are more than just administrative offices — they have certain policy functions which are all defined in terms of substantive tasks either in relation to specific assignments of the United Nations or, in the case of the D.P.I., public information.
They are all, so to say, vertical ministries, if you speak in terms of national administration, each with its own task. My idea is, or what I want to propose is, to put the European Office on a level with those five central sections, five central nuclei, in the Organisation and to make the European Office not a vertical department but a horizontal one covering the whole field and developing on a regional basis the work of those five departments. That means lifting the European Office up to the position of, let us say, one of the main inner organs of the Secretariat. The difference between the European Office and those five central political departments is that a European Office on the same level will have horizontal responsibilities fitting in vertically with the functions belonging to the various departments.

To get back to "department", because obviously the term sometimes seems to indicate something rather modest. Department is the highest nomination for a unit of the Secretariat so, from that point of view, it indicates a rise from an office to a department which is definitely ranking upwards in the hierarchy of significance in the total operation. On the other hand, it indicates something more than just this raising of the level; it indicates also that it is recognised as what it is formally, a part of the Secretariat.

Now you may ask next, and that is of course very natural, what is a department. It is part of the Secretariat and should be part of the Secretariat horizontally while the others are
vertical. You may also ask if formal integration as a department means any decrease in, let us say, independence. I would say definitely not because, you see, the departments generally operate on the basis of what I would call considerable freedom in terms of delegation of functions and powers. As I said the other day in the Economic and Social Council, it is all a question of agreeing on the main lines to be followed. On that basis the departments operate with great independence in the Secretariat and each department will operate with that independence and with a wider scope of activities which follows from its regional nature.

It goes without saying that the Secretary-General, even if he is, in the American sense, the only one with executive power, cannot look at everything. The result would be the most terrible bottleneck and limit of physical powers alone would prevent me from making any such attempt.

What I have said about the European Office generally is of course in this latter respect mutatis mutandis true also of the Economic Commission for Europe. There has never been on my part any attempt to get a so-called firm grip on the operation of the E.C.E. The only thing that matters in this case is exactly what I said about all the departments and the European Office generally. It is that we must have some kind of basic understanding concerning the aims we pursue and what we are going to do and that is not achieved by instructions or controls or checks. It is achieved on the basis of more
frequent contacts, more frequent round-table discussions, regional co-ordination between the Secretaries and the Secretary-General, and all down the line with ever-increasing contacts. You can certainly see the difference between giving direction and checking activities of an independent and strongly dynamic body like the E.C.E. and a policy where liberty and freedom are maintained. Stronger personal contact must be established in order to give the greatest possible inner unity to the operation.

I should like to add one point. You may not have seen the recent budget, which is a very long document, but if you look at it you will find that as a result of this change of the status of the European Office there will be a strengthening of contact with the European Office. This arrangement is intended to give greater possibilities for the head, the senior member, of the European Office to serve as liaison officer in relation to specialised agencies and governments, and so on, so that it will mean really creating a kind of personal representative for the Secretary-General in Europe. To my very great regret it proves impossible for me to attend to European matters and to make contacts here to the extent I would have liked.
Question: Would you say that this would be likely to involve a more frequent exchange of personnel between the European Office and the Head Office?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Yes, because I think, generally speaking, it is all to the good if the European staff sees more of Headquarters' activities, so I hope we will be able to develop on a firm basis and on clear-cut principles a regular policy of transfer, both ways.

Question: I want to put a question which I hope will not be interpreted as a political one. It concerns the procedure to be applied with regard to the possibility of the admission of China. Is that a question which falls within the competence of the Security Council or not? If it is studied by the General Assembly will it be a question of substance or procedure? Does it call for a two-thirds majority?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I understand very well your hope that this is not a political question but really this question has been given a political aspect and a political importance which prevents me from entering into any discussion on it. I want to say that the legal aspect of it is very complicated and much will depend upon the interpretation of
the situation. Is it a question of the admission of a new country or is it a question of the proper representation of a country which is already a Member? But I do not want to enter into that question.
Question: I believe in New York you were asking Mr. Robert Schumann to advise you in a consultative capacity on questions of public information in Europe. I wonder if you could tell us a little about that, and whether you would intend to ask people from other parts of the world to act in a similar capacity.

The Secretary-General: I invited Mr. Schumann last autumn already, and he managed to come in June. He stayed for a fortnight and we had frequent meetings and contacts between him and also the European journalists accredited to the United Nations. He elaborated certain drafts of a report on his findings and recommendations. As these drafts have not yet been given their final shape, I find that we should not today go into the subject, but I can say that, first of all, from my point of view and our point of view at headquarters, it was an extremely useful exercise, as you can imagine, because his experience and wisdom certainly added very much to our knowledge of the problem. The result would certainly be a considerable reactivating of our efforts to provide the European centres - the European press, say - with proper material, so presented as to fit into the framework of European interests, which has itself slight differences of emphasis from the American one. I hope that before the end of the summer, on the basis of this Schumann consultation, it will be possible to go deeper into the matter, both actively and, so to speak, publicly. At all events, it forms very much part of the same operation I mentioned when I referred to the change of position of the European Office.
It forms part of the consistent policy to bring Europe a little bit closer to headquarters, or headquarters a little bit closer to Europe; anyhow, to narrow the Atlantic a little bit.

As to the question of invitations to others, I must say that I had that in my head before asking Mr. Schumann to come, and I had it much, much more in mind after seeing how splendidly this first consultation developed. It proved to be useful in a way which certainly encourages further attempts in the same direction. On the other hand, I do not feel that this is an operation which we have to speed up in any way. It is much more essential to get the top man, as in this case Mr. Schumann, than to improvise with something which is not the very best. Then we have to adjust our plans to the plans and the timetables of some rather distinguished gentlemen, and I feel we should do that. I can certainly wait the time that it will mean; I will have to wait.

**Question:** Does the Secretary-General contemplate setting up in other continents offices like the one in Geneva - at least in the near future?

**The secretary-general:** Not in the near future. The situation is rather different. After all, we have the long and very rich Geneva tradition: we had a natural emphasis on Geneva. There is nothing quite similar to the background for United Nations activities in other places, and there are also practical reasons why we should not engage in it.
On the other hand, there is an expanding system of something more modest but serving in its way a similar purpose. You have the various information centres which, of course, have a specific task. They are inside the Department of Public Information. We have a very great number of others. We have the three regional commissions: one here; one in Santiago; and one in Bangkok. They are expanding and improving operations. I do not know what might crystallise around such centres at some stage. The time is not yet, I think, for any innovations there. These various regional commissions have not, so to speak, fully exhausted their possibilities yet, and there are no special practical reasons. The immediate political needs and purposes are very well met by the system we have, but of course there is nothing that would exclude, for example, one day adding to the Bangkok or Santiago centres activities which are not strictly economic, but which have, as here, a broader nature, but that is for the future. I do not want to give any promises for any firm innovations.

**Question:** I hope you will not take my question in any sense critical, but I have noticed that whenever you talk to us you begin by saying that you will not answer any political questions. I wonder whether that is because we are in Geneva or because you think that the Secretary-General should not talk about politics.
The Secretary-General: The Secretary-General should definitely talk about politics and he should definitely talk about politics in Geneva. But, you see, the Secretary-General has one major headache and that is the timing of everything he says, because the Secretary-General must serve all 60 governments and the 60 governments do not expect him to make life more difficult than it is already. For that reason, both here and in New York, I may have to adjust for days a kind of spiritual curtain over political questions. If you check with my New York colleagues, you will find that there may be two months that I do not say anything about politics, and then suddenly I talk nothing but politics. Now I have had the bad luck of being here at moments when it was not time. Last year, it was a little bit also lack of experience - I was for natural reasons shy of political questions. This time I may be less shy, but I may have stronger reasons not to go into them.

Question: At what level would the Secretary-General place U.N. prestige after the events of the current year?

The Secretary-General: Well, that takes some thinking. Not because it is a political question but because I would like to give a reasonably well-balanced reply. If you mean by prestige light-hearted acceptance, as a matter of course, I would not say that it is very high. But if, on the other hand, you take
prestige as meaning that people are thinking very seriously about what the U.N. can do to various problems, I would say that it is high. If I may make a comparison back over a couple of years, I would say that there was much more lip-service to the U.N. and much less feeling for the real good of the U.N. than there is today. If you call that a rise or a fall in prestige, I do not know. Personally I would say that in the serious sense it is a rise in prestige. It is prestige when the need for an organisation is wider and wider recognised.

**Question:** When you go to Berne, do you intend to try and persuade the Swiss Government to change its mind about withdrawing from the Korean Armistice Commission?

**The Secretary-General:** I would not feel that we should intervene in such a matter. We have very much ground to cover without bringing that up.
The SECRETARY-GENERAL: For the very good reason that I want to announce all the appointments of Assistant Secretary-General together and the whole list is not complete.

Question: When do you hope to make this announcement?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would like definitely to make it before the General Assembly, that is to say late August or August/September.

Question: In the note of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council we read that with the new direction to be given to the work of the Secretary-General, less money will be given to the service of information and to limit the role of the Secretariat as a centre of action. Could you give us some explanation of this?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This brings us into a very wide field which I should have to analyse, but I think I can see where you may fear that this may mean a contraction. It will mean that here, as in other cases of U.N. activities, greater concentration of those spheres of activity in the direction in which they really can make a contribution. It will not mean in any way that the information by essential media or to essential media is to be much affected, but here in this sphere as in other spheres of activities have got extremely widespread. For example, we find that there are some publications which are sold in ridiculously small numbers and there seems to be no public need for them. Then, I feel that it would be a good idea to give a
little bit more time and money to servicing the radio, or whatever it may be, and to give a little bit less money to those publications for which there does not seem to be a market.

That indicates in very general terms what I have in mind without going into the concrete documents which might be changed. This is more an indication, without going too deeply into the concrete measures.

**Question:** With all the streamlining and expansion on one side and the other that you intend to provide for the United Nations, how will this affect the budget? Will it go up or down?

**The Secretary-General:** It will go down, some of it. You see, cuts in the budget are always rather painful processes. In this specific case, the budget for 1955 is one million dollars below the budget for 1954. I would express it in this way, a cut of one million dollars in the budget is not in itself anything sensational. It is somewhat more than 3 per cent. But it is remarkable and significant in one respect in that it does mean that I think we have reached a stage where it is possible to stabilise. That in itself I consider to be a good thing because that means that in the future we will have to take on new tasks and we certainly will take on new tasks - and it is not my intention in any way to just stick to the old guns.

**Question:** This is an entirely non-political question. Could you tell us why it is that, in spite of the extra-territorial status of the Palais des Nations here, it has not been possible
for the United Nations postage stamps to be used here?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have to ask Mr. Pelt.

Mr. Pelt (Director of the European Office of the United Nations): I will tell you some day the details of the story because it is quite a long story, but it simply amounts to this. The Swiss postal monopoly extends to the whole of the Swiss territory and from that particular point there is no extra-territorial provision in the arrangements concluded in 1946 with the Swiss Government.

Questions: If I may ask you a subsidiary question as that. I believe that the United Nations has derived some profit from the sale of stamps in New York. Would you not consider asking the Swiss authorities to change this arrangement so that the United Nations stamps can be used here?

Mr. Pelt: We have also a revenue here but only from sales for philatelic purposes and not the use of stamps for official purposes.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I would like to add to that. There seems to be a double interest for those stamps. On the one side, the revenue point of view which is stressed and which is to some extent taken care of for philatelic purposes and so on, but there is another aspect which is quite important.
It brings home to people the fact/there is "something" in the United Nations having those rights and insisting that there is a sound element of admissible propaganda in those stamps, and from that point of view if something could be done about it I certainly would ask for it. On the other hand, it cannot be considered a major issue and if, from the Swiss point of view, there are objections to such exceptions from the general rules of extra-territorial rights, I would not like to press the issue in any way especially in the light of the very favourable treatment in all sorts of ways which we have received from the Swiss Government.
**Question:** May I ask the Secretary-General to tell us why it was found necessary to have four reports on the world economic situation within the last four months with their protracted discussions. Three of these reports were presented by United Nations agencies and the fourth by G.A.T.T., which is closely associated with the United Nations.

**The Secretary-General:** G.A.T.T. may be in the family but it is only a cousin and does not come in for any kind of paternal protection from me. On the other hand, the other reports you have in mind.....

**Question:** The reports of the O.E.E.C., I.L.O. and ECOSOC.

**The Secretary-General:** You raise really a question which is an essential one. I have also asked the same question because it does not strike anybody as very rational. On the other hand, you come fairly soon to the conclusion that the World Economic Report and, for example, the regional reports meet entirely different needs. There are things set on a regional basis which cannot properly be brought into the framework of the World Economic Report. At the same time there are things with a strictly universal approach which find their proper place in the World Economic Report. There is a lack of proper co-ordination between the reports because they are and have been partly overlapping and it is to be hoped that
we will find some method of avoiding that kind of system. So really, although you get a number of reports in a number of parts, they are one single unit. The fact that we publish them in different books should not shock you. It is one report. However, we are not there yet and the reason is that discussions at different stages calls for simultaneous preparation at various centres so that we cannot get the necessary degree of co-ordination. But it really means that it is one whole presenting different aspects of the problem. We had a meeting some months ago with the Regional Secretaries of E.C.I.A. and E.C.A.F.E. in order to try and find out what could be done about it and we are in process of experimenting in the direction I indicated.

You will certainly be able to raise the same question next year and, if luck is on our side, I will be able to reply: it is three books read as one. I hope that if we do not achieve it next year we will in the long run be able to overcome these editorial difficulties.

**Question:** What steps does the Secretary-General consider should be taken to increase and improve technical assistance activities?

**The SECRETARY-GENERAL:** Well, I have to go on very much in the same way. I and all my colleagues pleading, pleading, pleading........
On the whole, much I think is entirely sound. This is a high-yield operation with a result far beyond the cost in terms of political advantage and economic development and for that reason it is really a very good investment.

I must repeat my regret that I have to impose this limit on our discussions but I have explained the reasons. I hope that some other time the world position will be so improved that I will be able to discuss these political questions.

(The Conference closed at 6.15 p.m.)