

The London School of Economics and Political Science

“Machiavelli of Peace”: *Dag Hammarskjöld and the Political Role of the Secretary-General of the United Nations*

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Declaration

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Abstract

The thesis analyses Dag Hammarskjöld's political role as UN Secretary-General and the efforts he made to justify such a role. It is the first attempt to give a comprehensive account of the political role Hammarskjöld played from "both sides", based on the now available sources from both national and UN archives. The thesis also deals with the problems of a political role for the UN Secretary-General.

The conventional picture of Hammarskjöld as a "neutral and impartial" international civil servant is challenged and the figure that emerges is the one of an astute politician – a "Machiavelli of Peace".

As a civil servant in Sweden, Hammarskjöld played a political role although he viewed himself as an expert and civil servant and not a politician. He argued that he could play a political role based on "neutrality and impartiality" and he transferred this concept to the international arena as Secretary-General.

Hammarskjöld managed to play an important political role because he offered a solution to the American dilemma of how to deal with the Cold War in the Third-World without choosing between their Western European allies and the newly independent countries. This at the precise time when the Americans were losing control of the General Assembly due to the influx of newly independent countries that put decolonisation on the agenda.

In the Congo Crisis the political role of the Secretary-General reached its zenith during the initial period where Hammarskjöld played an interventionist role. Hammarskjöld's policies were based on clearly defined Cold War objectives – shared by the Western permanent members of the Security Council – and on a wish to enlarge the political role of the Secretary-General. The weak base for Hammarskjöld's political role forced him to radically change his policies in the Congo to shore up his position when he was criticised for his interventionist policies.

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Introduction

*“Through ambiguities resolved, through margins skilfully used, the office of the Secretary-General had grown in stature and authority far beyond what the framers of the Charter seem to have envisaged at San Francisco. This was quite widely recognized; someone, I know not who, had even jested that the motto of the Secretary-General ought to be *Per ambigua ad astra*. To most good ‘United Nations people’, like myself, this growth seemed healthy. The strengthening of the office was also the strengthening of the international community, the strengthening of the defences of peace. As for Mr Hammarskjöld himself, we had complete confidence in him as being – I quote the words used about him, in private, by a Russian member of the Secretariat – ‘an integritous man’. We even, I think, found something slightly intoxicating in the paradox of equivocation being used in the service of virtue, the thought of a disinterested Talleyrand, a Machiavelli of peace.”* Connor Cruise O’Brien¹

In the introduction to the standard study of the office of the UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld is referred to as “the most dynamic and influential Secretary-General the United Nations has seen”.² The status of Hammarskjöld in the UN today is almost that of a patron saint. Kofi Annan said that “There can be no better rule of thumb for a Secretary-General, as he approaches each new challenge or crisis, then to ask himself, ‘how would Hammarskjöld have handled this?’”.³ Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson refers to Hammarskjöld as “a role model” and to “the relevance of his ideas for the United Nations and the practices of global cooperation”.⁴ In recent years critics of the current UN leadership have routinely referred to the visionary leadership of Hammarskjöld as a model to be followed and the disillusionment with the UN today is related to how far it is perceived to have fallen short of the ideal of an active political role that Hammarskjöld embodied.⁵ Academic studies have referred to

¹ O’Brien, Connor Cruise, *To Katanga and Back* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1962), p. 47.

² Chesterman, Simon (ed.), *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 6.

³ Annan, Kofi, *Fourth Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture*, 6 September 2001 (Uppsala: Eklundshofs Grafiska, Uppsala, 2001).

⁴ Eliasson, Jan, “Foreword” in Stahn, Carsten and Melber, Henning (eds.), *Peace Diplomacy, Global Justice and International Agency: Rethinking Human Security and Ethics in the Spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. xii-xiii.

⁵ See e.g. Op-Ed in the New York Times on 16 September 2011 by Sir Brian Urquhart entitled “Learning from Hammarskjöld” and the *End of Assignment Report* of Inga-Britt Ahlenius, Under-Secretary-General for Oversight Services, 14 July 2010.

Hammar skjöld as “a beacon and legend for men who are seeking the road to international peace and security” and a “moral compass’ for international civil service”.⁶ Even a realist and critic of international organisation like Hans Morgenthau conceded that “the late Mr. Hammar skjöld’s tenure of office shows impressively how dependent the peace-promoting functions of the Secretary-General are upon the intellectual and moral qualities of the holder of that office. Only a man of Hammar skjöld’s personality could have tried to do what he did in this respect, and have achieved what he achieved”.⁷

This thesis deals with what kind of impact an individual agent like Hammar skjöld can have on an international organisation like the UN and on history. It asks whether Hammar skjöld had an independent political role and examines the efforts he made to justify such a role for the Secretary-General and the UN.

The conventional picture equates Hammar skjöld with idealism, a philosophy that seeks universal peace through international law. The standard Hammar skjöld biography, by Urquhart, concludes that Hammar skjöld “stood up for principle against even the greatest powers and in doing so he might sometimes have an influence on important events”.⁸ This summarises the two main elements in the conventional interpretation of Hammar skjöld’s political role. First, that he had an influence and made the Secretary-General and the UN a relevant actor, and, secondly, that his actions were guided by ideals, principles and a strong set of ethics. The majority of scholarly studies on Hammar skjöld are devoted to his political ethics “and how they influenced his actions”.⁹ This was also stressed by Hammar skjöld himself in many public speeches:

“Politics and diplomacy are no play of will and skill where results are independent of the character of those engaging in the game. Results are

⁶ Zacher, Mark, *Dag Hammar skjöld’s United Nations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 254; Melber, Henning, “Human Security and ethics in the spirit of Dag Hammar skjöld: an introduction” in Stahn/Melber (eds.), p. 9.

⁷ Morgenthau, Hans J., *Politics among Nations – The Struggle for Peace and Power*, (New York: Knopf, 1973, 5th edition), p. 486.

⁸ Urquhart, Brian, *Hammar skjöld* (New York: Knopf, 1972), p. 596.

⁹ The most detailed is Fröhlich, Manuel, *Dag Hammar skjöld und die Vereinten Nationen : Die politische Etik des UNO-Generalsekretärs* (Paderborn, Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2002); for a recent example see Dionigi, Filippo, “Dag Hammar skjöld’s Religiosity and Norms Entrepreneurship: A Post-secular Perspective”, in *Politics and Religion* Vol 9 March 2016, pp. 162-186.

determined not by superficial ability but by the consistency of the actors in their efforts and by the validity of their ideals. Contrary to what seems to be popular belief there is no intellectual activity which more ruthlessly tests the solidity of a man than politics. Apparently easy successes with the public are possible for a juggler, but lasting results are achieved only by the patient builder... Those who are called to be teachers or leaders may profit from intelligence but can only justify their position by integrity.”¹⁰

Hammar skjöld was the Secretary-General who devoted most time to the theoretical formulation and implementation of his own vision of the UN and, to this day, he is the only Secretary-General to explicitly invoke Article 99 of the UN Charter to bring an international crisis to the Security Council.

There is a vast outpouring of books and articles on Hammar skjöld and the last years have seen major new biographies, scholarly volumes and international conferences dedicated to his person and his legacy, but none of these challenge the conventional description. Indeed, most of these studies focus on Hammar skjöld as a symbol and use him for other purposes (the title of one recent book is symptomatic in this respect: “Peace Diplomacy, Global Justice and International Agency – Rethinking Human Security and Ethics in the Spirit of Dag Hammar skjöld”). In a eulogy after Hammar skjöld’s death that ring prophetic, Gunnar Myrdal said:

*“He will live on as a myth and a symbol. He will continue to serve as he always did, but henceforth unable to influence what interests he will serve and to what practical purposes he will be used. [...] Eventually historical research will force its way through the mythmaking, even if it may take a long time before all facts are elucidated in such a complex matter where such strong interests are involved. But it can be foreseen that much will then appear in a new light and that a lot of what is now said in different quarters will show itself to be the product of shallow and interest-guided prejudices”.*¹¹

¹⁰ Cordier, Andrew W. and Foote, Wilder, *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations Volume III* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 67.

¹¹ Myrdal’s speech on Hammar skjöld to the university students of Stockholm, ”Myt för en ny tids människor” (Myth for men/women of a new time), quoted from Appelqvist, Örjan, ”A hidden duel Gunnar Myrdal and Dag Hammar skjöld” in *Economics and International Politics 1935-1955* in Stockholm Papers in Economic History No 2, 2008.

Yet remarkably, there is still no full-fledged account of Hammarskjöld and his political role based on the now available source material, in particular national archives that allow us to understand the relation between the Secretary-General and the Member States and how they viewed and related to Hammarskjöld's attempts to develop a political role for the Secretary-General. All biographies of Hammarskjöld follow the interpretation of Urquhart and use mainly the same one-sided archival sources. Urquhart's Hammarskjöld biography has also been called "the most influential book ever written about the UN".¹² The most recent full-scale biography of Hammarskjöld even goes as far as saying that Urquhart's biography, published in 1972, is "the best biography we shall ever have".¹³ But Urquhart himself never intended it to be a definitive study. On the contrary, he wrote in the preface that "[m]ore detailed and more scholarly studies will obviously be required in order to explore, when other source materials become available, the depth and the full detail of the various episodes concerned".¹⁴ This thesis is an attempt at such a study.

Already in 1969 Robert Cox discussed executive leadership in international organizations in an essay that defined as a future research topic the question: Can international leadership transform an international organisation such as the UN from a forum of multilateral diplomacy into something that is more than the sum of its inputs, and thereby make the UN into a partly autonomous actor?¹⁵ Cox also used Hammarskjöld as an example to be studied and Fröhlich and others have used this as their starting point in studies of Hammarskjöld.¹⁶ This thesis, however, argues the opposite of the conventional interpretation, i.e. that Hammarskjöld managed to play a role precisely because he did not base his policies on principles, and that his success relied on his ability to redefine the political role of the Secretary-General and the UN according to the situation. This thesis argues that, after trials and errors, Hammarskjöld managed to find a political role for the UN in the Third-World at the interface of the Cold War and decolonisation that would be defining for the future of the UN. Furthermore, I will argue that Hammarskjöld was neither neutral nor

¹² Gilmour, Andrew, "Dag Hammarskjöld: Statesman of the Century" in *The Nation*, 9 September 2013.

¹³ Lipsey, Roger, *Hammarskjöld A Life*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013).

¹⁴ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, xiii.

¹⁵ Cox, Robert W., "The Executive Head An Essay on Leadership in International Organization" in *International Organization* 23 (1969), p. 207.

¹⁶ Fröhlich, p. 24-25.

impartial, but his policies were based mainly on clearly defined Cold War objectives – shared by the Western permanent members of the Security Council – and on a wish to enlarge the political role of the Secretary-General and the UN. This thesis argues that Hammarskjöld's tenure led to both the highpoint and the collapse of the political role of the Secretary-General and this thesis will show that his legacy is much more complicated than has been acknowledged previously. In a sense, the thesis is also a genealogy of many of the core UN principles of both peacekeeping and assistance to the developing world, both core aspects of the UN today that were developed by Hammarskjöld. The thesis argues that many of the principles that have guided the UN were created to serve certain Cold War objectives rather than being based on neutrality and impartiality.

This thesis is the first attempt to give a comprehensive portrait of Hammarskjöld's tenure as Secretary-General from both sides, utilising the national archives of Member States as well as UN archives. The large Hammarskjöld literature is mainly based on Hammarskjöld's speeches and his personal papers and does not engage with the relevant historical literature on the Cold War and American, British and French foreign policy or archival sources from these countries. The focus will be on Hammarskjöld's relations with the three Western permanent members of the Security Council and how his attempts to play a political role related to their respective policies. The picture that emerges is that of an astute realist, rather than a principled idealist. The conclusion will argue why "Machiavelli of peace" is a particularly apt title to describe Hammarskjöld and his development of the political role of the Secretary-General.

This also leads to a normative question: should the UN and its Secretary-General have a political role? Hammarskjöld believed that it should and he worked hard to develop it. The concept of neutrality and impartiality was the theoretical basis for Hammarskjöld's notion of an independent political role for the Secretary-General and must be central to its evaluation. Hammarskjöld stressed this and phrased a central question on this theme in a speech entitled "The International Civil Servant in Law and Fact". Delivered in Oxford on 30 May 1961 at the height of the Congo crisis the speech represents Hammarskjöld's most developed exposition of the political role of the Secretary-General. It is written as a response to Khrushchev's statement (aimed at

Hammar skjöld) “while there are neutral countries, there are no neutral men”. Hammar skjöld phrased the question in the following way:

“In fact, it [Khrushchev’s statement] challenges basic tenets in the philosophy of both the League of Nations and the United Nations, as one of the essential points on which these experiments in international cooperation represent an advance beyond traditional ‘conference diplomacy’ is the introduction on the international arena of joint permanent organs, employing a neutral civil service, and the use of such organs for executive purposes on behalf of all members of the organizations. Were it to be considered that the experience shows that this radical innovation in international life rests on a false assumption, because ‘no man can be neutral’, then we would be thrown back to 1919, and a searching re-appraisal would become necessary.”

In the conclusion we will return to Hammar skjöld’s question and argue that “a searching reappraisal” is indeed necessary.

The concept of neutrality and impartiality is central not just to a study of Hammar skjöld but also to the office of the Secretary-General in general. As has been pointed out elsewhere, a discussion about the future role of the UN rests on an understanding of its past.¹⁷ As Gross put it: “It has been said that a page of history is worth a volume of logic. Appraisal of a fully functioning United Nations executive may be aided by a glimpse behind the scenes of one or two significant moments of its history.”¹⁸

A Note on the Primary Sources and Literature Review

One feature of the source material deserves particular mention. Hammar skjöld wrote an enormous amount of memoranda for his own use, from summaries of conversations, or the facts of a situation to interpretations of important agreements. This is evident from the Dag Hammar skjöld Papers, but is also attested to by his contemporaries. The American diplomat Ernest Gross, whom Hammar skjöld hired as a consultant from time to time, described Hammar skjöld as:

¹⁷ Mazower, Mark, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 4.

¹⁸ Gross, *The United Nations: Structure for Peace* (New York: Harper, 1962), p. 30.

*“one of the most remarkable self-documenting people in history, if I may use that phrase. Not only did he have a genius for doing his own work, drafting, but he also, for example, made elaborate aide-memoirs, memoranda of conversations with officials, delegates. I’ve had the opportunity from time to time – in fact, he did me the honor frequently of showing me some, particularly in matters in which he happened to be engaged, in which he wanted to just think aloud with me. So I’m personally aware of the enormous volume of meticulously prepared aide-memoires and conversations.”*¹⁹

While these aide-mémoires give a fascinating insight into many events, they must also be treated with great caution, as they represent Hammarskjöld’s personal interpretation only. As Fröhlich already remarked, the Hammarskjöld papers were ordered in a very conspicuous way by Hammarskjöld himself.²⁰ Not only neatly kept, the section covering the Suez crisis was specifically collected by Hammarskjöld and entitled “The Suez Story”. It might well have been Hammarskjöld’s idea to write a book based on these materials. Any book based only on these papers – not any random papers found in Hammarskjöld’s office, but carefully selected files arranged by him – would therefore quite likely be Hammarskjöld’s version of the story. Urquhart, Fröhlich and Lipsey, all mainly based on the Hammarskjöld papers, also turn out to be, for all their other respective merits, largely the story from Hammarskjöld’s perspective. Urquhart even states in the foreword that “This book is written mainly from Hammarskjöld’s point of view”.²¹

The Hammarskjöld Papers contain documents in English, French, Swedish, and occasionally in German. This reflects the use of sources in this thesis, which is based on English, French and Swedish primary sources and literature and the occasional study in German. For the UN side of the story I have relied mainly on the Hammarskjöld Papers at the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm, the UN Archives in New York and the Andrew W. Cordier papers at Columbia University in New York. In addition I have also used private papers of many of Hammarskjöld’s friends and collaborators located in Oxford, New York and Princeton. To study Hammarskjöld’s relations with the Member States of the UN from the “other side” and how they reacted to his attempts to play a political role I have mainly used the national archives of the three Western permanent members of the Security Council in

¹⁹ Oral History Gross, p. 72.

²⁰ Fröhlich, p. 148.

²¹ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, xiii.

London, Paris and Washington. The focus has been on the reports from the permanent missions in New York and policy documents and instructions regarding UN affairs in capitals. I have also used the papers of several key individuals such as John Foster Dulles in Princeton and Couve de Murville and Henri Hoppenot in Paris.

I have also conducted interviews with Hammarskjöld's friend and chef-de-cabinet in Sweden Sverker Åström, his personal aid between 1958-1961 Wilhelm Wachtmeister, his French colleague from the Secretariat Claude de Kémoularia, and his nephew Knut Hammarskjöld. In addition I have used the many oral histories and memoirs of the different actors that throw further light on the topic. In particular the Oral History Transcripts of James Barco, which run to more than one thousand pages but have not been used in any study as far as I am aware, is a gold mine for the student of American foreign policy towards the UN. Barco was a member of the US permanent mission to the UN from 1949 to 1961 and eventually became deputy Permanent Representative. The fact that the interviews with Barco were recorded in 1963, directly after the events, makes them extra valuable.

There are two distinct strands in the literature on Hammarskjöld. The first consists of the works related to Dag Hammarskjöld and the UN (the Hammarskjöld literature) and the second is composed of works of international history relating to the Cold War, American, British and French foreign policy and studies of specific crises (the historical literature). The latter deal with Hammarskjöld and the UN in a more cursory way when not ignoring them.²² These two strands are quite distinct. Not only do they rely on different sources and methods, but they also do not communicate. The Hammarskjöld literature tends to rely mainly on the Hammarskjöld papers in the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm and the UN archives in New York. Most of these studies are written by UN enthusiasts and/or political scientists and take a distinctly positive view of Hammarskjöld, sometimes verging on the hagiographic. The historical literature, on the other hand, tends to be written by professional historians and relies mainly on national archives; the UN takes a marginal role. As an

²² On the Suez crisis there exist a few articles based on UK archives that deal specifically with Hammarskjöld's role, see e.g. Edward Johnson, "The Umpire on Whom the Sun Never Sets": Dag Hammarskjöld's Political Role and the British at Suez" in *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 8, no. 1 (1997); and Louis, Wm Roger "The United Nations and the Suez Crisis: British Ambivalence towards the Pope on the East River" in Louis, Wm Roger, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization: Collected Essays* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2006).

illustration Kalb²³, Kent²⁴ and Namikas²⁵ cover the Congo crisis mainly based on US archives (and some Soviet archives in the case of Namikas) and James²⁶ based mainly on British archives (although James also uses UN archives and the JFK presidential library to some extent). While these works do not focus on Hammarskjöld's political role they reveal enough to suggest that large pieces are missing from the Hammarskjöld literature. The general literature on the UN²⁷ and the Secretary-General²⁸ does not deal with these events in any detail.

Urquhart's Hammarskjöld biography from 1972 is still the most comprehensive study of the political role of the Secretary-General.²⁹ Among more recent books on Hammarskjöld, one strange aspect is that not only do they mainly rely on Urquhart for the facts, adding little or no new sources, but there is no engagement with the historical literature to assess Hammarskjöld's role in its context. This is all the more

²³ Kalb, Madeleine G., *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa from Eisenhower to Kennedy* (New York: Macmillan, 1982).

²⁴ Kent, John, *America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War Conflict in the Congo* (London: Routledge, 2010).

²⁵ Namikas, Lise A., *Battleground Africa: Cold War in the Congo, 1960-1965* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

²⁶ James, Alan, *Britain and the Congo Crisis, 1960-63* (New York: Macmillan, 1996).

²⁷ Berridge, Geoff and Jennings, Anthony (eds.), *Diplomacy at the UN* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985); Claude, Inis L., *Swords into plowshares: the problems and progress of international organization*, 4th Ed. (New York: Random House, 1971); Cunliffe, Philip, *Legions of Peace: UN Peacekeepers from the Global South* (London: Hurst, 2013); Findlay, Trevor, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Goodrich, Leland M. and Kay, David A., *The Process of International Organization* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973); James, Alan, *Peacekeeping and International Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); MacQueen, Norrie, *The United Nations, Peace Operations and the Cold War* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2011); MacQueen, Norrie, *Peacekeeping and the International System* (New York: Routledge, 2006); MacQueen, Norrie, *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa Since 1960* (New York: Pearson Education, 2002); Mazower, Mark, *No Enchanted Palace: The History of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012); Meisler, Stanley, *United Nations: The First Fifty Years* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995); Nicholas, H.G., *The United Nations as a Political Institution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975); Robert, Adam and Kingsbury, Benedict (eds.), *United Nations, Divided World: The UN's Role in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Simons, Geoff, *The United Nations, A Chronology of Conflict* (New York: Macmillan, 1994); Thakur, Ramesh, *The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); White, Nigel D., *Keeping the Peace: The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Wood, Robert S. (ed.), *The Process of International Organization* (New York: Random House, 1971).

²⁸ Chesterman, Simon (ed.), *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Gordenker, Leon, *The UN Secretary General and Secretariat* (London: Routledge, 2010); Gordenker, Leon and Rivlin, Benjamin, (eds.), *The Challenging Role of the UN Secretary-General Making "The Most Impossible in the World" Possible* (Westport: Praeger, 1993); Newman, Edward, *The UN Secretary-General from the Cold War to the New Era: A Global Peace and Security Mandate* (London: Houndmills, 1998); Rovine, Arthur W., *The First Fifty Years of the Secretary-General in World Politics: 1920-1970* (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1970). For a more detailed list see the bibliography in Chesterman.

²⁹ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*.

odd as even a cursory glance at Kalb, in print since 1982, or James, published in 1996, would have provided enough material to seriously question the conventional portrayal of Hammarskjöld that is contained in such recent works as Stahn/Melber³⁰, Lipsey³¹, Williams³² (published in 2014, 2013 and 2011 respectively) or Fröhlich³³ (first published in 2002, a revised English version came out in 2008). Nor would an enormous task of archival research have been necessary to follow up on these points as the printed collections of American documents in e.g. the *FRUS* volumes on the Congo Crisis are quite sufficient to give a much more complex and darker view of Hammarskjöld's role in the Congo than conventional accounts suggest. The recent Swedish studies on Hammarskjöld's career before he was elected Secretary-General in 1953, such as Appelqvist and Landberg, are an exception.³⁴ These studies add important new archival sources and contribute to a new interpretation of Hammarskjöld, indicating that "behind the picture of a strict civil servant looms the image of an exceptionally resolute power politician".³⁵

A special word might be appropriate on Urquhart's Hammarskjöld biography as it is still the golden standard that most Hammarskjöld biographies tend to refer back to for the facts. As an example, the arguably most read standard work on the history of the United Nations – Kennedy's *Parliament of Man* – relies exclusively on Urquhart for the Hammarskjöld years, including the Suez crisis and the Congo crisis.³⁶ Many have portrayed Urquhart as part of Hammarskjöld's closest circle, which adds legitimacy to his description of many events, especially those that are not referenced with a source. But Urquhart was never part of Hammarskjöld's closest circle as he himself has stated on many occasions.³⁷ As always, it is important to consider the background of the

³⁰ Melber/Stahn (eds.).

³¹ Lipsey.

³² Williams, Susan A., *Who Killed Hammarskjöld?: The UN, the Cold War, and White Supremacy in Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

³³ Fröhlich.

³⁴ Appelqvist, and Landberg, Hans, *På väg Dag Hammarskjöld som svensk ämbetsman* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2012), further works are cited in chapter 1.

³⁵ Appelqvist, Örjan, "Civil servant or politician? Dag Hammarskjöld's role in Swedish government policy in the Forties" in *Sveriges Riksbank Economic Review*, 2005:3, p. 49.

³⁶ Kennedy, Paul M., *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (New York: Random House, 2006).

³⁷ E.g. in his memoirs, Urquhart, Brian, *A Life in Peace and War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987); but also in Columbia Oral History Urquhart.

writer.³⁸ When Urquhart's Hammarskjöld biography was published in 1972 Urquhart had just been appointed Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs in charge of peacekeeping operations. A firm believer in the UN all his life, Urquhart had a strong interest in portraying Hammarskjöld, and the birth of peacekeeping operations, as positively as possible. Urquhart has also made comments in other books and interviews that are far more critical of Hammarskjöld than anything in his Hammarskjöld biography.³⁹

Outline

The first part of my thesis is entitled "looking for a role" and describes Hammarskjöld's life-long quest for a mission that he eventually found in the office of the Secretary-General of the UN. The first chapter focuses on Hammarskjöld's character and background as they are essential to understanding his future actions as Secretary-General. I argue that Hammarskjöld's central concept of the neutral and impartial civil servant with a political role was largely based on a conservative outlook that was anything but apolitical as Hammarskjöld claimed. The chapter also explores Hammarskjöld's work with Western integration and the Marshall Plan, two formative experiences that he would also draw on as Secretary-General. The second chapter deals with Hammarskjöld's first years at the UN and how he reorganized the Secretariat by centralizing all political functions into his own hands as a necessary prerequisite for the role he intended to play. The chapter also outlines Hammarskjöld's early ideas of a political role for the Secretary-General. The third chapter analyses Hammarskjöld's first attempts to put these ideas into action. I challenge the view that these early attempts at mediation were "extraordinary successful" and "made most of the Members enthusiastic supporters of an active mediator in the office of the Secretary-General".⁴⁰

The second part is called "finding a role" and explores how Hammarskjöld found a political role to fill at the interface of the Cold War and decolonisation. In the fourth chapter I attempt to show how the Suez crisis became a catalyst for a much more

³⁸ A point made with great verve in for example Carr, Edward Hallett, *What is History?* (London: Macmillan, 1961).

³⁹ See e.g. Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War*, pp. 141-142.

⁴⁰ See Zacher, p. 250; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 596.

ambitious political role for the Secretary-General. It then describes how Hammarskjöld embraced this new role and elaborated it into a full theory (the “vacuum theory”) of an interventionist Secretary-General after his reelection in 1957. I argue that the acceptance of this new political role was premised on the fact Hammarskjöld managed to persuade the Americans and the British that he would wield it in their favour at a time when they were losing control over the General Assembly due to the influx of newly independent countries. I also challenge the view that Hammarskjöld “saw the UN as the protector and helper of small and new states”.⁴¹ The chapter then explores how Hammarskjöld’s vacuum theory was expanded with a geographical component as Hammarskjöld devised a new and ambitious role for the UN in Africa and how this was perceived in Washington, London and Paris.

The third part deals with “the problems with the role” and is dedicated to Hammarskjöld’s handling of the Congo crisis. I argue that his policies in the Congo are best analysed as three quite distinct periods that correspond to the three chapters in this part. The relation between the three periods resemble those of a thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis as Hammarskjöld’s policy in the second period represents a 180 degree turn from the policy he pursued in the first period and the third is a combination of the first and the second. This division also corresponds to the periods when the Congo crisis was handled in the Security Council (the first period), the General Assembly (the second period), and in both organs (the third period). The three periods illustrate the very different problems this created for Hammarskjöld and how his attempts to solve this and gather support for his policies influenced and changed his policies to the extent that, I will argue, he became a prisoner of his own organisation and based policies on what was best for the UN and not what was best for the Congo.

The fifth chapter argues that Hammarskjöld saw the Congo as an opportunity to implement the ideas of a UN presence in Africa discussed in chapter six going as far as suggesting to turn the Congo into a de facto UN trusteeship. This led Hammarskjöld to ignore the Congolese government to pursue his two main policy goals of keeping the Soviet Union out of the Congo and ensuring that aid to the Congo would be exclusively multilateral (i.e. channelled via the UN). I argue that

⁴¹ Urquhart, p. 595-596.

Prime Minister Lumumba's resistance to these ideas led Hammarskjöld to actively undercut him and eventually support a coup against him. In the sixth chapter I argue that Hammarskjöld did a volte-face and changed his policy completely from an extreme interventionism to that of an extreme non-interventionism in an attempt to keep the support of the Afro-Asian bloc in the General Assembly while avoiding measures that could help Lumumba. The seventh chapter argues that the new Kennedy administration gave Hammarskjöld a second chance in the Congo as it allowed him to follow a policy that could get support from the Afro-Asians while achieving Cold War objectives. Contrary to previous accounts that blame Hammarskjöld's lieutenants in the Congo for the much criticised decision to use force in Katanga (operation Morthor), I argue that Hammarskjöld was not only aware, but had ordered it in what was a risky gamble driven by the need to produce a success ahead of the General Assembly that was due to start in New York a few days later.

Part I: Finding a Role

Chapter 1: “Hammarskjöld as a way of life”

“L’huître la plus charmante du monde”⁴² – “The most charming oyster in the world”. With these words the correspondent of *Le Monde* introduced the newly elected Secretary-General of the UN to his readers in 1953. The first interviews only added to the mystique surrounding the Secretary-General’s persona by focussing on his two perceived favourite hobbies: the poetry of T.S. Eliot and mountaineering.⁴³ The *New York Times* was quick to satirise him as declaring lines from the *Waste Land* from a mountaintop.⁴⁴ In his first meeting with the international press on arrival at the airport in New York, Hammarskjöld told the assembled reporters that “In my new official capacity the private man should disappear and the international public servant take his place”.⁴⁵ But the private man Hammarskjöld is key to understanding the international public servant and how he developed the political role of the Secretary-General.

A. “The Great Technocrat”

A.1 *Upbringing and Education*

Dag Hammarskjöld’s background and upbringing instilled in him a “markedly conservative feature” that he acknowledged on several occasions.⁴⁶ In an appearance on Edward R. Murrow’s radio show “This I believe” in 1954 Hammarskjöld said that: “The world in which I grew up was dominated by principles and ideals of a time far from ours [...] I now recognize and endorse, unreservedly, those very beliefs which were once handed down to me”.⁴⁷

Dag Hjalmar Agne Carl Hammarskjöld was born in 1905 into an illustrious Swedish family. The same year Dag’s father Hjalmar Hammarskjöld, then Minister of Education in a conservative government served as one of four members on the

⁴² Meuty, Pierre, in *Le Monde*, 3 April 1953.

⁴³ Bowen, C., and McKelway, St. Clair, “Like a mirror” in *New Yorker*, 18 April 1953.

⁴⁴ Breit, Harvey, “In and out of books” in *New York Times Book Review*, 26 April 1953.

⁴⁵ Statement to the Press on Arrival at International Airport, New York, 9 April 1953, in Cordier, Andrew W. and Foote, Wilder (eds.), *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations*, Volume II, Dag Hammarskjöld, 1953-1956 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 29.

⁴⁶ Hammarskjöld, Dag, ”Statstjänstemannen och samhället”, in *Tiden* No. 43, 1951, p. 396.

⁴⁷ “Old Creeds in a New World” – written for Edward R. Murrow’s Radio Program “This I Believe” in Cordier and Foote (eds.) *Public Papers*, Vol II, p. 195.

Swedish delegation that negotiated the dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway.⁴⁸ In this manner Dag Hammarskjöld was born as Sweden got its final contours and lost the last vestiges of a past as a great power. The Hammarskjölds had been raised to nobility in 1610 for feats on the battlefield for King Charles IX of Sweden. The Hammarskjölds had continued to serve king and country, but as civil servants and administrators. Dag Hammarskjöld's father Hjalmar Hammarskjöld continued this tradition. He made a career as a civil servant, judge and international legal scholar and even became Prime Minister during the troubled years 1914 to 1917. Hjalmar's brother served as a conservative defence minister and two of his cousins also served as ministers. Dag Hammarskjöld grew up in Uppsala Castle, where his father resided as the Governor of Uppland. As an "independent conservative"⁴⁹ Hjalmar Hammarskjöld was not a member of any political party. His example and views on civil service in the higher interest of the state would strongly influence his youngest son Dag Hammarskjöld.⁵⁰

From his mother's side Dag inherited a religious and mystical bent. Religion was important in Hammarskjöld's life and his mother was a devout Christian and close friend of Nathan Söderblom, the Archbishop of Sweden, resident in Uppsala, and young Dag spent much time in the household of the Archbishop.⁵¹ Söderblom was one of the founders of the ecumenical movement and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1930. From an early age Hammarskjöld also developed a keen interest in the great mystics of the Christian tradition. For his sixteenth birthday he received a copy of Thomas a Kempis' *De imitatione Christi* and later he was encouraged by the wife of Söderblom to read Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*.⁵² Hammarskjöld would quote both authors frequently in *Markings*, his posthumously published work written in the same mystical Christian tradition. *Markings* contains observations and poems by Hammarskjöld and is, in his own words "a kind of journal" and a "white-book concerning my negotiations with myself – and with God".⁵³

⁴⁸ Thelin, Bengt, *Dag Hammarskjöld – Barnet Skolpojken Studenten* (Falun: Carlssons, 2005), p. 28-29.

⁴⁹ Söderberg, Sten, *Hammarskjöld A Pictorial Biography* (New York: Viking Press, 1962) p. 26.

⁵⁰ See discussion of Hammarskjöld's speech on his father in the Swedish Academy 1954 below.

⁵¹ Thelin, p. 48.

⁵² See Little, Marie-Noëlle, *The Knight and the Troubadour*, (Uppsala: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 2011) p. 22; and Kelen, Emery, *Hammarskjöld* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1966), p. 36.

⁵³ At his death, when the manuscript of *Markings* was found, those who had known Hammarskjöld declared that they had no idea of his strong religious feelings as expressed in *Markings*. All references

Great things were expected from the Hammarskjöld children and their father assumed that they would work hard in order to live up to the great expectations. From an early age, Dag showed a propensity for hard work and he was one of the brightest students in his school. Literature and reading took pride of place among his interests and he preferred books to the more mundane pleasures that a student town like Uppsala could offer. For dancing and girls, he had little time or interest.⁵⁴ Later on in life, many commented on his natural shyness and uneasiness with physical contact and his dislike of “cocktail-party talk”.⁵⁵

In 1923 Dag Hammarskjöld enrolled in Uppsala University where he first studied economics, philosophy and French. After a bachelor’s degree (*filosofie kandidat*) he proceeded to take a law degree (*juris kandidat*), then considered mandatory for the higher positions in the Swedish civil service, while continuing with economics.⁵⁶ In 1927 he also made a short study trip to Cambridge, where he studied for, among others, John Maynard Keynes.⁵⁷

As a young man, eager to understand his time and its phenomena, Hammarskjöld spent much of his time searching for answers. At the law faculty in Uppsala, he attended the lectures of Professor Axel Hägerström, the famous proponent of value nihilism. A theory that, in the words of Hammarskjöld’s university friend and later distinguished diplomat Gunnar Hägglöf, “could just as easily be used to defend Bolsheviks as fascists”.⁵⁸ Very much *à la mode*, many people felt deeply concerned with the inherent emptiness of this philosophy. Such theories of value nihilism and the absurdity of the world led to many different responses in Europe, some atheist like the existentialist movement, some religious like the *renouveau catholique* in France.

are to the English translation of W.H. Auden and Leif Sjöberg in Hammarskjöld, Dag, *Markings* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964).

⁵⁴ Lash, Joseph P., *Dag Hammarskjöld* (London: Cassell, 1962) p. 21.

⁵⁵ See e.g. Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, pp. 27-28.

⁵⁶ Elder, Neil C.M., *Government in Sweden The Executive at Work* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1970) p. 103.

⁵⁷ Landberg, Hans, “Time for choosing – Dag Hammarskjöld and the Riksbank in the Thirties” in *Sveriges Riksbank Economic Review*, 2005:3, p. 22. Keynes supposedly said of Hammarskjöld that, while he was intelligent “I don’t think we can expect much from him”, see Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 368.

⁵⁸ Hägglöf, Gunnar, *Möte med Europa* (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt, 1964), p. 24.

The *renouveau catholique* in France interested Hammarskjöld in particular.⁵⁹ This was also echoed in the Anglo-Saxon world and two of Hammarskjöld's favourite authors, T.S. Eliot and W.H. Auden, converted to Anglicanism and Catholicism respectively. Hammarskjöld was also impressed by the book *Maria Cross*, about a group of catholic writers.⁶⁰ Later he would appoint the author of *Maria Cross*, Connor Cruise O'Brien, to a leading position in the UN intervention in Congo. In Sweden, this catholic renaissance had its self-proclaimed apostle in Sven Stolpe, a friend of Hammarskjöld from Uppsala who also converted to Catholicism and later wrote a book about Hammarskjöld.

But Dag's ambition was in the field of economics. Hjalmar Hammarskjöld retired from his post as Governor in 1930 and moved to Stockholm. Dag, who was still living at home, moved along. He continued studying economics at Stockholm University and was also appointed assistant secretary to a governmental committee on unemployment, a post that he occupied while at the same time working on his doctoral thesis in economics. One of the members of the Commission, Social Democrat Ernst Wigforss, would become Hammarskjöld's benefactor as Finance Minister.⁶¹

Hammarskjöld's doctoral thesis was widely regarded as "exceedingly difficult to understand".⁶² His opponent at the *viva* was the world-renowned economist Gunnar Myrdal. Myrdal was severe in his criticism. He censured Hammarskjöld for not explaining sufficiently the assumptions he was using which on many occasions left the reasoning arguments hanging in the air. This would in time become a typical feature of Hammarskjöld. While his arguments were always clear and rational to himself, they were often less so to his listeners, who maybe did not know, or did not share, the assumptions behind the reasoning. With a disappointing note on his thesis

⁵⁹ Sven Stolpe, himself a convert to Catholicism, writes that Hammarskjöld was "the first Swede I ever met who had a sensitivity, not only for the religious struggle of the French elites, but who was also fully aware of the whole *renouveau catholique*", see Stolpe, Sven, *Dag Hammarskjölds andliga väg* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1964), p. 25.

⁶⁰ Tingsten, Herbert, *Mitt Liv Tio år 1953 – 1963* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1964) p. 111. See also Tingsten, Herbert, *När skymningen faller* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1972) p. 130 ff.

⁶¹ Landberg, "Time for choosing", p. 13.

⁶² Landberg, pp. 85-86.

the road to academia was closed and Dag Hammarskjöld instead followed his father and brothers into the Swedish civil service.⁶³

A.2 The Civil Servant

During Christmas 1931 Hammarskjöld wrote a letter to his close friend from Uppsala Gudmund Björck that summarised how he viewed the new road he had embarked on in the capital. In the letter, he spoke of how he missed his university life and friends in Uppsala and the aversion, mixed with self-contempt, for his present employment as a civil servant in Stockholm and the world he was being drawn into. He confessed to Björck how he was defending himself against becoming a cynical careerist and climber while thinly disguising his feeling of superiority towards those around him. He was fighting with his loneliness, between bitterness and a feeling of being chosen. Hammarskjöld also spoke of how his loneliness could be purified into an inner loneliness that could release him from all bonds and prepare him for all sacrifices.⁶⁴

During his work with the committee on unemployment, Hammarskjöld viewed himself as a technocratic expert. In the words of Landberg, he tried to "make the political and value charged committee work scientific".⁶⁵ Through his work in the committee Hammarskjöld managed to affirm himself as an efficient and hardworking bureaucrat. His doctoral thesis, although admittedly difficult to understand, had also allowed him into the circle of leading economists in Stockholm. Dag's brother Bo wrote in a letter to their brother Åke that Dag was being heavily exploited, but that he also thereby gained "a very practical polish of his far too theoretical disposition".⁶⁶ Hammarskjöld's aspiration that the committee's work could be held on a scientific level, above politics, on such a contentious political topic as unemployment, quickly fell through. This did not, however, mean that he changed his views. On the contrary, he criticised this turn from the scientific to the political sphere in a letter: "The work [in the committee] has, for various reasons, become strongly politicised and in proportion thereto my own interest in it has diminished. Besides, it is dreary to have

⁶³ Hammarskjöld's three elder brothers had all at some point worked in the Swedish civil service.

⁶⁴ Landberg, p. 69.

⁶⁵ Landberg, p. 92.

⁶⁶ Landberg, p. 69.

to redo your work so it will rhyme with the views of others.”⁶⁷ Hammarskjöld had no interest in changing his own “scientific” views to accommodate base “politics”.

The greatest political question of the time was how the state should respond to economic cycles of depression and prosperity. In October 1935 Hammarskjöld presented the paper ”The role of central banks in today’s economic life”⁶⁸, an early example of Hammarskjöld’s views on economy, as well as of his more general political views on the role of the government. In the paper Hammarskjöld rated technocrats above politicians and argued for the independence of the central bank. He also expressed a more general support for “independent state intervention”. Hammarskjöld argued that the macroeconomic demands on modern society inevitably led to an increase in state intervention. This led to the question how political action should be allocated between the government and the non-party political state agencies, such as the central bank. To Hammarskjöld, the answer was clear: “In principle it is preferable that the government, when new, intricate functions are imposed upon it by developments, is supported by institutions that, like central banks, are essentially removed from the direct influence of party politics.” Hammarskjöld was quite clear that this was not based on ideological, and certainly not socialist, ideas, but it rather represented a factual need for a larger role for the state.

In order to deal with the cycles of prosperity and depression, the state needed to fight back against special interests. For this the state would have to rely on “non-party political organs” such as the central bank. In a rather idealistic view, Hammarskjöld believed that economists, through their social engineering skills, could serve the state as the efficient promoters of the common public interest, whereas politicians tended to represent special interests.⁶⁹

After dividing his time as a civil servant between the Ministry of Finance and the Swedish Central Bank (*Riksbanken*), it first seemed that Hammarskjöld would join the Central Bank permanently, when he was offered a post as Secretary there in 1935 by Ivar Rooth, the Governor of the Central Bank. One year later, however, Hammarskjöld was rather sensationally appointed State Secretary in the Finance

⁶⁷ Landberg, p. 96.

⁶⁸ Hammarskjöld, Dag, ”Centralbankerna i nutidens ekonomiska liv, föredrag vid Svenska Bankföreningens årsmöte 1935” in *Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Bankföreningen* 61, 1935.

⁶⁹ Landberg, p. 114.

Ministry, second only to Finance Minister Ernst Wigforss. From 1941, Hammarskjöld divided his time between the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank, as he was made Chairman of the board of the Central Bank, in addition to his post as State Secretary.

As State Secretary at the Ministry of Finance from 1936 to 1945, Hammarskjöld developed a close working relationship with the Finance Minister Wigforss. In terms of policy, he promoted a traditional line of a strictly balanced government budget, with limited scope for under-balancing and measures of labour market policy. As Chairman of the Central Bank, Hammarskjöld was also deeply involved with monetary policy. During and after the war, he increasingly dealt with issues regarding the financing of Sweden's foreign trade and combating domestic price increases in the bleak post-war world economy. In his double role as State Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and Chairman of the Central Bank, Hammarskjöld played a central role for economic policy in Sweden. One study concludes that “[p]erhaps the most remarkable thing about Dag Hammarskjöld’s role as economist and public servant in Sweden from the mid-1930s to the early 1950s is that a non-political official could exert so much influence on central aspects of economic policy.”⁷⁰ To some extent this was made possible by Hammarskjöld’s devotion to hard work and the long hours he spent in the office. His work habits, as well as the demands he put on his colleagues, soon became legendary in the Finance Ministry. Hammarskjöld was also a perfectionist and very few memoranda, if any, left the Finance Ministry without Hammarskjöld’s pen making revisions or complete redrafts.⁷¹ His tendency to micromanage would stay with him all his life. To some extent it was based on his high standards and perfectionism, but it was also part of his desire to be in control so that he could make sure the whole ministry was going exactly in the direction he wanted it to go. Several of the entries in *Markings* show Hammarskjöld’s attitude to colleagues and subordinates who were not up to his standards.⁷²

⁷⁰ Lindbeck, Assar, “Dag Hammarskjöld as economist and government official” in *Sveriges Riksbank Economic Review*, 2005:3, p. 9.

⁷¹ Landberg, pp. 129-130.

⁷² E.g. Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 35: ”It makes one’s heart ache when one sees that a man has staked his soul upon some end, the hopeless imperfection and futility of which is immediately obvious to everyone but himself.”

Hammarskjöld's work ethic was also a means of escape. As one entry in *Markings* puts it: "When all becomes silent around you, and you recoil in terror – see that your work has become a flight from suffering and responsibility, your unselfishness a thinly-disguised masochism; hear, throbbing within you, the spiteful cruel heart of the steppe-wolf – do not then anaesthetize yourself by once again calling up the shouts and horns of the hunt, but gaze steadfastly at the vision until you have plumbed into its depths."⁷³ In the entries in *Markings* from this period, Hammarskjöld accuses himself of cynical careerism.⁷⁴ Hammarskjöld had a very high opinion of himself, masked behind a restrained and somewhat shy personality: "Praise nauseates you – but woe betide him who does not recognise your worth."⁷⁵ Several of his contemporaries also noted these traits. Söderlund wrote of Hammarskjöld that he was "for all his intelligence, too power-hungry, self-sufficient and incapable of admitting any errors, a rather dangerous person at the head of a large and economic activity".⁷⁶

"Hammarskjöld is a conservative of a bureaucratic background", one of his contemporaries, Per Jacobsson, wrote. "He is really a 'tory' and as such is capable of allowing the guardianship of the state to extend quite far before he reacts. He seems to have a dislike for the very word 'liberalism', and 'capitalism' does not appeal to him either."⁷⁷ In his memoirs Ernst Wigforss, the long-time Social Democratic finance minister and Hammarskjöld's boss, concluded that "Hammarskjöld did not fit into any of the existing political parties". Wigforss described Hammarskjöld as a "tory", noting that his view on the role of the state was coloured by an older conservatism where the state was a highly developed form of human coexistence and a guardian of the common interest against special interests. This also made it easy for Hammarskjöld, although no social democrat to place himself among the promoters of a planned economy.⁷⁸ Hammarskjöld agreed with finance minister Wigforss and the economic policies as related to economic cycles and the, still relatively "liberal", economic planning of the Social Democratic party.⁷⁹ Hammarskjöld preferred to see himself as a non-political expert. In a debate with Gunnar Myrdal, Trade Minister at

⁷³ Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 37.

⁷⁴ Landberg, p. 191.

⁷⁵ Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 36.

⁷⁶ Quoted from Landberg, p. 207.

⁷⁷ Quoted from Landberg, p. 214.

⁷⁸ Quoted from Landberg, p. 125.

⁷⁹ Wigforss, Ernst, *Minnen III 1932-1949* (Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1954) pp. 198-200.

the time, Hammarskjöld cautioned against what he called Myrdal's "statism". Instead, Hammarskjöld argued that the state should remain neutral. As Landberg points out Hammarskjöld's neutrality of the state here meant guarding the status quo, a markedly conservative position.⁸⁰ Later on, as Secretary-General, Hammarskjöld would again argue for the status quo in international relations, again a conservative position in a time when revolutionary movements were challenging the status quo.

A.3 Criticism of Hammarskjöld's Double Role

In time, Hammarskjöld became more ambivalent about the independence of the Central Bank that he had embraced in his 1935 paper. After his employment as State Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, he started arguing that monetary and fiscal policies should be coordinated to a greater extent. From 1941, Hammarskjöld *de facto* united the monetary and economic policies in his dual role as State Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and Chairman of the Central Bank. Both leading conservatives and liberals criticised the fact that the State Secretary in the Finance Ministry was also the Chairman of the Central Bank as this would put the Central Bank's independent status under undue influence from the Finance Ministry, a political institution. Yet Hammarskjöld did not see his work as State Secretary in the Ministry of Finance as politically tied to the Social Democratic party and regarded himself as "outside political life". But this fine distinction was lost on Hammarskjöld's critics, who saw him as the "stooge" of Finance Minister Wigforss.⁸¹ Eli Heckscher, who had been Hjalmar Hammarskjöld's closest advisor on economic affairs, criticised Hammarskjöld in a letter, writing: "I think it is a mistake to always try and give a theoretical motivation for what must by its very nature to a great extent be pure political actions...". Heckscher wanted Hammarskjöld to reconsider his dual role as the State Secretary in the Finance Ministry and his attempt to claim for himself, at the same time the role of the independent expert.⁸²

Hammarskjöld addressed the criticism in a meeting with the Board of Directors of the Central Bank where he said that the criticism was completely unfounded, but that he

⁸⁰ Landberg, pp. 240-241.

⁸¹ Lash, p. 32.

⁸² Quoted from Landberg, p. 178.

would nonetheless offer his resignation as Chairman of the Board if there was a widely held view that his dual role was to the detriment of the Central Bank. But before taking such a step, Hammarskjöld wanted to hear how the members of the board viewed the criticism and its practical implications. He then added that he wanted his statement, as well as all comments thereon, added to the official protocol of the meeting.

This move showed that during his years in the corridors of power Hammarskjöld had become an astute chess player. As Landberg has shown, Hammarskjöld's purpose was to show that he was only serving the common good and would have been happy to step aside. But by offering to resign only after the members of the board had expressed their opinion, he cleverly put the onus on the members of the board, and made sure that any statements would be made public. If they censored Hammarskjöld and asked for his resignation, it would imply that they as the board had not been independent either. The members of the board were left with one option only and, to avoid admitting any possibility of partiality, they made a unanimous statement in which they described Hammarskjöld's dual role as advantageous in many ways, rather than problematic, and strongly urged Hammarskjöld to remain in his position of chairman.⁸³

Defeat had been turned into advantage for the moment. But the criticism did not cease. The press kept on criticizing Hammarskjöld, although now some of the attacks were also directed to the board that had, in the words of one paper, "refrained from the use of its own reason in order to use that of Mr. Hammarskjöld all the more". One newspaper wrote that Hammarskjöld represented "a bureaucracy that has succeeded in identifying itself with those in power to such a degree that it can no longer differentiate between its own opinions and those of the powers that be".⁸⁴ In a regular column of political satire Hammarskjöld was parodied as "Hammaraspik" (a derogatory name once used for his ancestor the poet Lorenzo Hammarskjöld): "Hammaraspik is the great technocrat. He sees problems exclusively as an expert. It is below his dignity to have political views on them."

⁸³ Appelqvist, Örjan, "Civil servant or politician? Dag Hammarskjöld's role in Swedish government policy in the Forties" in *Sveriges Riksbank Economic Review*, 2005:3, pp. 45-46. See also Landberg, pp. 329-332.

⁸⁴ Quoted from Landberg, p. 333.

Still, Hammarskjöld's work as State Secretary gave him a sense of mission. It accorded him the opportunity for fulfilment of his strong sense of a need to serve a higher purpose while allowing him to keep his integrity, as he claimed to be motivated by rational analysis rather than ideologically charged or political arguments.⁸⁵ But he was looking for a larger and more fulfilling role.

B “The most friendly and western-minded”

B.1 Sweden's Man in the West

During the Second World War, Hammarskjöld travelled to London several times to discuss Sweden's role in the economic future of Europe after the war and to negotiate an Anglo-Swedish payments agreement.⁸⁶ As an expert on both economic and monetary issues, with his insights into the Central Bank as well as the Ministry of Finance and with the complete confidence of the government, Hammarskjöld had “now gained for himself considerable authority behind the scenes”, according to a British report that also noted that he was “very capable and pro-British”.⁸⁷ Hammarskjöld's negotiations with the British and the Americans during and immediately after the Second World War were seen as a success in Sweden, and the Foreign Ministry considered making him a special contact man with the USA in early 1946.⁸⁸ Both the British and the Americans also held Hammarskjöld in high regard from the beginning. This new role as Sweden's main authority on international economic issues was made official when Hammarskjöld moved from the Ministry of Finance to the Foreign Ministry with the title of Envoy extraordinary and Minister plenipotentiary in 1945, although he remained as Chairman of the Central Bank until 1948.⁸⁹

Hammarskjöld's position brought him to the frontline of Sweden's economic negotiations with the Americans regarding Sweden's role in the new world economic

⁸⁵ Landberg, p. 131.

⁸⁶ Ahlström, Göran, and Carlson, Benny, ”Hammarskjöld, Sweden and Bretton Woods” in *Sveriges Riksbank Economic Review*, 2005:3, pp. 57, 59.

⁸⁷ *Leading personalities in Sweden 1946* – No 9854/362/42 Henderson to Bevin, 31 July 1946, FO371/56947.

⁸⁸ Landberg, p. 358.

⁸⁹ Appelqvist, “Civil servant”, p. 36.

system.⁹⁰ Hammarskjöld's negotiations and Swedish foreign policy in general, were a tightrope act of balancing Sweden's officially declared neutrality with the need to keep up imports and exports and finance Sweden's international trade in the struggling post-war economy.

Caught between Germany and the Allies in the war, Sweden now found itself trapped between Moscow and Washington. Sweden was dependent on imports of material and machinery from the US, but Swedish exports to the US did not match imports and this led to a significant dollar deficit. In 1947 this led to a crisis in Sweden and import restrictions were introduced. Hammarskjöld was sent to Washington to renegotiate the 1935 US-Swedish Trade Treaty so that Sweden could check the unfavourable balance of trade and excessive imports of non-essential goods without falling foul of the obligations under the treaty.⁹¹ Import restrictions were, however, merely a short-term remedy and in the autumn of 1947 Hammarskjöld tried to negotiate a dollar loan from Washington without success. The Americans were already planning for European aid on a grander scheme. After Marshall's famous speech on 5 June 1947 the coordination of the Marshall Plan started in Paris. Hammarskjöld was appointed the Swedish representative to the working party that would become the Committee on European Economic Cooperation (CEEC).⁹² The British were pushing for Sweden, and Hammarskjöld personally, to become more involved as they felt that both the country and its chosen representative were likely to be important and like-minded allies in negotiations with the French and other Continentals.⁹³ When the work resulted in the creation of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) on 16 April 1948, Hammarskjöld was appointed vice chairman of its Executive Committee. Again, this was to a large extent due to British machinations to tie Sweden closer to the European cooperation and make use of Hammarskjöld whom they viewed as competent and generally pro-British.⁹⁴ One British diplomat characterised Hammarskjöld as one of the leading members of the OEEC and as "one

⁹⁰ Ahlström/Carlson, p. 76.

⁹¹ *US relations to Sweden*, Stockholm (Jerram) to Foreign Office, 7 May 1947, No 5445/230/42, FO371/66495.

⁹² Landberg, p. 385-386.

⁹³ Landberg, p. 396-397.

⁹⁴ Landberg, p. 419.

of the most constructive, intelligent and high powered features of an otherwise rather arid landscape.”⁹⁵

Initially, Hammarskjöld tried to restrain the American influence on the OEEC.⁹⁶ He tried to keep the negotiations in Paris strictly to the economic aid and was wary of the French, who were pushing for further political cooperation between the Western European states and the Americans.⁹⁷ In contrast, the relations between Hammarskjöld and the British delegation were very good.⁹⁸ During these negotiations Hammarskjöld also made many important personal contacts and built a network among diplomats and economists that would become of great use to him later on as UN Secretary-General, men such as the head of the European Cooperation Administration (ECA), Paul Hoffmann and the representative of State Department at ECA, Henri Labouisse.⁹⁹ But also Sir Pierson Dixon and Hervé Alphand, who would go on to become the British and French Permanent Representatives at the UN, respectively. Hammarskjöld was aided by his fluency in English, French and German. Hammarskjöld’s English was “excellent”¹⁰⁰, and his French was “good but not idiomatic”¹⁰¹. He had made literary translations from all three languages.¹⁰²

When Sweden was offered Marshall help, it was gracefully accepted, although it was clear that the cooperation would not be limited to economic issues. Hammarskjöld acknowledged this in a letter to the Swedish Foreign Ministry but regarded it as unavoidable, not only to get the Marshall Aid, but because of the need for Sweden to fit into the formal organisation of European reconstruction as a prerequisite for economic cooperation with Western Europe and the US. Hammarskjöld was an outspoken supporter of Western European economic integration and he did not let the

⁹⁵ Quoted from Landberg, p. 421.

⁹⁶ Karlsson, Birgit, “Sweden and the OEEC, 1947-1950: Walking the tightrope”, in *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 1996, 44 (3), pp. 222-243.

⁹⁷ *Memorandum by Hammarskjöld (Skrivelse av Hammarskjöld till Utrikesrådet Grafström)*, Paris, 17 July 1947, Riksarkivet, H7L: 371.

⁹⁸ *Memorandum by Hammarskjöld (Angående Paris-konferensen under arbetsperioden 12-19 juli 1947)*, 20 July 1947, Riksarkivet, H7L: 371.

⁹⁹ See Landberg p. 436 and p. 444.

¹⁰⁰ *Memorandum regarding Visit of Monsieur Dag Hammarskjöld by H.A.F. Hohler for the Minister of State (Selwyn Lloyd)*, 19 July, 1952, N W 1151/23, FO371/100943.

¹⁰¹ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 270.

¹⁰² See translation of Saint-John Perse’s *Chroniques*, Perse, Saint-John, *Chronique Krönika* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1960); Djuna Barnes’ *Antiphon*, translated together with Karl Ragnar Gierow, Barnes, Djuna, *Växelsången* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1961). When he died, Hammarskjöld was translating Martin Buber’s *Du und Ich* from German.

hesitations of the Swedish government rein him in. As the British reported “Hammarskjöld is one of its [OEEC] most ardent frequenters and supporters”.¹⁰³

By the end of 1947 the Cold War was making its presence felt in Stockholm. The Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén noted in his diary on 18 November 1947 that an American diplomat had explained that those who were not clearly on the side of the United States would be seen as part of the Eastern Bloc.¹⁰⁴ Hammarskjöld noticed this in his negotiations when his American counterparts expressed their discontent over the trade agreement that Sweden had signed with the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁵ This was a sign of things to come.

With the arrival of Freeman Matthews as American ambassador to Stockholm at the end of 1947, a campaign against Sweden’s neutrality and unwillingness to take a stand against the Soviet bloc started.¹⁰⁶ In a cable to the State Department Matthews singled out Hammarskjöld for his “great influence and authority [...] in the Swedish Government” and urged his colleagues in Washington to have a “frank and emphatic talk” with Hammarskjöld regarding Swedish support for the European Recovery Program.¹⁰⁷ After Hammarskjöld reported back to Foreign Minister Undén, the Swedes emphatically gave their support to the program.

In his study of Sweden and the Western European integration between 1945 and 1949, Malmberg concluded that Hammarskjöld “more than anyone else shaped Sweden’s policy towards Europe during these early years”.¹⁰⁸ Landberg agrees with this position and adds that “no decisive decisions were made without asking for his analysis and opinion”. In June 1948 the Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander wrote in his diary that “the negotiations regarding the Marshall Plan signify a great personal success for Hammarskjöld, something which makes me very happy. He does not have an easy situation at present but what he has achieved for Sweden in the first hand, but

¹⁰³ Roger Makins to Secretary of State (Eden), 18 June 1952, N W 1151/21 (A), FO 371/100943.

¹⁰⁴ Landberg, p. 371.

¹⁰⁵ Landberg, p. 374.

¹⁰⁶ Landberg, p. 414.

¹⁰⁷ Telegram Stockholm to State 5 January 1948 FRUS 1948 Vol III.

¹⁰⁸ af Malmberg, Mikael, *Den ståndaktiga nationalstaten. Sverige och den västeuropeiska integrationen 1945-1949* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1994) pp. 76-79.

indirectly also for Europe, cannot be valued highly enough.”¹⁰⁹ But the Americans would demand more from the Swedes.

B.2 Flexible Neutrality or the Strange Case of Dr Undén and Mr Hammarskjöld

Hammarskjöld had brought the negotiations regarding the Marshall Plan to a successful end and it was time to start to think about his next career move. Hammarskjöld was still looking for a role. In *Markings* there is an entry from this period:

*”At every moment you choose yourself. But do you choose your self? Body and soul contain a thousand possibilities out of which you can build many I’s. But in only one of them is there a congruence of the elector and the elected. Only one – which you will never find until you have excluded all those superficial and fleeting possibilities of being and doing with which you toy, out of curiosity or wonder or greed, and which hinder you from casting anchor in the experience of the mystery of life, and the consciousness of the talent entrusted to you which is your I.”*¹¹⁰

Despite all his successes as an international negotiator and trusted advisor of his government, Hammarskjöld still felt that he had not found his role where he would experience ”congruence of the elector and the elected”, the role that he was meant to play.

For a long time Hammarskjöld’s dream appears to have been to follow in his father’s footsteps as Governor of Uppsala. Hammarskjöld lobbied for the position on several occasions at the end of 1948.¹¹¹ At the beginning of 1949 there were discussions about appointing Hammarskjöld ambassador to London, which never materialised. Instead he was offered the ambassadorship to Copenhagen, which he turned down, but not before suggesting to Foreign Minister Östen Undén that the State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry, Beck-Friis, was the best candidate for Copenhagen. Hammarskjöld’s manipulation succeeded and Undén offered him the post as State Secretary a few days later, as Beck-Friis was sent to Copenhagen. One of the leading papers welcomed Hammarskjöld’s appointment, although it was seen as “original” as

¹⁰⁹ Quoted from Landberg, p. 438.

¹¹⁰ Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 38.

¹¹¹ Landberg, p. 450.

his predecessors on the post had traditionally been career diplomats from the Foreign Ministry.¹¹²

To Hammarskjöld, the position offered a good post to wait for the Governorship in Uppsala to open up.¹¹³ In the meantime, the Swedish foreign policy, based on neutrality, was a matter of political consensus between the government and the opposition so Hammarskjöld would be able to continue to claim his status as an independent civil servant only working in the best interest of Sweden. The Foreign Minister Undén was also an imposing personality that would protect Hammarskjöld just like Wigforss had in the Finance Ministry. Hammarskjöld would also be able to continue to devote his time mainly to questions of economic integration with Western Europe. In his work with Undén there was, as there had been with Wigforss, more of a division of labour than that of a deputy to his principal. Hammarskjöld dealt with international economic affairs that Undén knew less about, while Undén handled the more traditional aspects of foreign policy.

At the Foreign Ministry, Hammarskjöld kept his routines from the Ministry of Finance and brought together a “small personal secretariat of outstanding young men” on whom he placed a heavy demand of high moral standards and through whom “he kept his finger on every lever”.¹¹⁴ This led to “raised eyebrows” and “some feeling in the department that he tended to keep the reins too tightly in his hands”.¹¹⁵ Later at the UN, Hammarskjöld’s reliance on a small number of intimates would lead to a “certain cliquishness”.¹¹⁶

But Hammarskjöld’s views were not always in line with Undén’s rigid neutrality. The negotiations regarding a Nordic defence alliance was one of the first questions that tested Sweden’s neutrality in the Cold War. For Sweden it was a prerequisite that such a defence alliance would be neutral and not have any connections to other alliances. In the end negotiations broke down and Denmark and Norway in April 1949 opted to join NATO instead. Despite this, the Swedish chiefs of staff were still

¹¹² Landberg, p. 453-455.

¹¹³ Landberg, p. 457.

¹¹⁴ Lash, p. 42; and Åström, Sverker, *Ögonblick Från ett halvsekel i UD-tjänst* (Stockholm: Lind&Co, 2003) p. 97.

¹¹⁵ Lash, p. 42.

¹¹⁶ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p 31.

arguing strongly for limited defence cooperation with Denmark and Norway and imports of military equipment from the United States for this purpose. The head of the chiefs of staff, Nils Swedlund, who knew Undén's categorical rejection of all things that smelled of Western alignment, contacted Hammarskjöld whom he found to be "loyal to the government, but sympathetic to the importance of cooperation with the West". Hammarskjöld promised to support Swedlund and even advised him on how to deal with the government. After the issue of whether a limited technical cooperation could be allowed without giving up Sweden's neutrality, Prime Minister Erlander replied that "it was not worth it to take such large risks for such small rewards". Swedlund thought this was the end of the matter, but Hammarskjöld reassured him that the Prime Minister's statement had only been for public consumption and promised to bring the matter up in Washington himself on his next visit in November 1949. "Towards the end of the discussion", Swedlund noted in his diary, "Hammarskjöld made a didactic, highly complicated exposition about how one should view the moral dilemma that a civil servant could end up in when one was serving a government one did not like. Obviously Hammarskjöld intended to justify himself in my eyes!".¹¹⁷ But Prime Minister Erlander did not appreciate Hammarskjöld's "babble in America" and referred to it as "bullshit that will raise expectations and suspicions about something much more far-reaching"¹¹⁸ Hammarskjöld had stepped out of line. But he had been partially right on the public statements being for public announcement only. Erlander would soon appreciate Hammarskjöld's sympathy for Western cooperation as an important supplement to Undén's more rigid version of neutrality.

In the beginning of 1950 the Americans, in secret, instituted the so called Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (CoCom) which met in conjunction with the OEEC. The role of CoCom was to coordinate a *de facto* trade embargo on the Soviet Bloc. The Americans were hoping to see Sweden join CoCom, but in view of its official neutrality, Sweden could not officially take part in US coordinated export restrictions directed against the Eastern block. To solve the matter informal discussions began in 1949, with Hammarskjöld representing Sweden. Already in 1966 Adler-Karlsson wrote that it has "repeatedly been stated by well-

¹¹⁷ Quoted from Landberg, p. 467.

¹¹⁸ Quoted from Landberg, p. 466.

informed diplomats that [Hammar skjöld] concluded some kind of gentlemen's agreement with the Cocom group" to the effect that Sweden gave a declaration of intent on rules they would apply in matters of export restrictions.¹¹⁹ The Americans were to provide Sweden with embargo lists as "information material". As Hammar skjöld's chef-de-cabinet from this time, Sverker Åström pointed out in his memoirs, it was Hammar skjöld who "held the pen" in drawing up the Swedish policy to deal with the American pressures to implement the Cocom strategies.¹²⁰

The key point for Hammar skjöld was that there must be no formal agreement and that Swedish policy had to appear autonomous. That Sweden was in fact complying with CoCom, was of less importance as long as the decision to do so was a unilateral Swedish decision, however fictive.¹²¹ Sweden then informed the Americans of the measures that Sweden had adopted "unilaterally". In December 1949 Hammar skjöld wrote in a memorandum that the Americans thought "that the Swedish measures had served to bring about a more satisfactory practical result than that obtained in other countries that had been politically more forthcoming."¹²² A British report on Sweden in 1950 confirms this view and explains that Swedish participation in the OEEC "was at times made difficult by her refusal to participate in the machinery set up for controlling strategic exports to the East, or to follow, even unofficially, the exact line taken by other Western Governments. She did, however, on several occasions give assurances to the effect that she herself possessed – and exercised – equally satisfactory methods of control".¹²³ An American report mentioned that Hammar skjöld had "proved to be a valuable contact for Ambassador Butterworth in Stockholm in such matters as East-West trade, procurement of military equipment in the United States, and other sensitive matters".¹²⁴

Although Hammar skjöld was responsible for these negotiations Undén, as the responsible minister, must have been informed. Undén must also have understood the

¹¹⁹ Adler-Karlsson, Gunnar, *Western Economic Warfare 1947-1967 A Case Study in Foreign Economic Policy* (Uppsala: Almqvist&Wiksell, 1968) p. 76.

¹²⁰ Åström, p. 93-94.

¹²¹ Landberg, p. 511.

¹²² Cited from Karlsson, Birgit, "Neutrality and Economy: The Redefining of Swedish Neutrality, 1946-1952" in *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 32, no.1, 1995, p. 44.

¹²³ *Sweden: Annual Review for 1950*, Sir H. Farquhar to FO (received 17 February 1951), No. 84, NW 1011/1, FO 371/94968.

¹²⁴ *Undated biographic sketch of Hammar skjöld*, NARA RG 59 CDF 1950-54 Box 1251.

need for Sweden to have a good relation with the Americans and to have access to crucial American imports, not least for a strong defence, which was in itself a prerequisite for a meaningful neutrality.¹²⁵ The problem with Swedish neutrality was that the only real threat came from the East, so help must be sought in the West. Sweden was also culturally aligned to Western Europe.

To Undén the key was that Sweden's decisions were autonomous and not dictated by others, however fictional that autonomy might have been. But Undén was most likely also happy to leave sordid dealings such as the CoCom to Hammarskjöld. In a sense, Hammarskjöld played the flexible Western-friendly Mr. Hyde to Undén's rigidly neutral Dr. Jekyll. As alluded to by Landberg, Hammarskjöld's dealings with CoCom were probably also conducted with the blessing of prime minister Erlander, who could see how a more flexible neutrality could greatly benefit Sweden's relations with the West.¹²⁶

B.3 Minister Hammarskjöld

In 1950 Hammarskjöld was offered a position as minister without portfolio in the Social Democratic government. He had been asked earlier, probably already in 1949¹²⁷, but had then said no as he was not a member of the Social Democratic party.¹²⁸ The elevation of Hammarskjöld was supposed to remedy the fact that neither the finance nor the trade ministry were conducting international negotiations and that a great burden was thus placed on Undén. As a minister, Hammarskjöld would also be able to represent the government at meetings on a ministerial level. The post would mean that Hammarskjöld remained in charge of international economic negotiations and European integration and become the junior minister for Foreign Affairs that he already was in everything but name.

¹²⁵ Undén was never the "starry-eyed idealist" he is sometimes made out to be, Lönnroth, Erik, "Sweden: The Diplomacy of Östen Undén" in Craig, Gordon, and Gilbert, Felix (eds.), *The Diplomats 1919-1939*, p. 99.

¹²⁶ Landberg, pp. 544-545.

¹²⁷ In 1949 Foreign Minister Undén had contemplated resigning and mentioned Hammarskjöld as a potential successor in his diary, Östen Undén's diary 21 June 1949, cited from Sevón, Cay, *Visionen om Europa Svensk neutralitet och europeisk återuppbyggnad 1945-1948* (Saarijärvi: Biblioteka Historica, 1995) p. 47.

¹²⁸ Landberg, p. 475.

Hammar skjöld made it a *sine qua non* for his acceptance that his condition to serve as a “non-political civil servant” was duly “understood, accepted and registered”. By registered Hammar skjöld meant that not only the government had to acknowledge such a condition but he insisted that he should be allowed to make his reservations directly to the king (in the theory the king was the head of the government, which was at the time still officially called his majesty’s government). This condition was only made after Hammar skjöld had consulted his father Hjalmar and prime minister Erlander asked himself if it was the old royalist Hjalmar Hammar skjöld who had put Dag up to it.¹²⁹ The problem was accentuated by the Swedish constitutional particularity that all ministers are responsible for decisions by the government collectively. After a long discussion with the Prime Minister Erlander, who was not impressed when Hammar skjöld explained that his reservation was a return to the old ways. (Erlander wondered in a note in his diary if Hammar skjöld also meant a subversion of the current parliamentary system.) This was solved by a reservation with the content that Hammar skjöld would only be collectively responsible for government decisions within his own sphere. Erlander summarised the reservations of Hammar skjöld after the discussion in his diary:

“1. H-d does not belong to the party and has not found a reason to join.

2. He regards his commitment as an expert summon.

3. He does not fear any political contentions since he has followed our policy for so long and does not foresee any signs of positions that would force him to leave the government.”¹³⁰

Several members of the government were critical of Hammar skjöld’s appointment in general and his reservations in particular and even Erlander started to have second thoughts. At this point, however, Hammar skjöld changed tack and asked Erlander for the post.¹³¹

In a letter to his old friend Gudmund Björck, who was a conservative, Hammar skjöld explained his decision to join a Social Democratic government in the following words:

¹²⁹ Landberg, p. 481.

¹³⁰ Quoted from Landberg, p. 484.

¹³¹ Landberg, p. 485.

“I do not serve any ‘persons or interests’ but a cause and a country. The situation for the one who wants to achieve something for the future of this country would be much facilitated if those who are now in the opposition – or others in their stead – would think a little more about the country and a little less about themselves in the formulation of their policy. I have, to the best of my ability as a follower of old traditions, no problem to cooperate with someone who wholeheartedly shares the same goal, regardless of potential differences over the methods. But very difficult to cooperate with others – regardless of their political profession.”¹³²

Hammar skjöld saw himself as the follower of an old tradition and it is interesting to note how he seems to be advocating a policy of putting the goals above the means.

The reactions to Hammar skjöld’s appointment as Minister in the Foreign Office throw an interesting light on Hammar skjöld’s role in Swedish foreign policy. “Both the wisdom and, from the British point of view, the desirability of this change are questionable”, was scribbled on the report on the appointment in the Foreign Office. The British were worried, not about Hammar skjöld’s elevation, but about his successor as State Secretary in the Foreign Office, Arne Lundberg, a young member of the Social Democratic Party. The British were concerned that “a ‘social party man’, who may be expected dutifully to echo M. Undén’s narrow-minded ‘neutrality-at-all-costs’ policy, is replacing a[s] principal advisor to the Foreign Minister a man who has shown some independence of mind and strength of character. So far as the prospects of cooperation with the West are concerned, this seems a [illegible word] stop”.¹³³ Another British diplomat added “on balance, we shall lose by M. Hammar skjöld’s elevation”.¹³⁴ The praise for Hammar skjöld’s “independence of mind and strength of character” is testament to the fact that in Hammar skjöld the British had found someone they could do business with; someone who was not too rigid in the interpretation of the official Swedish neutrality; someone who was in favour of “cooperation with the West”. To the British ambassador in Stockholm, Sir Harold Farquhar, Hammar skjöld clearly played a political role in Sweden. In his report on the nomination of Hammar skjöld as minister, he wrote that

¹³² Landberg, p. 487.

¹³³ *Minutes regarding appointment of M. Dag Hammar skjöld as Minister without portfolio*, 8 February 1951, NW 1015/3, FO 371/94969.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

“Hammar skjöld’s transfer from the official to the political sphere will confirm a situation which has in fact existed for some time.”¹³⁵ Hammar skjöld was also seen as “the leading Swedish authority on international affairs”.¹³⁶ The British went to great lengths to accommodate him as “M. Hammar skjöld is the most friendly and western-minded of the Swedish Ministers and merits all encouragement”.¹³⁷

Hammar skjöld was also a favourite of H. Freeman Matthews, the hawkish American ambassador in Stockholm who campaigned against Swedish neutrality on ideological and moral grounds.¹³⁸ American reports described Hammar skjöld as “one of the most important and influential people in Sweden” and “definitely pro-western in outlook”.¹³⁹ Freeman Matthews would come to play an important, if incidental, role in the election of Hammar skjöld as Secretary-General.

Hammar skjöld remained in charge of the delicate CoCom discussions as a minister. After the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 the Americans, the British and the French pressured Sweden further on exports of strategic materiel.¹⁴⁰ Hammar skjöld refused formal meetings with the three countries and insisted on informal and secret bilateral meetings.¹⁴¹ The outcome of Hammar skjöld’s meetings with the Americans was, once again, that Sweden *unilaterally* decided on a policy that was acceptable to the Americans. The reward for this was that Sweden was now treated “almost as a NATO member” for US export license purposes.¹⁴²

At the end of 1951 Hammar skjöld published an article entitled “To Choose Europe” wherein he confessed an allegiance not only to the European heritage of “Jerusalem, Athens and Rome”, but more practically to European integration; contextually he highlighted the importance for Sweden to be part of this, although stopping short of a

¹³⁵ *Stockholm (Farquhar) to Foreign Office (Bevin)*, 8 February 1951, FO 371/94969.

¹³⁶ *Memorandum regarding Visit of Monsieur Dag Hammar skjöld by H.A.F. Hohler for the Minister of State (Selwyn Lloyd)*, 19 July, 1952, N W 1151/23, FO371/100943.

¹³⁷ *Roger Makins to Secretary of State (Eden)*, 18 June 1952, N W 1151/21 (A), FO 371/100943.

¹³⁸ See Karlsson, “Neutrality”, p. 41. Matthews later commended Dag Hammar skjöld as Secretary-General of the UN when questioned on his suitability by Dulles, *Memorandum for the files*, 30 March 1953, NARA RG 59 CDF 1950-54 Box 1251.

¹³⁹ *Undated biographic sketch of Hammar skjöld*, NARA RG 59 CDF 1950-54 Box 1251.

¹⁴⁰ Cain, Frank, *Economic Statecraft during the Cold War European responses to the US trade embargo* (London: Routledge, 2006) p. 11.

¹⁴¹ Karlsson, “Neutrality”, p. 45.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* and Nilsson, Mikael, *Tools of Hegemony Military Technology and Swedish-American Security Relations 1945-1962* (Stockholm: Santerus, 2007), p. 147.

NATO membership.¹⁴³ In early 1952 Hammarskjöld discussed the article with Prime Minister Erlander. Hammarskjöld explained to Erlander that his relation to foreign minister Undén was coming under strain over the latter's rigid neutrality position. Hammarskjöld told Erlander that the representatives of the Western powers in Stockholm – “and in particular US ambassador Butterworth” – understood Hammarskjöld's position to be clearly Western-friendly but stopping short of active defence cooperation due to the official neutrality of the government. Hammarskjöld asked Erlander directly if he had gone too far in his Western-friendly approach; if this was not the government's position Hammarskjöld would be compromised in his contacts with the Western powers. Hammarskjöld was looking for more solid support than foreign minister Undén's tacit approval for a position that was considerably more pro-Western than the official neutrality. Erlander confirmed that Hammarskjöld's position was the correct one for Sweden.¹⁴⁴ US President Eisenhower later defined neutrality as “a moral, spiritual, and, possibly, a political commitment to our side, but not necessarily a military commitment”.¹⁴⁵ Hammarskjöld was instrumental in making Swedish neutrality adhere to that definition.

C The Ideal Civil Servant

C.1 Hammarskjöld's Theory of the Ideal Civil Servant

Hammarskjöld's promotion to membership of the government challenged his integrity as an independent civil servant. Although Hammarskjöld's role was really political, he felt a strong need to rationalise his actions with his idiosyncratic philosophy of the neutral civil servant. Hammarskjöld was “passionately” interested in the role of the civil servant in the modern state. After his appointment as minister in the Social Democratic government, he published two articles in an attempt to explain his ideas.¹⁴⁶ In these articles, Hammarskjöld emphasised that he was not a member of the Social Democratic party and argued that as a neutral civil servant he was outside party

¹⁴³ Hammarskjöld, Dag, ”Att välja Europa”, in *Svensk Tidskrift* No. 38, 1951, pp. 442-459.

¹⁴⁴ See Landberg, pp. 546-547. Landberg bases his account on Erlander's diaries among other sources.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted from Rakove, Robert, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) p. 4.

¹⁴⁶ Hammarskjöld, Dag, ”Statstjänstemannen och samhället” in *Tiden* No. 43, 1951, pp. 391-396; and Hammarskjöld, Dag, ”Politik och ideologi” in *Tiden* No. 44, 1952, pp. 6-17.

politics, but could still play a political role as “the servant of society”.¹⁴⁷ He wrote that the civil servant is allowed to introduce political policy objectives in his work, and indeed should do so, provided that he clearly indicates this and flags when he crosses the line between what can be done without political assumptions and where instead a political conviction is the basis of the analysis. Hammarskjöld wrote that “[the civil servant] has chosen the position as the servant of society, not the servant of the group” (as opposed to the party man one must assume).¹⁴⁸

In the same article Hammarskjöld defined his political creed as the “reverence for life”, a formula he borrowed from Albert Schweitzer, theologian and philosopher famous for his fieldwork running hospitals in Congo. Schweitzer, was a modern representative of an idea that sprung from deep roots in the European cultural tradition according to Hammarskjöld. Hammarskjöld then summed up the constitutive parts of the “reverence for life” formula as he interpreted it:

*“A first consequence of this basic outlook is a reverence for what is historically given as the result of generations’ striving and attempts at problem solving. This is a markedly conservative feature. A second consequence is that the political reactions will be governed by a respect for the individual, from which can be deduced on the one hand a demand for the largest possible freedom for the individual to form his life according to his own ideas, and on the other hand a demand for social justice in the form of equal rights and equal possibilities for all. In this later point liberal and social-radical elements are mixed together. Finally, the ethics that Schweitzer exemplifies, is the subordination of personal interests under the collective whole, with a morally conditioned loyalty firstly towards society, as it appears in the nation, but secondly towards the larger view of society that is represented by internationalism.”*¹⁴⁹

Herbert Tingsten, the editor of the leading paper *Dagens Nyheter*, criticised Hammarskjöld’s articles for saying simple things in a complicated way and referred to Hammarskjöld’s “ability to dress up as for a polar expedition to go to Uppsala”.¹⁵⁰ The American ambassador Butterworth mentioned Hammarskjöld’s articles in a

¹⁴⁷ Hammarskjöld, ”Statstjänstemannen”, p. 395.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Hammarskjöld, ”Statstjänstemannen”, p. 396.

¹⁵⁰ Tingsten, *Mitt Liv Tio år 1953 – 1963*, Norstedts, Stockholm, 1964, p. 112.

report to State Department but said that he did them a favour by not adding a translation as the articles were boring and obscure.¹⁵¹

Hammar skjöld also outlined what he considered his own role as a civil servant outside party politics:

“The modern democracy has as one of its fundamental prerequisites a healthy and strong party system, but this does not prevent that the democracy, also in a purely political respect, may have a need of groups and individuals, whose political interests find another outlet than adherence to a political party. It is, e.g. the case, that the person who in his political work has the individualists need of an unprejudiced trial of all questions and proposals ‘on the merits’ and without any interest bias whatsoever, tends towards finding an outlet for their public interests in public service rather than in party political activities.”

This explains what Hammar skjöld thought that he was doing as a civil servant – giving all political questions an “unprejudiced trial ‘on the merits’ and without any bias whatsoever” – and he would use it again to justify his political role as Secretary-General later. Hammar skjöld argued as well that a democracy needs people who are not elected, to act as checks and balances on the elected politicians. To understand this element of Hammar skjöld’s views better we need to consider what he had referred to as his “conservative mark”. Hammar skjöld saw himself as a civil servant in a line of civil servants. Hammar skjöld’s direct link to this heritage was his father, Hjalmar Hammar skjöld.

C.2 The Heritage of Hjalmar Hammar skjöld

Dag Hammar skjöld’s ideas on civil service are further illustrated in a commemorative speech from 1954, on the occasion of the death of Hjalmar Hammar skjöld. Dag took over his father’s seat in the Swedish Academy, the first and only time a son has succeeded his father in that assembly. As was customary, the new incumbent gave a speech on his predecessor and Dag’s speech on his father sheds important light on his conception of the neutral civil servant. Dag’s father, Hjalmar, was a controversial

¹⁵¹ Landberg, p. 536.

figure and had been heavily criticised as Prime Minister during World War I. On account of his refusing to sign a trade deal with the United Kingdom during World War I he was seen as friendly towards Germany and partly responsible for the hunger years that followed, an accusation which earned him the nickname “Hungerskjöld” (“Hungersshield” in Swedish).

In the speech, while ostentatiously portraying his father, Dag developed his own perception of civil service in the greater interest of the state.¹⁵² He even claimed that, while Prime Minister, his father had served only as an independent civil servant without taking political sides: “with his strong sense of the independence of public administration and with his feeling about the duties accompanying the responsibilities of officials, he could feel bound to form a cabinet without therefore taking sides concerning the principle involved in the current constitutional conflict, as represented by the opponents.”¹⁵³ Hammarskjöld’s contemporaries noted with scepticism that “not many would have looked at old Hjalmar in that light.”¹⁵⁴ Tingsten, wrote an editorial entitled “*Hammarskjöld as a Way of Life*”, which criticised Dag’s speech for glossing over Hjalmar’s “stance for the conservatives and the king, hostility towards democracy, the ambition and the extreme self-assuredness”, words that could apply also to his son.¹⁵⁵ Tingsten also noted that Dag seemed to identify strongly with his father in the speech.

Dag Hammarskjöld also made reference to the fact that his family had served Sweden as civil servants since before democracy and spoke of his father as “one of those who are firm in their roots and firm in their faith, those whose changing fates may well deepen the convictions and directions of their earlier years, but not change them [...] What gave an inner unity to his life was that in the period of revolutionary development through which he lived, he remained faithful to his past, faithful also to

¹⁵² It has already been pointed out by several of Hammarskjöld’s biographers that his speech on his father seems to refer as much to himself as to his father, see e.g. Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 21.

¹⁵³ Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers* Vol II, p. 408.

¹⁵⁴ If anything, Hjalmar Hammarskjöld’s Government was reactionary in that it supported the King, Gustavus V’s coup. This “brought him into conflict with the movement toward a fully developed parliamentarism” and Hjalmar Hammarskjöld was seen by many as a representative of extreme conservatism, Lash, p. 19.

¹⁵⁵ Tingsten, editorial in *Dagens Nyheter* ”Hammarskjöld som livsform”, 24 December 1954. See also Tingsten, *Mitt Liv*, p. 113.

the past”.¹⁵⁶ These words echo Hammarskjöld’s own ideals. Dag had also been criticised at times in Sweden for his self-sufficiency and another passage from the speech must have made his contemporary listeners think as much of the son as of the father: “A mature man is his own judge. In the end, his only firm support is being faithful to his own convictions. The advice of others may be welcome and valuable, but it does not free him from responsibility. Therefore, he may become very lonely. Therefore, too, he must run, with open eyes, the risk of being accused of obdurate self-sufficiency.”¹⁵⁷ In *Markings*, Hammarskjöld noted “You are your own god – and are surprised that the wolf pack pursues you over the dark desolation of the wintry ice fields.”¹⁵⁸

C.3 *The Religious Ideal of Servitude*

Hammarskjöld’s religion combined his Christian faith with his ideas of civil service via mystical doctrines of a life spent in servitude. Among contemporaries, Hammarskjöld found his creed best expressed by Albert Schweitzer, although he saw this as an old lineage of religious mysticism that expressed itself through deeds and service in the world in a straight line from the Gospels via various mystics such as Meister Eckhart, John of the Cross and Thomas a Kempis down to Albert Schweitzer. Hammarskjöld spoke of his religious inspiration quite openly on the Edward R. Murrow show in 1954 and mentioned that he drew inspiration from “those great medieval mystics”.¹⁵⁹ But no one of his friends or associates was aware that Hammarskjöld was himself a mystic, as the publication of *Markings* after his death would show.

This mystic ideal can be summed up in the title of Thomas a Kempis *De imitatio Christi – On the imitation of Christ*, that is to follow Christ’s example with a life spent in service. Eckhart was the first of the mystics Hammarskjöld quoted, and he defined the highest form of mysticism and spirituality as action, *via activa*, as opposed to the *via contemplativa*, a life of meditation on the scriptures far away from the realities of the world, pursued by most monastic orders of Eckhart’s time. The link between mysticism and action in Eckhart’s thinking is that inner spirituality will lead

¹⁵⁶ Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol II*, p. 409.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹⁵⁸ Hammarskjöld, Dag, *Vägmärken* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1963) p. 43.

¹⁵⁹ “Old Creeds in a New World”, Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol II*, p. 195.

to an outward action, directed by god. This is an idea that Hammarskjöld reiterated again and again in *Markings*, both in quotes of Eckhart such as “der Täter unserer Taten” (“the doer of our deeds”) and in his own words “Not I, but God in me.” Eckhart’s idea of “gewöhntes Wollen” is central in Hammarskjöld’s thinking and he quotes it on several occasions in *Markings*.¹⁶⁰ The idea, as presented by Eckhart, and as expounded upon by Hammarskjöld in *Markings*, is to empty the self so as to make it receptive to the will of God; or, in Hammarskjöld’s words, “to shift the boundary between subject and object in my being all the way to the point that the subject, even if it is still in me, is outside and above me – and my whole being is thus an instrument for that in me which is more than I.”

In Albert Schweitzer, Hammarskjöld found the modern day expression of this old concept. While Schweitzer was also a strongly religious man, his ideas were more readily acceptable to modern humanism and was the one Hammarskjöld preferred to refer to. Schweitzer was, however, writing in the same mystic tradition, as Hammarskjöld. For Schweitzer rational philosophical speculation, if it went deep enough, led to irrational mysticism.

Many of Hammarskjöld’s commentators do not seem at ease talking about these irrational aspects of Hammarskjöld. Maybe because they fail to see that the man could be at the same time a rational public official and a mystic. But many distinguished scientists were mystics. Perhaps the best way to look at Hammarskjöld is to compare him with two of his favourite authors Blaise Pascal and Carl Linnaeus. Both were famous scientists, whose rationality no one would question, but both were also deeply religious with a penchant for the mystical. Hammarskjöld wrote of Linnaeus in the following words: “A great naturalist guided the author, but a great poet permitted the scholar to peer into the secret Council Chamber of God.”¹⁶¹ The dichotomy of faith and reason is a modern one. Like one of his favourite authors, Sir Thomas Browne – who thought that reason was implanted in man by God, but disdained by the Fall so that it needed to be completed by faith – Hammarskjöld combined a strong rationalism and a strong religious faith.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Fröhlich, pp. 149-155.

¹⁶¹ Lash, p. 24.

¹⁶² See for example, Patrides, C.A., “Introduction” in *Sir Thomas Browne, The Major Works* (London: Penguin, 1977) p. 25.

Hammar skjöld's religious ideas are a key to explaining several other aspects of his personality that have intrigued his biographers. Certainly, Hammar skjöld's strong commitment to work and his self-imposed celibacy sprung from, or was reinforced by, his religious outlook on life. Lash spoke of a "secular priesthood" referring to Hammar skjöld's view of the position of Secretary-General. For Hammar skjöld this image is very fitting. Hammar skjöld had decided to turn his back on such things as marriage to live his life in the *imitatio Christi*. For Hammar skjöld that road led to a life of action in public service, not to contemplation in a monastery, but the choice was the same. As Hammar skjöld put it in *Markings*: "'Upon my conditions'. To live under that sign is to purchase knowledge about the Way at the price of loneliness."¹⁶³

The British Ambassador to Stockholm described Hammar skjöld in 1953 as "unmarried and a basically rather a lonely figure who consoles himself with a full range of interests and lives fully on two planes, the official and the personal and cultural." Hammar skjöld still lived at home until he was 40, he moved out only in 1945 and is not known to have had any intimate relation with women.¹⁶⁴ Trygve Lie circulated rumours in New York that Hammar skjöld was homosexual; this might have been done in order to undercut his successor's position.¹⁶⁵ The main biographers and people who knew him all conclude that "sex played little if any part" in Hammar skjöld's life and that the rumours were completely unfounded.¹⁶⁶ In *Markings*, Hammar skjöld noted on this subject that "Because it did not find a mate/ They called the unicorn / A pervert". None of his biographers, however, draws the conclusion that Hammar skjöld lived in a self-imposed celibacy. Yet for someone aiming to follow in the tradition of *imitatio Christi* voluntary and complete chastity is the first step.¹⁶⁷ Hammar skjöld joked that the UN Charter should include an article to the effect that "the Secretary-General of the UN should have an iron constitution and

¹⁶³ Hammar skjöld, *Markings*, p. 35.

¹⁶⁴ See e.g. Lash, p. 42.

¹⁶⁵ As Lie's biographer puts it "It was not Lie's finest hour", Barros, James, *Trygve Lie and the Cold War The UN Secretary-General Pursues Peace, 1946-1953* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, De Kalb, 1989) p. 341.

¹⁶⁶ See e.g. Urquhart, *Hammar skjöld*, pp. 26-27, Kelen, p. 157.

¹⁶⁷ See e.g. Schopenhauer who points out that "voluntary and complete chastity is the first step in asceticism", cited from Niebuhr, Reinhold, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952) pp. 54-55.

should not be married”.¹⁶⁸ But this was not merely a joke from Hammarskjöld’s side. In a letter to his friend the Swedish painter Bo Beskow, he wrote that he felt a “short pain” at missing out on the blessings of marriage, but concluded that “what must be, is right”.¹⁶⁹ Instead Hammarskjöld chose to devote himself body and mind to his work as a civil servant.

The striking aspect of Hammarskjöld’s role as a civil servant in Sweden was the lack of supervision and control. Normally, a civil servant is under the supervision and direct control of his superiors. As the chief official, first in the Ministry of Finance and then the Foreign Ministry, he was responsible only to his minister. In both cases, Hammarskjöld had the full trust and support of his ministers and was left mainly to his own devices regarding the issues that did not interest the ministers or which were outside their respective field of expertise. Hammarskjöld was much more than the executor of policy, more also than an influential actor, he was often the originator of policy. The picture of Hammarskjöld as a grey eminence – Hammarskjöld had been referred to as the Grey Eminence of the Swedish Government in a Swedish newspaper¹⁷⁰ – springs to mind and like the original grey eminence, Père Joseph, as described by Aldous Huxley, Hammarskjöld was also a mystic with a taste for worldly power.¹⁷¹ But just what role was Hammarskjöld looking to fill? Prime Minister Erlander noted in his diary in 1952 that Hammarskjöld “had ambitions. But what is his aim?”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, pp. 25-26.

¹⁶⁹ Quoted from Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 26.

¹⁷⁰ Landberg, p. 364.

¹⁷¹ Huxley, Aldous, *Grey Eminence – A Study in Religion and Politics* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1941).

¹⁷² Tage Erlander’s diary, quoted from Landberg, p. 557.

Chapter 2: “The most difficult job in the world”

The preparatory commission on the UN Charter had noted that the Secretary-General “more than anyone else, will stand for the United Nations as a whole. In the eyes of the world, no less than in the eyes of his own staff, he must embody the principles and ideals of the Charter to which the Organization seeks to give effect.”¹⁷³ Hammarskjöld had been a member of the Swedish delegation to the UN on several occasions but had given little thought to the principles and ideals of the Charter. Before his appointment as Secretary-General his view of the UN was that it “was a lot of talk and unnecessary resolutions”.¹⁷⁴ Hammarskjöld’s friend, and chef-de-cabinet in Sweden, Sverker Åström, gives an interesting picture of Hammarskjöld at the press conference the day after his appointment as Secretary-General:

“During the press conference [...] the participants got the impression that he mastered the whole complex of the UN and that he was also a convinced and idealistic follower of the purposes and aims of the UN. You could have thought that he had spent the night going through a meter of literature on the UN, at the same time convincing himself that he had always thought that the UN was the central organ for international cooperation [...] he realised that he had been allotted the role of his life, the task which he would, with time, come to see as a mission and a calling.”¹⁷⁵

With his appointment as Secretary-General of the UN Hammarskjöld had finally found the “role of his life”, the mission and the calling he had been searching for; but the role as Secretary-General of the UN was also, in the words of his predecessor Trygve Lie, “the most difficult job in the world”.

¹⁷³ Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, 23 December 1945, Chapter VIII, Section 2, paragraph 17.

¹⁷⁴ Åström, p. 97.

¹⁷⁵ Åström, p. 98.

A. “A veto-ridden failure of an ideal” – The United Nations in 1953

A.1 *The Security Council: “An Alliance of Great Powers embedded in a universal organization”*

The United Nations grew out of the wartime coalition between the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union and their allies. Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin all agreed that the new international organisation would have to contain a “high degree of Great Power control”.¹⁷⁶ Roosevelt, despite his penchant for lofty talk of legalism and international law, never meant the United Nations to consist of equal members.¹⁷⁷ This was enshrined in the veto power of the permanent members of the Security Council. The British historian and diplomat Sir Charles Webster, a specialist on the Congress of Vienna and Castlereagh who had worked in the British delegations that drew up the charters of both the League of Nations and the United Nations, remarked in his diary that the United Nations was “an Alliance of Great Powers embedded in a universal organization”.¹⁷⁸ But the UN never turned into the “international police power” that Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin had dreamt of. Already before the end of the war the great coalition that was the UN showed signs of breaking apart. The onset of the Cold War meant that the UN could never function as it was intended to as the required harmony among the permanent, veto-yielding, members of the Security Council was replaced by dissent.

A.2 *The General Assembly: “The monkey house”*

The General Assembly turned into a talking-shop and already in 1946 Dean Acheson dismissed it as “the monkey house”.¹⁷⁹ But the General Assembly could still be useful as the Americans, with their European and Latin American allies, commanded a majority in the General Assembly. The Americans could also publically isolate the Soviets in the Security Council by voting measures that the Soviets then had to veto.

¹⁷⁶ Mazower, Mark, *Governing the World* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), p. 195-197.

¹⁷⁷ Stephanson, Anders, “The Cold War considered as a US Project” in Pons, Silvio and Romero, Federico (eds.), *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War* (Abingdon: Frank Cass, 2005), pp. 54-57.

¹⁷⁸ Quoted from Mazower, p. 199 and p. 209.

¹⁷⁹ Quoted from Mazower, *Governing*, p. 222.

The British thought that the Americans were treating the UN as an “anti-communist alliance”¹⁸⁰. Without going that far, the British also wanted to use the UN in the Cold War and prioritised cooperation with the Americans to achieve their common aims as British Permanent Representative to the UN, Sir Pierson Dixon put it in 1953:

*“We in fact both of us want to use the United Nations in the cold war, but as is so often the case the difference between us is one of timing. Our belief is that the United Nations should be used to convince world opinion of the correctness of the policies pursued by the West so that in moments of crisis the weight of the United Nations will be thrown on our side and we shall be able to call in the event of war upon the manpower and material resources of the majority of the United Nations in support of any action taken by NATO or some other regional collective self-defence organisation. The Americans on the other hand rather tend to skip the persuasion and to try to bind the majority of the United Nations irrevocably to the military arrangements devised by the West to contain Communist aggression”.*¹⁸¹

Dixon’s report had started with the following declaration: “There is no doubt that, apart from the rather superficial criticisms, which are so often heard – that it is a waste of money, a mere talking shop or a veto-ridden failure of an ideal – the United Nations, as it is, has great disadvantages both for her Majesty’s Government, the United States Government and the free world generally.” But Dixon conceded that with these limits in mind, the UN could do much good and set out the British priorities in the following way: “Our overriding aim must be to use the United Nations first to help consolidate the free world and avoid total war and secondly to pursue this policy on a solid basis of Anglo-United States cooperation.”¹⁸² Dixon also discarded the “comatose” Security Council, and recommended that it be left undisturbed, as well as the General Assembly, which he did not consider an adequate substitute for the Security Council. In his 14-page report he made no reference to the office of the Secretary-General and yet his conclusions that the Security Council and the General Assembly were not viable ways forward pointed towards a possibility for the Secretary-General to find a role here.

¹⁸⁰ *Minutes on Anglo-US Differences* 20 January 1954, Foreign Office Minutes, UP 135/1 FO 371/112346.

¹⁸¹ *Minutes on Role of the United Nations* 30 August 1954, Foreign Office Minutes, UP 135/3 FO 371/112346.

¹⁸² *UKUN (Dixon) to FO* 20 August 1954, No. 14, UP 137/2 FO 371/112348.

A.3 The Potential Role of the Secretary-General: “A virgin field of influence”

The Secretariat of the UN had not played a political role. In 1954 it was demoralising for the UN to host the Geneva Conference that addressed the two most pressing threats to world peace at the time – the Korean War and the war in Indo-China – without being allowed to sit at the table. As Adrian Pelt, director of the UN European Office in Geneva wrote to Hammarskjöld from the conference: “a situation is developing which reminds me very much of what a French ambassador once said to the plenipotentiaries of the Netherlands States General at the Peace Conference following the war of the Spanish succession: ‘Messieurs, nous sommes venus pour trahir chez vous, de vous et sans vous.’”¹⁸³

Hammarskjöld had an essentially realistic view of the UN. In 1953, on the upcoming revision of the UN Charter, he told his British interlocutors that the “Charter itself was not so unsatisfactory an instrument: it was the dissensions between the Powers which were responsible for United Nations failures, rather than inadequacies in the Charter itself.”¹⁸⁴ After just a few weeks as Secretary-General Hammarskjöld wrote to his friend Labouisse: “already after a fortnight I find the job quite exciting. Some of the difficulties are close to the margin of the impossible, but with the excellent help of my collaborators and with the kind of confidence which I have already experienced from men like Averell Harriman, I am not worried”.¹⁸⁵

The powers of the Secretary-General, as delineated in the Charter, are largely those of an administrative officer (Article 97) whose responsibility it is to enable the various parts of the UN to work together. He therefore makes an annual report (Article 98) and he keeps the General Assembly informed of the actions taken by the Security Council (Article 12). The exception is Article 99, from which the real political power of the Secretary-General stems. It is one of the shortest articles in the UN Charter:

¹⁸³ *Letter from A. Pelt (Geneva) to Hammarskjöld 7 May 1954, Cordier Papers, Cataloged Correspondence, Box 2.*

¹⁸⁴ *Minutes of meeting with P. Mason 17 December 1953, UP 104/6, Mr Hammarskjöld’s Visit, FO 371/107021.*

¹⁸⁵ *Letter from Hammarskjöld to Henry Labouisse 25 April 1953, Labouisse Papers, Box 12, Folder 4 to 6.*

“The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.”

It leaves much room for the discretion of the Secretary-General, firstly it is the discretion to decide what “in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security” and secondly, the discretionary choice of whether to bring such a situation to the attention of the Security Council as he “may” do so, not “shall”.

During the discussions at Dumbarton Oaks when the UN was set up several different proposals for the Secretary-General were discussed ranging from that of a “President” with a wide political mandate to a mere “Director-General” with a mainly administrative function to a combination of both. The drafts for the final version of the Secretary-General show that the idea was to create “an impartial watchdog, an agent who will bring to the attention of the organization threats to the peace which Member states, because of political considerations, will tend to be hesitant in raising”.¹⁸⁶ These American drafts are *travaux préparatoires* with a very limited role for the legal interpretation of the Charter under International Law. However, they may well have inspired Hammarskjöld’s reading of his Charter role. Hammarskjöld showed an intense interest in the UN Charter and its interpretation under International Law. In the Swedish legal tradition the *travaux préparatoires* are also, unlike in International Law, considered a source of law in its own right and play an important role in the interpretation of a statute or law.

The actual invocation of Article 99 is extremely rare and yet Article 99 could be said to be behind almost all political activities of the Secretary-General. The article is self-operating and is the unmentioned legal source from which the political activities of the Secretary-General are derived. In this it can be said to provide the “specific legal authorization for that extensive, informal, behind-the-scenes political activity of the Secretary-General for which the propensities of his position, and the precedent of the League, provide a non-textual basis”.¹⁸⁷ The role of the Secretary-General was left to

¹⁸⁶ Schwebel, Stephen M., “The Origins and Development of Article 99 of the Charter” in *British Yearbook of International Law* 28 (1951), p. 374.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

be developed in practice. Summing up the development of Article 99 in 1951, international lawyer Schwebel noted that the use of Article 99 as the basis for more bold political participation of the Secretary-General was “largely a virgin field of influence which the Secretary-General might, if the need arises, find himself capable of exploiting”.¹⁸⁸ An American report, written by the Carnegie Endowment for the State Department in 1950, also mentioned that “great potential power is vested in the Secretary-General and the very absence of confining detail permits the flexible evolution of these powers”.¹⁸⁹ Hammarskjöld would exploit this virgin field and make full use of the flexible evolution of the great potential power vested in the Secretary-General like no other Secretary-General before or after.

B The Secretariat under Hammarskjöld

B.1 Hammarskjöld’s Reorganisation of the Secretariat – Centralising Power in the Hands of the Secretary-General

As soon as Hammarskjöld touched ground in New York he started working on reforming the Secretariat. The aim of his reorganisation was to promote the political role of the Secretariat, which in Hammarskjöld’s understanding of the UN Charter meant the Secretary-General himself. As Hammarskjöld told a reporter: “This is a political job. I am a political servant. Administration is just a tool at my command.”¹⁹⁰ Hammarskjöld’s reorganisation explicitly aimed at centralising most of the authority in the office of the Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld wanted to replace the previous two-tiered system of Assistant Secretary-Generals and Principal Directors with the single new position of Under-Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld wanted the new position of Under-Secretary to be “essentially administrative” and to undertake political responsibilities if delegated by the Secretary-General only. According to Hammarskjöld the “political responsibilities thus would clearly be exercised on the

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

¹⁸⁹ The United Nations Secretariat, Unpublished report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for State Department, p. 3, (the report is undated but is accompanied by a reply letter from Dean Rusk dated 9 March 1950), NARA RG 59 CDF 1950-54 Box 1251.

¹⁹⁰ Hammarskjöld quoted from Rosenthal, A.M., “Dag Hammarskjöld Sizes Up His U.N. Job” in New York Times, 16 August 1953.

personal responsibility of the Secretary-General”.¹⁹¹ This would “clarify the lines of authority and facilitate[e] the formulation of over-all policy”.¹⁹² Hammarskjöld made it clear that the Secretary-General was “the only political officer of the United Nations”.¹⁹³

Following the so-called London understanding of 1946, five of the eight Assistant Secretaries General went to the five permanent Members of the Security Council. Trygve Lie had not cared much for the intricacies of administration and under his tenure the Secretariat had broken down into a feudal system where the Assistant Secretaries-General ruled over their own fiefdoms with little central organisation or direction. Hammarskjöld was determined to restore the independence of the Secretary by ridding it of the strong influence that the permanent members of the Security Council now held.

The Soviet bloc was opposed to Hammarskjöld’s reforms as they were perceived as a dilution of Soviet influence in the Secretariat. The Soviet Assistant-Secretary-General had by tradition been head of the important Department for Political and Security Council Affairs. Hammarskjöld’s reorganisation meant that this department would cease to exist and instead he would have two Under-Secretaries without portfolio responsible for assisting the Secretary-General on an ad hoc basis with political affairs. These two positions were given to an American, Ralph Bunche, and a Soviet, Ilya Tchernychev.

It was not just the Soviets who were critical of Hammarskjöld’s reorganisation. The French Assistant Secretary-General Guillaume Georges-Picot was opposed to the fact that the reorganisation would destroy the original idea of a cabinet of senior officials that represented the five permanent members of the Security Council, which was Hammarskjöld’s very intention.¹⁹⁴ Hammarskjöld was also determined to replace Georges-Picot and firmly rejected several French attempts to put people that he deemed unqualified in the post. As long as the Assistant Secretaries-General were in

¹⁹¹ Report on Organisation of the Secretariat, 12 November 1953, in Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers* Volume II, p. 176.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹⁹³ UN Oral History Schachter, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 78.

place, Hammarskjöld treated them with distance and Georges-Picot complained that he rarely had access to the new Secretary-General.¹⁹⁵ Georges-Picot eventually left the UN, but not before telling Hammarskjöld that “he was surrounded by a group of people who were giving him only the kind of advice which they thought he wanted – “yes men” – [and] that his proposed reorganization was ill-conceived”.¹⁹⁶ While parts of Georges-Picot’s criticism were motivated by personal animosity to Hammarskjöld and his idea to merge George-Picot’s Social Department with the Economic Department, the criticism of the centralisation of power in the Secretariat to the Secretary-General and the group surrounding him was shared by the French government.

In Paris the main apprehension about Hammarskjöld’s reorganisation was that it would increase an already large American influence over the organisation. The French viewed Hammarskjöld as an administrator without vision, but feared the growing importance of his American advisors. A French report on the reorganisation noted that “in fact all decisions of any importance will be made by the Secretary-General”. The French did not fear the increased power of the Secretary-General though, but worried that the Americans “would not give their consent without having been assured of the presence of an active and all-powerful agent in the Cabinet of the Secretary-General himself”.¹⁹⁷ To the French the reorganisation was seen as a battle for power in the Secretariat between the Member states.

It is possible that the all-powerful agent that the French were referring to was Andrew Cordier. Already in April 1953 the French tried to launch their own candidate to replace Cordier as Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld rebuffed this attempt by saying that he would not make any changes before he had completed his in-depth study of the Secretariat.¹⁹⁸ To the British Hammarskjöld said that he wanted to keep Cordier “primarily because of his long association with the UN,

¹⁹⁵ Smouts, Marie-Claude, *Le secrétaire générale des nations unies* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1971), p. 66.

¹⁹⁶ King, Jeff and Hobbins, A.J., “Hammarskjöld and Human Rights: the Deflation of the UN Human Rights Programme 1953-1961” in *Journal of the History of International Law* 5 (2003), pp. 345-346.

¹⁹⁷ Note du 29 octobre 1953 a.s. Réorganisation du Secrétariat des Nations Unies, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

¹⁹⁸ Lettre d’Henri Hoppenot à Georges Bidault du 23 avril 1953, Archives MAE, AD, Fonds Hoppenot, 13.

which will enable him to give the continuity of experience desirable for such an appointment”.¹⁹⁹

But the observers in Paris remained suspicious of Hammarskjöld’s reorganisation. In another very critical analysis of the reorganisation, the French highlighted the “too large concentration of powers” in the Secretary-General.²⁰⁰ The French were worried that Hammarskjöld would not be in a position to exercise all these accrued powers and “it can thus be feared that a group of anonymous counsellors will be constituted around him that will hold the real levers of command. The efficiency of the administration will suffer gravely from this without mentioning the disadvantages that the existence of such a camarilla always brings with it”. The report is clear about the concern: If the Secretary-General needs to delegate “some of the important responsibilities on his immediate colleagues, it is the American-Scandinavian team that surrounds him and not the Under-Secretaries who will benefit from these delegations that will thus increase its hold over the Secretariat”.²⁰¹ The French concerns of an overly powerful Secretariat running a policy out of line with the wishes of the member states would return.

In 1953 the Soviets voted no to Hammarskjöld’s proposal, but the General Assembly nevertheless authorised Hammarskjöld to proceed with his proposals for reorganising the Secretariat on 9 December, with a vote of 53 for and 5 against.²⁰²

All affairs came to be handled by Hammarskjöld directly or his immediate close circle. Even the smallest details were to be decided by Hammarskjöld personally or run by his office, down to the petty details such as travel authorisation for relatively junior staff.²⁰³ In some aspects, the work of the Secretariat was diminished, e.g. human rights, partly because Hammarskjöld and his close circle did not have the time

¹⁹⁹ UKUN (Dixon) to FO, No 224/80/54, 20 August 1954, UP 154/17, FO 371/112359.

²⁰⁰ Note a.s. Réorganisation du Secrétariat du 11 octobre 1954, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

²⁰¹ Rapport sur l’organisation du secrétariat du 18 octobre 1954, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

²⁰² Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Volume II*, p. 192.

²⁰³ See e.g. a memorandum from Cordier to Bruce R. Turner, Controller at the UN, from 8 August 1959 with the title “Travel reports to the Secretary-General” which takes the controller to task saying that Hammarskjöld “has repeatedly stated that he personally would like to approve travel requests. This desire covers not only the quarterly anticipation of possible travel but also the specific trips requested within a quarter which may be either in accordance with quarterly projection or may represent departures from it. [...]” Cordier Papers Box 55.

to manage it and there was no delegation of responsibilities.²⁰⁴ The Director of the UN division for Human Rights, John Humphrey, wrote in his diary of Hammarskjöld's approach as "the failure [...] to understand that a sine qua non of public administration is the delegation of power and responsibility" and that "nothing could be done in the Secretariat without express approval of the Secretary-General".²⁰⁵ In the prioritisations that Hammarskjöld did as he lessened the scope of the UN to activities that he could himself oversee the social programs and human rights were cut out to the benefit of political affairs.²⁰⁶

B.2 Hammarskjöld and his team

Hammarskjöld did not get the people he wanted for many posts and some of the Under-Secretaries-General were lacking in his view. To counter this Hammarskjöld relied heavily, as he had in Sweden, on his own "brain trust" of trusted lieutenants that often wielded more power than their nominal superiors who did not have Hammarskjöld's confidence.²⁰⁷ This led to a situation where "[p]olitical affairs came to be regarded by many officials as the closely-held specialty of a small group, chosen personally by the Secretary-General without regard to organizational niceties".²⁰⁸

Hammarskjöld's "capacity for work was enormous" and his "dedication to work was completely astonishing" at the UN.²⁰⁹ Hammarskjöld once replied to the question if he were tired by stating: "Tired, that would be frivolous"²¹⁰. Cordier related an anecdote where Hammarskjöld had asked a delegate, at the end of a meeting at 4 a.m., to join him at ten the same morning for another meeting. After the delegate replied that he needed to sleep Hammarskjöld had "stamped up and down in the corridor

²⁰⁴ King/Hobbins, pp. 376ff.

²⁰⁵ Quoted from King/Hobbins, pp. 377-378.

²⁰⁶ For a well-documented critique of how Hammarskjöld downscaled human rights, see King/Hobbins.

²⁰⁷ Fröhlich, p. 235.

²⁰⁸ Leon Gordenker, *The UN Secretary-General and the Maintenance of Peace* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 103.

²⁰⁹ There are many similar views of Hammarskjöld's work capacity, these quotes are from Jarring, Gunnar, *Rikets förhållande till främmande makt: memoarer 1952-1964* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1983), p. 98.

²¹⁰ UN Oral History Beeley, p. 8.

outside his office repeating ‘Sissy, sissy. The man has to sleep!’”²¹¹ Hammarskjöld could certainly be harsh on colleagues and others whom he deemed below his highly set standards. Hammarskjöld’s “judgments of people could be harsh and irrevocable, often being based on a single mistake or misunderstanding, and he resisted, often rudely, any attempt to presume on his friendship”.²¹² Urquhart, who worked in the Secretariat at the time, gave the following picture of Hammarskjöld as manager:

*“His relentlessly high intellectual and ethical standards made him intolerant of incompetence and impatient with slow or confused performance. He was at the same time shy but demanding, modest but arrogant, quiet but with a formidable capacity for anger and indignation. I do not think he was accustomed to dealing with people at close quarters, and he did not encourage intimacy or familiarity. Indeed those who attempted it usually suffered painful rebuffs. However, because his other qualities were so impressive, his aloofness seemed entirely natural.”*²¹³

The Swedish Permanent Representative, Gunnar Jarring, who had also known Hammarskjöld from the Swedish Foreign Ministry, mentions Hammarskjöld’s “special ability to freeze people out” when he did not appreciate them.²¹⁴ This would lead to a lot of internal criticism against Hammarskjöld by members of the Secretariat who felt that they were not given interesting tasks and were side-lined by Hammarskjöld’s circle. Hammarskjöld’s remarks about colleagues and others in private could be caustic and “not indicative of a particularly Christian disposition”.²¹⁵ But Hammarskjöld also had the gift to “inspire loyalties and affections of remarkable intensity and duration”.²¹⁶

The Executive Office of the Secretary-General became the “center for all important work on political matters” during Hammarskjöld’s time.²¹⁷ The central role after Hammarskjöld was held by his executive assistant Andrew Cordier, who was

²¹¹ Cordier, Andrew, “Motivations and Methods of Dag Hammarskjöld” in Cordier, Andrew and Maxwell, Kenneth, *Paths to World Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 16-17.

²¹² Urquhart, Hammarskjöld, p. 35.

²¹³ Urquhart, *A Life*, pp. 125-126.

²¹⁴ Jarring, p. 100. This is also testified by others, e.g. in Oral History Barco, pp. 1057-8: “[Hammarskjöld] would just pull down a curtain and that was the end [of a relationship]”.

²¹⁵ Jarring, p. 101.

²¹⁶ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 596.

²¹⁷ Fröhlich, p. 236.

“closest” to Hammarskjöld.²¹⁸ Cordier was a professor of history, who had joined the State Department in 1944 and had been a member of the US delegation at the creation of the United Nations. He had then been appointed executive assistant to Trygve Lie. Cordier described his working relationship with Hammarskjöld in the following words:

*“Everyday he [Hammarskjöld] came frequently to my office or I went to his to exchange views and to expedite business. We were constant luncheon companions for eight and a half years, and the call of work almost always brought us together on Saturdays and Sundays [...] He made every matter of concern to him as Secretary-General also a matter of concern to me.”*²¹⁹

Hammarskjöld and Cordier developed a close working relationship right from the beginning. Already in April 1953 Cordier wrote to a friend to say that “the new Secretary-General is working out beautifully. As you know I usually speak with some restraint but I have difficulty in restraining my enthusiasm for his many good qualities. We have established a perfect personal working relationship and I have nothing but praise for the way in which he handles every situation.”²²⁰ In May 1953 he wrote that “We are working together even more closely than I did with Mr. Lie, if that is possible.”²²¹ James Barco, who worked in the US permanent mission to the UN during all of Hammarskjöld’s tenure, eventually rising to deputy permanent representative, described Hammarskjöld’s relationship with Cordier in the following words:

“In the case of Cordier, Cordier was the one person who – to the maximum extent – was privy to the Secretary General’s thinking, and who was most frequently in attendance and present at meetings the Secretary General had. The Secretary General by no means had Cordier or anyone else in all his meetings with delegations. By and large most of the time, when I called on him in his office, he was by himself. And this of course put a burden on him, if there was anything to record or take action on, there

²¹⁸ Oral History Barco, p. 1060.

²¹⁹ Cordier, “Motivations”, p. 1.

²²⁰ Letter from Cordier to M.R. Zigler, Director, Brethren Service Commission, Geneva, April, 1953. Cordier Papers, box 52.

²²¹ Letter from Cordier to A. J. Brumbaugh, President, Shimer College, Mount Carroll, Illinois, May, 1953. Cordier Papers, box 52.

was nobody there to turn to, to carry it out. It's my assumption that he informed Cordier afterwards."²²²

Another veteran of the UN, Ralph Bunche was appointed one of two Under-Secretary-Generals without portfolio, the other being the Soviet Ilya Tcherneyev. Over the years Bunche would become one of Hammarskjöld's most trusted advisors together with Cordier. Besides Cordier and Bunche, others who were at times part of Hammarskjöld's close circle were Pakistani Bokhari and the British Sir Humphrey Trevelyan although both later fell out of favour and were "frozen out" by Hammarskjöld.²²³ Heinz A. Wieschhoff, Bunche's former deputy in the Trusteeship Department, would later rise to prominence as Hammarskjöld's foremost advisor on African affairs.

Cordier, Bunche and Wieschhoff had all been professors and had academic careers behind them. This is hardly a coincidence as Hammarskjöld, who loved to discuss ideas and theories, would have appreciated this. Furthermore, they were all dedicated hard workers and could be relied upon to stay at the office as long as Hammarskjöld.²²⁴ All three were also Americans and had worked for both the State Department and the precursor of the CIA, the Office for Strategic Services, during the war.²²⁵ This would later be an object for great criticism during the Congo Crisis,

²²² Oral History Barco, p. 1060.

²²³ Several different sources testify to this, see e.g. Columbia Oral History Schachter [director of UN legal office], p. 8; and Oral History Barco, p. 841. According to Barco Hammarskjöld had sought the services of Trevelyan and finally persuaded him to join the Secretariat, but after a first period where the two were practically inseparable Hammarskjöld dropped Trevelyan who left the Secretariat soon after. On Trevelyan see also Jarring, p. 101; and Trevelyan, Sir Humphrey, *Public and Private* (London: Hamilton, 1980), pp. 34 ff. According to Barco, Hammarskjöld was never on as close personal terms with Bunche as he had been with Bokhari and Trevelyan, which, according to Barco, probably spared him their fate, Oral History Barco, p. 1059.

²²⁴ Smouts, p. 66.

²²⁵ According to a biographical sketch of Bunche his career in government can be summarised thus: "1942-1944 served with the Africa Section, Research and Analysis Branch of the Office of Strategic Services, first as Principal Research Analyst and later as Chief of the Africa Section. In 1944 he was transferred to the State Department where he successively held the positions of: Area Specialist (Expert on Africa and Dependent Areas) in the Division of Territorial Studies; Acting Associate Chief, Division of Dependent Area Affairs, Office of Special Political Affairs; Associate Chief and Acting Chief of the Division of Dependent Area Affairs. He served as a member of the United States Delegation to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944, the United Nations Conference on International Organizations at San Francisco in 1945, and the First General Assembly of the United Nations in London in 1946. In 1946 the United Nations requested his services on loan from the State Department and he subsequently accepted a permanent post in the United Nations Secretariat, resigning from the State Department." Cordier Papers, box 95.

which was handled mainly by a small circle of officials nick-named the “Congo club” almost all of whom were American.

Hammarskjöld claimed that Cordier and Bunche were accepted as genuine international civil servants by all the countries of the world.²²⁶ Andrew Cordier, has given an interesting testimony on this:

*“I feel that you can be pursuing the interests of all of humanity while at the same time you are giving full and complete and loyal support to the proper and positive and constructive interests of your own people and your own country. The two are not incompatible. They supplement each other.”*²²⁷

This was, however, not possible for the Soviets as their national interest had global aspirations in that it advocated world revolution according to Cordier. Cordier saw no conflict between American interests and UN interests, as they were one and the same. If US interests and Soviet interests differed, then UN interests and Soviet interests could not be the same. What Cordier failed to realise was that the American national interest had the same global aspiration as the Soviet national interest as it sought a world that was safe for American interests and propagated the universality of American economic and political models.

Bunche also felt that he was best serving his country’s interest at the UN. He had turned down an offer to be deputy permanent representative of the US delegation to the UN²²⁸ and in 1957 he turned down an offer by president Eisenhower to sit on the Civil Rights Commission. Bunche’s motivation was that “by continuing in the UN he can best serve his country’s interests”; the president’s staff agreed with Bunche.²²⁹ The view of Cordier and Bunche, of being able to serve both US and UN interest at the same time, was of course not an impossible idea. But in a polarized confrontation like the Cold War where US and Soviet interests clearly collided, UN interests cannot at the same time be in line with both US and Soviet interests.

²²⁶ Oral History Cordier II, p. 173.

²²⁷ Oral History Cordier II, p. 158.

²²⁸ Lodge, Henry Cabot, *As It Was: An Inside View of Politics and Power in the 50’s and 60’s* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), pp. 61-62.

²²⁹ This information is from notes and interviews that Urquhart made for his Hammarskjöld biography, they are now stored in the UN archives, folder S-370-39-18.

The influence of Hammarskjöld's aides was important but Hammarskjöld remained "a one man operation".²³⁰ Even Ralph Bunche "was an assistant in the full sense and the extent to which Hammarskjöld directed operations in a detailed way quite naturally limited the scope for any one of his top people", as one member of the Secretariat put it.²³¹ The regular meetings of Hammarskjöld with the Under-Secretaries-General "consisted essentially of reporting by Hammarskjöld, and the contribution around the table was relatively small".²³² Later on, during the Congo crisis, one new arrival to Hammarskjöld's team would describe it as "meetings between a youngish headmaster and a bright sixth form".²³³ Since most of Hammarskjöld's advisors owed their position only to Hammarskjöld's favour and not to a secure position in the organisation, they were unlikely to provide Hammarskjöld with too much dissenting advice, especially as Hammarskjöld did not tend to appreciate such advice.

Outside the circle of colleagues at the UN, Hammarskjöld also turned to Ernest Gross and Philip P. Jessup as trusted advisors on political and legal issues. Gross was a lawyer who previously served as the deputy permanent representative – and acting permanent representative during the Korean crisis, he was the man behind the Uniting for Peace initiative – at the US permanent mission to the UN. Jessup was professor of international law and diplomacy at Columbia Law School.²³⁴ Gross shared Cordier's view on "how the United States can support the United Nations so as to promote effectively the United States national interest".²³⁵ Hammarskjöld used Gross' law firm for many services and used Gross in his personal capacity as an advisor (e.g. later on

²³⁰ Oral History Barco, p. 662.

²³¹ Columbia Oral History Schachter, p. 3.

²³² Columbia Oral History Schachter, p. 7.

²³³ O'Brien, p. 51.

²³⁴ Hammarskjöld called Gross to his office a few days after his first arrival in New York as Secretary-General to discuss administrative issues at the UN, see Oral History Gross, p. 20. Hammarskjöld also hired the services of Gross' law firm on several occasions, see e.g. Agreement between the Secretary-General, on behalf of the United Nations, and the Law Firm of Gross and Hyde, New York City, Cordier Paper, box 130. Gross dedicated his book on the UN, published in 1962 to Hammarskjöld, Gross, Ernest, *The United Nations: Structure for Peace* (New York: Harper, 1962).

²³⁵ These are the words with which Cordier introduced Gross' contribution, entitled "The United States National Interest and the United Nations", to the collection of Dag Hammarskjöld Memorial Lectures entitled "The Quest for Peace" edited by Andrew Cordier and Wilder Foote, p. xvi.

ahead of his trip to Peking to negotiate with Chou En-Lai). According to Gross both Lodge and Dulles were happy to see Hammarskjöld bring Gross on board.²³⁶

It was not Hammarskjöld's idea, from the outset, to rely on a mainly American team. He tried hard to get qualified Soviet and French representatives in his close circle. He refused several Soviet suggestions for the new role of Under-Secretary-General without portfolio until Moscow agreed to Hammarskjöld's choice of Ilya Tchernychev, whom Hammarskjöld knew from his time as Soviet ambassador to Stockholm. But although Tchernychev and, from 1958 Anatoly Dobrynin, were very seasoned diplomats, they did not play the same role as Cordier and Bunche as advisors – there were complaints that they were not even given anything to do – but served mainly in a secondary function as an additional liaison point with the Soviet government.²³⁷ The documents also testify to the fact that the Soviet Under-Secretary-General was never given the same responsibilities as Cordier and Bunche. As an example, when it was Tchernychev's time, according to a rotation scheme, to be acting Secretary-General in Hammarskjöld's absence, Cordier reported to the US permanent delegation that it would have been “embarrassing” to pass Tchernychev over but that two sensitive areas would not be under his control, instead being placed directly under Bunche and Cordier respectively, while Tchernychev was acting Secretary-General.²³⁸

Hammarskjöld also tried hard to recruit a qualified French advisor. He had told the Quai d'Orsay that he wanted a French official for a post as political advisor in the consulting group constituted as a brain trust around the Secretary-General; in Hammarskjöld's words he would need a “diplomat of the very first order, relatively young, gifted with political aptitudes”.²³⁹ A young French diplomat named Jacques Chazelles was proposed and accepted by Hammarskjöld on the personal recommendation of the French permanent representative Henri Hoppenot. But

²³⁶ See Oral History Gross, pp. 42-43.

²³⁷ See e.g. Lash, pp. 54-55.

²³⁸ The two areas were the scientific conference on peaceful uses of atomic energy (Bunche) and coordination of Hammarskjöld's trip to Peking (Cordier), see Telegram from USUN to Secretary of State, No 316, 29 December 1954, NARA RG 59 CDF 1950-54 Box 1251.

²³⁹ Lettre de Vincent Broustra à Henri Hoppenot du 27 juillet 1954, Archives MAE, AD, Fonds Hoppenot, 13.

Chazelles' superior refused to let him go.²⁴⁰ Hoppenot complained bitterly to the Director of Personnel at the Quai d'Orsay, stressing the importance of the post that Chazelles was to occupy and Hammarskjöld, who had been impressed by Hoppenot's description of Chazelles, even offered him a higher grade; their efforts though were in vain and in the end no French diplomat was appointed to this post.²⁴¹ The highest ranking French official in the UN, who took over after Georges-Picot, as the head of the newly merged Economic and Social Department was also a battle for Hammarskjöld. The French first tried to give the post to a favourite of the outgoing president Vincent Auriol with none of the experience or skills required for the post. Hammarskjöld strongly refused and asked the French to nominate Robert Marjolin, the first head of the OEEC whom Hammarskjöld knew well from his work with the Marshall Plan and the OEEC. Eventually, the French nominated Philippe de Seynes. Hammarskjöld was initially not impressed but when it was pointed out to him that de Seynes believed in the idea of the UN, he warmed to his candidacy.²⁴² de Seynes had been appointed by the short-lived government of Pierre Mendès France to whom he was close. This, in the era of de Gaulle, would become a source of problems for Hammarskjöld as he would sometimes rely on de Seynes' out of touch views of French policy and contributed to give Hammarskjöld a false picture of ideas and opinions in Paris.²⁴³

C The Political Role of the Secretary-General

C.1 "Dangerous implications"

As part of his reorganisation, Hammarskjöld wanted to improve the analytical capacity of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs so that the Secretary-General and the two Under-Secretaries without portfolio could be fully

²⁴⁰ Lettre de Raymond Bousquet à Henri Hoppenot du 22 mars 1955, Archives MAE, AD, Fonds Hoppenot, 13.

²⁴¹ Lettre d'Henri Hoppenot à Raymond Bousquet du 6 mai 1955, Archives MAE, AD, Fonds Hoppenot, 13.

²⁴² Lettre de Georges Boris to Henri Hoppenot, 29 July 1954, Archives MAE, AD, Fonds Hoppenot, 13. See also de Seynes, Philippe, "Hammarskjöld's Commitment to Economic and Social Development" in Jordan, Robert (ed.), *Hammarskjöld Revisited: the UN Secretary-General as a force in world politics* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1983), p. 67.

²⁴³ For a detailed discussion of Hammarskjöld's relationship with France and de Seynes see Frielingsdorf, *Les relations entre la France et Dag Hammarskjöld 1953-1961*, unpublished master thesis from 2008 available at the library of Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po).

briefed on any situation that might require the attention of the UN. Dixon wrote to London in 1954 that while he found it laudable that Hammarskjöld was looking at ways to improve the work of the staff, he felt “somewhat uneasy at what lies behind his idea [...] I think I detect in this evidence of a desire on the part of the Secretary-General to assert himself more vigorously in the United Nations. He wishes to have his own team of advisers so that he can be more ‘au point’ and in a position to intervene effectively at short notice and at critical moments.” Dixon thought that the motive behind this was that “Hammarskjöld, with his very wide experience and great sense of responsibility is, I think, somewhat irked at finding that he cannot exert much visible influence in world affairs. Fortunately he has not succumbed to his predecessor’s predilection for launching out on ideas of his own for settling international problems. But he is, I believe, beginning to suffer from the same urge”. To Dixon there were “dangerous implications” in Hammarskjöld’s proposal. Dixon had seen what he perceived as Hammarskjöld’s “first serious attempt to express publicly his views” in his intervention in the Guatemalan affair earlier in 1954 and he was not impressed.

The Guatemalan government under president Arbenz Guzman had been pursuing policies with regard to land reform and nationalisations that were considered more and more radical, the most notorious being the nationalisation of the United Fruit Company lands. In what was a more successful version of the infamous Bay of Pigs affair, the CIA prepared an invasion composed of US-trained exiled Guatemalans led by Colonel Carlos Castillo Aramas. On 18 June 1954, Colonel Aramas led a force of 150 men across the border into Guatemala. The next day, the Guatemalan government requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council.²⁴⁴ Lodge stated that the matter should be referred to the Organization of American States. Hammarskjöld reacted strongly against this idea, stating that the Security Council could never be prevented from dealing with a matter due to another regional organisation. On 20 June a resolution referring the matter to the Organization of American States was vetoed by the Soviet Union. Instead a resolution calling for an “immediate termination of any action likely to cause bloodshed” was adopted. Two days later, the Guatemalan

²⁴⁴ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, pp. 88-94 and Urquhart, Brian, “Dag Hammarskjöld: The Private Person in a Very Public Office”, in Robert S. Jordan (ed.) *Dag Hammarskjöld Revisited The UN Secretary-General as a Force in World Politics* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1983), p. 139.

Foreign Minister, Guillermo Toriello, wrote to Hammarskjöld and asked for a further meeting since the resolution was not being adhered to. Hammarskjöld discussed the matter with Lodge who regarded the whole thing as a communist plot. When the meeting eventually convened, the agenda was rejected on the grounds that this was a matter for the Organization of American States, with a vote of 5 to 4 with France and the UK abstaining. Since this was a procedural question, the veto could not be used.

Hammarskjöld had anticipated this outcome and prepared a legal analysis on the jurisdiction of the UN with regards to regional organisations. Hammarskjöld's motivation was, he claimed, purely procedural. To him there could be no question of carving out the jurisdiction of the UN in this way. For the Americans, this was partly a matter of keeping the question out of the Security Council to avoid the Soviets lambasting them in public. Pierson Dixon "succeeded with difficulty" in dissuading Hammarskjöld from making a public statement at the Security Council meeting by pointing out that this would "so alienate the Americans as seriously to prejudice his own position as Secretary-General". Despite this, Hammarskjöld later prepared a detailed memorandum with a legal analysis setting out his views. It was his intention to circulate this memorandum to all delegations, but on the advice of Pierson Dixon he agreed to first send it to Lodge for comments. Hammarskjöld referred to his memorandum as "a rather dry, factual review without evaluations or conclusions".

In the State Department, Hammarskjöld's memorandum was seen as "a most unusual document [...] both as to form and content" and caused "the greatest surprise in the United States Government". The Americans did not see the document as a "dry, factual review" but described it as "contentious in tone and faulty in reasoning" and as a direct challenge and attack on US policies in Central America. The Americans thought that Hammarskjöld probably did not fully appreciate the harmful effects his attack could have.²⁴⁵ Was Hammarskjöld merely motivated by procedural concerns as he claimed or motivated by other reasons? The issue has been portrayed as a clash between Hammarskjöld's legalistic idealism and the realism of Dulles. Dulles, however, was a seasoned international lawyer, with a vastly superior experience than

²⁴⁵ Memorandum entitled Observations on Secretary General's Memorandum on the relationship between "regional arrangements" and the United States, 5 July 1954, NARA, RG 59, Office of the Legal Advisor, Office of the Assistant Legal Advisor for United Nations Affairs, General Records, 1945-1959, Guatemala, 1954 to Cyprus, 1950-1954, Box 87 Lot 62D205 Entry A1 1494I.

Hammar skjöld, from his work both as a lawyer and as a member of the US delegations working on the preparatory committee to both the League of Nations and the United Nations. Dulles made full reference to these experiences in the Guatemalan case.²⁴⁶ In a telephone call with Lodge Dulles told Lodge that he would have used the veto, even if it was the first American veto ever, as it was “a matter of basic principles – there is a relationship of two organizations. It is fundamental to maintain the integrity of the American system. ...The UN Charter is being violated. ...”²⁴⁷. Hammar skjöld’s motive was to expand, or at least not diminish, the powers of the UN and in the end himself as Secretary-General. But Hammar skjöld’s legal position was weak due to the fact that the Members of the Security Council had voted in accordance with the American interpretation. The Guatemalan affair showed the weakness of the Secretary-General’s position in practice and that he did not have the ultimate say in how the Charter was interpreted, something that Hammar skjöld would work hard to change.

C.2 Hammar skjöld’s Method

When he landed at Idlewild airport in New York for the first time as Secretary-General, Hammar skjöld gave a speech in which he hinted at the role he wanted to play as Secretary-General:

“The public servant is there in order to assist, so to say from the inside, those who make the decisions which frame history. He should - as I see it - listen, analyse and learn to understand fully the forces at work and the interests at stake, so that he will be able to give the right advice when the situation calls for it. Don't think that he - in following this line of personal policy - takes but a passive part in the development. It

²⁴⁶ In a telephone conversation with Lodge on 24 June 1954, Dulles said that “... Guatemala itself is violating the terms of Article 53(2) of the Charter. He said that the whole status of regional organizations was at stake in this particular matter, which was the very thing which he and Vandenberg had fought for in San Francisco. The whole concept is being destroyed. ...”. Telephone Memoranda (Excepting to or From White House) (2); 1954 May 1 - 1954 June 30; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library files relating to John Foster Dulles, Box 7; Public Policy Papers, Princeton University Library.

²⁴⁷ Telephone conversation between Dulles and Lodge, 24 June 1954, Telephone Memoranda (Excepting to or From White House) (2); 1954 May 1 - 1954 June 30; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library files relating to John Foster Dulles, Box 7; Public Policy Papers, Princeton University Library.

*is a most active one. But he is active as an instrument, a catalyst, perhaps an inspirer - he serves.*²⁴⁸

The role Hammarskjöld was initially aiming for as Secretary-General was as the “trusted consultant” of all sides.²⁴⁹ He would also refer to the role of the Secretary-General as a sort of “clearing-house” that “the delegations know can be used to check their own opinions against the opinions of other countries, who will pass on to other delegations not their confidences but the conclusions he has drawn from them, who perhaps can advise, who perhaps is in a better position to judge than any single delegate”.²⁵⁰

A few days after Dixon’s report about the “dangerous implications” of Hammarskjöld’s ideas on his own staff for political analysis, Dixon found the opportunity to discuss the role of the Secretary-General with Hammarskjöld. Hammarskjöld “spoke very frankly about his ideas”:

“Mr. Hammarskjöld had evidently given considerable thought to this problem. Under the strict rule of the Charter (Articles 99 and 100) it could be argued that the Secretary General should intervene in political matters only when it was a question of bringing a mediatory influence to bear. This, however, did not correspond with realities. The reality to his mind was that the Secretary General, from the very nature of his office, must be expected to have some settled and continuing view of the role of the United Nations. If one looked at precedents, it was clear that both Sir Eric Drummond and Mr. Trygve Lie had conceived of themselves as having such a position. Their methods had been different. Sir Eric, while in public appearing as a perfect international civil servant, had in practice through his contacts exercised great influence on policy making. Mr. Lie adopted the method of “pronunciamentos”. Mr Hammarskjöld preferred a different method.”

Dixon replied, also “speaking very frankly” that:

²⁴⁸ Statement to the Press on Arrival at International Airport, 9 April 1953, in Cordier/Foote (eds.), Public Papers Vol II, p. 29.

²⁴⁹ Lash, Joseph P., “Dag Hammarskjöld’s Conception of his Office” in International Organization Vol. 16, No. 3 (Summer, 1962), p. 542.

²⁵⁰ Hammarskjöld quoted from Rosenthal, A.M., “Dag Hammarskjöld Sizes Up His U.N. Job” in New York Times, 16 August 1953.

“as long as it was clearly the voice of Mr. Hammarskjold, Governments would listen with pleasure and attention. But if it was the voice of a brains trust surrounding the Secretary General that would be a quite different matter. The British were constitutionally opposed to the building up of a strong Secretariat view in an international organisation, and above all in a universal organisation like the United Nations. It was for this reason that I hoped that he would not pursue his ideas for enlarging his own private office.

Another factor which must be borne in mind was the sensitivity of the Americans to the role of the Secretary General. Of course it was right that he should speak for the organisation as a whole but we must face the fact that the Americans tended to regard the United Nations as an instrument in the struggle against Communism. Too many nicely balanced interventions by the Secretary General might therefore seriously upset his relations with the Americans, and we must never forget that the headquarters was situated in New York.”

Hammarskjöld told Dixon that he intended to maintain “very close relations” with Dixon and “one or two others” and agreed with Dixon that this was the best way of bringing his opinion to bear. (Dixon wrote to the FO that “Hammarskjöld tends to seek my advice on the various matters which are troubling him, sometimes even to an embarrassing extent”.) For his part, Dixon was confident that the British were “in a position to steer him away from his more dangerous ideas” and suggested three remedies. First, to go out of their way to keep Hammarskjöld informed of British policies and assessments and try and bring the Americans to do the same. Secondly, to try to “convince him that his most effective way of keeping us all on the right path, if we seem to him to be straying away from it, is by intervention in private, and on a strictly personal basis, not as part of a ‘Secretariat view’”. Finally, Dixon suggested that they should encourage Hammarskjöld to spend more time on the one international problem that was in the sphere of responsibility of the UN and to which he had not given enough attention so far: Palestine.²⁵¹

The Foreign Office in London agreed that generally Hammarskjöld was “seeking to assert himself more than he should do as Secretary-General”. However, they also noted that in order for the Secretary-General to be able to evaluate situations under Article 99 he could perhaps argue that he needs special senior staff not only to collect information but also to analyse it so that he can exercise his judgement. The important

²⁵¹ UKUN (Dixon) to FO 31 August 1954, Despatch No 17 UP 1012/2 1014/17/54 FO 371/112437.

distinction to London was between the Secretary-General forming his own opinion, which was laudable, and expressing that opinion out of turn, which might well have unfortunate results.²⁵² Dixon's suggestions on how to deal with Hammarskjöld were found "very sound". A split with the Americans must also be avoided "at all costs": "Any loss of confidence in Mr. H. at the present moment would do great harm to the United Nations".

London therefore believed it was important to inform Hammarskjöld "of the great dangers that would result from his entering the partisan arena. That could be the only result of his being identified, particularly in American eyes, as the protagonist of any particular course of international policy".²⁵³ On a legal note, London also noted that "[i]t is indicated nowhere in the Charter that the Secretary General should express views on international problems; in fact such taking of sides might almost be precluded by the second half of Article 100". The British had hit on something that was to be defining of Hammarskjöld's career: The paradox of remaining impartial while taking political action. Schwebel had summed up this contradictory aspect of the role of the Secretary-General in his 1951 article in the following manner:

*"Thus while the Secretary-General may be in a higher sense impartial in the carrying out of his political duties, he cannot be neutral. Neutrality implies political abstinence, not political action [...] There is, indeed, an 'un-neutral' predisposition about the Secretary-General's calling the attention of the Security Council to a matter threatening the peace, since it is unlikely that it can ever be in the equal interests of the parties to a dispute, in an exact, strictly 'neutral' degree, that a situation in which they are involved be brought before the Council. The unequivocal character of the Secretary-General's intervention in the Korean case emphasizes this at least superficially partisan potentiality of Article 99."*²⁵⁴

In much the same way, Hammarskjöld's pointing out procedural concerns in the Guatemalan case might have been impartial, but not neutral. Hammarskjöld's attempt to solve the problem of how the Secretary-General could pursue an active political role while remaining impartial was to base his actions on the "ideology of the Charter".

²⁵² J G Ward (Foreign Office) to Pierson Dixon, August 10, 1954.

²⁵³ UKUN (Dixon) to FO 31 August 1954, Despatch No 17 UP 1012/2 1014/17/54 FO 371/112437.

²⁵⁴ Schwebel, p. 381.

C.3 The “Ideology of the Charter” and the “Secular Church” of Hammarskjöld

The preparatory commission on the UN Charter had noted that the Secretary-General “more than anyone else, will stand for the United Nations as a whole. In the eyes of the world, no less than in the eyes of his own staff, he must embody the principles and ideals of the Charter to which the Organization seeks to give effect.”²⁵⁵ Hammarskjöld was well aware of the need for the Secretary-General “to try and reach the minds and hearts of people so as to get the United Nations efforts firmly based in public reaction”.²⁵⁶ In a speech to the American Association for the UN, Hammarskjöld told his audience that he conceived of “the Secretariat and the Secretary-General in their relations with the Governments as representatives of a secular ‘church’ of ideals and principles in international affairs of which the United Nations is the expression”.²⁵⁷ By this he meant that the “relationship of the Secretary-General to the governments should be one of a trusted consultant on those considerations following from adhering to the Charter and membership in the United Nations that should be taken into account by the governments in coming to their own policy decisions”.²⁵⁸ This was a new and idiosyncratic view of the Charter obligations of the Member states. To Hammarskjöld the Member states had subscribed to follow certain rules in international relations by signing up to the Charter and he viewed it as his role to remind them of their obligations when they strayed from them.

Hammarskjöld’s leap of faith in his personal religious outlook corresponds to another leap in his official philosophy in the UN. In order to bridge the realism of great power politics Hammarskjöld developed what he himself referred to as the “ideology of the Charter”. A draft of his introduction to the annual report of the Secretary-General from 1954 contained the following sentence:

“[...] Because of this very fact, it is also true that the United Nations must oppose any policy in accordance with those principles of the Charter and support a policy in accordance with those principles, not in a spirit of partiality but as an expression of loyalty to the ideology of the Charter. [here “ideology” in the draft is crossed out

²⁵⁵ Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, 23 December 1945, Chapter VIII, Section 2, paragraph 17.

²⁵⁶ Address at Luncheon Given by the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C., 11 September 1953, Cordier/Foote (eds.) *Public Papers* Vol II, p. 84.

²⁵⁷ 14 September 1953, Cordier/Foote (eds.) *Public Papers* Vol II, p. 94.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

and replaced with “principles”] The attitude proper to the United Nations is thus not one of neutrality but one of active effort to further those ideals [here the wording “very principles” is suggested instead of “ideals”] which have been fully endorsed by all the signatories of the Charter. [...]”²⁵⁹

In a discussion of this draft at a private meeting between Hammarskjöld and the Under-Secretaries-General on 25 June 1954 it was suggested that “loyalty to the ideology of the Charter” might not be clearly understood and the word “philosophy” was suggested as more suitable than “ideology”. In the end Hammarskjöld agreed to the deletion of the word “ideology” so that the passage simply referred to “loyalty to the Charter”.²⁶⁰

Even if the word “ideology” was removed it was clear that Hammarskjöld meant that it was possible to take political action and remain impartial, as long as the action was in line with the “ideology” or “principles” of the Charter. But this strong belief in the Charter was not necessarily everyone’s interpretation of the Charter or the role of the UN. Nor are the principles expressed in the Charter very much to base a detailed policy on. The UN, like the League of Nations in the words of A.J.P. Taylor, “could cover anything from the Concert of Europe to a system of International Government in which national sovereignty ceased to exist”.²⁶¹ Yet Hammarskjöld would continue to develop his philosophy of the UN in tandem with his development of a political role – and more often than not as a defence for an increasingly active and interventionist political role. No other Secretary-General has written so much about the political role of his office. His predecessor Trygve Lie had established some important rights for the Secretary-General, such as fact-finding missions during the Greek crisis in 1946. But the theory behind it was not Lie’s strong side. According to his biographer, Trygve Lie’s “heavily accented, imperfect command of English and

²⁵⁹ Draft Introduction of Annual Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 1954. UN Archives, S-0847-0002-01-0001 Secretary-General’s private meetings with Under-Secretaries-General, folder S-0847-2-2.

²⁶⁰ Secretary-General’s private meeting with Under-Secretaries-General, 25 June 1954. UN Archives, S-0847-0002-01-0001 Secretary-General’s private meetings with Under-Secretaries-General, folder S-0847-2-2.

²⁶¹ Taylor, A.J.P., *The Trouble Makers – Dissent over Foreign Policy 1792-1939* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957), p. 143.

lack of French probably hindered his ability to discuss abstract questions dealing with the expansion of the powers and prerogatives of his office”.²⁶²

Hammarskjöld also quickly realised the importance of building popular support for the UN. In his speech to the American Association to the UN, Hammarskjöld told his audience: “Your role is of the highest significance. No matter what their private judgment, those in positions of authority cannot go against prevailing public opinion or lead in a direction the public is not prepared to follow”.²⁶³ Ernest A. Gross, a previous American deputy representative at the UN, said of Hammarskjöld that “In time of crisis, the S-G’s views and actions are as important a political phenomenon as the Pope in Rome and his views”.²⁶⁴ The importance of Hammarskjöld’s views as a secular pope would eventually eclipse those of the Pope in Rome. To a great part this was due to the moral role that Hammarskjöld invested his office with, evident during the Suez crisis, that Hammarskjöld consciously built up.

In the annual report that Hammarskjöld wrote for 1954 he made a thinly veiled comment on the American handling of the Guatemalan affair at the UN by emphasising that regional arrangements should not be permitted to cast doubt on the “ultimate responsibility of the UN”.²⁶⁵ But Dixon was content with the annual report and wrote to London that the annual report “the first in which the Secretary-General has formally analysed his views about the United Nations, does not confirm my apprehensions”. Although some of the views in the report might be at variance with those held in the US Administration Dixon thought that “Hammarskjöld has expressed himself with reasonable restraint and caution” and the document had not caused any raised eyebrows among the Americans. “It is to be hoped that Mr. Hammarskjöld will continue to act with the same degree of restraint in his future political dealings and pronouncements”, Dixon concluded.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Barros, James, *Trygve Lie and the Cold War* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), p. 46.

²⁶³ Cordier/Footer (eds.) *Public Papers Vol II*, p. 94.

²⁶⁴ Beichman, Arnold, *The “Other” State Department: the United States Mission to the United Nations — Its Role in the Making of Foreign Policy* (New York: Basic Books, 1967), p. 180.

²⁶⁵ Introduction to Ninth Annual Report, in Cordier and Foote, 327.

²⁶⁶ UP 1012/2 UK Delegation (Pierson Dixon) to Anthony Eden, August 31, 1954, Despatch No 17 1014/17/54. FO 371/112437.

Hammarskjöld adopted some of Dixon's advice and he would soon realise that he needed the full support of the Americans for any successful action. But Dixon was wrong about the path that Hammarskjöld would follow. Shortly after the Guatemalan affair and his discussions with Dixon on the role of the Secretary-General, Hammarskjöld wrote to Gunnar Myrdal, who was now head of the ECE, regarding his range of political initiative: "it is even in the case of the Secretary-General himself a matter of dispute which was never consistently explored by my predecessor and where I have to proceed with caution – also in relation to the most friendly governments – in my efforts to widen and consolidate recognized rights".²⁶⁷ Hammarskjöld might have been dented in his efforts, but his efforts to widen the political role of the Secretary-General had just begun.

²⁶⁷ Hammarskjöld to Myrdal, 10 August 1954, cited from Appelqvist, "Hidden Duel", p. 21.

Chapter 3: Hammarskjöld's First Attempts to Expand His Role

All major studies of Hammarskjöld refer to the Peking mission as a great success for the Secretary-General and a breakthrough for Hammarskjöld as a mediator.²⁶⁸ But the Peking mission almost resulted in Hammarskjöld becoming *persona non grata* in Washington as the Americans and the British came to be more and more critical of Hammarskjöld's tendency to overstep his mandate and power. During his mission to the Middle East in early 1956, however, governments came to accept, albeit tacitly, that Hammarskjöld could act as a mediator without a specific mandate from the Security Council or the General Assembly. These episodes clearly highlight how Hammarskjöld proactively worked to expand his political role as Secretary General, amid general scepticism and governments' opposition.

A The "Peking formula"

A.1 Hammarskjöld's Mission to Peking

On 23 November 1954, the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) announced that 11 US airmen and 2 US civilians had been convicted of espionage in Korea, while US claimed they were part of the UN force. As a matter of principle Dulles did not want to make the release of the American fliers part of a comprehensive settlement with the PRC.²⁶⁹ The US wanted the UN to adopt a resolution calling on the PRC to release the fliers and convened a meeting of the 16 countries who had participated in the UN intervention in Korea.²⁷⁰ The other 15, however, favoured some sort of good offices approach and in the end a paragraph that called on the President of the General Assembly "to use his good offices" was inserted into the draft resolution. Before the resolution was passed on 6 December the reference to the President of the General Assembly was changed to the Secretary-General after Hammarskjöld suggested this to Lodge.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ See e.g. Lash, 65; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, pp. 127 and 131.

²⁶⁹ Memorandum of Conversation 3 December 1954 FRUS 1952-54 Vol XIV.

²⁷⁰ USUN to State 3 December 1954 FRUS 1952-54 Vol XIV.

²⁷¹ USUN to State 6 December 1954 FRUS 1952-54 Vol XIV; see also Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 98.

On 8 December Hammarskjöld told Lodge that he had decided to go to Peking himself.²⁷² Lodge told Eisenhower that he thought Hammarskjöld could actually achieve something if he was given “a real opportunity to work it out” without too much discussion in the press and comments from American officials. Hammarskjöld also implored the Americans to try and minimise comments that might raise the level of tensions before and during his trip. Dulles and Eisenhower agreed to “keep the lid on” at least until Hammarskjöld’s return from Beijing.²⁷³

While Nationalist China viewed Hammarskjöld’s mission with great suspicion, in light of the fact that Hammarskjöld was in favour of admitting the PRC to the UN, Lodge reassured the Permanent Representative of Nationalist China that Hammarskjöld was “to do no bargaining whatever on behalf of the US” and that “his powers came exclusively from the res[olution] passed by the GA”.²⁷⁴ Hammarskjöld, though, did not share this view, as it would soon transpire

Hammarskjöld was received by foreign minister Chou En-lai on the evening of 5 January and he immediately set the tone by explaining how he viewed his role as Secretary-General:

*“Under the Charter of the United Nations the Secretary-General is entitled – and, being entitled, in my view obliged, – to take whatever initiative he finds appropriate in order to get under control or reverse developments leading to serious tensions. His rights and obligations in this respect are not limited to Member Nations. They are of world-wide application and were given him when he was established in his post not only by a majority of the General Assembly but by the unanimous vote of the permanent members of the Security-Council. When he acts for the purpose indicated, it is not, and can never be permitted to be, on behalf of any nation, group of nations or even majority of Member Nations as registered by a vote in the General Assembly. He acts under his constitutional responsibility for the general purposes set out in the Charter, which must be considered of common and equal significance to Members and Non-Members alike.”*²⁷⁵

²⁷² Memorandum of Telephone Conversation 8 December 1954 FRUS 1952-54 Vol XIV.

²⁷³ Memorandum of Conversation 10 January 1955 FRUS 1952-54 Vol XIV.

²⁷⁴ USUN to State 30 December 1954 FRUS 1952-54 Vol XIV.

²⁷⁵ Minutes of meetings between Hammarskjöld and Chou, p. 2, UN Archives, Series S-0846, Box 2, File 4.

This would be known as the “Peking formula” and it was partly designed as a clever way to circumvent the General Assembly resolution that Chou did not accept. But Hammarskjöld also took the opportunity to add his very wide interpretation of the role of the Secretary-General as having a standing mandate, indeed an obligation, to intervene in any world crisis and his remark on the Secretary-General’s independence was not a coincidence. The “Peking formula” represented an important development as it established that the Secretary-General could act independently from the Security Council and the General Assembly. It had “a political and juridical significance which was quite well understood by Hammarskjöld, and was very much taken into account by him”.²⁷⁶

Chou welcomed Hammarskjöld “personally, and as Secretary-General”²⁷⁷ and told him that he “did not believe that they would be able to find a solution or a common view without approaching the matter from the angle of general political questions”.²⁷⁸ The next day Chou attempted to discuss several more general questions such as the US treaty with Taiwan and UN representation while Hammarskjöld tried to get the discussions back to the fliers. On the third day of meetings, Hammarskjöld changed tactics and took the initiative to discuss the wider political situation, again taking the chance to explain his personal interpretation of the role of the Secretary-General:

*“[The Secretary-General] must, independently of the governments, form his own opinion as to what best serves the cause of peace and act on that basis without jeopardizing the position of his office by permitting himself to be drawn into open conflicts where a broad opinion might misinterpret his intentions.”*²⁷⁹

This statement contains two rather revolutionary ideas about the role of the Secretary-General. That the Secretary-General should “form his own political opinion as to what best serves the cause of peace” and “act on that basis”. The only limitation seems to be that he should not do so in a way as to lose all support. Hammarskjöld’s mission to Peking is a very revealing illustration of how he put these ideas into practice. Hammarskjöld’s opinion was in fact that it would serve the cause of peace if he could

²⁷⁶ Oral History Gross, pp. 82-83.

²⁷⁷ Minutes of meetings between Hammarskjöld and Chou p. 8, UN Archives, Series S-0846, Box 2, File 4.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p21.

act as a mediator between Washington and Peking, including on the wider political issues, and he acted accordingly, regardless of not having such a mandate. As to the risk of jeopardizing his office, Hammarskjöld does not appear to have given that much thought.

Hammarskjöld was much taken in by Chou and he thought there would have been some grounds for negotiation. Hammarskjöld also told Chou that “as to the question of representation you know from public statements what is my attitude” and called it “an anomaly” that “one fourth of mankind” was not represented at the UN, but added that he thought the problem could not realistically be solved for some time.²⁸⁰ No agreements were reached at these discussions, but Chou offered to give visas for the families of the imprisoned fliers to visit them in China and Hammarskjöld promised to discuss the question of imprisoned Chinese students in the US.

Chou’s hope for Hammarskjöld to work as a channel between him and the US government was clearly stated on the day of Hammarskjöld’s departure, when he told him that he hoped “that you will be able, at times which you consider appropriate, to tell those countries concerned, although not friendly towards us, especially the United States, about China, our views and positions”.²⁸¹ From Hammarskjöld’s words and actions, Chou had every reason to believe that he was going to act as an intermediary with Washington, and Hammarskjöld appeared eager to go to Washington and offer his services in this capacity.

On his way home Hammarskjöld sent word to Dulles from Tokyo that he thought it would be “most useful” to discuss his trip with him and the President on his return. The American embassy in Tokyo also reported about the “considerable admiration for Chou’s intellectual and general ability” that the Secretary-General expressed.²⁸² This hardly inspired confidence in Dulles, who allegedly refused to shake the hand of Chou at the 1954 Geneva Conference.²⁸³ Hammarskjöld claimed that whereas Chou had made much in public of the fact that they were to discuss “pertinent questions”, hinting that these included recognition, UN admission etc., in private he did not

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 37.

²⁸² Telegram Tokyo to State 12 January 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

²⁸³ Pruessen, Ronald W., “Over the Volcano The United States and the Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1954-1955” in Ross, Robert S. and Changbin, Jiang (eds.), *Re-examining the Cold War U.S. – China Diplomacy, 1954-1973* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 100.

expect them to be discussed.²⁸⁴ Though, as the transcripts of the meetings reveal, this was not entirely true, nor did it correspond with what Lodge had been told by Cordier, who reported on 7 January that Chou had related the question of the fliers to “the whole complex of questions”.²⁸⁵

Dulles was “not keen” on seeing Hammarskjöld on his return. He felt that an official visit “would make trouble and would give the impression [Hammarskjöld] was the intermediary between the Sec. and the Pres. and Chou”.²⁸⁶ Instead Hammarskjöld had to settle for a meeting with Lodge on 13 January.²⁸⁷ The day after he again proposed a meeting with Dulles and Eisenhower, this time in the form of a “relaxed talk” in Washington but Dulles and Eisenhower decided that Dulles should invite Hammarskjöld over, but that he would not meet Eisenhower.²⁸⁸

A.2 Secretary-General in Search of a Role

When Dulles and Hammarskjöld finally met in Washington, on 19 January, Hammarskjöld jumped at the opportunity to give his views of the whole situation in the Far East and concluded that “the Chinese Communists were now a world power. They could no longer be treated as pariah”. Dulles did not say much and, in Hammarskjöld’s view as he later told Dixon, Dulles listened to all he had to say “with interest, though without comment”. Hammarskjöld’s impression was that Dulles did not disagree on any point. Hammarskjöld told Dulles that although Chou was “undoubtedly cold and ruthless” he was “certainly not a petty man, nor was he incapable by nature of negotiation”. He also referred that Chou had told him “in a way clearly intended to be a message to the Americans” that he wanted to reduce tensions and seek a state of peaceful co-existence.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ Telegram Tokyo to State 12 January 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

²⁸⁵ Notes of telephone conversations between Dulles and Lodge from January 7, 1955 cited in FRUS 1955-57 Vol II Document 5 note 2.

²⁸⁶ Notes of telephone conversation between Dulles and Lodge on January 12, 1955 cited in FRUS 1955-57 Vol II Document 7, note 1.

²⁸⁷ Record of telephone conversation between Eisenhower and Dulles on 13 January, 1955 cited in Telegram USUN to State 13 January 1955 in FRUS 1955-57 Vol II Document 11, note 7.

²⁸⁸ Record of meeting between Eisenhower and Dulles 7 January 1955, Meetings with the President (7); 1955; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library files relating to John Foster Dulles, Box 21; Public Policy Papers, Princeton University Library.

²⁸⁹ Letter from UKUN to FO (Allen) 24 January 1955 FO 371/115032.

If Hammarskjöld interpreted Dulles' silence as tacit agreement he was mistaken. Dulles was growing weary of Hammarskjöld's activities and had no intention of entering into negotiations with the PRC.²⁹⁰ The Americans were frustrated by newspaper reports that portrayed the Hammarskjöld negotiations as concerning a quid pro quo of UN recognition or changes to the Formosa defence treaty in return for the release of the American prisoners.²⁹¹ The New York Times had also published a picture from Hammarskjöld's trip to Beijing that showed him under a sign that denounced American aggression in Formosa in Chinese letters.²⁹² Hammarskjöld also stated in a press conference on 14 January that it would be "useful" if the PRC were directly represented at the UN.²⁹³

In reality, Dulles thought that Hammarskjöld "had made no progress at all" and that the main effect of the Peking offer of visas and Hammarskjöld's trip was to give the PRC a propaganda opportunity.²⁹⁴ The Americans now wanted the UN to call for a cease-fire in the Taiwan Strait area, even if the PRC would not comply with a UN cease-fire and the Soviets would veto such a resolution. Dulles in fact hoped that such a move would rally the "free world" and public opinion.²⁹⁵ The British were less enthusiastic about such an approach and thought they should aim to negotiate a cease-fire that the PRC would actually be willing to accept.²⁹⁶ Hammarskjöld had not been consulted but was aware of the preparations to bring the Taiwan Strait situation to the Security Council. In a discussion with the UK representative to the UN, he suggested that the Security Council should ask the Secretary-General to "explore the situation" with the two parties in view of a possible future cease-fire. He also suggested that the resolution should not call on him to report to the Security Council, "but to give him wide discretion to examine the situation".²⁹⁷

²⁹⁰ Memorandum of Discussion 12 September 1954 FRUS 1952-54 Vol XIV.

²⁹¹ Telegram USUN to State 17 January 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

²⁹² Memorandum of Conversation 19 January 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

²⁹³ Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol II*, p. 441-455.

²⁹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation 19 January 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

²⁹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation 20 January 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

²⁹⁶ Telegram from UK Representation in Peking (Trevelyan) to FO, Peking 24 January 1955, no. 83, FO 371/115026.

²⁹⁷ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO, no. 67, 21 January 1955, FO 371/115024.

Dixon thought it “would be a mistake to use Secretary-General”.²⁹⁸ The next day Hammarskjöld told Dixon that “personally he would be glad to avoid being mixed up with the exercise”, but at the same time he felt strongly that the “Peking formula” meant that he was the only one suited for good offices. He even invoked Chou as support for his extensive interpretation of the rights of the Secretary-General: “Chou En-lai had apparently been able to reconcile his rejection of the right of the United Nations to interfere in matters relating to China’s domestic affairs with opening negotiations with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the grounds that the Secretary-General was constitutionally empowered under the Charter to investigate any situation giving rise to international tension”.²⁹⁹ Dixon was not convinced and found it difficult to determine under which Article or Articles of the Charter precisely Hammarskjöld thought he derived “the general authority to investigate any situation giving rise to international tension”.³⁰⁰

Dulles was not impressed by the suggestion to resort to Hammarskjöld’s good offices and felt it would arouse suspicions that there was a “deal” with the PRC. Dulles also felt that “Hammarskjöld had been a bit naïve and had really not gotten anything at all but a mandate from the Chinese Communists to tell us to be more reasonable”. To the British fears of a Soviet veto, Dulles replied that the UN’s “main value lay in its being a forum for world opinion where influence was exerted on nations to conform to the standards of world opinion”.³⁰¹ The Americans were far from embracing Hammarskjöld’s extensive concept of the role of the UN, preferring to see the organisation as an anti-Communist tool, to provide the US with the political prestige of the UN as an expression of world opinion.³⁰²

On 27 January Hammarskjöld wrote to Dulles complaining that he had not had the time to explain his ideas regarding the next steps of the negotiations. Hammarskjöld continued to explain the difficulties he had gone through to make the announcement of the visas for relatives to the imprisoned fliers as manageable as possible for the Americans only to find that Dulles treated it as “nothing but a propaganda move” and

²⁹⁸ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO, no. 68 21 January 1955, FO 371/115024.

²⁹⁹ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to Foreign Office, 22 January 1955, no. 72, FO 371/115024.

³⁰⁰ Letter from UKUN (Dixon) to FO (Allen), New York, 24 January 1955, FO 371/115032.

³⁰¹ Memorandum of Conversation 25 January 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

³⁰² Pruessen, p. 89.

did not intend to issue exit permits for the families. Hammarskjöld wrote “I must confess that I am worried when, in this way, I see issues which may be vital to the further negotiations, handled and settled without any consultation with the negotiator himself”. Hammarskjöld was also worried about possible action in the Security Council that might “widen the gulf between East and West” if it provoked a Soviet veto. He told Dulles that “as matters now stand, when the Secretary-General has a more direct impression of the Chinese aspect of the problem than anybody else in the West” he should be consulted.³⁰³ Dulles and Lodge reacted badly to Hammarskjöld’s letter and agreed that there was nothing in the Charter that said that they had to consult with the Secretary-General. Lodge thought that Hammarskjöld was in “way over his head” and had “delusions of grandeur”.³⁰⁴

If Hammarskjöld felt that Dulles had treated him in a cavalier manner so far, the curt reply he received the next day made it perfectly clear that this was not by accident:

“My Dear Mr. Secretary General: I have your letter of January 27th. It illustrates, I am afraid, the difficulty of you and me trying to deal with these matters on a direct personal basis. We were together for over one and one half hours. Yet you feel the time was inadequate. Perhaps it was, in the sense that it would have taken many hours to have covered the subject in detail. That is why I have to do a measure of delegating to Ambassadors and assistants”.³⁰⁵

The rebuke was complete. After a meeting with Dulles the next day, the British ambassador, Sir Roger Makins, reported that “Mr. Dulles obviously regards the Secretary-General as gullible and I am afraid his stock is rather low here at the moment”.³⁰⁶ The Foreign Office noted that “it is ironical that whereas we had initial misgivings that the intervention of the Sect-General in this matter might lead to his

³⁰³ Letter from the United Nations Secretary-General to the Secretary of State 27 January 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II. A copy also exists in Cordier Papers, box 132. Hammarskjöld also showed the letter to Dixon and said he would be grateful for anything the British could do to explain to Dulles how hard they were making it for him, *Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO* 28 January 1955, no. 97, FO 371/115029.

³⁰⁴ Telephone call to Amb. Lodge Friday January 28 1955 2:29 pm, Telephone Conv. - General - (1); 1955 January 3 - 1955 February 18; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library files relating to John Foster Dulles, Box 8; Public Policy Papers, Princeton University Library.

³⁰⁵ *Letter from Dulles to Hammarskjöld*, January 28, 1955 in FRUS 1955-57 Vol II Document 53. A copy of this letter also exists in Chronological - John Foster Dulles (1-6); 1955 January; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library files relating to John Foster Dulles, Box 76; Public Policy Papers, Princeton University Library.

³⁰⁶ Telegram from Washington (Makins) to FO, Washington 29 January 1955, no. 269, FO 371/115029.

becoming *persona non grata* with the Communists, the result seem to be rather the contrary”.³⁰⁷

A.3 Mediator without a Mandate: “Volunteer operations on a freewheeling basis”

The Security Council met on January 31 and decided to invite the Chinese Communists to attend Security Council discussions on a cease-fire in the Taiwan Strait. The United Kingdom and France wanted Hammarskjöld to deliver the invitation and also to add a comment on the importance that several of the members of the Security Council attached to the attendance of the representatives of the PRC. The UK and France added that the Secretary-General should not merely be “a transmitting agent” but should use “his judgment in making appropriate use of the contact he had established with Chou En-lai”. Lodge did not agree. After some discussion of this point it was decided that Hammarskjöld should send an official invitation and a personal message. The Americans protested at the wording of Hammarskjöld’s personal message as “exceeding his authority under the Charter” as it was not confined to the cessation of hostilities, but gave the impression of impending negotiations on an over-all solution.³⁰⁸

Eventually, Hammarskjöld’s personal message did not reach Chou until after the PRC had already refused the Security Council invitation.³⁰⁹ Hammarskjöld later received a reply from Chou via the Swedish Ambassador in Peking, which floated the idea of direct negotiations with the US and suggested that “Hammarskjöld could facilitate this by persuading his American friends”. Hammarskjöld showed the message to Lodge on February 6 and said that it was “significant” that Chou had chosen the Secretary-General as a channel to put forward the idea of direct negotiations as it showed that “Chou did not want to use New Delhi or Moscow and that he did not want a Geneva-type conference”. (In fact, Chou had communicated via the Russians

³⁰⁷ Minutes 1 February 1955, no. 269, FO 371/115029.

³⁰⁸ Memorandum 5 February 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II. See also Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 2 February 1955, no. 119, FO 371/115031 and Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 2 February 1955, no. 126, FO 371/115031.

³⁰⁹ Hammarskjöld’s personal message had not reached Chou before his reply and Hammarskjöld then saw no point in forwarding it. When Chou learnt that Hammarskjöld had prepared a personal message, he asked Hammarskjöld to deliver it although he had already replied. Hammarskjöld saw in this “a desire on Chou’s part to carry the matter somewhat further” and instructed the Swedish Embassy to deliver it. USUN to State 6 February 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

and the Indians as well as with Hammarskjöld using all these channels at the same time.³¹⁰)

Hammarskjöld had already prepared a draft reply to Chou that cautiously noted Chou's reasons for eliminating the Security Council as a forum adding that he did "not take this as meaning that you exclude the possibility of discussions under the aegis of the UN, if another, appropriate forum could be found". Hammarskjöld told Lodge that as a starting point there should be no *direct* negotiations as such between the US and the PRC, but preferably negotiations should be under the aegis of the UN. Lodge asked Hammarskjöld if by this he meant that he himself should undertake the negotiations. Hammarskjöld avoided the question, but repeated that he "felt the matter should remain a UN matter".³¹¹ In a conversation with Dixon, Hammarskjöld made reference to the "Peking formula" and said that it was clear to him that Chou drew a line between an invitation from Security Council, which he had rejected, and the communication from the Secretary-General, which he was interested in. To Dixon, it was obvious that Hammarskjöld was envisaging a role as mediator for himself.³¹²

Hammarskjöld informed Lodge on 8 February that he would reply to Chou's personal message. Lodge replied that the US thought this exceeded the Secretary-General's authority. Hammarskjöld replied that their interpretations of his authority differed.³¹³ In a meeting with the British ambassador, Makins, the same day Dulles said that he did not think that "Hammarskjöld's volunteer operations on a free-wheeling basis were contributing much" and added that "If [Hammarskjöld] were to play any role in the matter, he felt he would have to operate under instructions".³¹⁴

On 9 February, in a meeting at the State Department, the British Ambassador informed Dulles that his government shared the American concern regarding Hammarskjöld's "unauthorized" correspondence with the PRC. Dulles considered this correspondence "extremely dangerous" as Hammarskjöld's efforts might be misunderstood in Peking. Dulles remarked that "Hammarskjöld seems to think he has

³¹⁰ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 7 February 1955, no. 139, FO 371/115033.

³¹¹ USUN to State, 6 February 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

³¹² Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 5 February 1955, no. 136, FO 371/115033.

³¹³ USUN to State 8 February 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

³¹⁴ Memorandum of a Conversation 7 February 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

a standing function as an arbitrator between the two sides in UN matters. This is a new concept, which should not be encouraged”. The British also regarded the role Hammarskjöld had assumed as “outside his competence”. Hammarskjöld was now “discredited in Washington”.³¹⁵

At the Bandung conference Chou stated that the PRC wanted direct negotiations with the US. On May 6, Dulles discussed potential candidates to serve as intermediaries in discussions, ahead of a possible direct negotiation. When asked if Hammarskjöld could be a suitable intermediary Dulles replied that “Hammarskjöld had not done a good job”.³¹⁶ On May 28 Chou had informed Krishna Menon, the Indian ambassador to the UN and Nehru’s confidante, that the four fliers that had not yet been convicted would be sentenced to extradition and handed over to the Americans. Lodge thought that Hammarskjöld would be “quite burnt up” at Menon for having “moved into his act and taken over his role as mediator”. The same day Eisenhower sent a message to Nehru and Menon thanking them for their kind offices and invited Menon to Washington for informal and private talks.³¹⁷ Lodge, in a press conference, also gave some credit to Hammarskjöld.³¹⁸

By the beginning of July Dulles was “fed up with all the intermediaries”.³¹⁹ The time had come for direct contact. The idea was to use the framework of the Geneva negotiations the previous year so that it would not look like a major novelty. Dulles, via British Foreign Office channels, negotiated a resumption of talks at ambassadorial level in Geneva with the PRC.³²⁰ On July 25 it was announced that the talks would start in Geneva on the first of August.

³¹⁵ Minutes of Conversation, Foreign Office 9 February 1955, FO 371/115032. See also, Telegram from FO to UKUN, London 9 February 1955, no. 228, FO 371/115034.

³¹⁶ Memorandum of a Conversation 6 May 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

³¹⁷ Memorandum 28 May 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

³¹⁸ Statement by Lodge on 30 May 1955, published in Department of State Bulletin 13 June 1955, p. 953.

³¹⁹ Memorandum 3 July 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

³²⁰ Li, Gong, “Tension across the Taiwan Strait in the 1950s Chinese Strategy and Tactics” in Ross/Changbin (eds.), p. 153. See also Telegram From the Acting Secretary of State to Taipei 24 July 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol II.

In order to create a positive environment for the ambassadorial talks Chou released the 11 American fliers on 31 July.³²¹ Menon was the first to bring note of this to the Americans as Chou had informed him in advance. Chou also sent a private message to Hammarskjöld in which he stated that “The Chinese Government has decided to release the imprisoned U.S. fliers. This release [...] takes place in order to maintain friendship with Hammarskjöld and has no connection with the UN resolution. Chou En-lai expresses the hope that Hammarskjöld will take note of this point”. The cable also expressed the hope that the contact with Hammarskjöld would continue and congratulated Hammarskjöld on his 50th birthday.³²²

Chou’s letter with birthday greetings to Hammarskjöld has been taken as proof that Hammarskjöld’s efforts resulted in the release of the prisoners when, in fact, Chou informed both Menon and Hammarskjöld. The real reason behind the release was that the Americans had agreed to direct negotiations in Geneva.³²³ From the beginning, Chou had taken the issue of the imprisoned fliers as an opportunity to negotiate the wider political situation with the Americans. He initially gave Hammarskjöld hope that the prisoners might be released quickly, but this was tied to discussions of the wider situation or some offer of negotiations by the Americans, which Hammarskjöld could never deliver as he was not accepted as an intermediary by the Americans. In the end, as soon as an offer of direct negotiations came from the Americans, quite independently of Hammarskjöld’s efforts, the fliers were released. Chou did not want to miss the opportunity to flatter both Menon and Hammarskjöld and was also still entertaining hopes that Hammarskjöld, who was already in favour of extending UN membership to the PRC, would play a “go-between role” with the Americans.

On 2 August Hammarskjöld dined with Alexis Johnson, the American representative at the ambassadorial talks in Geneva. During their dinner discussion Hammarskjöld told his host that he interpreted Chou’s message as a will to keep the UN channel via Hammarskjöld open. However he did not plan to take any further action while the

³²¹ Baijia, Zhang, “The Changing International Scene and Chinese Policy toward the United States, 1954-1970” in Ross/Changbin (eds.), p. 51. See also two other studies based on Chinese archival sources: Gong Li, p. 153; and Baijia, Zhang and Qingguo, Jia, “Steering Wheel, Shock Absorber, and Diplomatic Probe in Confrontation Sino-American Ambassadorial Talks Seen from the Chinese Perspective” in Ross/Changbin (eds.), p. 183.

³²² Quoted from Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 126.

³²³ Meisler, Stanley, *United Nations: A History* (New York: Grove Press, 2011), p. 89.

talks were ongoing in Geneva.³²⁴ On 7 August, Hammarskjöld called on Johnson to tell him that Wang, the Chinese representative at the talks, had delivered a written message from Chou emphasising how the PRC foreign minister wanted to maintain his “personal” contact with Hammarskjöld and asked him to “play a go-between role” in the talks in Geneva. Wang had then added orally that the PRC now expected “deeds” from the Americans. Hammarskjöld “stressed he could not and would not play any “go-between” role but [was] willing to do anything he properly can as “third-party””. This was Hammarskjöld’s cryptic, but characteristic way to say that he did not want a mission, but would of course be happy to accept if it were offered. Hammarskjöld thought that as “Menon channel has not produced anything”, Chou wanted to use the Secretary-General as a channel now. Johnson thought that Chou was trying to play different games, using all available channels, but of course had not said so to Hammarskjöld.³²⁵

On 10 September, Hammarskjöld cabled the report that he was required to submit to the General Assembly as an end to his mission to Chou. Chou replied immediately with an angry cable that he did not agree with the report and added that the PRC had acted on its own initiative in releasing the prisoners and did not care for the General Assembly or its resolutions.³²⁶ Hammarskjöld’s reply to Chou’s angry letter was met by an oral rebuke from Vice-Foreign Minister Cheng. The contact between Hammarskjöld and Chou was broken, never to be resumed.³²⁷ Possibly Chou was frustrated that the talks were leading nowhere and that Hammarskjöld was not acting as a “go-between” as Chou had hoped. The Americans refused to widen the discussions beyond the question of the return of prisoners.³²⁸ Dulles saw the talks as a way to let the situation calm down as the PRC focused on negotiations and he was quite content to let the talks drag on without leading to anything.

Hammarskjöld’s actions had given Chou the false impression that the UN Secretary-General did have some sort of mandate from the US to act as a “go-between”, a role Hammarskjöld actively sought. Dulles considered Hammarskjöld’s efforts as

³²⁴ Telegram Alexis Johnson to State 3 August 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol III.

³²⁵ Telegram Alexis Johnson to State 7 August 1955 FRUS 1955-57 Vol III.

³²⁶ Goldstein, Steven M., “Dialogue of the Deaf? The Sino-American Ambassadorial-Level Talks, 1955-1970” in Ross/Changbin (eds.), p. 205.

³²⁷ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, pp. 130-131.

³²⁸ Baijia, p. 51.

“volunteer operations on a freewheeling basis”, a consideration apparently later shared by Chou once he realised that Hammarskjöld was not going to act as an intermediary. His attempt to fulfil the role as a “trusted consultant” and mediator was not accepted in Washington. The inherent right of the Secretary-General to form his own political opinion and act on it that Hammarskjöld deduced from the Charter and expressed in the “Peking formula” was not accepted by Washington and London. Hammarskjöld’s first real attempt to expand the political role of the Secretary-General and act as a mediator can therefore hardly be qualified as a success. Nevertheless, Hammarskjöld treated the “Peking formula” as a part of an evolving body of precedents and case law that expanded the independent political role of the Secretary-General.

B The Hammarskjöld Mission to the Middle East in 1956

B.1 From “Agent General” to Secretary-General

On 15 January 1956, Hammarskjöld left New York for a tour through the Middle East and Asia.³²⁹ Hammarskjöld defined his tour as “a journey without a mission”.³³⁰ At the same time as Hammarskjöld toured the Middle East, a Texan businessman by the name of Bob Anderson was also travelling back and forth in the region. Officially, Anderson was on a business trip. But, unlike Hammarskjöld, Anderson’s journey had a mission; a secret mission that was part of an American-British initiative, code-named Operation Alpha, for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Operation Alpha was a covert operation that aimed at convincing Egyptians and Israelis to consider a settlement through secret negotiations. Alpha eventually failed, in Anderson’s view mainly due to Nasser, who was not in a position to sell a peace plan, neither to his own people, nor to his fellow Arab leaders.³³¹

Faced with the definite failure of the Anderson mission and a deteriorating situation in the Middle East, the Americans and the British now had to come up with alternative

³²⁹ UKUN (Dixon) to FO 10 January 1956, No. 17, FO 371/121732.

³³⁰ Minutes of Meeting 16 January 1956, FO 371/121733.

³³¹ Kyle, Keith, *Suez Britain’s End of Empire in the Middle East*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 98-99. Wawro, Geoffrey, *Quicksand America’s Pursuit of Power in the Middle East* (New York: Penguin, 2010), p. 187. Alteras, Isaac, *Eisenhower and Israel: U.S. – Israeli Relations 1953-1960* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), p. 171.

plans.³³² The Americans came up with the idea of appointing a UN mediator “with substantial powers – greater, in fact, than those that were held by Count Bernadotte”.³³³ Both governments were in agreement that it was essential to find “a really good man” and the Americans suggested Ralph Bunche, Nobel Prize winner in 1949 for his earlier mediation efforts in Palestine that resulted in the armistice agreements. Furthermore, Bunche’s appointment, as he was UN Undersecretary-General, “would help to save the Secretary-General’s face”.³³⁴ Dixon, who knew Hammarskjöld best, had warned from the beginning that any attempt to appoint a special mediator “should have to be careful not to offend the susceptibilities of the Secretary-General”. Dixon correctly suspected that Hammarskjöld had “certain aspirations in the field of mediation”.³³⁵ After consultations with Hervé Alphand, the French representative, Lodge and Dixon presented the Agent General proposal to Hammarskjöld on 13 March 1956.

Dixon had been right and Hammarskjöld’s first reactions were “decidedly hostile”. “At the risk [...] of being misunderstood [Hammarskjöld] suggested that he was himself the only person available to the parties (and to the Russians) and whose intervention would not upset the existing machinery”.³³⁶ Hammarskjöld was offering his services under the “Peking formula”. The fact that Hammarskjöld seemed to have never contemplated sending Ralph Bunche also points toward his clear wish to fulfil the mission himself. Despite having the world’s foremost expert on the Palestine question, who had won the Nobel Peace Prize for his previous negotiations in Palestine, in an office next to his, Hammarskjöld never discussed the Middle East with Bunche prior to the last months of 1956.³³⁷

Hammarskjöld’s strong protests derailed the idea for an “Agent General”. Acting Secretary of State Hoover told Eisenhower a little later that “Hammarskjöld very much wanted to undertake the mission to the Middle East himself [...] Hammarskjöld’s efforts would probably prevent us from getting enough support for

³³² Memorandum 23 February 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XV.

³³³ Memorandum of a Conversation With the President 6 March 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XV.

³³⁴ Record of Conversation with Mr. Barco of USUN 9 March 1956, FO 371/121734.

³³⁵ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 6 March 1956, No. 173, FO 371/121733.

³³⁶ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO, March 13, 1956, No.199, FO 371/121734.

³³⁷ Urquhart, Brian, *Ralph Bunche – An American Life* (New York: Norton, 1993), p. 264.

our proposal for an independent Agent General.”³³⁸ The Foreign Office preferred the original idea, but since the Americans were not prepared to go through with it in the face of the opposition of Hammarskjöld they were “prepared to accept the Secretary-General”. But, they “did not want to inflate his status or establish a precedent for his unsolicited intervention in other disputes”. “It is therefore important to ensure that he is specifically appointed by a Security Council resolution and that his terms of reference are clearly defined”.³³⁹ Dixon acknowledged that Hammarskjöld “is undoubtedly a skilful negotiator and might achieve some results”, but recommended that the mandate should be limited to the implementation of the Armistice Agreements.³⁴⁰ In other words, they wanted to avoid a repetition of “Hammarskjöld’s volunteer operations on a free-wheeling basis” in his dealings with Chou En-lai.

A limited mandate was not, however, what Hammarskjöld had in mind. Over lunch the same day Hammarskjöld handed Dixon a memorandum with his objections to the original plan for an “Agent General” and “since he did not wish to be negative, his ideas about what he might do himself”.³⁴¹ Hammarskjöld had explained his habit of drafting notes and memoranda on his own views to hand to member states informally to Dixon already in 1954. Hammarskjöld hoped, by these means, to influence the parties before they had finally decided on their own views. In the memorandum, which he called “an attempt at an objective analysis”, Hammarskjöld stressed that any new activity in the region “should be so organised as to lift it entirely outside the Cold War orbit”; a prerequisite for this was that it was accepted by the Soviet Union and not seen as an initiative by the Tripartite Powers. To achieve this, Hammarskjöld suggested that he, as Secretary-General, could bring the matter to the Security Council so that it would, formally, be the Secretary-General’s own initiative, thereby avoiding any association with any particular country. Regarding the terms of his mandate Hammarskjöld proposed that his functions should be expanded so as to cover “in the first instance an exploration together with the governments concerned about the possibilities of an intensified attack on the major problems within the framework of the United Nations”. This wording was broad enough to include an attempt at

³³⁸ Memorandum From the Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State 16 March 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XV.

³³⁹ Telegram from FO to UKUN 15 March 1956, No. 249, FO 371/121734.

³⁴⁰ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 14 March 1956, No. 208, FO 371/121734.

³⁴¹ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 14 March 1956, No. 208, FO 371/121734.

solving the wider Arab-Israeli dispute. Hammarskjöld also added that he did not consider a formal decision necessary, hinting that he considered that it was already within his rights as Secretary-General to mediate in the conflict.³⁴²

The memorandum increased Dixon's misgivings about involving Hammarskjöld,³⁴³ but he was not aware of the new tack in the Foreign Office, now only too happy to hand the problem over to the UN. The Foreign Office informed Dixon that there had been a change in their policy and they wanted to dilute the Tripartite Powers' responsibility. "The intrusion of the Soviet Union, the arrival of Czech arms and the rapidly growing self-confidence of the Arab states have completely changed the situation [...] The danger now is that the Arabs and the Israelis will start a war and that, under the Tripartite Declaration, we shall find ourselves arrayed on the side of Israel against the Arab States backed perhaps by the Soviet Union". For these reasons the Foreign Office did "not object to the Secretary-General playing the bigger role for which he seems to have cast himself". But the Foreign Office as well underlined that the task should be given to Hammarskjöld by the Security Council and they "should resist the suggestion that the proposed powers are inherent in his office".³⁴⁴

When Dixon met again with Lodge and Alphand on May 15, they agreed to draft a Security Council resolution to give the Secretary-General a limited mandate to go for a brief tour to the Middle East. Lodge regarded this as a lead-in to appointing an "Agent General" later. The three representatives also secured a "gentleman's agreement" with Hammarskjöld that he would not report to the Security Council without prior discussion with them.³⁴⁵ The Americans did not agree with Hammarskjöld's idea that the Secretary-General should present it to the Security Council as his own initiative and preferred to sponsor the resolution themselves.³⁴⁶

On 4 April 1956, the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution that requested the Secretary-General "to undertake, as a matter of urgent concern, a survey of the various aspects of enforcement of and compliance with the four general

³⁴² Memorandum by Hammarskjöld to Dixon 14 March 1956, FO 371/121735.

³⁴³ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 15 March 1956, No. 211, FO 371/121734.

³⁴⁴ Telegram from FO to UKUN, March 18, 1956, No. 257 and Minutes from March 17, 1956, FO 371/121734.

³⁴⁵ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO, March 15, 1956, No. 212, FO 371/121734.

³⁴⁶ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO, March 20, 1956, No. 224, FO 371/121735.

armistice agreements and the Council's resolutions under reference".³⁴⁷ The mandate was limited to the practical aspects of upholding the cease-fire and improving the border survey and left no room for discussion of other issues or attempts to explore a settlement.

Hammarskjöld wasted no time in pointing out his own interpretation of his double competence as Secretary-General and mandated by the Security Council. In a press conference the same day, he stressed this double aspect and said that he went not only with the mandate from the Security Council, but in his capacity "as Secretary-General" and it seemed that nothing was outside the scope of what the Secretary-General could discuss. He explained his thinking in response to a question:

*"Your question gives me reason to explain perhaps a little bit more fully how I regard my own relationship, as Secretary-General, to the special mission. The special mission, I think, is very clear in its indication of limits. A question of the type you refer to here [flow of arms into the Middle East] is outside the field of the mission, undoubtedly. On the other hand, you must not forget that the Secretary-General remains the Secretary-General, and – something quite apart from the Security Council action, where I represent the Security Council – I have, of course, unlimited, my regular right to bring up with governments points which I think are worth consideration because they tend to complicate matters or increase tension."*³⁴⁸

But Dulles was not going to rely on Hammarskjöld to keep the peace in the Middle East. The failure of the Anderson mission and operation Alpha and an increasing disillusionment with Nasser led to a new US policy code-named Omega. On 28 March, Dulles presented the outlines of this new policy to Eisenhower in a memorandum. The various steps, to be coordinated with the British, aimed to isolate Nasser and build up Iraq and Saudi Arabia as alternative Arab leaders.³⁴⁹ The British had drawn the same conclusion, but to a greater extent: Eden now saw no alternative but to get rid of Nasser; a path that would lead to the Suez crisis.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ Security Council Resolution 113 4 April 1956.

³⁴⁸ Cordier/Foote (eds.) *Public Papers Vol III*, p. 73. See also Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 5 April 1956, No. 270, FO 371/121736.

³⁴⁹ Alteras, p. 172-3.

³⁵⁰ For a discussion of the US and British versions of Omega, see e.g. Kyle, p. 99 or Tal, David, "The Making, Operation and Failure of the May 1950 Tripartite Declaration on Middle East Security" in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol 36 Issue 2 (2009), p. 190. According to Anthony

B.2 Negotiating Between Different Mandates

Initially, in his meetings in the capitals of the Middle East, Hammarskjöld stuck to his mandate from the Security Council, discussing the implementation of the Armistice Agreements only.³⁵¹ But soon he started nurturing the hope that negotiations on wider issues might be successful and he requested a secret meeting with Ben Gurion to explain why he thought Nasser was ready for a broader settlement.³⁵² The Israeli leader was not very impressed when Hammarskjöld told him that he was convinced that Nasser's main concern was not over land and territorial claims, but about refugees.³⁵³

Hammarskjöld next returned to Cairo with hopes of discussing the issue of free navigation in the Suez Canal and the Strait of Tiran, a topic clearly outside his Security Council mandate. In order to avoid any Egyptian opposition to such discussions, Hammarskjöld, contacted the Americans, British, French and the Soviets through Cordier, and asked them to have their respective Ambassadors in Cairo confirm his right to hold such discussions in virtue of his role as Secretary-General. The verbatim note for the ambassadors that Hammarskjöld proposed read: "The Secretary-General, as agent of the Security Council, to my knowledge seems to have remained within the limit of his mandate, but as to what the Secretary-General might do on the basis of his constitutional rights as Secretary-General, I neither have reason to express opinions nor any cause now to submit the issue to my government which, in due time, may have to express its view on the personal policy of the Secretary-General."³⁵⁴ Dulles forwarded the message to Ambassador Byroade in Cairo with an explanatory note indicating that he understood that "Hammarskjöld has throughout mission made careful distinction between his SC mandate and his constitutional rights as SYG. By this distinction he has avoided Israeli injection of Suez Canal into context

Nutting, who had written the British draft memorandum setting out this new policy the wording in the memorandum was "neutralising Nasser" whereas Eden supposedly told Nutting over the phone that he wanted Nasser "destroyed" according to Nutting's 1967 book on Suez, *No End of a Lesson*; later in 1987 Nutting claimed that Eden had actually said that he wanted Nasser "murdered", Kyle, p. 99.

³⁵¹ Summary of Hammarskjöld Mission by E.M. Rose 16 May 1956, VR1074/268 FO 371/121740.

³⁵² Telegram Tel Aviv to State 20 April 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XV.

³⁵³ Telegram Tel Aviv to State 25 April 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XV.

³⁵⁴ For Hammarskjöld's instruction and discussion of this matter with Cordier, see Letter from Hammarskjöld to Cordier and attached memorandum for personal use only, dated Beirut, April 21, 1956, Cordier Series I Cataloged Correspondence Box 2, Cordier Papers. Telegram USUN to State 23 April 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XV.

his negotiations to carry out SC mandate”.³⁵⁵ The British did not believe that Hammarskjöld would get anywhere by discussing wider issues such as the Suez Canal, but thought that he should “clearly be allowed to play his hand as he thinks best”.³⁵⁶

The Egyptians clearly stated from the very beginning how they had agreed to talks with Hammarskjöld on the basis of the Security Council resolution and not on any other inherent power under the Charter.³⁵⁷ In private, however, the Egyptian foreign minister Mahmoud Fawzi told Hammarskjöld that *formally* the Egyptians demanded the immediate Israeli evacuation of El Auja, but *politically* they had a different stand where they regarded the evacuation of El Auja as part of a reciprocal step towards easing the tensions in the region. By separating the formal and the political stands, the Egyptians managed to look strong in the eyes of the other Arab states and avoided being tied down to positions they were not really interested in, while at the same time in private accommodating Hammarskjöld. When Hammarskjöld returned to Ben Gurion with this message, the Israeli leader, while still highly suspicious, realised that he could not get an assurance from the Egyptians, but yet demanded they at least would give one to the Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld thought this would be very difficult and as there was no clear way forward, he decided to “freeze the situation” and drafted a letter that Ben Gurion agreed to sign assuring that the Israelis would withdraw from El Auja if the blockade on the Suez Canal was lifted.³⁵⁸ This was Hammarskjöld acting in the role he had devised for himself in 1953, as a “clearing-house” for governments.³⁵⁹

On April 18, when the first reports came from Hammarskjöld’s negotiations it became clear that the Secretary-General had been “extending the scope of his mission into discussions about a possible overall settlement” according to the British Ambassador in Beirut, seemingly, with American support³⁶⁰ The British thought the Americans “had been talking a little out of turn”, but noted that Hammarskjöld “would probably

³⁵⁵ Telegram State to Cairo 25 April 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XV.

³⁵⁶ Memorandum by R.M. Hadow 27 April 1956, FO 371/121738. Telegram from FO to Cairo 27 April 1956, No. 1220, FO 371/121738.

³⁵⁷ Telegram from Cairo (Trevelyan) to FO 26 April 1956, No. 747, FO 371/121738.

³⁵⁸ Letter from Hammarskjöld to Selwyn Lloyd 14 May 1956, FO 371/121740 VR1074/246.

³⁵⁹ See chapter 2.

³⁶⁰ Letter from Beirut (Scott) to Selwyn Lloyd 18 April 1956, No. 71, FO 371/121738.

in any case have taken the opportunity of discussing wider issues with the Govts concerned”.³⁶¹ The Americans had, however, not been talking out of turn as far as Dulles was concerned and on April 20 he presented a new proposal to the British. Having failed to get a Palestine settlement through operation Alpha, Dulles proposed to seek Russian consent to get a settlement through the UN. The British were enthusiastic about the idea and thought the opportunity was too good to be missed. For once the Americans, the British, the French and now also the Russians seemed open to make the UN responsible for peace in the Middle East; and at that very moment the Secretary-General of the UN was in the area “giving very definitively the impression that he has more to do and probably new suggestions to make”. The British hoped to use the occasion to get out of “some of the more embarrassing of our commitments, notably the Tripartite Declaration”. They decided to approach Bulganin and Khrushchev scheduled to visit London on April 20. It was also decided that no new initiatives should be taken in the UN without consulting Hammarskjöld.³⁶² Dulles was of the same mind and suggested that the British should steer the talks with Bulganin and Khrushchev to the Middle East and the UN as much as possible. “In order to test Soviet good will and sincerity”, Dulles further suggested that the British should ascertain “whether the Soviets would give substance to their statement by supporting a Security Council resolution which would call upon Hammarskjöld, following his return and report upon his present mission, to consult the parties to the armistices and make recommendations concerning elements of a just settlement”.³⁶³

The Anglo-Russian meeting in London boded well for Hammarskjöld’s mission. The Soviets even publicly committed themselves, through an Anglo-Soviet joint communiqué, to support United Nations action both in regard to keeping the peace in the area, and in seeking a “peaceful settlement on a mutually acceptable basis”. The British thought this would strengthen Hammarskjöld’s hand in his current efforts and also encourage him to come forward with ideas towards the latter on his return from the Middle East, especially since the British were well aware that “he has been giving thought to this wider fundamental problem”. The British decided that the first step would be to consult Hammarskjöld on his return to New York.³⁶⁴ There now seemed

³⁶¹ Minutes 24 April 1956, FO 371/121738.

³⁶² Memorandum by C.A.E. Shuckburgh 20 April 1956, FO 371/121738.

³⁶³ Letter from Aldrich (US Embassy London) to Selwyn Lloyd 20 April 1956, FO 371/121738.

³⁶⁴ Telegram from FO to UKUN 27 April 1956, No. 396, FO 371/121738.

to be a consensus for strong UN action and the Foreign Office in London thought Hammarskjöld “is the right person to prepare and perhaps to launch this”.³⁶⁵ Dulles was adamant that they should consult Hammarskjöld before any further steps.³⁶⁶ It seemed that Hammarskjöld was now finally cast to play the role he had wanted all along. Everybody was now waiting with excitement about what ideas for further steps the Secretary-General would bring back from the Middle East. They were in for a disappointment.

Hammarskjöld published his interim report on 3 May. The report concluded that a cease-fire had been established and that proposals had been put forward for strengthening border security under the Armistice Agreements. In the end, Hammarskjöld did not manage to secure more than an adherence to the cease-fire agreements. On the other hand, this was what the Security Council mandate had asked of him and, considering the initial situation he faced on his arrival, this was an achievement. In the press the Hammarskjöld Mission was hailed as a great success.³⁶⁷

On his return to New York Hammarskjöld told the representatives of the three Western powers that he thought he had achieved a period of calm of perhaps two or three months, but he was pessimistic of further moves and “did not seem to visualise any further role for himself”. Hammarskjöld also told them that his “‘eyes had been opened’ on Nasser, but [he] liked Fawzi, [and] got along splendidly with Ben Gurion”.³⁶⁸ His idea was that the three Western powers should try, with as much support as could be obtained from the Soviets, to use the period of calm his mission had achieved to try and solve some of the other pressing issues that he thought should be attacked on a piecemeal basis.³⁶⁹ In the Foreign Office they noted that “The Secretary-General is disappointing, but maybe it may be a gain that his ego is deflated”.³⁷⁰ Over the next days, Hammarskjöld confided in private to Dixon that he had returned “profoundly depressed” from the Middle East.³⁷¹ Despite the fact that they “got along splendidly” he found Ben Gurion’s “basic attitude however shocked

³⁶⁵ Memorandum by Shuckburgh 28 April 1956, FO 371/121738. Telegram from FO to UKUN 28 April 1956, No. 400, FO 371/121738.

³⁶⁶ Telegram from Washington (Makins) to FO 29 April 1956, No. 1075, FO 371/121738.

³⁶⁷ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 149.

³⁶⁸ Telegram USUN to State 7 May 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XV.

³⁶⁹ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 7 May 1956, No. 347, FO 371/121739.

³⁷⁰ Minutes 9 May 1956, FO 371/121739.

³⁷¹ Letter from Dixon to E.M. Ross 11 May 1956, VR1074/274 FO 371/121740.

him deeply”. Hammarskjöld felt that he “had had a very rough time and had to resort to methods very different from his favourite quiet diplomacy in order to achieve as much as he did. Several times he said it felt like being in a madhouse, and constantly stressed how often he had been obliged to thump the table and deliver ultimatums”.³⁷²

On 10 May, Hammarskjöld gave his full report to the Security Council. It dealt at length with the cease-fire, the question of general compliance with the armistice agreements, local arrangements and also included passages on the Banat Yacub Canal, El Auja and the Suez Canal blockade. Hammarskjöld concluded that the re-establishment of a full compliance with the cease-fire “represents a stage that has to be passed in order to make progress possible on the main issues”. Hammarskjöld reported that the parties had agreed to the general cease-fire clause without retaliation (although the British noted that it was not clear how far the parties accepted this interpretation).³⁷³

In addition to his official report, Hammarskjöld handed a dossier on his negotiations on the El Auja-Suez Canal Nexus to the British for the attention of Selwyn Lloyd. Hammarskjöld thought he could get Nasser to unilaterally withdraw troops from Sinai, which would give Ben Gurion cause to evacuate El Auja and the Egyptians could in turn lift the blockade. The British agreed that it was worthwhile to let Hammarskjöld explore this, although all the Middle East experts, from Trevelyan to Shuckburgh, thought Nasser would never have done so.³⁷⁴ Hammarskjöld ended his letter by saying that he had “dropped all diplomatic inhibitions” in speaking so openly with Lloyd and that he had done so because he considered it essential that they could “see eye to eye” and consult before “any of the big powers come out in the field”.³⁷⁵ Lloyd instructed Dixon to keep Hammarskjöld informed of their consultations with the Americans and the French “and make sure that he is in agreement with the course of action proposed”.³⁷⁶ (This general instruction related to the tactical choices and not to the long-term strategy of Omega, of which Hammarskjöld was unaware.)

³⁷² Saving telegram No. 124 from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 8 May 1956, FO 371/121739.

³⁷³ Letter from Ramsbotham to E.M. Rose 12 May 1956, FO 371/121737 VR1074/242.

³⁷⁴ Minutes of meeting by P.H. Laurence 22 May 1956, VR1074/246, FO 371/121740.

³⁷⁵ Letter from Hammarskjöld to Selwyn Lloyd 14 May 1956, FO 371/121740 VR1074/246.

³⁷⁶ Telegram from FO to UKUN 17 May 1956, FO 371/121740 VR1074/246.

B.3 “Continued Good Offices”

Dixon suggested that the Security Council should convene to keep up the momentum and suggested that they should ask Hammarskjöld to continue his good offices on the present lines towards full compliance with the Armistice Agreements and possibly towards a special issue such as the El Auja/Suez Canal deal that could be said to fall within the Armistice Agreements. Dixon thought that if the Soviets would agree to this, the Egyptians might find it hard not to discuss it.³⁷⁷ London agreed and asked Dixon to consult both the Americans and the French and, if they agreed, to take the Soviet representative into their consultations to the furthest extent possible.³⁷⁸ But the situation was deteriorating again and on 16 May the New York Times published an article about the difficulties the Israelis were making regarding arrangements in the Gaza strip as had been agreed to with Hammarskjöld. Hammarskjöld was “furious with the Israelis” and sent a strongly worded letter to Ben Gurion. He told the British that this made it imperative that a Security Council meeting be held fast to put a stamp of approval on his report or else he feared the parties would go back on even the few substantial agreements he had so painstakingly got out of them.³⁷⁹

The Americans were looking for “something dramatic” and on 21 May, Hammarskjöld was “greatly disturbed” by a conversation with Lodge who suggested a reversion to the old idea of appointing an Agent General. Hammarskjöld asked Dixon to “hold the Americans in check”³⁸⁰ and on 22 May, presented Dixon with a new memorandum containing “next steps”. Hammarskjöld told Dixon that one of his objectives in drafting it had been “to prevent the United States from taking any dramatic action and to stop them wobbling about future policy”.³⁸¹ The “next steps” were the same as Hammarskjöld had recommended before with additional motivations. In regards to an Agent General, Hammarskjöld wrote that “No agent would be able to take up on the spot the threads where I left them, and no agent would have greater chances than those I give myself”.³⁸² Hammarskjöld was adamant that he should remain the mediator. After consulting with the Americans and the French,

³⁷⁷ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 13 May 1956, No. 366, FO 371/121739.

³⁷⁸ Telegram from FO to UKUN 14 May 1956, No. 446, FO 371/121739.

³⁷⁹ Letter from Ramsbotham to E.M. Rose 17 May 1956, FO 371/121740 VR1074/269.

³⁸⁰ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 22 May 1956, No. 392, FO 371/121740 VR1074/247.

³⁸¹ Letter from Dixon to Lloyd 25 May 1956, No. 10620/97/56 FO 371/121741.

³⁸² Memorandum by Hammarskjöld 22 May 1956, VR1074/302 FO371/121741.

Dixon managed to get them to agree to a draft resolution that recommended Hammarskjöld's report and simply called on him "to continue his good offices", but without spelling out what he was really to do.

What had happened to turn Dixon into a supporter of giving Hammarskjöld a free rein? Due to the close partnership with the British, Dixon felt sure that Hammarskjöld would consult with them on all important occasions while at the same time he was no longer showing signs of spectacular independent initiatives.

A sort of symbiosis had developed whereby Hammarskjöld consulted with the British in advance on his plans and the British supported Hammarskjöld's ideas in discussions with the Americans and Dixon urged the Foreign Office to take great care not to reveal the extent to which Hammarskjöld was taking the British into his confidence to the Americans, the French or anyone else.³⁸³ Giving Hammarskjöld a free rein, now that the British felt sure they would be consulted on all steps, was also a way to keep some control of the UN process while keeping the Soviets out.

Hammarskjöld had planned to go from a meeting in Geneva to his country house in Sweden at the end of July. But in the evening of 26 July 1956 Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal Company triggering the chain of events that would lead to the Suez crisis and a new role for Hammarskjöld. As Hammarskjöld put it, "henceforth, all we do will be in the shadow of the Suez Canal".

The Hammarskjöld Mission was not a case of "Leave-it-to-Dag" mentality on behalf of the Western powers, an idea made popular by media accounts and Hammarskjöld's many biographers. On the contrary, it is a textbook example of how Hammarskjöld put into practice the methods he had developed in theory for making the Secretary-General more influential. Building on the "Peking formula" Hammarskjöld claimed that the "Secretary-General", as such and in virtue of his role, had a mandate to discuss any issue threatening world peace. He managed to steer the three Western members of the Security Council into accepting the Secretary-General as mediator instead of their preferred first choice of appointing an "Agent General".

³⁸³ Saving telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO 20 June 1956, No. 158, FO 371/121743 VR1074/350. This point was made on several occasions, see e.g. Letter from Crosthwaite to A.D.M. Ross 18 July 1956, FO 371/121743 VR1074/356: "I should be most grateful if the greatest care could be taken not to say anything to anyone which would reveal our privileged position with the Secretary-General".

Hammarškjöld achieved this by proactively setting out his own ideas and arguing strongly against proposals to appoint other mediators.

Hammarškjöld's initial choice to expand negotiations in the Middle East was taken consciously against the wishes of the British and the Americans, who did not accept his view of the Secretary-General and were adamant that he should act only on a politically circumscribed mandate from the Security Council. But it was a rather safe gamble. As long as Hammarškjöld produced solutions acceptable to the parties, these would have been accepted by the Western powers. Out of political expediency, the Americans and the British later accepted, with some reluctance, Hammarškjöld's "inherent rights" as Secretary-General. This meant that a precedent had now been established, unlike Hammarškjöld's dealings with Chou En-lai, which remained "volunteer operations on a free-wheeling basis". But unlike his negotiations under the Security Council mandate, where Hammarškjöld could pressure the parties into public agreements to respect the cease-fire, for the expanded discussions under his mandate as Secretary-General Hammarškjöld relied only on his "quiet diplomacy". This approach, which Hammarškjöld saw as an open discussion about possibilities, was limited by the seriousness of the intent of his interlocutors and the lack of any means to pressure them into concessions. Hammarškjöld relied too much on his personal contact with the parties. Hammarškjöld was very impressed by Fawzi and tended to believe Nasser was more open to concessions than he was. Hammarškjöld's views on the personalities in the Middle East would greatly influence his handling of the Suez Crisis and how it was perceived by the different actors. The fact that he was also kept in the dark regarding much of US and UK policy – including Alpha and Omega – also meant that his prospects for success were limited. Nevertheless, Hammarškjöld had now managed to establish himself as an impartial mediator and trusted consultant to governments that corresponded to his early view of the political role of the Secretary-General. This enabled Hammarškjöld to become a central actor in the Suez crisis, which became a catalyst for a much more ambitious political role for the Secretary-General.

Part II: Finding a Role

Chapter 4: The Secretary-General as “a force”

In his valedictory dispatch, written in 1960 and summing up his experience at the United Nations, Sir Pierson Dixon described how “United States policy is caught between the horns of a perpetual dilemma: the need on the one hand to support its major allies, such as ourselves and France, in pursuance of its major interest in halting Communist encroachments; and on the other hand its instinctive desire, arising in part from its own past, to be on the side of the anti-colonial countries”.³⁸⁴ With the admission of many newly independent countries to the General Assembly, the issue of decolonization came to dominate a General Assembly characterised by a growing bloc of Afro-Asian countries that wanted to position themselves between the two blocs in the Cold War. Hammarskjöld managed to see how the Secretary-General could find a new political role at a time when the UN could no longer be effectively controlled by the US. Suez was the catalyst for this development as it showed both the risk of a split between the West and the Third-World and the new importance of the General Assembly, but Suez also demonstrated how Hammarskjöld could be instrumental in allowing the Americans to ride both horns of their dilemma through the UN.

A The Suez Crisis as a Catalyst for a New Role for Hammarskjöld

A.1 Hammarskjöld and the Americans at Suez: Cold War Priorities and Colonial Problems

At the outset of the Suez crisis Hammarskjöld told the British that “[i]f the Suez crisis led to the disappearance of Nasser, so much the better”.³⁸⁵ He worried though that Suez could turn into a confrontation between the colonial powers and the Third-World and for once, Hammarskjöld and Dulles were on the same page. Both feared that Suez would develop a “Europe v. Asia complexion”, that would certainly be exploited by the Soviets.³⁸⁶ Regardless of their common dislike for Nasser, they both

³⁸⁴ Dixon’s Valedictory Despatch 9 August 1960, FO 371/153585 UN 2251/17.

³⁸⁵ Cited from Louis, Wm Roger, “The United Nations and the Suez Crisis: British Ambivalence Towards the Pope on East River” in Louis, Wm Roger, *Ends of British Imperialism The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization* (London: L.B. Tauris, 2006), p. 668.

³⁸⁶ Memorandum of Conversation 10 August 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

worked together for a peaceful settlement of the crisis. After long discussions, Dulles, Lloyd and the French foreign minister Christian Pineau, agreed that Lloyd and Pineau should hold private discussions with the Egyptian foreign minister Fawzi in Hammarskjöld's office, with the active presence of Hammarskjöld.³⁸⁷ Dulles urged the UN secretary General to play an active role in the talks and Hammarskjöld reported on the progress of the talks to the Americans.³⁸⁸ The main result of the talks was a set of six principles, drafted by Hammarskjöld, based on the outcome of the discussions. Dulles managed to get the six principles adopted in the Security Council over the obstruction of Eden, a first example of what was to come.³⁸⁹

Dulles thought that it had been a "great gain" that the Soviets had agreed to endorse the talks in New York and if this was not "nailed down" in the Security Council they "might never again have the opportunity to keep the Soviets out of the talks".³⁹⁰ The new Soviet foreign minister Shepilov was also growing angry at not having a greater role.³⁹¹ Dulles promoted further substantive discussions under "Hammarskjöld's auspices" and further talks were scheduled in Geneva.³⁹² Dulles was, however, growing increasingly worried about what the British and the French were really up to and felt that "they are deliberately keeping us in the dark"; alarming reports of Israeli mobilisations were also coming in.³⁹³ What neither Hammarskjöld, nor the Americans knew was that on 24 October, British, French and Israeli representatives had met secretly in Sèvres and agreed on a concerted attack on Egypt. Israel would invade the Sinai and push towards the Suez Canal, while Britain and France would then issue ultimatums to both Israel and Egypt to withdraw 10 miles from the Canal and accept a British-French police force to safeguard the canal. Cairo was to accept the ultimatum, or the British and the French would begin military operations against Egypt. On 29 October, the day scheduled for talks to take place in Geneva, Israel launched its attack. When the news reached Hammarskjöld, he immediately stated that, if necessary, he would take the new crisis before the Security Council, by his own

³⁸⁷ Memorandum of a Conversation 5 October 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI. See also Kyle, pp. 277-78.

³⁸⁸ Memorandum of Conversation 10 October 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

³⁸⁹ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 169.

³⁹⁰ Memorandum of a Conversation 13 October 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

³⁹¹ Kyle, p. 283.

³⁹² Closing Statement by Secretary Dulles, October 13, 1956, in Department of State Bulletin 22 October 1956, 615-617 and Report Prepared in the Executive Secretariat of the Department of State 19 October 1956, FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

³⁹³ Transcript of Telephone Conversation 18 October 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

initiative, under Article 99.³⁹⁴ Later that evening State Department instructed the US mission to the UN to seek an urgent meeting of the Security Council the next morning. Hammarskjöld agreed to the American suggestion at once.³⁹⁵

When the Security Council met the following day, on October 30, Lodge presented a resolution calling on Israel to stop military action and withdraw behind the armistice lines. After the Yugoslav and Iranian representatives had spoken in support of the American resolution, the Soviet representative Arkady Sobolev read out a news wire he had just received with the first report of the British and French ultimatum declaring their intention to intervene to protect the canal. All present were shocked, not least Dixon and the French permanent representative de Guiringaud, who had not been informed in advance. When the Security Council reconvened in the afternoon, Dixon read out Eden's official speech with the ultimatum to the Security Council and urged Lodge not to press the American resolution. Lodge nonetheless presented the resolution to a vote. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, Britain and France then proceeded to veto an American resolution. The Soviets then proposed a similar resolution that was also vetoed. In the same afternoon the British and the French had vetoed both an American and a Soviet resolution. Faced with this deadlock in the Security Council, Yugoslavia proposed to call an emergency session of the General Assembly under the "Uniting for Peace" resolution. The "Uniting for Peace" procedure had first been used during the Korean War to avoid a veto and permitted a situation to be referred to the General Assembly if the Security Council failed "to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". As the referral to the General Assembly was considered a procedural question the British and the French could not veto this. Dixon moved that the Yugoslav resolution was out of order, but was voted down. The Americans also supported bringing the crisis to the General Assembly.³⁹⁶

When the Security Council again met in the afternoon the next day, the UN Secretary General made a declaration that Lodge called "a major bomb".³⁹⁷ In Hammarskjöld's words it "gave the attentive reader an idea [...] of the small personal side of the great

³⁹⁴ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 172.

³⁹⁵ Editorial Note Document 413 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

³⁹⁶ Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation 31 October 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

³⁹⁷ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 175.

tragedy that we have all become the troubled witnesses to”.³⁹⁸ He first stated that he would have taken the initiative to call a meeting of the Security Council on his own had not the Americans done so, and then continued:

“The principles of the Charter are, by far, greater than the Organization in which they are embodied, and the aims which they are to safeguard are holier than the policies of any single nation or people. As a servant of the Organization, the Secretary-General has the duty to maintain his usefulness by avoiding public stands on conflicts between Member Nations unless and until such an action might help to resolve the conflict. However, the discretion and impartiality thus imposed on the Secretary-General by the character of his immediate task, may not generate into a policy of expediency. He must also be a servant of the principles of the Charter, and its aims must ultimately determine what for him is right and wrong. For that he must stand. A Secretary-General cannot serve on any other assumption than that – within the necessary limits of human frailty and honest differences of opinion – all Member Nations honor their pledge to observe all articles of the Charter. He should also be able to assume that those organs which are charged with the task of upholding the Charter will be in a position to fulfill their task.

*The bearing of what I have just said must be obvious to all without any elaboration from my side. Were the Members to consider that another view of the duties of the Secretary-General than the one here stated would better serve the interests of the Organization, it is their obvious right to act accordingly”.*³⁹⁹

Why did Hammarskjöld make this statement of principles? Dixon told Hammarskjöld that he “wasn’t playing fair” (Pearson told Hammarskjöld the same thing)⁴⁰⁰; to which Hammarskjöld responded that it was not Dixon’s place to speak of “playing fair”.⁴⁰¹ According to Urquhart, Hammarskjöld never intended to resign, and showed the statement in advance to the permanent members of the Council. He had carefully planned his words to “make them as politically effective as possible” to both set a precedent for the Secretary-General to act only on the basis of the principles of the Charter and to bolster his credentials ahead of the special emergency session of the

³⁹⁸ Letter from Dag Hammarskjöld to Alexis Léger, 1 November 1956, DH Coll., also printed in Marie-Noëlle Little (ed.), *Saint John Perse Correspondance avec Dag Hammarskjöld*, (Gallimard: Paris, 1993), p. 113.

³⁹⁹ Cordier/Foote (eds), *Public Papers Vol III*, p. 309.

⁴⁰⁰ Fry, Michael G., “Canada, the North Atlantic and the United Nations” in Louis, Wm. Roger and Owen, Roger (eds.), *Suez 1956 The Crisis and its Consequences* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1989), p. 307.

⁴⁰¹ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 175.

General Assembly that had already been convened at the time of his speech.⁴⁰² Both Lodge and Lester Pearson seem to have thought that the threat to resign was seriously meant and encouraged Hammarskjöld to carry on.⁴⁰³ The direct effect of Hammarskjöld's speech was words of approval and concurrence in his view of his functions from all the present representatives, including Dixon and de Guiringaud.

The National Security Council met on 1 November to discuss the American response to the new turn of events. Dulles outlined the crucial nature of the General Assembly special session:

*“For many years now the United States has been walking a tightrope between the effort to maintain our old and valued relations with our British and French allies on the one hand, and on the other trying to assure ourselves of the friendship and understanding of the newly independent countries who have escaped from colonialism [...] in view of the overwhelming Asian and African pressure upon us, we could not walk this tightrope much longer. Unless we now assert and maintain this leadership, all of these newly independent countries will turn from us to the USSR. We will be looked upon as forever tied to British and French colonialist policies.”*⁴⁰⁴

To Dulles and Eisenhower, this was a fight the British and the French could not win and the quicker they realised it the better. Eisenhower instructed Dulles to try and stop the situation from deteriorating by drafting a resolution that would be as mild as possible to the British and the French.⁴⁰⁵

A.2 Hammarskjöld and the Americans tame the General Assembly

At five o'clock, when the first emergency session of the General Assembly met, Dulles introduced a resolution urging the parties to agree to a cease-fire that was adopted.⁴⁰⁶ Canada abstained and Lester Pearson explained that they would have preferred a resolution authorizing the Secretary-General to start making arrangements

⁴⁰² See Oral History Åhman, p. 9.

⁴⁰³ Fry, p. 307.

⁴⁰⁴ Memorandum 1 November 1956, FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ General Assembly Resolution 997 (ES-I).

for a UN force to keep the borders at peace while a political settlement was worked out and Dulles made very clear that he would support such a proposal.⁴⁰⁷ Pearson's idea was to create a UN force, overseen by a committee of five, that would initially be comprised mainly of the Anglo-French force now prepared to invade Egypt. Hammarskjöld was initially very sceptical of Pearson's idea and the Americans shared his scepticism.⁴⁰⁸ Eisenhower did not want the British and French to get ashore in Egypt and proposed to "get the Secretary-General into the act" to stop this. Lodge was instructed to "sell" the plan to Hammarskjöld and then to Pearson.⁴⁰⁹ Lodge's deputy, James Barco asked Hammarskjöld to support an American resolution calling for the Secretary-General to prepare a UN force. Hammarskjöld assured Barco that he would support the American proposal.⁴¹⁰ Lodge also managed to sell the resolution to Pearson who agreed to introduce it as a Canadian resolution. Hammarskjöld was "all for it" and "would push for it".⁴¹¹ From the beginning of the Suez crisis Hammarskjöld had been in close contact with the Americans and during the emergency session these contacts became even closer. Barco described the relationship in the following words:

*"during the period of Suez, where in a way the American delegation and [Hammarskjöld] were working as a team, and one didn't take a step without the other one's knowing it. We both consulted. We showed each other our drafts and proposals and discussed the negotiating position and so forth. That time was an extremely close relationship, up to a point."*⁴¹²

In another long-haul meeting, in the early hours of 4 November, the General Assembly adopted the Canadian resolution alongside a resolution sponsored by 19 Afro-Asian countries that authorised the Secretary-General to implement the cease-fire, called for earlier on by the American resolution.⁴¹³ Hammarskjöld immediately

⁴⁰⁷ U.N. doc. A/PV.562.

⁴⁰⁸ Fry, pp. 310-311.

⁴⁰⁹ Memorandum by Lodge 3 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴¹⁰ Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation between Hammarskjöld and Barco 3 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴¹¹ Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation between Barco and Hoover 3 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴¹² Oral History Barco, pp. 1056 and 1049.

⁴¹³ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 178.

set to work and already on the afternoon of 4 November Eisenhower was informed that “great progress was being made by Hammarskjöld”.⁴¹⁴

Ever weary of Hammarskjöld’s ambitions for his office, on 5 November Dixon noted in his diary how he “got the impression that [Hammarskjöld] was fascinated by the idea of building up a UN police force under his command”.⁴¹⁵ Nonetheless, he recommended the “Pearson-Hammarskjöld plan” the same day with the motivation that it might be difficult to manage the General Assembly, and especially the Afro-Asian bloc.⁴¹⁶ Initially, the British assumed that the UN force would consist mainly of British and French troops. When they realised that this was not the case they tried to obstruct until the Americans put additional pressure on them. During November 7, Eisenhower told Eden on several occasions that “we are committed to Hammarskjöld’s plan—& very definitely” and finally persuaded the British to accept that the UN Force would not include British or French troops.⁴¹⁷ The French were happy to leave the responsibility for setting up the UN force in the hands of the Secretary-General.⁴¹⁸ Eisenhower now thought that it was of “critical importance” to get Hammarskjöld to move ahead “as rapidly as possible to get the peace force in position”.⁴¹⁹ The reason behind the haste was the American anxiety that the Soviets could still try and turn the situation to their advantage, as Eisenhower pointed out “the Bear is still the central enemy”.⁴²⁰

Hammarskjöld and the Americans were determined not to have any British or French troops in the UN force as this would never be accepted by the Egyptians. To make it more palatable, Hammarskjöld, in a suggestion that would later be referred to as a key peacekeeping principle, put forward the idea that none of the five permanent members of the Security Council should provide troops to the UN force. The principle was not, however, born at Suez. In discussions regarding a potential strengthening of UNTSO already in March 1956 Hammarskjöld suggested that none of the permanent five

⁴¹⁴ Memorandum of a Conference with the President 4 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴¹⁵ Dixon, Piers, *Double Diploma The Life of Sir Pierson Dixon* (Hutchinson: London, 1968), p. 270.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

⁴¹⁷ Transcript of a Telephone Conversation between Eisenhower and Eden 7 November 1956, FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴¹⁸ Telegram Paris to State Department 7 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴¹⁹ Memorandum by Howe 7 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴²⁰ Memorandum by Goodpaster 7 November 1956 and Memorandum of Conversation between Eisenhower, Dulles and Hoover 7 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

should participate with the express purpose to avoid an unwanted Soviet participation.⁴²¹ Keeping Soviet, or communist, troops out of the UN force was still a major objective for Hammarskjöld at Suez and he now applied the same principle. When Romanian and Czechoslovakian units were offered for the UN force Hammarskjöld informed the Americans he was turning them down.⁴²² Nor did he like asking the Yugoslavs “although he might mention possibility to them expecting refusal”. Hammarskjöld told the Americans that he would like to tell the General Assembly, in case it would be difficult to get the UN force in place quickly, that “the US would consider supplying a number of forces as a stop-gap and temporarily”. Hammarskjöld did not think that the Soviets, Arabs, UK or France would object to this as “obviously the US had no intention of occupying bases in Arab world”.⁴²³ This idea came to nothing, but it illustrates how Hammarskjöld applied his “principles” and a certain naivety on his part as to how the role of the US was viewed in the UN. Hammarskjöld’s principle that UN forces should not include troops from the permanent five members was designed to keep out Soviet and communist troops. When the Egyptians protested against Canadian troops as being both members of NATO and close to Britain, Hammarskjöld was unyielding.⁴²⁴ In the Suez case, it was also used to keep out British and French troops, but this was caused by the circumstances, the motive behind the principle was to keep out communists. At the same time this was also how Eisenhower was trying to sell the idea to Eden.⁴²⁵ The Americans provided the crucial logistical support for the UN force and this would also become a standard for UN peacekeeping operations under Hammarskjöld, with dire consequences for his independence.

On the afternoon of 7 November, Lodge told Hammarskjöld that Eisenhower had spoken with Eden, Mollet, Nehru and St. Laurent and told them “to get 100 per cent behind the SYG [Secretary-General]”, and in return the Secretary General asked Lodge to give Eisenhower “officially and personally, a message of his deep appreciation for the full support” he had received throughout the crisis. Hammarskjöld also agreed completely with the need for a speedy withdrawal to avoid

⁴²¹ Telegram from FO to Washington 7 March 1956 No. 1343, FO 371/121733.

⁴²² Memorandum of a Conversation between Lodge and Hammarskjöld in Hammarskjöld’s office 7 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴²³ Telegram USUN to State Department 4 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴²⁴ Lloyd, Selwyn, Suez 1956: A Personal Account (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978), p. 214.

⁴²⁵ Transcript of Telephone Conversation 6 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

providing the Soviets with an excuse to move in. Later in the afternoon, Cordier informed Lodge that Hammarskjöld would arrange for a resolution to be introduced “probably by Sweden, Ecuador, Ceylon, Burma and some others” that would approve his plan for a UN force as put forth in his final report.⁴²⁶ Asking small “neutral” countries to introduce resolutions that had effectively been drafted by the Secretary-General would also become a standard procedure for Hammarskjöld.

The same day the General Assembly adopted two resolutions. The first resolution approved Hammarskjöld’s principles for establishing the first armed peacekeeping force ever, UNEF (United Nations Emergency Force) and authorised him to establish an Advisory Committee to help him.⁴²⁷ This meant that no further consultation of the Assembly was needed as this was now delegated to the Advisory Committee, chaired by Hammarskjöld. Hammarskjöld was thus left to his own devices, which he much preferred. The Canadians would later tell the Americans that they “were most impressed with effective way [the Advisory Committee] had proceeded and with way it permitted Hammarskjöld [to] utilize his talents to fullest in admittedly complex operation”.⁴²⁸ The Advisory Committee contained reliable supporters of the Secretary-General, such as Lester Pearson and the Norwegian Hans Engen.

In his study of the meetings of the Advisory Committee, Fröhlich describes them as long monologues by Hammarskjöld (or Cordier in his absence). Instead of a vote system, Hammarskjöld insisted that he would simply sum up the discussion for the record at which point any member was free to make a reservation; Hammarskjöld later boasted that there had never been any reservation.⁴²⁹ The Americans were happy to let Hammarskjöld proceed with as little interference as possible rather than leaving it to the “acrimonious debate” in the General Assembly.⁴³⁰

Hammarskjöld’s “magnificent work under conditions of almost unbelievable pressure”, in the words of Lester Pearson, was the instrument through which the Suez crisis was resolved.⁴³¹ The powers behind it, however, were Eisenhower and Dulles.

⁴²⁶ Telegram USUN to State Department 7 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴²⁷ Resolution 1001 (ES-I). The Advisory Committee was composed of representatives from Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Colombia, India, Norway, and Pakistan, and chaired by the Secretary-General.

⁴²⁸ Telegram USUN to State Department 6 December 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴²⁹ Fröhlich, pp. 295-296.

⁴³⁰ Telegram USUN to State Department 6 December 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴³¹ Quoted from Kyle, p. 481.

To the Americans, Hammarskjöld offered a way to continue to walk the tightrope between their colonial European allies and the Third-World emerging countries, yet avoiding a dangerous rift that the Soviets could have exploited. While Hammarskjöld and the UN were to all appearance solving the crisis it was really Eisenhower and Dulles who forced the parties to agree to the Secretary General's proposals. In Dulles's words "Hammarskjöld is the fellow who has the titular responsibility [...] but the fact of the matter is the effective power behind this thing is the US". Although worried that Hammarskjöld was not being forceful enough, Dulles deferred to his judgment and took a backseat until called upon. During Suez Dulles instructed Lodge to inform Hammarskjöld that if "there is anything he wants done" he should just inform Dulles.⁴³²

Regarding the overall political consequences of the Suez crisis both Hammarskjöld and the Americans viewed the crisis primarily through a Cold War lens. Whether Hammarskjöld was aware of Omega or not, he told the Americans in November 1956 that they should work with "stable elements in Arab world" to build up a reaction against Nasser, in favour of a settlement of Palestine.⁴³³ Until the Palestine question was solved "the possibilities of unrest and of Soviet activity would persist".⁴³⁴ From the beginning of the Suez crisis to the end, Hammarskjöld saw Nasser and Soviet activities as the problem and he saw his own role as helping the British and the French to extricate themselves from the mess they had gotten themselves into, as it risked pitting the colonial powers against the "Third World", making the latter vulnerable to Soviet influence.

A.3 *"He had become a force"*

In the conclusion to his great study of the Suez crisis, Kyle states that "The organisation which emerged with enhanced credit from the whole crisis was the United Nations; the individual was Dag Hammarskjöld."⁴³⁵ Dixon wrote that as a result of Suez, Hammarskjöld had become "more than a symbol or even an executive;

⁴³² Memorandum of Telephone Conversation 26 December 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴³³ Telegram USUN to State Department 27 November 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVI.

⁴³⁴ Memorandum of Conversation 31 December 1956 FRUS 1955-57 Vol XVII.

⁴³⁵ Kyle, p. 850.

he had become a force”.⁴³⁶ But this was only made possible by the unwavering support of the American administration. Barco, who had been working closely with Hammarskjöld throughout Suez, claimed “that two men or three men made Mr. Hammarskjöld the force that he was: they were Lodge, Dulles and Eisenhower”.⁴³⁷

Ever cautious of Hammarskjöld’s expanding political role, Dixon had warned already on 7 November 1956 that “we may find it inconvenient to have to deal with a Secretary-General who will be elevated to the status of a Pope with temporal as well as spiritual powers”.⁴³⁸ During the Suez crisis Dixon would say of him: “In the first place he is a very obstinate creature with a unique gift for combining high moral principles with an obscurity of thought and expression, which makes it almost impossible sometimes to understand what he is saying, let alone what he is driving at”.⁴³⁹ According to Douglas Hurd, first secretary at the British UN mission during Suez, the British felt that they owed Hammarskjöld a great deal but increasingly started to feel that “with his moods and his obscurity and his pontifical outlook [he] is really exasperating”.⁴⁴⁰ According to Hurd “it became clear that another aspect of his character was coming to the fore: “I remember my boss Pierson Dixon making a comparison which often people made in those days where he talked about Hammarskjöld as having a pontifical manner. And that was not a word chosen at random. It was a suggestion that the Secretary-General of the UN was gradually working himself into the position of a pope. That is to say he was gradually assuming, not precisely infallibility, but an assumption in his own mind that he had a mission: and the mission was to uphold the role, importance and integrity of the United Nations and the Secretary-General was the high priest”.⁴⁴¹ Many noted a change in Hammarskjöld according to Hurd: “Parallels with Thomas Becket or with Sir Thomas More would not be exact, but, like them, Hammarskjöld began to place himself on a different moral plane to the representatives of temporal governments. He alone was the custodian of the United Nations Charter, and of the values and interests of the

⁴³⁶ UKUN (Dixon) to FO (Lloyd), 16 January 1958, FO371/137002, UN2303.

⁴³⁷ Oral History Barco, p. 649.

⁴³⁸ Quoted from Kyle, p. 481, see also p. 512 citing PREM 11/1107 from Dixon to Lloyd, January 1, 1957.

⁴³⁹ Quoted from Kyle, p. 520.

⁴⁴⁰ Hurd, Douglas, *Memoirs* (Little, Brown: London, 2003), p. 142.

⁴⁴¹ Hurd quoted in Grundy, Trevor, “Dag Hammarskjöld and Douglas Hurd”, in Hanley and Melber (eds.), *Dag Hammarskjöld Remembered A Collection of Personal Memories* (Uppsala: Graf Tryckeri, 2011), p. 87.

international community. Article 99 of the Charter, by his own liberal interpretation, gave him the right to intervene wherever he thought it necessary”.⁴⁴²

The reference to Thomas Becket is interesting. Hammarskjöld was very familiar with T.S. Eliot’s play “Murder in the Cathedral” about Becket and he had even made reference to the “temptations of Becket” in a speech at ECOSOC in 1955. In Eliot’s play, Becket’s last temptation is martyrdom to which Becket replies:

*“The last temptation is the greatest treason:
To do the right deed for the wrong reason.”*

The play is ambiguous as to whether Becket succumbs to the last temptation or not and later Becket says:

*“For those who serve the greater cause may make the cause serve them,
Still doing right: and striving with political men
May make that cause political, not by what they do
But by what they are. I know”*

Hammarskjöld knew about this temptation. *Markings* is full of remarks where he chastises himself for his ambition. He had an “affinity for the role of an independent world statesman” as Barco related: “I’m sure he did enjoy that role. I think he took to it, increasingly, and he must have known it had its dangers”.⁴⁴³ In his memoirs Urquhart wrote that after Suez “a certain hubris was setting in”, a “slightly evangelistic tone [...] had begun to creep into some of Hammarskjöld’s utterances and attitudes [...] I was sometimes uneasy at the possibility that Hammarskjöld might be beginning to hear voices”.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴² Hurd, *Memoirs*, p. 142.

⁴⁴³ Oral History Barco, p. 1039.

⁴⁴⁴ Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War*, pp. 141-142.

B Hammarskjöld's Development of an Independent Political Role

B.1 The Vacuum Theory

In his speech to the General Assembly after his reelection for a second term on 26 September 1957, Hammarskjöld first stated that he did not believe that the Secretary-General should be asked to act by the Member States, if no guidance for his action is to be found either in the Charter or in the decisions of the main organs of the UN”, but added at the same time: “On the other hand, I believe that it is in keeping with the philosophy of the Charter that the Secretary-General should be expected to act also without such guidance, should this appear to him necessary in order to help in filling any vacuum that may appear in the systems which the Charter and traditional diplomacy provide for the safeguarding of peace and security”.⁴⁴⁵ This meant that when Hammarskjöld himself deemed it necessary, he could act independently, apparently based only on his own judgment, in any situation when the Security Council or the General Assembly did not. In 1959 he developed his ideas further, in a speech in Copenhagen, to argue outright for a practice that might open the door “to a more generally recognized independent influence for the Organization as such in the political evolution”.⁴⁴⁶

The first example of Hammarskjöld intervening in a “vacuum” came in 1958 with the crises in Lebanon and Jordan.⁴⁴⁷ Resistance to Lebanese President Chamoun’s attempt to amend the constitution to seek a new term led to a crisis which was brought to the Security Council as Lebanon complained of infiltration from the UAR. Hammarskjöld set up a Lebanon Observation Group (UNOGIL). After Brigadier Kaseem’s coup in Baghdad, interpreted as the beginning of a Communist inspired takeover of the Middle East by forces inspired or aligned with Nasser, the Americans sent 10,000 marines to Lebanon. Hammarskjöld attempted to expand UNOGIL as a face-saving device to allow the Americans to withdraw.⁴⁴⁸ Faced with a Soviet veto in the Security Council, Hammarskjöld referred to his vacuum theory and set up a UN

⁴⁴⁵ Statement in the General Assembly 26 September 1957, in Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol III*, p. 665.

⁴⁴⁶ Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol IV*, p. 371.

⁴⁴⁷ For a detailed study of Hammarskjöld’s role see Hughes, Ann, “’Impartiality’ and the UN Observation Group in Lebanon, 1958” in *International Peacekeeping*, 2002, 9:4, pp. 2-20.

⁴⁴⁸ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 281.

presence on his own initiative as Secretary-General.⁴⁴⁹ There was even a joke among journalists in New York at the time: “you know what happens to a vacuum, don’t you? Mr. Hammarskjöld fills it!”⁴⁵⁰ To many, not least Macmillan, the British-American intervention in Lebanon and Jordan was a successful remake of Suez.⁴⁵¹ Successful, because this time the British had managed to avoid being cast adrift by the Americans and getting Hammarskjöld on board. As Dixon described it: “This episode encourages the belief that firm Anglo-American action in the Middle East, with the help of Mr. Hammarskjöld, can be successfully piloted through the United Nations machinery and thus deal effectively with a dangerous situation.”⁴⁵²

Despite the successful Lebanese episode, the General Assembly was still considered a major problem for British UN strategy, and the problem was only likely to grow with the admission of new members, most of them small countries with a distinct anti-colonial disposition. The conclusion for the British was, as Dixon put it in his Annual Report for 1958, that the “United Nations is becoming a less and less reliable instrument for Western policies. With the introduction of an increasing number of new members in the next few years this tendency must be expected to grow.” There were two reasons for this hollowing out of support for Western policies: first, the “great political importance which Member States attach to Colonial questions”; and, secondly, that “the general effect of the additional membership has been to increase the number of uncommitted countries who view with distaste and fear the continuing struggle between the Western and Communist powers and are interested only in the promotion of world conditions which will eliminate the risk of war between the advanced states and favour their own advancement to an equality in material well-being with the more highly industrialised countries”.⁴⁵³

Hammarskjöld was quick to pick up on this sentiment. He focused on technical assistance and development aid and cultivated his image as a leader of the “neutrals” in the UN. Georges-Picot, Hammarskjöld’s old nemesis who had returned as French permanent representative, reported to Paris that the Secretary-General’s Annual

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 286.

⁴⁵⁰ Sven Åhman, “Mr. Hammarskjöld’s Not-So-Quiet-Diplomacy” in *The Reporter* 4 September 1958.

⁴⁵¹ See e.g. Ashton, Nigel, *Eisenhower, Macmillan and the Problem of Nasser: Anglo-American relations and Arab Nationalism, 1955-1959* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

⁴⁵² Dixon’s Valedictory Despatch 9 August 1960, FO371/153585 UN 2251/17.

⁴⁵³ Annual Report 1958 by UKUN (Dixon) 2 February 1959, FO371/145242, UN1011/1.

Report for 1957 “shows, at times, aspects of a veritable electoral manifesto for the small states”. He also noted that “Hammar skjöld seems to have developed a taste for the role of the itinerant ambassador of the United Nations. We should therefore expect, over the coming years, to see him accept, or provoke with the help of the General Assembly, or even undertake by his own initiative, missions of this nature, with a certitude, nonetheless that he will veil himself in all possible legal safeguards”.⁴⁵⁴ But there were also those who saw that the new political role of the Secretary-General could be in their interest.

B.2 “Mr. Hammar skjöld’s prestige and influence”

In order to win the day in the General Assembly, the Secretary-General was seen as a valuable support. In 1958, Dixon reported that “The Office of the Secretary-General, as interpreted by Mr. Hammar skjöld, is the only institution of the United Nations which has grown in influence and scope during the year”.⁴⁵⁵ In both the Annual Reports for 1957 and 1958, the Minutes in the Foreign Office show that the sections on the Secretary-General were seen as among the most important, in stark contrast to Dixon’s first Annual Report for 1954, which had not even mentioned the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General was influential in his own right, for taking initiatives such as in the Lebanon crisis. The difficulty of reaching precise agreements in the General Assembly and the Security Council often led to a consensus – even if that consensus was only achieved through the inherent ambiguity of such a measure – on a resolution to give Hammar skjöld a more or less free hand to deal with a problem: “the difficulty of reaching precise conclusions has had both the General Assembly and the Security Council at times to content themselves with establishing a consensus as a basis for further decisions by the Secretary-General. In general, Her Majesty’s Government have no cause for complaint at the way his influence has been wielded”.⁴⁵⁶

Hammar skjöld had proven to be an astute politician and had built up his standing in the UN: “Mr. Hammar skjöld’s prestige and influence is now such that it is wise to

⁴⁵⁴ Dépêche 1157 de Georges-Picot à MAE 11 octobre 1957 *Idées de M. Hammar skjöld sur le rôle futur des Nations Unies et de son Secrétaire général*, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

⁴⁵⁵ Annual Report 1958 by UKUN (Dixon), February 2, 1959, FO371/145242, UN1011/1.

⁴⁵⁶ Annual Report 1958 by UKUN (Dixon), February 2, 1959, FO371/145242, UN1011/1.

make sure of his approval before embarking on any important course of action in the United Nations.”⁴⁵⁷

Noticing the growth of “neutralist” new members, Hammarskjöld had courted them and made himself the unofficial figure head of this view of world politics, as Dixon explained:

*“This increase in the influence of the position of Secretary-General has been accompanied by an interesting development fostered by the Secretary-General himself. The other day he remarked to me that a certain course of action would accord with the opinion of “the House”. When I asked him whom he included in the house he replied “Oh, Burmese, Swedes and those kind of people”. The fact is that there has grown up in the United Nations a body of neutral opinion composed of those countries who do not belong to the alliances whether of the West or the East, and who conceive it to be their duty to keep the peace between the power blocs and work for the pacific aims and ideals of the Charter. These delegations drawn from all continents (and indeed being sometimes able to count on members of N.A.T.O. such as the Canadians and Norwegians), are being added to daily as the new African states emerge to independence. It is to opinion of this kind that the Secretary-General tends to turn, not I think necessarily because he is himself exactly a pacifist or a neutralist, but more because he believes that the orderly running of the United Nations and the development of the Charter principles make it necessary to carry what in effect is a majority of members.”*⁴⁵⁸

Earlier, Dixon had often warned of a more powerful and interventionist Secretary-General, but after 1958 he saw Hammarskjöld’s increased role as largely positive for British interests: “I do not think there is any cause for alarm at the growth of Mr. Hammarskjöld’s influence. He has a real respect for the principles and methods of British policy and there is no doubt that on major East/West issues he is wholeheartedly with the West. Yet it is disturbing to think that the growing influence of the office, which Mr. Hammarskjöld wields on a completely personal basis, can hardly be inherited by anyone so able or so reliable.”⁴⁵⁹

If British strategy was to co-opt the Secretary-General, French policies would, from 1958, develop along radically different lines. The tone had been set by Michel Debré,

⁴⁵⁷ Valedictory Despatch (Dixon) 9 August 1960, FO 371/153585, UN 2251/17.

⁴⁵⁸ Valedictory Despatch (Dixon) 9 August 1960, FO 371/153585, UN 2251/17.

⁴⁵⁹ Annual Report 1958 by UKUN (Dixon), 2 February 1959, FO371/145242, UN1011/1.

who launched a violent attack on the Secretary-General in *L'information* on 22 January 1958, denouncing the policy of the Secretariat as “a secret diplomacy, contrary to the fundamental principles of the UN; led by irresponsible officials; preferring the injustice of the *faits accomplis* by revolutionary means to any form of open conflict, which was exactly the diplomacy of Munich”.⁴⁶⁰ When, later in 1958, the Fourth Republic was replaced by the Fifth and de Gaulle became President, Michel Debré was appointed prime minister. The new Prime Minister was not alone among the men who swept to power with de Gaulle in having a decidedly hostile view of the evolution of the United Nations and the new role of its Secretary-General; it was shared, if not exceeded by de Gaulle himself and his loyal foreign minister Maurice Couve de Murville. When the United Nations were created, de Gaulle had fought hard to make France a permanent member of the Security Council; he was not going to give up the rights inherent in this position by accepting the usurpation of the Security Council’s role by the wilful General Assembly, or by a Secretary-General intent on enlarging his office; de Gaulle’s vision of the United Nations was clear: “The UN is the states. And first of all, the permanent [members of the Security Council]”.⁴⁶¹ The French scepticism would only grow as the vacuum theory acquired a geographic element. Hammarskjöld spoke of the vacuum that would develop in the new African states when the old colonial powers withdrew. It was important to avoid a fight between the blocs to fill this vacuum; to Hammarskjöld, only the UN could fill it.

B.3 “Spiking one of the heaviest guns in the Communist armoury” – economic and political assistance to the Third-World

From the beginning of his tenure as Secretary-General, Hammarskjöld had pondered the issue of decolonisation; its connection to the cold war, and its impact on the future of the UN. In one of his first discussions with the British after his election, in June 1953, he discussed the question of decolonisation and the growth of an anti-colonial bloc in the UN and said that the UN could play an important role not only with economic but also “political” assistance to the under-developed countries. This would

⁴⁶⁰ “M. Michel Debré: Le Secrétariat général de l’O.N.U. est à reformer” in *L'information* 23 January 1958, Archives FNSP Dossiers de presse, Relations de la France avec l’ONU (1950-1958).

⁴⁶¹ Peyrefitte, Alain, *C’était de Gaulle tome II* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), p. 424.

also be an opportunity for “spiking one of the heaviest guns in the Communist armoury” according to Hammarskjöld.⁴⁶² Over the following years these ideas would develop into a full “doctrine” on the role of the UN in Africa.

In 1955, Hammarskjöld ordered a study of all the African activities at the UN, he set up an African Working Group in the Secretariat and accounted for these activities in the 1955 UN Annual Report. Hammarskjöld wrote that “The peoples of Asia today, of Africa tomorrow, are moving towards a new relationship with what history calls the West. The world organization is the place where this emerging relationship in world affairs can most creatively be forged.”⁴⁶³ A further hint of the special focus on Africa in the Secretariat was the fact that the Introduction to the Annual Report, for the first time, contained a heading entitled *African Problems*; under this heading, Hammarskjöld gave some background to the African Working Group:

*“The great changes that are under way in Africa present a challenge to the rest of the world – a challenge to give aid in guiding the course of events in orderly and constructive channels. It is apparent that in the next ten years the peace and stability of the world will be strongly affected by the evolution in Africa, by the national awakening of its people, by the course of race relations, and by the manner in which the economic and social advancement of the African peoples is assisted by the rest of the world. I believe that this is an area of concern to the United Nations in which the Secretariat may prove helpful. As a first step in the Secretariat approach it is essential to bring together and into focus the many problems concerning Africa with which the United Nations is already dealing or will have to deal in the years ahead.”*⁴⁶⁴

The French diplomats in New York were concerned about Hammarskjöld’s interest in Africa, as a report by Charles Lucet, chargé d’affaires at the French Permanent Mission, highlighted in August 1955. Lucet described a meeting where “M. Hammarskjöld immediately launched into the sphere of high political strategy”. Hammarskjöld explained how the Asian continent was now the prey to the double influence of Nehru and Chou En-Lai and would in the coming years move more and more into the orbit of the Chinese Communists, with the result that the Soviets would

⁴⁶² Memo of Conversation 3 June 1953, FO 371/107050.

⁴⁶³ Introduction to the Tenth Annual Report 8 July 1955 in Cordier/Foote, *Public Papers Vol III*, p. 545.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 551.

find themselves expelled from the Asian continent and would have to look for “new territories for expansion”. Hammarskjöld feared that over the coming years the principal thrust of Soviet propaganda would be directed at an African continent in political awakening. He went on to describe how the present focus on the rights of self-determination for the colonised peoples made this a very dangerous situation, which he hoped could still be canalised and controlled. Hammarskjöld predicted that the Soviet Union would “likely be supported by the coloured peoples of Asia and Africa who would want the aid of this powerful ally to win the day for their anti-colonialist ideas”.⁴⁶⁵

In the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee) and the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee) of the General Assembly there had already been much anti-colonial rhetoric and Hammarskjöld explained to Lucet that part of his motive for establishing an African Working Group at the Secretariat was to take the edge off future discussions at the UN. The African Working Group would undertake long-term studies at “a very slow rhythm and with all possible precautions”, enabling the Secretary-General to reply to the “fiery orators” of the Third and the Fourth Committee that he was “himself looking into the well-being of the African populations” and that “he should be left to his own methods”. This shows Hammarskjöld’s ambiguity towards the principle of self-determination of peoples and how the same principle was in fact subordinated to his analysis of the Cold War context.⁴⁶⁶

Lucet was not entirely convinced by Hammarskjöld’s argument and expressed “certain scepticism as to the influence that the Working Group might have on the evolution of African problems”. In the analysis of the French diplomat, Hammarskjöld would quickly find himself in an untenable situation. If he really meant to proceed along the lines he had indicated, the representatives of Asian and African countries would soon accuse him of excessive prudence and of dragging his feet; if, on the other hand, the Working Group would were actually to take any important initiative, this would lead to problems with the colonial powers. Lucet pointed to what would soon become a great dilemma for Hammarskjöld in steering a

⁴⁶⁵ Dépêche de Charles Lucet à MAE 20 août 1955, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

⁴⁶⁶ For more on Hammarskjöld and self-determination, see King/Hobbins.

course between the colonial powers and the anti-colonial movement. Nevertheless, Lucet found the project of the Secretary-General to be “inoffensive at the present time”. The report still provoked a vivid reaction in Paris, and the French were not the only ones interested in Hammarskjöld’s African ideas. The Belgian UN mission contacted Lucet to find out if the French Government would talk to Hammarskjöld “to bring his attention to the danger in seeing the United Nations showing too much interest in African problems”. The French had on occasion coordinated their UN policies towards colonial questions with the British and the Belgians and they now contacted Brussels⁴⁶⁷ and London⁴⁶⁸ to this effect. In London neither the Foreign Office, nor the Colonial Office shared the French concerns.⁴⁶⁹ Not for the first time, the British cooled down French feelings over Hammarskjöld’s projects and vouchsafed his good intentions. On 21 October 1955, de Guiringaud, who had replaced Lucet, met with de Seynes, the French Undersecretary-General. De Seynes allayed the French fears about Hammarskjöld’s African project, and reassured de Guiringaud that Hammarskjöld was not interested in “vast summaries and exercises of high politics”. De Seynes’ opinion was that the activities of the Secretary-General “did not present any danger, on any level” to French policies in their African territories.⁴⁷⁰ A hand-written note on de Guiringaud’s report shows that this effectively closed the dossier on Hammarskjöld’s African Working Group: “In the light of the assurances given by de Seynes, we do not see why we should oppose Hammarskjöld’s initiative”.⁴⁷¹

Were the French correct in their perception of de Seynes as a guardian of French interests within the Secretariat? His predecessor, Georges-Picot, had been a staunch defender of French interests – and of the principle that the Assistant Secretaries-General (now changed into Undersecretaries-General) should be a national representative in the Secretariat – with the effect that he got into a row with Hammarskjöld and resigned. De Seynes, on the other hand, saw himself as an

⁴⁶⁷ Dépêche de Vincent Broustra à l’ambassadeur de France à Bruxelles 26 août 1955, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

⁴⁶⁸ Dépêche de Vincent Broustra à l’ambassadeur de France à Londres 26 août 1955, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

⁴⁶⁹ Dépêche de l’ambassadeur de France à Londres à Antoine Pinay 1^{er} septembre 1955, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

⁴⁷⁰ Dépêche n° 2350 de Louis de Guiringaud à MAE 21 octobre 1955, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

⁴⁷¹ Dépêche n° 2350 de Louis de Guiringaud à MAE 21 octobre 1955, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 612.

international civil servant, loyal to the UN rather than to France. Furthermore, he was a *ménesiste* and critical of some French colonial policies in Africa. But in 1955 his assurances were enough to reassure Paris. Lucet, a close ally of future French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, would go on to become the head of the Political Department of the Quai d'Orsay in 1959 and from this vantage point he would see how his worst fears of Hammarskjöld's African ideas would come true.⁴⁷²

The development behind Hammarskjöld's choice to focus on Africa was motivated by what he perceived as a new Soviet interest in Africa paired with the rise of anti-colonialism. In 1955, the Geneva conference had led to a *détente* between the blocs in Europe. This was partly due to the threat of nuclear retaliation that had made a war in Europe almost unthinkable, and partly that the attempt to win the Western European countries for communism via elections had failed – the Marshall Plan, that Hammarskjöld had worked with, had been a major factor in achieving this. According to Hammarskjöld, after failing to foment revolution and strengthen communist parties in Western Europe, the USSR now looked to the Middle East and increasingly towards Africa. The change in Soviet strategy would be most clearly expressed in the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956, where the underdeveloped countries were identified as the main battlefield between the blocs.⁴⁷³ To what extent there really existed a Soviet grand strategy for the subversion of Africa is not clear, but the mere thought of it was enough; while the Communist ghost no longer haunted the streets of Western Europe, the fear of its sudden appearance in the jungles of Africa was quite sufficient to keep Western policy makers up at night.⁴⁷⁴ And besides, even if communism failed in Africa, extreme nationalism, directed against the West, would lead to major problems for the Western world and would play into the hands of the East according to a logic where what was bad for the West was good for the East.⁴⁷⁵ This confrontation was also likely to play out in the UN; a State Department memorandum entitled “Communist Penetration in Africa” stated that “unhindered by ties with the colonial powers, the Soviet Union and its allies are able openly and

⁴⁷² Andrieu, Claire, Braud, Philippe and Piketty, Guillaume (eds.) *Dictionnaire de Gaulle* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2006), p. 699.

⁴⁷³ Zacher, *Dag Hammarskjöld's United Nations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 56.

⁴⁷⁴ Mazov, Sergey, *A Distant Front in the Cold War – The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964*, (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010), pp. 15, 28.

⁴⁷⁵ Mazov, p. 29.

constantly to champion nationalist causes of the world stage, especially in the UN”.⁴⁷⁶ Increasingly, the Soviet Union was finding itself on the side of the majority in the General Assembly as it supported Afro-Asian initiatives.⁴⁷⁷

The Bandung conference, which took place in April 1955, also led Hammarskjöld to engage more with the question of decolonisation. The Bandung conference saw the emergence of “neutralism” as an anti-colonial force. In the introduction to the annual report in 1955, Hammarskjöld made a specific reference to Bandung and the fact that these countries had issued a statement on their adherence to the principles of the Charter, although many of them were not yet members of the UN.⁴⁷⁸ Hammarskjöld was sensitive to the fact that the countries that had assembled at Bandung were increasingly acting as a bloc in the UN and that the question that kept them together was a fervent anti-colonialism. Hammarskjöld had already been irritated at Menon’s attempt to mediate both in Peking and in Suez and he would increasingly try to portray himself as an alternative leader for the “neutralist bloc”.

In the introduction to the Annual Report for 1956, Hammarskjöld wrote: “It is important to remember that the Charter endorses self-determination as a basis for friendly relations among nations. Both unrealistic impatience in the movement toward self-determination and wasteful resistance to it would contradict this philosophy of the Charter by leading to conflicts which might threaten peace”.⁴⁷⁹ In these words, Hammarskjöld comes across as a moderate; he was for independence, but it should not be rushed. Hammarskjöld’s personal assistant, Wilhelm Wachtmeister said that Hammarskjöld was not at all happy about the invasion of the General Assembly by the newly independent former colonies. In principle, he was for independence and decolonisation, but he was not convinced that all states were necessarily ready for it.⁴⁸⁰ As always, however, Hammarskjöld quickly adapted to the situation and the

⁴⁷⁶ “Communist Penetration in Africa”, United States Draft Paper on Africa CA-57-21, 8 January 1959, quoted in Mazov, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁷⁷ Gaiduk, Ilya V., *Divided Together: The United States and the Soviet Union in the United Nations, 1945-1965* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), p. 255.

⁴⁷⁸ Introduction to the Tenth Annual Report 8 July 1955 in Cordier/Foote (eds.) *Public Papers Vol III*, p. 544.

⁴⁷⁹ Introduction to the Eleventh Annual Report 4 October 1956 in Cordier/Foote (eds.) *Public Papers Vol IV*, p. 270.

⁴⁸⁰ Interview by the author with Wilhelm Wachtmeister, personal assistant to Dag Hammarskjöld 1958-1961.

newly independent countries would be an increasingly important support for Hammarskjöld.

On New Year's Eve 1956, Dulles, met for luncheon with Hammarskjöld at Lodge's residence in the Waldorf Towers for a stock taking of Suez and to discuss future ideas and policies. Barco, who was also present, described the luncheon as "very awkward". Dulles and Hammarskjöld never seem to have connected on a personal level and very few words were uttered until the dessert when Dulles asked Hammarskjöld to express his views on economic development. This was the topic that Hammarskjöld had wanted to talk to Dulles about and he now launched into a long monologue – "and when Hammarskjöld would start on something he was very interested in, he was not lacking for words", as Barco described, but "unless you were familiar with the Secretary-General's manner of speaking, you often missed nuances and issues and points that were of considerable importance". Dulles "hadn't really understood what the Secretary-General was saying", but he did not say so. What Hammarskjöld had wanted to discuss with Dulles can be discerned from the rather summary American report from the luncheon: "[Hammarskjöld] felt that some of the Arabs were sensitive to receiving aid from the US lest it put them under political obligations. He thought that some multilateral form of aid would be best".⁴⁸¹ While Dulles did not see the need for multilateral assistance in the Middle East he had had similar discussions before with someone he understood better than Hammarskjöld. Paul Hoffman, who had been in charge of the Marshall Plan as head of the ECA, had tried to convince Dulles earlier in 1956 that a large program of foreign aid to the newly independent countries "was vital to stop penetration of Soviet Communism". Hoffman referred to this as "waging peace", what it really meant was to win the Cold War by aid to the Third-World, much like the Marshall Plan had saved Western Europe from Communist penetration.⁴⁸² Later Dulles realized that the two ideas went well together and he and Lodge proposed to Hammarskjöld that Hoffman should be

⁴⁸¹ Memorandum of conversation on 31 December 1956, Memos of Conversation - General - E Through I (2); undated; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library files relating to John Foster Dulles, Box 38; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

⁴⁸² Memorandum of conversation on 9 April 1956, Memos of Conversation - General - E Through I (2); undated; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library files relating to John Foster Dulles, Box 38; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

made the head of the new UN Special Fund for Economic Development (that would eventually become the UNDP).⁴⁸³ As the head of the UN Special Fund Hoffman made the same arguments about winning the Cold War through aid directly to Eisenhower.⁴⁸⁴

Hammar skjöld had stayed in contact with Hoffman, Labouisse and many others from his work with the Marshall Plan.⁴⁸⁵ Hammar skjöld also shared their views on economic development.⁴⁸⁶ Hoffman's biographer writes that Hoffman "never questioned the efficacy of private enterprise and the capitalistic international market. Thus he and other prominent spokesmen for the Development Establishment sought to promote peaceful economic development as an alternative to revolution and other threats to the system that benefitted the United States".⁴⁸⁷ This mirrored Hammar skjöld's ideas on economic development, to keep the peace by guarding the status quo from revolutionary movements, be they communist or nationalist. Hoffman also belonged to Hammar skjöld's "informal cabinet" and his UN position was based to a great extent on his ability to get American support (the US was by far the greatest donor) for the Special Fund.⁴⁸⁸ As head of the Special Fund Hoffman produced a confidential memorandum entitled "How to Win the Cold War" which stressed that aid to the Third-World via the UN – in line with Hammar skjöld's thinking on the subject – was crucial. There was every reason that the memorandum should be kept confidential; Hoffman wrote that "If economic aid is to play the part it should in the 1960's, we must [...] take the programme out of the Cold War, not because it will not play a significant part in winning that war, but for tactical reasons".⁴⁸⁹ In Africa Hammar skjöld saw the opportunity for the UN to play a new role along these lines.

⁴⁸³ Oral History Barco, pp. 923-924.

⁴⁸⁴ Raucher, Alan R., Paul Hoffman: Architect of Foreign Aid (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985), p. 138.

⁴⁸⁵ See below on contacts with Labouisse regarding Hammar skjöld's ideas on technical assistance to Africa.

⁴⁸⁶ See Orford, Anne, "Hammar skjöld, Economic Thinking and the UN" in Stahn/Melber (eds.).

⁴⁸⁷ Raucher, p. 134.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁴⁸⁹ Confidential Memorandum "How to Win the Cold War", Cordier Papers Box 96. The memorandum is undated but refers to Hoffman having been head of the Special Fund for 20 months so should have been written at some point in early 1961 but reflects his earlier ideas.

C The “Hammarskjöld doctrine for Black Africa”

At the turn of the year 1959-1960 Hammarskjöld undertook a six week odyssey through most of the countries and territories in Africa. As with Hammarskjöld's trip to the Middle East in January 1956 this trip was planned as a proactive way of preparing and bringing in more African work to the UN.⁴⁹⁰ Back in New York, Hammarskjöld met with the new French permanent representative, Armand Bérard, on 2 February. After the meeting, Bérard reported back to Paris: “in one word, M. Hammarskjöld returns persuaded of the grand role that awaits the UN in Africa and that it belongs, he thinks, to the Secretary-General to assume, in an organisation where he has ceased to be the simple executive agent of a now impotent Security Council”.⁴⁹¹ Bérard noted that the financial means would limit the ambition of Hammarskjöld and recommended using the financial weapon to counter Hammarskjöld's projects. Bérard also recommended that a tight contact should be established with Hammarskjöld “in order to orient his actions in a way that is not contrary to our influence or our policy”. In his memoirs, Bérard wrote of this meeting that Hammarskjöld's ideas “if they were sincere, were those of a neophyte, his judgments often erroneous, and his projects hazardous for the role of the organisation in Africa”.⁴⁹² The French press association AFP, reported that there now existed “a Hammarskjöld doctrine for Black Africa”.

The Quai d'Orsay “did not doubt that the ‘missionary spirit’ that seems to animate M. Hammarskjöld was inspired by elevated feelings, but the consequences of it could be serious in the political domain”. Hammarskjöld's idea to send UN representatives to the new African countries was also vividly criticised from a legal point of view: “The Secretary-General does not, like a sovereign, enjoy the right of legation”. This practice “could be interpreted as a will to lay, progressively, the basis for a sort of international government”.⁴⁹³ A phrase in a speech by Hammarskjöld on the “now impotent Security Council” drew strong protests from the French: “The phrase on the Security Council as ‘now impotent’ and the conclusion that he draws for the increased role that he judges to be his cannot but lead to reservations from our side, as much for

⁴⁹⁰ Letter from Cordier to Hammarskjöld 15 January 1960, Cordier Papers, Box 121.

⁴⁹¹ Télégramme d'Armand Bérard à MAE du 2 février 1960, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 1116.

⁴⁹² Bérard, Armand, *L'ONU oui ou non ? 1959-1970* (Paris: Plon 1979), p. 49.

⁴⁹³ Télégramme de MAE à la délégation française à New York 4 février 1960, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 1116.

legal as for political reasons”. Furthermore, the French were astonished by the “categorical judgments, normally so rare in the mouth of such a prudent personality”. After reading Bérard’s report de Gaulle wrote an acid entry in his notebook: “The ambition and vanity of M. Hammarskjöld appears in broad daylight in the interview with our ambassador. Mr. H... does not have any other idea than to replace the European powers in the role that they play in Africa with himself. To sum up, he wants them to nominate him, pay him and give him the means so that he can oust them”.⁴⁹⁴ To Bérard, de Gaulle simply said: “Regarding M. Hammarskjöld, we will not re-elect him”.⁴⁹⁵

Hammarskjöld presented his new ideas at a press conference on 4 February 1960. Hammarskjöld welcomed the political awakening in Africa, but underlined that it faced certain problems. Most African countries did not have “the kind of social grouping, the kind of social classes, from which you can recruit a broad administration and a broad political leadership”. What was needed was “assistance in human terms”, according to Hammarskjöld, “people, experts, technicians, and – why not? – officials”. The UN OPEX scheme provided some possibilities in this respect, but was, Hammarskjöld concluded, “ridiculously modest – in relation to the needs”. Hammarskjöld then explained how the UN was uniquely positioned to provide this as it was “infinitely easier to receive financial assistance and technical assistance by experts and so on through an international body than on a bilateral basis, and it is infinitely easier for them to receive it through an international body of which they are themselves members”.⁴⁹⁶ These were explosive ideas and they did not go down well with the colonial powers. On February 5, Hammarskjöld met with Bérard to reassure him that “all his efforts aimed at supporting the action of France and Britain in the African continent, especially at a moment when they were developing the most generous of policies” and that he hoped to “combine closely his action with [France]”.⁴⁹⁷ Regarding the representatives Hammarskjöld had in mind to send to Africa, he had only meant “to choose as coordinators of the technical aid persons who were not only economists, but also capable of showing a certain political spirit”. Bérard cautioned

⁴⁹⁴ de Gaulle, Charles, *Lettres, notes et carnets : Juin 1958 – Décembre 1960* (Paris: Plon, 1985), pp. 325-326.

⁴⁹⁵ Bérard, p. 52.

⁴⁹⁶ Press conference 4 February 1960, FO371/153646, UN2302/4.

⁴⁹⁷ Télégramme de Bérard à MAE 5 février 1960, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 1116.

Hammar skjöld to “be careful not to give the [great] powers the suspicion that the Secretary-General of the United Nations [is trying to] go outside his rights”.⁴⁹⁸

Dixon also met with Hammar skjöld to draw him out as much as possible on his African ideas, which did not prove difficult. Hammar skjöld had already been “discussing fairly widely around the United Nations with Representatives” and now he delivered “rather over an hour’s monologue” to Dixon.⁴⁹⁹ “Not for the first time”, Dixon reported, “the Secretary-General has been fired by the prospect of a decisive and benevolent impact by the United Nations on a complex new situation which is clearly of the very first importance”. Dixon thought that it “may be that to some extent he [Hammar skjöld] has come to feel that his credit has been over-extended in the Middle East, and that his energies and the prestige of his office could in the immediate future be more rewardingly engaged in the problems of Africa”. Dixon summarised Hammar skjöld’s “African ideas” in the following way:

*“the result of the irresistible tide of African nationalism will be the emergence in the near future of a large number of independent African States. In most of these there will exist in varying degrees dangerous elements of instability which in some cases at any rate could lead to chaos, and even barbarism, and which are in any event likely to provide opportunities for the spread of Communism. In these circumstances there will emerge opportunities and responsibilities for a contribution to stability to which only the United Nations will be able to respond adequately”.*⁵⁰⁰

Hammar skjöld believed that the newly independent countries would be suspicious of all national governments and all former Colonial powers, “however enlightened”. As an alternative to help from the old colonial powers, Hammar skjöld’s “intellectual mind” had constructed a “more or less precise pattern” of how the UN, “through the Organ of the Secretary-General” could influence the political development of Africa. Hammar skjöld’s plan was to establish “in all the new territories of Africa of a United Nations representative of high calibre and sharing the general ideas of the Secretary-General”. This representative would nominally be the head of a technical assistance office, but would be giving the local African leader – Dixon noted that it was clear

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁹ Record of a talk with the Secretary-General on Africa, Memorandum by Dixon 18 February 1960, UN 2302, FO371/153646.

⁵⁰⁰ Letter from Dixon to C.D.W. O’Neill 18 February 1960, UN 2302, FO371/153646.

that Hammarskjöld thought of the new African Governments in terms of personalities – political and economic advice to the degree appropriate for the country concerned. The political influence of the UN representative would, in Hammarskjöld’s thinking, especially be exerted to counter

*“(a) territorial ambitions by one new African State against another;
(b) internal fragmentary tendencies calculated to lead to a breakdown of law and order; and
(c) developments affording an opportunity for the assertion of Soviet or any other foreign dominating influence”*.⁵⁰¹

Hammarskjöld thought that the whole concept would have to be based on “relations of confidence between the Secretary-General and the African leaders. It would thus be based on a relationship between the African States and the Secretary-General personally rather than the United Nations as such”.⁵⁰² This was the way Hammarskjöld loved to influence; the civil servant giving impartial advice to further the national interest. This was the idea that Hammarskjöld had been pursuing all his life; in Sweden as the non-political civil servant; in New York as the impartial advisor of governments; and now as the international civil servant ready to serve the newly independent states in Africa. If Hammarskjöld’s idea of his own role was essentially the same, the problems inherent with this role were also the same. Hammarskjöld assumed that he, and his trusted circle at the UN, could, by impartially weighing the facts, see what was the right course to follow for a newly independent country. As in Sweden, Hammarskjöld assumed that he could serve a higher “common interest” without getting bogged down in politics. Compelling as a thought, this was not a realistic view. In Sweden, Hammarskjöld had also steered a course that was hardly “neutral”, but clearly pro-Western and conservative. In the summing up of his three points (a to c above), Hammarskjöld shows himself as a guardian of the status quo, and an opponent of communism and the Soviet Union. Hammarskjöld’s theory of the impartial international civil servant giving advice to governments failed to take into account situations where there were differing interpretations of what the national interest was. And what if some governments would perceive that their national interest were best served by leftist or even communist policies?

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*

Hammar skjöld's focus on personal relations also served another purpose. Hammar skjöld predicted that most of the newly independent states would be led by strong men and dictators. Sekou Touré was one such strong man who had impressed Hammar skjöld and, in a discussion with Dixon, Hammar skjöld "spoke of Sekou Toure's one party system as typical of political development in the new African countries". Hammar skjöld did not see a direct problem with this, but said that "The Westminster model was not suitable for automatic export to independent African countries, and we must, he thought, accept that the one party system would be, at any rate to begin with, general". If Hammar skjöld admired Touré in early 1960 (his attitude to Touré would change), he had made "plain his distaste for President Nkrumah, his dictatorial methods and territorial ambitions".⁵⁰³ As with Nasser's pan-Arab aspirations, Hammar skjöld felt a strong dislike for Nkrumah's pan-African aspirations that he would refer to as "an African Hitler-Mussolini drive".⁵⁰⁴

Dixon thought that Hammar skjöld was "rather too inclined to try and fit the many diverse problems into one matrix, and to regard them all as susceptible to more or less the same 'school solution'". Hammar skjöld also announced to David Owen, head of UN technical assistance, "I think we have found the practical solution to the post-colonial vacuum in Africa".⁵⁰⁵ In the Secretariat there were also those who felt that there was a naïve view that the UN could deal with any problem, including political problems, in Africa through economic and social development.⁵⁰⁶ De Seynes, who as Under Secretary-General for economic and social affairs was in charge of much of this work later wrote of "our mentality as 'enlightened westerners' devoted to the Third World".⁵⁰⁷

While remarking that Hammar skjöld's ideas appeared in "some respects disturbingly precise", Dixon thought that Hammar skjöld would be "open to influence" and ready to modify his plans. Hammar skjöld was well aware that although he may exert some

⁵⁰³ Record of a talk with the Secretary-General on Africa, Memorandum by Dixon 18 February 1960, UN 2302, FO371/153646.

⁵⁰⁴ Hammar skjöld (Leopoldville) to Cordier, incoming coded cable, 15 August 1960, Dag Hammar skjöld Papers L179:155.

⁵⁰⁵ From an interview with Owen by Urquhart, S-1078-59-1, UN Archives.

⁵⁰⁶ UN Oral History Urquhart, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁰⁷ de Seynes, Philippe, "An Informal Retrospection on Dag Hammar skjöld's Commitment to Economic and Social Development" in Jordan, Robert S., *Dag Hammar skjöld Revisited* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1983), p. 74.

pressure on governments to accept his ideas, “he cannot in the last resort put them into effect unless they have the genuine support of the key governments”. Dixon’s analysis was that Hammarskjöld was now, as was his habit, floating his projects in an ideal form in order to get reactions, many of which Dixon expected him “to absorb into his own thinking”. Dixon also noted that Hammarskjöld had tailored his presentation to his listeners; for instance, he had not told Dixon that he wanted to send a UN representative to Tanganyika before independence, although he had said he planned on doing so to others. Dixon felt that there were a number of “obvious weaknesses” in Hammarskjöld’s plans “including the extra strain it would impose on Mr. Hammarskjöld himself, and the possibility that because of this he would be less able to be useful to us in other connexions”. Dixon also warned of French reactions. Dixon recommended – especially since the ideas were likely “to get a good deal of support” in the UN – that they should be turned to advantage; “our best course would be to seek to influence rather than to discourage his plan”.⁵⁰⁸

In London, Hammarskjöld’s new ideas “caused a good deal of fluttering in the Whitehall dovecote(e/s)”.⁵⁰⁹ From a constitutional perspective, the Foreign Office noted that these new ideas were “in line with the Secretary-General’s conception of his developing role in international affairs. We have kept a close but fairly benevolent eye on the growth of this concept”. The idea of special representatives of the Secretary-General would “be a considerable step in this development and clearly has some dangers”, but it was not a complete novelty and generally, the British view was that Hammarskjöld could “use his staff more or less as he likes as long as he does not put things on too formal a basis and provided he is able to get away with it”.⁵¹⁰ In the Foreign Office, Dixon’s advice to try and influence rather than stop Hammarskjöld’s ideas was accepted as sound advice. Hammarskjöld’s ideas were in line with the tide of African opinion and the British did not want “to put ourselves publicly on the wrong side of this movement of thought”. Several of the points that Hammarskjöld had made in his press conference on February 4 were, if not shared, at least understood, by the officials in the Foreign Office: “Indeed, Africans (like Mr. Hammarskjöld himself) tend to give the United Nations a mystic significance

⁵⁰⁸ Letter Dixon to C.D.W. O’Neill 18 February 1960, UN 2302, FO371/153646.

⁵⁰⁹ Letter J.G. Tahourdin to Harold Beeley 4 March 1960, UN 2302/6, FO 371/153646.

⁵¹⁰ Note by J.G. Tahourdin 4 March 1960, UN 2302/6, FO 371/153646.

beyond the mere sum of its members. They see in membership of it the criterion of independence; and they look to it as a source of uncontaminated aid". Unlike the Africans, however, the British were not content to put all their trust in Hammarskjöld and the UN. While Hammarskjöld had British support, there were more officials than Hammarskjöld working at the UN: "We cannot rely too much upon the magical personality Mr. Hammarskjöld tends to give the United Nations Organisation as a projection of himself. The effect on our interests of a United Nations servant in an African country would depend, not only on his calibre, but on his attitude and his nationality. A high-calibre Egyptian could, for example, be a disaster. There is a large weight of opinion in the United Nations emotionally unsympathetic to the Colonial Powers; some, at least, of Mr. Hammarskjöld's disguised United Nations Ambassadors in the African States would reflect this outlook and we should get nothing or worse from them in exchange for our share of their salaries."

The British also raised the fundamental question of if, and if so how, a member of the UN Secretariat, be it the Secretary-General or a Special Representative, could perform political tasks such as the ones enumerated by Hammarskjöld to Dixon ("(a) territorial ambitions by one new African State against another; (b) internal fragmentary tendencies calculated to lead to a breakdown of law and order; and (c) developments affording an opportunity for the assertion of Soviet or any other foreign dominating influence").⁵¹¹ The British questioned how any UN representative could "realistically" go about giving political advice according to these three points. If they exerted an influence against Soviet influence (c), this "would mean him [the UN Special Representative] taking sides to an extent which would scarcely be compatible with his United Nations function". The same was true for other political advice: "And who would decide on the policy to be followed on the various issues on which advice would be given under paragraphs 4 (a) and (b), in which the interests of different States or groups of States might be set against one another (as in (a)), or different theories about the internal organisation of a country might be canvassed (as in b)?" "It seems likely that the United Nations representative would either be ineffective or, if not, would be assuming functions which go beyond those properly exercised by the United Nations Secretariat and indeed edge the concept of world government".⁵¹²

⁵¹¹ Letter Dixon to C.D.W. O'Neill 18 February 1960, UN 2302, FO371/153646.

⁵¹² Minutes 2 March 1960, UN 2302/6, FO 371/153646.

On March 9, Dixon was treated to another long monologue from Hammarskjöld. “Although in his own mind Mr. Hammarskjöld is evidently making adjustments to his original ideas to take account of the difficulties which have been put to him as a result of his consultations with ourselves and others”, Dixon reported, “the fact remains that the general impression has spread around the United Nations [...] that the Secretary-General intends to establish Representatives in Africa with political functions”. He lamented – “as you know it is by no means easy to do one’s full share of the talking in discussion with Hammarskjöld, especially on questions such as this in which he is passionately interested”. Nevertheless Dixon hoped that he had got across some critical points though he was not entirely satisfied that Hammarskjöld had taken them on board. Dixon’s main point was that in accepting a degree of responsibility for influencing both political and economic developments in African territories, the Secretary-General and the UN “may incur odium if things do not turn out entirely satisfactorily in either sphere”. There was also a substantial risk that a UN representative with the sort of role Hammarskjöld envisaged would get “involved in the international relations of the countries concerned, and thus be subject to international pressure”. Dixon pointed to the discussions regarding US versus Soviet financing of the Aswan Dam in Egypt, and noted that if there had been a UN representative advising the Egyptians at the time, he would no doubt have come under substantial pressure from both sides. Hammarskjöld shrugged this off and simply “remarked that this sort of hazard was inevitable”. Hammarskjöld’s remarks did not calm Dixon. In words that would soon ring prophetic, Dixon reported after the meeting that Hammarskjöld “agreed that all these risks existed and said that he had calculated them. However he showed no disposition to go more deeply into these matters, and I felt some uneasiness that, although he has accepted intellectually that there are these problems, he may not have fully grasped their gravity and may perhaps over-estimate his own capacity to overcome them”. But there was also substantial support for Hammarskjöld. It was evident to Dixon that Hammarskjöld felt that he had the general support of the Americans; Hammarskjöld also told Dixon that the US Secretary of State Christian Herter had told him in a meeting on March 8 that Hammarskjöld’s initiatives were “the minimum that should be done”. The British also noted that Hammarskjöld’s ideas probably had the support of a majority of the

African states.⁵¹³ On 5 December 1959 the General Assembly had also adopted a resolution that “invited” the Secretary-General to give urgent consideration to requests from newly independent states for “high-level technical experts” and “all other forms of technical aid”.⁵¹⁴ Hammarskjöld was aware of this and he had two purposes for discussing his African ideas widely. Firstly, Hammarskjöld wanted to get feedback from the great powers so that he could attenuate any proposals that were likely to prove completely unpalatable. Secondly, Hammarskjöld was building support for his ideas among the members of the Afro-Asian bloc, sowing the seeds for a majority in the General Assembly, and making it harder for the great powers to refuse his ideas outright. In conclusion, Dixon wrote that he still thought “that the Secretary-General’s ideas could be turned to good effect, and that we should be ready to support and encourage him but I am rather disturbed that he may be underestimating the depth of the waters into which he is moving”.⁵¹⁵

The French view under de Gaulle was that the Secretary-General was merely a servant of the member states and should not act without being asked to do so: “It was not proper that he should take initiatives of this kind”. This French “purist” (as the British called it) view of Hammarskjöld’s role no longer held water according to the British as Hammarskjöld had come to their aid so many times in the Middle East that they could “hardly adopt the attitude that he should not speak until he is spoken to”.⁵¹⁶ Despite official French fears of Soviet subversion in Africa, France moved somewhat closer to the Soviet Union at the UN in its critique of the “ambitions” of Hammarskjöld. Kosciuzko-Morizet, the French delegate at the Trusteeship Council, reported to Paris that his Soviet colleague had told him of his fear of Hammarskjöld’s “ambitions” and the American influence over the UN. The Americans were using the UN as a cover for their economic penetration of the African continent at the expense of European capital, an idea that appealed to the French. Kosciuzko-Morizet wrote that he would not accept that, “under the pretext of technical assistance and the cover of international officials the trusteeship of the old powers will be substituted with the trusteeship of the United Nations. The Americans, who are aware that their dollar

⁵¹³ Letter A.R. Moore to J.G. Tahourdin 14 March 1960, UN 2302/8A, FO371/153647. Bérard reiterated these views to Dixon, who had been ill with the flu, the next day, letter Dixon to J.G. Tahourdin 15 March 1960, UN2302/8C, FO371/153647.

⁵¹⁴ General Assembly resolution 1215 (XIV).

⁵¹⁵ Letter Dixon to O’Neill 11 March 1960, UN 2302/8, FO371/153647.

⁵¹⁶ Letter A.R. Moore to J.G. Tahourdin 14 March 1960, UN 2302/8A, FO371/153647.

diplomacy is too conspicuous and unacceptable to the Africans, want to use the United Nations as a screen and this goes hand in hand with the desire of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to play an increased role with the newly independent states”.⁵¹⁷ This suspicion of UN involvement as a cover for the American penetration of Africa would linger and become the focus of public Soviet critiques of Hammarskjöld in the near future.

The challenges facing the political activities of the Secretary-General and his special representatives that Dixon feared materialised almost immediately on the independence of Belgian Congo.

⁵¹⁷ Télégramme de Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet à MAE 9 mai 1960, Archives MAE, AD, NUOI, 1116.

Part III: The Problems of the Role

Chapter 5: “Gamesmanship”: The Congo Crisis until September 1960

The Congo crisis saw the pinnacle of an independent political role for the Secretary-General and is often interpreted as the first Cold War crisis in Africa.⁵¹⁸ The Cold War conflict partly concealed the very real conflict between a newly independent country and its former colonial master struggling to keep its socio-economic privileges in the old colony.⁵¹⁹ To Hammarskjöld the Cold War screen served a useful purpose to cover the colonialist actions in his attempts to preserve the alliance of the Americans, the West Europeans and the Afro-Asians that he had built his position on. Until the middle of September 1960, Hammarskjöld managed to control the Congo crisis at the Security Council in New York, carefully balancing between the demands of the West and the Afro-Asians with the full backing of the Americans, against an increasingly hostile Soviet Union. On the ground in the Congo, Hammarskjöld managed to foil the Congolese government when it interfered with his plans and he was on the verge of turning the Congo into a *de facto* UN trusteeship.

A “The Most Advanced and Sophisticated Experiment in International Cooperation Ever Attempted”⁵²⁰

A.1 UN action to “keep bears out of Congo caviar”

Hammarskjöld had identified Belgian Congo as a country where the UN would have an important role. Already before independence Hammarskjöld sent a “mission of information and observation”⁵²¹ and dispatched Sture Linnér to Leopoldville as UN resident technical representative. Ralph Bunche was sent to attend the independence celebrations on 30 June 1960 as the Secretary-General’s representative.⁵²² Independence, when the Belgian government belatedly opted for it, was only meant to be political independence; the socio-economic dependence on Belgium, it was

⁵¹⁸ Most studies of the Congo crisis follows this interpretation to some extent, a classic example is Kalb, and a recent example is Namikas.

⁵¹⁹ A study that focuses on this aspect and its relation to the Cold War is Kent.

⁵²⁰ Lippmann, Walter, “The Congo and the UN” in *The Michigan Daily* 22 July 1960.

⁵²¹ Coded cable from de Seynes to Hammarskjöld, 17 June 1960, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:155.

⁵²² Hoskyns, Catherine, *The Congo Since Independence: January 1960-December 1961* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 112-113.

assumed, would continue.⁵²³ When Patrice Lumumba won a surprise victory in the first legislative elections organised ahead of independence it was a sign that the Congolese might not quietly accept the socio-economic *status quo*.⁵²⁴ A mutiny broke out on 5 July and thousands of Belgians fled as rioting, looting, attacks on whites and rapes were reported. Lumumba himself was attacked in an attempt to negotiate with the mutinous soldiers before he and Kasavubu reached an agreement with the soldiers on 8 July.⁵²⁵ On 9 July, the Belgians announced that they were sending 1,200 troops to reinforce the 2,500 Belgian troops already in the Congo.⁵²⁶

The next day, on 10 July, Kasavubu and Lumumba, made an oral request for UN assistance to Bunche. The idea to ask the UN for assistance had come from the American ambassador, Clare Timberlake whom they had approached initially for US assistance. Timberlake realised that it was unacceptable for the old colonial power to send in troops without even asking the Congolese government, and feared this might provoke the Soviets to come to the aid of the Congolese.⁵²⁷ Timberlake did not have a clear idea about what the UN should do in the Congo,⁵²⁸ but thought that a request for UN assistance “should keep bears out of the Congo caviar”. Timberlake foresaw the possibility of a Soviet veto at the Security Council, as any resolution the Americans would want to sponsor would inevitably be Belgian-friendly, but assumed that the General Assembly could then step in.⁵²⁹ Bunche reported to Hammarskjöld that the “situation clearly demands some urgent and possibly unprecedented action”.⁵³⁰

Eisenhower was firmly opposed to any US unilateral action in the Congo and wanted the UN, in close coordination with the US, to take the lead. The Americans were

⁵²³ See Kent, pp. 10-11; and Gibbs, David N., *The political economy of Third World intervention: mines, money, and U.S. policy in the Congo crisis* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), p. 78.

⁵²⁴ For a detailed account of the Belgian attempts to prevent a Lumumba government and the consequences on the relationship between Kasavubu and Lumumba see Kent, pp. 14-15.

⁵²⁵ Kent, p. 16.

⁵²⁶ According to an agreement between Belgium and the Congo that had been signed but not ratified, the Belgians had a right to retain Kitona and Kamina as military bases.

⁵²⁷ Kent, p. 16.

⁵²⁸ US Ambassador Timberlake “variously mentioned UN force replacing Belgian troops, UN commander of Congo troops, UN advisor to Commander of troops and UN Commander of Belgian troops until they were replaced. He did not mention UN military observers or technicians”, Coded cable from Bunche to Hammarskjöld 10 July 1960, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:155.

⁵²⁹ Telegram from Brussels to State 10 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV. This telegram was sent via Brussels as Timberlake could not communicate directly with Washington due to the situation in Leopoldville.

⁵³⁰ Coded cable from Bunche to Hammarskjöld, 10 July 1960, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:155.

faced with several dilemmas. The US could no longer control the UN as they had during the Korean War when they controlled a majority in the Security Council as well as the General Assembly. Hammarskjöld had, however, offered a solution to this in his promotion of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat. The Americans were convinced of Hammarskjöld's pro-Western and anti-communist stance and the Secretary-General could therefore be seen as a trusted partner of the Americans. At one point Eisenhower even asked why they had to bother with the Security Council, could not Hammarskjöld "just go out there and do his thing".⁵³¹ Secondly, the Americans wanted to avoid a situation, where they had to take sides between their colonial European Nato-allies and the anti-colonial countries in the Third World. A third important driving force in the foreign policy of the Eisenhower administration that played a role in the Congo was the promotion of liberal capitalism. To many countries in the Third World, the planned economies of the Soviet Union and China were alluring. Especially if capitalism was tainted by colonialism, as in the socio-economic *status quo* that the Belgians and their European allies were trying to uphold in the Congo. Finally, the American choice to rely on the UN was also motivated by the upcoming elections. As Lodge told Dixon: "it had been absolutely essential to move the United Nations into the situation; otherwise there might have been another Korea, with American forces operating in Africa, which would have been intolerable just before the presidential elections".⁵³² This reason was extra compelling to Lodge, who would soon leave the UN to join Nixon's ticket as candidate for Vice President. On 11 July, Lodge was instructed to inform Hammarskjöld and Cordier that the US saw an important role for the UN in the Congo and that the Secretary-General "should take [the] lead in formulation and implementation UN actions in Congo".⁵³³

By 11 July the situation had deteriorated in the Congo and the resource rich province Katanga, which provided 47 per cent of income from taxation in the Congo,⁵³⁴ declared its independence. The Katangan economy was dominated by the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga* that controlled the mining sector.⁵³⁵ *Union Minière* backed

⁵³¹ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between Eisenhower and Herter 12 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵³² Telegram from Leopoldville (Scott) to FO 1 August 1960, No 400, JB2251/115, FO 371/146774.

⁵³³ Telegram State to USUN 11 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵³⁴ As taxes paid on revenue earned in Katanga, Kent, p. 8.

⁵³⁵ The mining industry in Katanga was controlled by *Union Minière du Haut Katanga* and various associated companies created by it or by the *Société Générale*.

the political party *Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga* (CONAKAT), which, led by Moïse Tshombe, pursued secessionist policies with the backing of white settlers. CONAKAT won a slender majority in the provincial elections, due to a technicality, but its main opponent, the *Association des Balubas du Katanga* (BALUBAKAT) won a majority of the popular vote.⁵³⁶ BALUBAKAT boycotted the provincial legislature, leaving Tshombe in complete control. But BALUBAKAT continued to dominate northern Katanga and it was only with the arrival of Belgian troops and European mercenaries in the Katanga gendarmerie that Tshombe managed to control the unruly province. Although the Belgian government did not officially support Katangan independence, the secession was backed by Belgian and Western European interests and made possible by the active support of Belgian troops.⁵³⁷

The Belgian involvement in destabilising the Congo became obvious with the secession of Katanga and led Kasavubu and Lumumba to send a new appeal to Bunche, this time in a very different tone. Instead of requesting UN technical assistance, as in the first request, the second request asked for UN “military assistance” to protect the Congo specifically against Belgian aggression. The request denounced the “colonialist machinations” that had led to the secession of Katanga and set out that the “essential purpose of the requested military aid is to protect the national territory of the Congo against the present external aggression which is a threat to international peace”. If the UN would not lend such military assistance, the letter continued, the government of the Congo would “be obliged to appeal to the Bandung Treaty Powers”.⁵³⁸ The Congolese government was no longer asking for assistance to uphold law and order, it was asking the UN for military assistance against the Belgians and to end the secession in Katanga.

Hammarškjöld decided to “ignore the part indicating they want the troops to act against Belgian aggression”.⁵³⁹ Any military action against the Belgians would have been stillborn in the Security Council, vetoed by the French, the British and the Americans. It would also have risked a situation where the Third World might side

⁵³⁶ Gibbs, p. 84.

⁵³⁷ Kent, p. 18.

⁵³⁸ Letter from Kasavubu and Lumumba to Hammarškjöld 13 July 1960, published as UN Document S/4382.

⁵³⁹ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between Eisenhower and Herter 13 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

with the Soviet Bloc against the West. Hammarskjöld had no mind to lend UN military assistance to the Congo government on any terms other than his own. The fact that Hammarskjöld wittingly ignored what the Government of the Congo had specifically asked for and the fact that the UN operation that Hammarskjöld envisaged was completely different from the one that the Congolese government had requested would soon trigger a set of events that would lead to a rupture between Hammarskjöld and Lumumba.

Hammarskjöld called the Security Council meeting on 13 July on his own initiative under Article 99 of the UN Charter – the first and only time Article 99 has been used. This brought the Congo operation into an intimate connection with the Secretary-General from the outset. Hammarskjöld realised that it would be difficult to steer a resolution through the Security Council, and he had prepared a plan B, as he cabled to Bunche: “If vetoed, I will see to it that proposal is carried through to special emergency session [of the General Assembly] where I have no doubt about majority”.⁵⁴⁰

Hammarskjöld was now faced with walking the tightrope of a policy that was acceptable both to the Western European colonial countries and the Afro-Asians in order to avoid a rift between the two where the Soviets would support the Afro-Asians against the West. Afro-Asian support was also important as the Soviets would not want to vote against the Afro-Asians. The British and the French were sympathetic towards the Belgians, and the British, who had major economic interests in Katanga, were naturally interested in keeping their economic privileges in the Congo. The Afro-Asians were critical of the Belgians and any course of action that smelled of supporting colonialism or limiting the newly gained independence of the Congo. The Americans tried to balance between the two.⁵⁴¹ In this they were close to Hammarskjöld’s position and the US instructions for the Security Council meeting on the evening of 13 July was that the US should give “every feasible support” to Hammarskjöld, while not appearing to take a lead. If Hammarskjöld wanted to “down play US involvement for obvious reasons” this was fully understood.⁵⁴² Some

⁵⁴⁰ Cable from Hammarskjöld to Bunche, 13 July 1960, UN Archives Series 217 Box 1 File 5.

⁵⁴¹ Although Barco, the deputy at USUN said that the Afro-Asians were essentially correct to view “the heart of the matter as a neo-colonial matter, economic imperialism”, Barco, p. 867.

⁵⁴² Telegram State to USUN 13 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

American diplomats were sceptical of a policy that they would describe as a “carte blanche” without restrictions to Hammarskjöld, in effect saying: “Whatever you say, we will support”.⁵⁴³

Hammarskjöld had drafted a resolution with the mandate he wanted and asked the moderate Tunisian permanent representative Mongi Slim, who would become an important ally, to present it as this would make it harder for the Soviets to veto it.⁵⁴⁴ Slim’s help was important as the Tunisians coordinated closely with the African states and were seen as the African representative on the Security Council. The British and the French, supported by the Italians, directed their efforts at deleting or amending the first operative paragraph of the resolution that called for a Belgian withdrawal. Lodge would have preferred to delete this paragraph as well, but Hammarskjöld convinced him that Slim would need this paragraph to secure his role as representative of all Africans in the Security Council.⁵⁴⁵ Slim thought that this formula was the “point of equilibrium” where both the West and the Afro-Asians could support the resolution.⁵⁴⁶ In the debate at the Security Council, Slim also made clear that the text was left intentionally imprecise to reach a compromise.⁵⁴⁷ Presented as an Afro-Asian resolution, although drafted by Hammarskjöld, it was “extremely difficult” for the Soviets to veto the resolution for being too soft without angering the African states.⁵⁴⁸ The operative parts of the resolution read as follows:

- “1. *Calls upon* the Government of Belgium to withdraw its troops from the territory of the Republic of the Congo;
2. *Decides* to authorize the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the Government of the Republic of the Congo, to provide the Government with such military assistance as may be necessary until, through the efforts of the Congolese Government with the technical assistance of the United Nations, the national security forces may be able, in the opinion of the Government, to meet fully their tasks;

⁵⁴³ Oral History Barco, pp. 833-835.

⁵⁴⁴ Memorandum of telephone conversation between Herter and Eisenhower 13 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁴⁵ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Herter and Lodge 14 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁴⁶ UKUN (Beeley) to FO, 14 July 1960, No 477, JB2251/13, FO 371/146769.

⁵⁴⁷ Hoskyns, p. 117.

⁵⁴⁸ Kalb, p. 13.

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council as appropriate.”⁵⁴⁹

The Soviet delegate then proposed three amendments: that Belgian aggression should be condemned; that the Belgian withdrawal should be “immediate”; and that it should be specified that African nations were to provide the troops for the UN force. The three amendments were defeated and the resolution adopted. Lodge reported that the Security Council had “done its part and now we don’t need a special session of the GA and we really did much better than we had a right to expect”; the resolution was “not perfect but it gives [Hammarškjöld] what he wants”.⁵⁵⁰ Hammarškjöld would later refer to it as a “political miracle”.⁵⁵¹

Although the Belgians and their supporters would interpret it differently, the first operative paragraph was unequivocal in its call for the Belgians to withdraw. The second operative paragraph, on the other hand, was vague in that it left it to the Secretary-General to set up the UN operation in the Congo. It was, however, unambiguous in its stress on the relation between the UN operation and the Congolese government. The Secretary-General should act “in consultation with the Government” and “provide the Government with such military assistance as may be necessary”. Ambiguity would be the hallmark of the Security Council resolutions during the early months of the Congo crisis and Hammarškjöld would exploit this to push through his own policies for UN action. Hammarškjöld later told Dayal that a “new course in international cooperation was being chartered that would expand the frontiers of the Organization’s responsibilities and functions and greatly stimulate its future growth”.⁵⁵² To the West’s objectives of keeping the Soviets out and upholding the socio-economic *status quo*, Hammarškjöld added a third objective: to expand the role of the UN and its Secretary-General, which would lead to policy and actions of the UN in the Congo being influenced by the logics of the UN as an organisation seeking to expand its role and influence. A success for the UN operation in the Congo became a goal in and of itself; but what was good for the UN was not necessarily good for the

⁵⁴⁹ Security Council resolution S/4387 of 14 July 1960.

⁵⁵⁰ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Herter and Lodge 14 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁵¹ Hammarškjöld to de Seynes, outgoing code cable, 19 July 1960, Dag Hammarškjöld Papers L179:155.

⁵⁵² Dayal, Rajeshwar, *Mission for Hammarškjöld: The Congo Crisis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 12.

Congo. Later on, Hammarskjöld wrote to Cordier regarding complaints that the UN was not consulting the government: “Of course we can satisfy them by lip service to consultation even in cases where Govt. is utterly incompetent to judge or utterly incapable of acting but where the ultimate responsibility must be ours as we cannot, with open eyes, in order to placate Govt., do things we know to be harmful to best interests of the Congo.” Hammarskjöld also added that the UN “lives under its own laws and may act for purposes which override any single national consideration”.⁵⁵³

A.2 ONUC and the “Congo Club”

The same day that the Security Council resolution was adopted Kasavubu and Lumumba sent a message to Khrushchev in which they asked him to follow the situation carefully as “Soviet help might be required if the Western powers failed to stop aggression”.⁵⁵⁴ From the outset, one of the major objectives of ONUC was to prevent Soviet interference in the Congo, just as it had been a main objective for Hammarskjöld’s ideas on a UN role in Africa in general – Hammarskjöld’s slogan “keeping the Cold War out of the Congo” meant keeping the Soviets out of the Congo. As the British Ambassador to the UN would write later, looking back on the first months of the UN operation in the Congo: “[Hammarskjöld’s] fundamental political aim [...] was to keep out the Great Powers, by which he really meant the Soviet Union. It is because this coincides with British policy and interests that we have been able to support [Hammarskjöld]”.⁵⁵⁵

Hammarskjöld had presented a set of principles according to which ONUC should be set up during the debate in the Security Council. First, Hammarskjöld would ask African countries to contribute troops, then other countries who were not permanent members of the Security Council.⁵⁵⁶ The African troops were to avoid any taint of colonialism, and non-permanent members of the Security Council was, as at Suez, a principle used to keep Soviet troops out. Both Hammarskjöld and the Americans were clear that no Soviet Bloc troops would be used in the Congo. Instead a token

⁵⁵³ Cable from Hammarskjöld to Cordier, 1 September 1960, UN Archives, Series 217, Box 1, File 13.

⁵⁵⁴ Kent, p. 19.

⁵⁵⁵ UKUN (Dean) to FO 14 October 1961, JB 2251/155, FO371/155079.

⁵⁵⁶ Kalb, p. 18.

Yugoslav force was acceptable to “neutralize” the Soviets.⁵⁵⁷ Hammarskjöld predicted from the outset that differences over UN policies might occur with some of the most enthusiastic troop contributors. Hammarskjöld therefore tried to decline the offers of troops from Guinea altogether and then delayed their arrival.⁵⁵⁸ Hammarskjöld and his military commander then made sure that the Guineans were sent to a “remote jungle region” so as not to be a possible power factor in the capital.⁵⁵⁹ Hammarskjöld also declined an offer from Guinea to provide political advisors, stating as an excuse that they were not needed, but told Lodge in private that Guinean political advisors would have been “impossible”.⁵⁶⁰ The Guinean, Ghanaian and United Arab Republic (UAR) contingents were highly suspicious to Hammarskjöld, who referred to them as “flags of convenience” for potential African nationalist or Soviet (or a combination of both) interests and therefore likely to have an equivocal loyalty to the UN.⁵⁶¹ As at Suez, the Americans provided the bulk of the logistical support for the UN operation.

If Hammarskjöld could not be too picky when it came to troop providing countries, he could choose the top level of UN officials. For the head of the UN force Hammarskjöld selected his countryman Major General Carl von Horn, who was “uncompromisingly pro-Western and anti-Communist”.⁵⁶² Bunche was Hammarskjöld’s Special Representative and in charge of ONUC, although Bunche was given little leeway and reported constantly to Hammarskjöld on the smallest things.⁵⁶³ Hammarskjöld’s right hand man in New York, Andrew Cordier – who was to play a crucial role in the Congo crisis – was also American. A third American, Heinrich “Heinz” Wieschhoff, completed the triumvirate of Hammarskjöld’s closest advisors during the Congo crisis. According to Barco, who worked closely with them, all three appeared to share Hammarskjöld’s views and there was never any real difference of opinion in the group, although Wieschhoff sometimes appeared to want

⁵⁵⁷ “Obviously, we are strongly opposed to Soviet bloc states providing any troops, and we know that SYG fully cognizant this point. We can appreciate SYG desire bring in some Yugoslavs, as he did in UNEF in order neutralize Soviets in this regard.” Telegram State to USUN 13 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁵⁸ Telegram USUN to State 18 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV; see also Telegram from Conakry (Hugh Jones) to FO, 20 July 1960, No. 267, JB2251/63, FO 371/146772.

⁵⁵⁹ Kalb, p. 23.

⁵⁶⁰ Kalb, p. 18.

⁵⁶¹ Memorandum by Hammarskjöld 4 September 1960, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:141.

⁵⁶² Kalb, p. 22.

⁵⁶³ According to FT Liu (Bunche’s assistant and translator), UN Oral History Liu, pp. 11-12.

to go further than the others.⁵⁶⁴ By 1960, Wieschhoff was Hammarskjöld's chief African adviser and Hammarskjöld referred to him as his "grey eminence".⁵⁶⁵ Wieschhoff had been deputy to Bunche when he headed the Trusteeship department but was now the Director of the Department for Political and Security Council Affairs, and therefore nominally the deputy of the Soviet Under Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs. To Hammarskjöld, theoretical hierarchies mattered little and his Soviet superior was not allowed access to the Congo files, which were instead handled by his Wieschhoff.⁵⁶⁶ During the Second World War Wieschhoff had – as had Bunche and Cordier – worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a precursor to the CIA, and for the State Department. To this triumvirate was added a fourth American, Henry Labouisse, Hammarskjöld's friend from the days of the Marshall Plan, who was borrowed from the World Bank.⁵⁶⁷ This was the inner circle of the "Congo Club", as the small group that ran ONUC from New York was nicknamed.⁵⁶⁸ To this inner circle was added Sir Alexander MacFarquhar⁵⁶⁹, the Secretary-General's adviser for civilian operations in the Congo, Indarjit Rikhye, the Secretary-General's adviser for military operations, and Philippe de Seynes, who worked with the financial aspects of the Congo operation. This was the full list of the Congo Club from the beginning.⁵⁷⁰ Later, after criticism, the Congo Club was expanded to take in more members and a greater geographic diversity, but this was a watered down version and at these meetings Cordier and Wieschhoff tended to say very little; they remained, however, Hammarskjöld's closest advisers, but their counsel was for an intimate circle only.⁵⁷¹ It was hardly surprising that this

⁵⁶⁴ Oral History Barco, p. 824.

⁵⁶⁵ O'Brien, Conor Cruise, *To Katanga and Back a U.N. Case History* (London: Hutchinson, 1962), p. 47.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵⁶⁷ Letter from Hammarskjöld to Eugene Black, 5 September 1960, Henry R. Labouisse Papers, Series 2, Box 12, Princeton University Library. This letter also provides a description of the respective roles of the members of the Congo Club.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.* See also distribution lists for the coded cables on Congo in the UN Archives that confirm this as cables always included Cordier, Bunche, Wieschhoff, Labouisse and Wachtmeister (Hammarskjöld's personal assistant).

⁵⁶⁹ MacFarquhar was a British citizen who had made his career in the Indian Civil Service before joining the UN where he had worked in Bangkok before being called to New York as the Secretary-General's adviser for civilian operations in the Congo.

⁵⁷⁰ See e.g. Memorandum by Hammarskjöld, 4 September 1960, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:141, that mentions "a meeting of the whole group" with these present (except Cordier who was on his way to the Congo at that moment). According to Rikhye the group included Cordier, Wieschhoff, Bunche, MacFarquhar and himself. However, Rikhye spent most of his time in Leopoldville and was therefore not part of the daily meetings of the "Congo club". See Rikhye, Indarjit, *Military Adviser to the Secretary-General U.N. Peacekeeping and the Congo Crisis* (London: Hurst & Company, 1993), p. 19.

⁵⁷¹ O'Brien, p. 53-54.

state of affairs did not commend the neutrality of the operation to the Soviets and other critical observers.

The relations between Cordier and the State Department were very close. It is, however, important to not misunderstand the nature of these relations.⁵⁷² The Secretariat, in order to function, must have close contacts with member states and it is only natural that a member of the Secretariat will be expected to have privileged contacts with his government, which does not mean acting on the orders of that government. Nothing says that the Secretariat should not share information and work closely with member states, and especially members of the Security Council in a Security Council mandated operation. The problem arises when we compare with the Soviets. It can hardly be considered correct for the Secretariat to have the intimate relationship that Cordier had with the State Department with one government, but not with others. The problem also arises when the Secretariat attempts to be something else than the member states and have an independent political role, then it becomes problematic that they are discussing and outlining that policy with some member state and not others. From the beginning, Hammarskjöld geared the whole UN operation in the Congo in an anti-Soviet and pro-Western way. As UN policy was anti-Soviet, this also explains the reluctance to share UN documents with Soviet members of the UN.

B Hammarskjöld Against Lumumba

B.1 "Guarantees of Western interests"

The different views of the role of the UN in the Congo came to the fore as soon as the first troops arrived in Leopoldville. "Bunche was now finding his dealings with Lumumba, who had a totally wrong notion of the role of the UN troops, increasingly difficult", Hammarskjöld's military adviser, Rikhye wrote.⁵⁷³ If Lumumba's idea of the role of the UN was "totally wrong" it is worth considering if the UN should even have stayed in the country as it was there on the invitation of the Congolese

⁵⁷² See e.g. Gibbs, David N., "The United Nations, International Peacekeeping and the Question of 'Impartiality': Revisiting the Congo Operation of 1960", in *Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 38, No. 3 (Sep., 2000), pp. 359-382, who criticises Hammarskjöld for sharing documents with the Americans as a breach of impartiality in itself.

⁵⁷³ Rikhye, p. 8.

government and mandated to work in close cooperation with the government.⁵⁷⁴ On 18 July, four days after the Security Council resolution, Hammarskjöld remarked to the Americans that “this is first time UN has had to assist country where it had no government and whole UN program is going ahead without Govt of Congo approval in any clear-cut form”. Hammarskjöld did not feel he had to pay attention to Lumumba’s government. Instead Hammarskjöld acted without consulting the Congo government, in direct contradiction of the second operative paragraph of resolution 143. The Americans noted that Hammarskjöld did not seem daunted by the fact that there was no consent from the government “and in fact appears intrigued by creative role thrust upon the UN”. Hammarskjöld also held a low opinion of the Prime Minister Lumumba, who, in Hammarskjöld’s opinion was “not very strong and probably will not last”.⁵⁷⁵

Hammarskjöld’s views also differed starkly from those of the Congolese government regarding how to deal with the secession in Katanga. Already on 18 July, he had spelt out his strategy towards Katanga to the Americans and the British. Hammarskjöld’s “general tactic will be that he will deal directly with Tshombe and by implication recognize his importance and at same time trade that recognition for permission have troops enter Katanga”. Hammarskjöld thought that the problem would go away once UN troops were installed in Katanga, as Tshombe’s efforts to secede would then “likely lose their footing”, prompting Tshombe to seek a reconciliation with the central government. Hammarskjöld also “emphasized he does not wish UN action to have effect of artificially bolstering Lumumba”.⁵⁷⁶ The British had also been adamant that Hammarskjöld should not try and help the central government to regain Katanga. Hammarskjöld replied, both in public, commenting on the resolution of 14 July, and privately to the British, that the UN force “would not in any way interfere in internal political or constitutional issues”, a euphemism for not interfering with Katanga.⁵⁷⁷ The British objective, was “to see achieved a settlement between the Katanga and the Central Government which preserves Katanga’s rights as a province and offers

⁵⁷⁴ This can be contrasted to the meticulous concerns regarding Egyptian approval of all aspects of the UNEF in Hammarskjöld’s negotiations with Nasser at the time of the Suez crisis in 1956.

⁵⁷⁵ Telegram USUN to State 18 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁷⁶ Telegram USUN to State 18 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁷⁷ Telegram from FO to UKUN, 14 July 1960, No 845 JB2251/12, FO 371/146769 and Telegram from UKUN (Beeley) to FO, 14 July 1960, No 482, JB2251/15, FO 371/146769.

guarantees of Western interests there”.⁵⁷⁸ In other words, to keep the socio-economic *status quo*. Hammarskjöld reassured the British that his “long-term objectives were identical” in this regard.⁵⁷⁹ Both Britain and France abstained (the French also warned Hammarskjöld they would follow developments closely⁵⁸⁰) on the resolution and Hammarskjöld’s first priority was to convince them that he would implement the resolution in accordance with their preferences.

In the evening of 17 July Kasavubu and Lumumba, as the Belgians showed no signs of withdrawing despite the arrival of UN troops, presented Bunche with an ultimatum that if the Belgians had not left the Congo by 19 July they would ask the Soviets for help. This ultimatum and other instances of the central government asking for help from other quarters than the UN has often been interpreted as proof that Lumumba was erratic, or held communist sympathies, or both. However, it fits in perfectly with the logic pursued by Kasavubu and Lumumba. To them, the overriding goal was to achieve full independence as a truly sovereign nation; the two main objectives to do so were to get the Belgians out and end the Katangan secession. It was to deal with these two problems that they had asked for UN assistance. The first appeal had been to the Americans, who had in turn persuaded them to turn to the UN. But the UN quickly showed that it had objectives that were not the same as those of the Congolese government in its willingness to ignore the Belgians and instead focus on exclusive multilateral assistance.

B.2 Exclusive Multilateral Assistance or a UN trusteeship?

Already before independence Hammarskjöld had seen the Congo as an opportunity to implement his ideas for a large technical assistance scheme for the Congo.⁵⁸¹ He now argued for UN exclusive technical assistance to the Congo partly as a way to prevent Soviet technical assistance, unless it was given via the UN. Exclusive UN technical assistance was, however, not something the Congolese government had ever asked for, nor was it mentioned in the Security Council resolution. The Americans backed Hammarskjöld’s plans for exclusive UN assistance and suggested that the UN should

⁵⁷⁸ Telegram from FO to UKUN 18 July 1960, No 916, JB2251/32, FO 371/146770.

⁵⁷⁹ UKUN (Beeley) to FO, 19 July 1960, No 519, JB2251/46, FO 371/146771.

⁵⁸⁰ Note by Dag Hammarskjöld 14 July 1960, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:141.

⁵⁸¹ Cable from de Seynes to Hammarskjöld, 17 June 1960, UN Archives, Series 217, Box 1, File 1.

enter into an agreement with the Congo “giving it the exclusive right to furnish all necessary technicians” to which the UN agreed. As a corollary to this, a group had been set up in the State Department that had “spotted all the key places in the Government of the Congo in which we would prefer not to have Soviet technicians placed. We will try to have our own technicians in these positions or at least prevent their being filled by Soviet technicians.”⁵⁸² The reason for this was that “Western-oriented or at least neutral Congo extremely important in Cold War”.⁵⁸³

The Congolese Government was not interested in exclusive UN technical assistance and limiting Soviet influence. To Lumumba technical assistance would not be a problem: the Congo held enormous riches and there would always be foreigners willing to help the Congolese extract these. (To Lumumba there was “no difference fundamentally between Russians and Americans since both would come to Congo to exploit it”.⁵⁸⁴) Lumumba would welcome whoever wanted to work with the Congolese on the best terms for the Congolese.⁵⁸⁵ What he did need help with was getting rid of the Belgians and asserting control over Katanga. If the Americans and the UN were not going to help with this, Lumumba made it clear that he would look for help elsewhere. As Lumumba stated in a press conference on 20 July, the Congo, as a sovereign nation, had the right to “ask any nation in the world for help”.⁵⁸⁶ To Lumumba this right was an integral part of being a sovereign nation that the UN was now trying to deprive the Congo of with its insistence on exclusivity. Lumumba might also have been hoping that rattling the Soviet sabre would get the UN to put more pressure on the Belgians, at least this was the analysis of Lodge. After meeting Lumumba in New York he reported that “Lumumba is certainly not crazy; that he wasn’t getting anywhere so he threatened to call in the Chinese Communists which put the necessary heat on the U.N. to get quick action [...] he is a little flighty and erratic in some respects; but he knows exactly what he is doing”.⁵⁸⁷ In the short run, Lumumba’s tactic was successful. As a direct consequence of the ultimatum the Soviets called a new meeting of the Security Council to discuss the Belgian defiance

⁵⁸² Memorandum of Discussion 1 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁸³ Circular from State Department, 3 August 1960, NARA RG59 CDF 1960-63 Box 1955.

⁵⁸⁴ Telegram USUN to State 26 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁸⁵ Kanza, Thomas, *The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba: Conflict in the Congo* (London: R. Collings, 1978), p. 67.

⁵⁸⁶ Kalb, p. 29.

⁵⁸⁷ Telegram USUN to State 26 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

of resolution 143. This was exactly the situation that Hammarskjöld and the Americans wanted to avoid. From a Cold War perspective it was very embarrassing that the Soviets were now lambasting the Belgians for breaching Security Council resolution 143.

When Tunisia and Ceylon presented a draft resolution that called for “immediate” withdrawal – the exact wording of the Soviet amendment that had been defeated a week earlier – Hammarskjöld and the Americans had to use every effort to avoid an Afro-Asian-Soviet Bloc-alliance against the Belgians. Finally, the wording was changed from “immediate” to “speedy”. When he introduced the resolution Slim stated that he would have preferred stronger wording such as “immediate”, but had acquiesced to get general support for the resolution.⁵⁸⁸ In other words, the African representative now went on the record as preferring a wording first proposed by the Soviets, but agreed to water it down to get the support of the Western members of the Security Council. Both Hammarskjöld and the Americans realised that the Belgians were the problem. But they had to tread carefully and not alienate the Belgians or their French and British sympathisers in the Security Council. Behind the scenes, Hammarskjöld and the Americans put pressure on the Belgians to make an announcement of their intentions to withdraw ahead of the Security Council meeting to take some of the wind out of the Soviet sails, which Wigny, the Belgian Foreign Minister, also did. For now it calmed the situation and Lumumba was happy with the outcome.⁵⁸⁹ The Belgians were also happy with the outcome and the British found resolution 145 “surprisingly satisfactory”. This was due to the operative paragraph leaving it to the Secretary-General to coordinate the “speedy withdrawal”. As Dixon reported, the Secretary-General’s ideas on the subject were very similar to British views.⁵⁹⁰ Even the French, for all their scepticism of ONUC, had voted for resolution 145 after Wigny had specifically asked them to.⁵⁹¹ A few days earlier Wigny had told the British Ambassador in Brussels that he was worried about the resolutions against Belgium, but recognised that they “were at present neutralized by Secretary-General’s

⁵⁸⁸ Telegram from UKUN (Beeley) to FO, 22 July 1960, No. 533, JB2251/68, FO 371/146772.

⁵⁸⁹ Kalb, p. 33.

⁵⁹⁰ Telegram from UKUN (Dixon) to FO, 22 July 1960, No 534, JB2251/70, FO 371/146772.

⁵⁹¹ Vaïsse, Maurice (ed.), Documents diplomatiques français 1960 tome II (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale), pp. 136-137.

helpful and robust attitude”, although he was worried that they were now putting all their trust in the Secretary-General’s implementation of the resolutions.⁵⁹²

It was in the days after the 17 July ultimatum that the CIA director Allen Dulles famously labelled Lumumba “a Castro or worse”.⁵⁹³ The Belgians had tried to portray Lumumba as a Communist for a long time to turn the Americans against him, but the Americans had taken these reports with a large pinch of salt. Now, as Lumumba turned more and more against the UN, he was – Communist or not – *de facto* acting against American interests. On 19 July Burden, the American ambassador in Brussels, summed up the situation after Lumumba’s ultimatum: “Whatever circumstances and motivations may have led to present situation, Lumumba has now maneuvered himself into position of opposition to West, resistance to United Nations and increasing dependence on Soviet Union and on Congolese supporters (Kashamura, Gizenga) who are pursuing Soviet’s ends”. In the light of this it was “only prudent” that a “principal objective of our political and diplomatic action must therefore be to destroy Lumumba government as now constituted, but at same time we must find or develop another horse to back which would be acceptable in rest of Africa and defensible against Soviet political attack”.⁵⁹⁴ Although Burden’s views were among the most hawkish, this would become the American policy, hampered only by the fact that it was very hard to find “another horse to back”. Burden added that for this policy it was “important persuade United Nations authorities and representatives see situation in Congo as we do”.⁵⁹⁵

But there was little need to persuade the top UN officials of the dangers of Lumumba. To the Americans he represented a danger to their Congo strategy; to the UN he represented a danger to its very existence. If the UN would have to leave the Congo, it would mean an end to all Hammarskjöld’s ambitions for the UN. Rather than the Americans convincing the UN that Lumumba was dangerous, Hammarskjöld portrayed Lumumba to the Americans and the British as a “Communist stooge” and a

⁵⁹² Saving telegram from Brussels (J. Nicholls) to FO, 19 July 1960, No 27, JB2251/50, FO 371/146771.

⁵⁹³ Memorandum of Discussion 21 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV; see also Kalb, p. 29.

⁵⁹⁴ Telegram Brussels to State 19 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁹⁵ Memorandum of Discussion 18 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

dope addict in private meetings.⁵⁹⁶ The insistence of Hammarskjöld and other UN officials that Lumumba was a “Communist stooge” was not consistent with the reports that the Americans received from other sources. A report from the Bureau for Intelligence and Research on whether Lumumba was a Communist stated that they had found “nothing to substantiate this allegation”. The report concluded that “The most accurate summary of his views is probably his own declaration of July 5, 1960, ‘We are not Communists, Catholics, or Socialists. We are African nationalists. We reserve the right to be friendly with anybody we like according to the principles of positive neutrality’”.⁵⁹⁷ The American embassy in Léopoldville was of the same opinion: “Lumumba is an opportunist and not a Communist”.⁵⁹⁸ At the US mission in New York there were those who felt that Hammarskjöld was “moving perhaps to rapidly to the conclusion that it was impossible to work with Lumumba” and that Hammarskjöld rejected Lumumba out of hand.⁵⁹⁹

As far as Hammarskjöld and his confidants were concerned, third-world nationalism and revolutionary movements were viewed with a striking lack of analytical depth that seemed stuck in the inter-war period with a passion for discarding all nationalists as Hitlers and Mussolinis. With a logic that could have been borrowed from Anthony Eden, Hammarskjöld was also fond of referring to “Munich” as a historical argument for acting early against any nationalist and revolutionary tendencies. Before the Suez crisis Hammarskjöld had referred to Nasser as both a “Hitler” and a “Mussolini” in private discussions with the British and now he cautioned against the perils of Nkrumah’s pan-africanism. In a cable to Cordier he described it as an attempt to create “a coastal empire, stretching from Ghana down to and including the ex-Belgian Congo”, and referred to this as “Nkrumah’s African Mussolini-Hitler drive”.⁶⁰⁰ Cordier held the same views and wrote that “Nkrumah is the Mussolini of Africa while Lumumba is its little Hitler”.⁶⁰¹ Bunche was also opposed to this brand of pan-

⁵⁹⁶ Telegram USUN to State 11 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV; Telegram from UKUN (Beeley) to FO, 17 August 1960, JB 2251/190, FO 371/146777,.

⁵⁹⁷ Memorandum From the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to Herter 25 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁹⁸ Telegram Leopoldville to State 26 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁵⁹⁹ Oral History Barco, pp. 818-819.

⁶⁰⁰ Hammarskjöld (Leopoldville) to Cordier, incoming coded cable, 15 August 1960, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:155.

⁶⁰¹ Letter from Cordier to Schwalm 18 August 1960, Cordier Papers Box 47.

africanism⁶⁰² and Wieschhoff derogatorily referred to the delegates of the fourth committee as the “Mau-mau”.⁶⁰³

Lumumba’s trip to New York in July 1960 would bring out the differences between his vision of the Congo and Hammarskjöld’s. During his stay in New York, Lumumba kept to his tactics of holding all doors open, meeting with the Americans as well as the Soviets. Multilateral assistance, as defined by Hammarskjöld, would on the other hand mean that all doors were closed except the UN door. By now, Lumumba knew a bit more about the UN, and he had come to realise that exclusive multilateral assistance was not what he wanted. In a discussion with Cordier, Lumumba said that it “smacked of trusteeship”.⁶⁰⁴ Real independence and sovereignty were Lumumba’s goals.⁶⁰⁵ Lumumba brought this up as one of his main concerns with the Americans: “[Lumumba] did not like idea of all countries channelling their aid through UN. This would make Congo subservient to UN. As sovereign nation Congo should be able to negotiate bilateral treaties with various nations”.⁶⁰⁶ Lumumba met several times with Hammarskjöld, flanked by Cordier and Wieschhoff. Kanza, the Congolese representative at the UN, who was present at these talks wrote that “misunderstandings and disagreements [...] dogged all their talks”; he was “witnessing a real conflict of personalities”.⁶⁰⁷ To Lumumba, the Congolese economy should not be in thrall to Western European companies. To Hammarskjöld the Congo represented the opportunity to put into practice all his theories of UN technical assistance and development – of filling the vacuum in Africa, and keeping the Soviets out. While Lumumba focused on the internal situation, Hammarskjöld’s focus was the international situation, where the logic of the Cold War was paramount. Hammarskjöld held “Lumumba to be an ignorant pawn, in his utter lack of experience of the big political currents, balances and pressures”.⁶⁰⁸ To Hammarskjöld it was imperative to keep the Soviets out, but also to keep Western style capitalism as the

⁶⁰² Nzongola-Ntalaja, p. 155.

⁶⁰³ O’Brien, p. 37.

⁶⁰⁴ Kalb, p. 42.

⁶⁰⁵ Tshonda, Jean Omasombo, “Lumumba vs. Hammarskjöld A story of confrontation” in Stahn and Melber (eds.), p. 245.

⁶⁰⁶ Telegram from Léopoldville to State, 10 September 1960, NARA RG59 CDF 1960-63, Box 1956.

⁶⁰⁷ Kanza, p. 238.

⁶⁰⁸ Hammarskjöld (Leopoldville) to Cordier, incoming coded cable, 15 August 1960, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:155.

base of the economy.⁶⁰⁹ This meant not only keeping Soviet troops and political influence out, but also keeping Communist or leftist socio-economic influence out. It was therefore important to show the success of a Western capitalist economy as the way forward. Technical assistance on a massive scale was needed. Lumumba threatened both of these objectives with his flirting with the Soviets and his economic ideas. Exclusive UN technical assistance was not only needed to keep the Soviets out, but also to fulfil Hammarskjöld's dream of the UN's destiny in Africa as the provider of technical and political assistance on a massive scale. There was never any real discussion or exchange of ideas between Hammarskjöld and Lumumba, and they continued to view the Congo crisis from two different points of view, both underestimating the other. Hammarskjöld thought that he did not need to cooperate with Lumumba and could go against Lumumba with impunity, failing to realise his support among other African leaders. Lumumba underestimated Hammarskjöld and his influence not only over the UN, but also over American policy in the Congo and the extent to which the Americans would support Hammarskjöld.

When the Americans discussed UN assistance to the Congo with the African ambassadors it soon transpired that, contrary to Hammarskjöld's claims after his African trip, many countries had a negative view of UN exclusivity when it came to technical assistance. Guinea's ambassador was "firmly opposed since this might be taken as indication Congo considered U.N. Trust Territory". Instead he urged the US to make a bilateral offer of aid for fear that Lumumba would otherwise be likely to accept a Soviet offer. The Moroccan and Tunisian representatives, considered moderates by the US, also showed understanding for the "Congolese sensitive to limitations on sovereignty such as exclusive aid arranged even with U.N. might imply". The Liberian and Ghanaian ambassadors, on the other hand, agreed that the UN should be an exclusive channel. All the African ambassadors, however, emphasised that the "immediate problems of Belgian troops and Katanga outweighed all considerations and nothing could be settled in Congo in absence of settlement".⁶¹⁰ This had been Lumumba's view all along; it was not, however, the priority of Hammarskjöld.

⁶⁰⁹ Kent, p. 17.

⁶¹⁰ Telegram State to Conakry 1 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

B.3 “Showdown” with Lumumba over Katanga

For some time Bunche had argued that Tshombe was a “puppet” and that Hammarskjöld and the US should make a clear statement of support for the central government.⁶¹¹ Wieschhoff argued strongly against Bunche’s line both with Hammarskjöld and in meetings with the Americans.⁶¹² Wieschhoff thought that Lumumba would evolve into a radical and that the UN and the US should support “Tshombe as politically important conservative political counterweight to extremism of Lumumba”.⁶¹³

Hammarskjöld did not view the Katanga secession as an urgent problem before his first trip to the Congo at the end of July and he hoped that he could negotiate a UN entry into Katanga in Brussels. Hammarskjöld also succeeded in securing Belgian agreement to the entry of UN troops with the proviso that direct negotiations with Tshombe would first be held.⁶¹⁴ The Belgian Foreign Minister, Wigny, also told the British Ambassador in Brussels that he thought Hammarskjöld “might be satisfied if this were only a token force”.⁶¹⁵ When Hammarskjöld arrived in Léopoldville from Brussels he soon realised that he would not be able to solve the Katanga problem so easily. Lumumba had instructed Antoine Gizenga, the Deputy Prime Minister, to put the heat on Hammarskjöld during his visit.⁶¹⁶ At a dinner in Hammarskjöld’s honour Gizenga gave a speech, broadcast on the national radio, that criticised the UN in harsh terms for not sending troops to Katanga. In New York this statement was immediately backed up by Lumumba, Ghana and the Soviet Union.⁶¹⁷ Faced with this pressure Hammarskjöld declared on 2 August that he was sending Bunche to Katanga on 5 August to negotiate the entry of UN troops who, Hammarskjöld added, would enter Katanga the following day, 6 August. This schedule would hardly leave any time for negotiations with Tshombe, and the entry of UN troops seemed a foregone conclusion as Hammarskjöld had phrased it. It was not what the Belgians had agreed to, and they felt they had “been abused and Hammarskjöld had not acted properly”.⁶¹⁸ Tshombe

⁶¹¹ Cable from Bunche to Hammarskjöld 21 July 1960, B159, UN Archives Series 217 Box1 Folder 21.

⁶¹² Telegram from USUN to State, 22 July 1960, NARA RG 59 CDF 1960-63, Box 1954.

⁶¹³ Telegram from USUN to State, 27 July 1960, NARA RG 59 CDF 1960-63, Box 1954.

⁶¹⁴ Hoskyns, p. 160.

⁶¹⁵ Telegram from Brussels (J. Nicholls) to FO, 28 July 1960, JB 2251/101, FO 371/146774.

⁶¹⁶ Kanza, p. 243.

⁶¹⁷ See UN Documents S/4414, S/4415, and S/4416 and Hoskyns, p. 161.

⁶¹⁸ Memorandum of Conversation 5 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

immediately sent a telegram to Hammarskjöld stating that UN troops would be resisted by force, but agreed to discuss the situation with Bunche. When Bunche arrived in Elisabethville he received a hot welcome that left him shaken and convinced that any attempt to deploy UN troops would be met with fierce resistance.⁶¹⁹ Whether this was true or not, Hammarskjöld decided to postpone the deployment of UN troops to Katanga and instead call a meeting of the Security Council.

The Katanga question had now become an existential question for the UN. From New York, Lumumba immediately attacked Hammarskjöld for giving in to the Belgians and Tshombe, and both Ghana and Guinea offered to put their UN contingents at the disposal of the Congolese government for a move against Katanga. Lodge pressed the Belgian foreign minister to withdraw the Belgian troops and, later in the day, Lodge met with Hammarskjöld who shared Bunche's analysis from the field with Lodge. Bunche's cables painted a sad picture of the UN position in the Congo and concluded that the situation could only be saved by an immediate withdrawal of Belgian troops and the entry of UN forces in Katanga. There was a risk that this would lead to an exodus of westerners from Katanga, but "such a risk must be taken in order pull rug out from under extremists among Congolese political leaders".⁶²⁰ To Hammarskjöld, Lumumba and other "extremists" were using the Katangan secession and the prolonged Belgian military presence as a means to increase their power and potentially opening the door for Soviet intervention. If, however, a UN presence could be established in Katanga, Lumumba would be bereft of his trump card. This was a strange analysis that shows how the Cold War logic had gotten the better of Hammarskjöld. Lumumba had, from the outset, only wanted two things from the UN: to get the Belgians out and end the Katangan secession. It is hard to see that Lumumba preferred to use the Belgian troops and the Katangan secession to strengthen his position and invite the Soviets. On the contrary the Belgian presence and the Katangan secession were undermining Lumumba's government. If the Belgian presence and the Katangan secession continued this might lead Lumumba to request Soviet aid, but as an act of desperation. The surest way of keeping the Soviets out would therefore have been to secure a Belgian withdrawal and end the secession

⁶¹⁹ Hoskyns, p. 163.

⁶²⁰ Telegram USUN to State 7 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

in Katanga. The reason Hammarskjöld had not acted more strongly against Tshombe was because he did not want to strengthen Lumumba. Hammarskjöld was at this point also well aware of the Belgian involvement in backing Tshombe and obstructing a UN entry. Hammarskjöld showed Lodge a report from Linnér that showed that the business lobby in Katanga were trying to sabotage the UN entry into Katanga on the orders of the Belgian representative d'Aspremont and that Tshombe was supported by money rather than local political success.⁶²¹ Nonetheless, despite the fact that both the Americans and Hammarskjöld were by now clear that the Belgians were the problem, they chose to accommodate their demands.

To resolve the issue of the entry of UN troops in Katanga, Hammarskjöld needed to give strong assurances to Tshombe and the financial interests behind him. Hammarskjöld realised that the Belgian government was not in a position to call the shots in Elisabethville; if he wanted to make headway, he would have to offer something directly to Tshombe. This was also in line with US and UN policy to keep Tshombe as a strong moderate influence in the Congo. To deal with the problem and give Tshombe the necessary assurances and strengthen his own hand by getting express Security Council endorsement for his interpretation of the mandate Hammarskjöld prepared a report, in which he outlined his views for tackling the Katanga question, which he presented to the Security Council on 8 August. In the report, Hammarskjöld said that he did not interpret the previous resolutions as giving the UN a mandate to use force against Katanga. Furthermore, Hammarskjöld's report stated that the problem "did not have its root in the Belgian attitude" nor in the Katangan authorities' wish to secede.⁶²² Hammarskjöld was well aware that this was a misrepresentation of the situation and admitted "emphatically" to the Americans that the Belgian troops in Katanga were indeed the root of the problem, "although in his written report he had decided play it differently".⁶²³ Hammarskjöld also went to great lengths to put in writing that the entry of the UN into Katanga would not in any way mean "taking sides in the conflict" and that Tshombe would be left free to work out

⁶²¹ Cable from Bunche to Hammarskjöld transmitting Linnér's report, 7 August 1960, UN Archives, Series 845 Box 1 File 3; see also USUN to State 7 August 1960 FRUS 1958-1960 Vol XIV.

⁶²² Second report on the Implementation of the Security Council Resolutions of July 14 and 22 on the Congo, 6 August 1960, in Cordier/Foote, *Public Papers Vol V*, p. 65.

⁶²³ Telegram USUN to State 7 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

his differences with the central government.⁶²⁴ The report thus met with more or less all of the demands that Tshombe had been making earlier, although officially Hammarskjöld ignored these demands.⁶²⁵ The Belgians found it “unexpectedly favourable from the Belgian point of view.”⁶²⁶ Even the French, although they would abstain on the final resolution, told the British and the Americans that they supported a resolution along the lines of Hammarskjöld’s report.⁶²⁷ Lodge correctly foresaw that the African countries would be “unhappy” with Hammarskjöld’s report, “and Lumumba and Soviets even more so”.⁶²⁸

Hammarskjöld asked the Security Council to adopt a resolution along the lines of his report. The Western members of the Security Council declared themselves in favour of this, while the Congolese Foreign Minister, Bomboko, and the Tunisian Slim, presented evidence that the Belgians were actively backing the Katangan secession. The Soviet representative Kuznetsov followed up on these remarks and introduced a draft resolution which called on the Secretary-General “to take decisive measures, without hesitating to use any means to that end, to remove the Belgian troops”, but this was withdrawn when a Tunisian-Ceylonese draft resolution, largely following Hammarskjöld’s report, was adopted.⁶²⁹ The Belgians, were “extremely satisfied” with the outcome, even though the resolution called for the “immediate” withdrawal of Belgian troops from Katanga.⁶³⁰ The resolution also stated that “the United Nations Force in the Congo will not be a party to or in any way intervene in or be used to influence the outcome of any internal conflict”.⁶³¹

In a meeting with the US mission to the UN, Wieschhoff, Hammarskjöld’s “grey eminence”, explained that now that Hammarskjöld had received the necessary backing from the Security Council to deal with Katanga in his preferred way, “his next problem will be Lumumba”. Hammarskjöld anticipated strong resistance from Lumumba to his way of dealing with Katanga. In Wieschhoff’s “personal view” it

⁶²⁴ Secretary-General’s report, 6 August 1960, UN Document S/4417, p. 11.

⁶²⁵ This was also the American interpretation of the report, see Telegram State to USUN 6 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶²⁶ Telegram from Brussels (J. Nicholls) to FO, 6 August 1960, No. 268, JB2251/140, FO 371/146775.

⁶²⁷ *Compte rendu de la sixième réunion tripartite sur les affaires du Congo tenue à Paris le 8 août 1960* in Vaïsse (ed.) *Documents diplomatiques français 1960 tome II*, p. 207.

⁶²⁸ Telegram State to USUN 6 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶²⁹ Hoskyns, pp. 169-170.

⁶³⁰ Telegram USUN to State 10 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶³¹ Security Council resolution 146 (1960), S/4426.

might be a good thing if Lumumba tried to interfere with Hammarskjöld's plan for Katanga as this would precipitate a test of strength with his opponents in the Congo. Wieschhoff believed that "Lumumba would now lose such struggle and it would have result of weakening or destroying his role in govt".⁶³² Hopefully, a success in Katanga would result in both under-cutting Lumumba and tempering the criticisms of the Africans and the Soviets. From this meeting, on 10 August, can be dated the beginning of a tactic by Hammarskjöld to force a confrontation with Lumumba with the objective of ousting him from office. The reasons were many. Hammarskjöld and most of the UN personnel in the Congo were unable to cooperate with Lumumba, who was opposed to UN schemes for exclusive multilateral assistance. But Lumumba was also embarrassing Hammarskjöld by pointing out that the Belgians were in breach of the Security Council resolutions.

What was meant by a success in Katanga was far from clear. To Hammarskjöld, form seems, as so often, to have triumphed over substance and any UN presence was the goal, not the end of secession. On 12 August Hammarskjöld, accompanied by 240 Swedish UN soldiers, went to Elizabethville without consulting Lumumba. Tshombe, who referred to the Swedish contingent as Hammarskjöld's "body guard" and arranged for pictures to be taken with Hammarskjöld in front of the secessionist flag of Katanga, welcomed Hammarskjöld. To Hammarskjöld this was a great success: there now was a UN presence in Katanga, albeit a small token force of white soldiers. To Lumumba it seemed less so: the UN might have been allowed into Katanga, the central government was not. Hammarskjöld had not consulted the government before his move and Katanga was as secessionist as ever. What Lumumba had wanted was UN assistance to end the secession. Hammarskjöld had achieved something quite different. The UN had tacitly accepted eight out of ten of Tshombe's conditions, which would be proved by UN actions over the next months.⁶³³ To all intent and purpose, the UN now safeguarded the neo-colonial order that the Belgians had orchestrated in Katanga. This was the American interpretation as well, who considered that the UN entry into Katanga was "accomplished on basis of assurances which in essence meant UN presence would not be permitted to upset status quo".⁶³⁴

⁶³² Telegram USUN to State 10 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶³³ Hoskyns, p. 172.

⁶³⁴ Telegram State to USUN 3 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

In Elisabethville, the arrival of UN troops under these circumstances was celebrated as a great success.⁶³⁵ In fact this gave Tshombe the time he needed to consolidate his power and build up the Katangan troops. As one observer put it: “If the internal organization of Katanga can be strengthened, if the UN troops limit themselves strictly to their role as a police force and if the existence of Katanga security forces becomes more than a myth, then Lumumba can go boil himself an egg; he will have lost the game.”⁶³⁶ By the time the UN realised that something more had to be done about Katanga the situation would be much worse with tragic consequences for both the UN and Hammarskjöld.

But Lumumba was not about to go and boil himself an egg. Instead he protested vigorously in a letter to Hammarskjöld. There followed an exchange of letters between Lumumba and Hammarskjöld that were marked by Lumumba’s increasingly accusatory tone and Hammarskjöld’s frosty responses. In his final letter Lumumba wrote: “The government and people of the Congo have lost their confidence in the Secretary-General”.⁶³⁷ Hammarskjöld did not seem perturbed in the least; instead he made the correspondence public and returned to New York to convene a Security Council meeting to decide whose interpretation of the UN mandate was correct – the Secretary-General’s or the Prime Minister’s.

The “crux of the issue”, read the American instructions for the upcoming Security Council meeting, “has now become dispute between Lumumba and [Secretary-General] re future of UN role in Congo”.⁶³⁸ This was largely due to Hammarskjöld, whose intransigent attitude to Lumumba had caused the confrontation that Hammarskjöld had wanted. Hammarskjöld was certain that Lumumba would lose his support both in the Congo and on the international scene over a confrontation with the UN. Hammarskjöld told Lodge that “‘Only Lumumba would be stupid enough’ to look for a showdown when the Secretary-General had all the ‘cards in his hand’”.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁵ Hoskyns, p. 173.

⁶³⁶ Hoskyns, p. 173, quoting from Davister, Pierre, “Katanga: Enjeu du monde” (Bruxelles: Editions Europe-Afrique, 1960), p. 156.

⁶³⁷ Kalb, p. 48.

⁶³⁸ Telegram State to USUN 16 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶³⁹ Kalb, p. 58.

Hammarškjöld seemed very “sure of himself” and told the Americans that “this is a showdown and that the UN cannot yield”.⁶⁴⁰

Hammarškjöld’s calculations were based on the premise that the Afro-Asians would side with him against Lumumba, although the Americans were less convinced of this.⁶⁴¹ Hammarškjöld’s problem was the Soviets, who would support Lumumba, which meant that any resolution in support of the Secretary-General would most likely run into a Soviet veto. He therefore came up with a new tactic to prevent a Soviet veto that he elaborated on in discussions with “his friends” the British⁶⁴² and the Americans. Hammarškjöld told them not to press for a resolution: “the West should not put up a resolution but let the Soviets do so if they want to. The rest can vote against or abstain”.⁶⁴³ At a brief meeting with the French Foreign Minister at Orly in between flights, Hammarškjöld also explained that “from a tactical view point, his view was that the West should refrain from tabling a resolution approving his report to avoid the risk of a Russian veto”.⁶⁴⁴ His idea was that if no resolution critical of the Secretary-General’s conduct of the UN operation was adopted, that meant that his interpretation was validated. If the Soviets proposed a resolution that supported Lumumba’s interpretation and this was defeated, this meant that Lumumba’s interpretation was not supported. It did not follow that the Security Council endorsed Hammarškjöld’s interpretation, but this would be the implication. Hammarškjöld was of course careful to avoid pressing a resolution in his support as this would be vetoed, thus exposing that his interpretation was not supported either. This was something of a fiction, but Hammarškjöld thought that as long as only the Soviet Bloc was against him he could get away with it. The key issue for Hammarškjöld was to keep the support of the “neutral” Afro-Asians on the Security Council – Tunisia and Ceylon – to show that he had the support of “neutral” world opinion against the isolated voice of the Soviet Bloc. To do this, Hammarškjöld needed the support of the broader Afro-Asian group, to whose opinion Tunisia, in its bid for African leadership at the UN, was especially deferential. Although a moderate influence, the Tunisians were careful not to be caught voting with the West against

⁶⁴⁰ Memorandum of Conversation 17 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁴¹ Telegram State to Leopoldville 12 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁴² James, p. 66-67.

⁶⁴³ Memorandum of Conversation 17 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁴⁴ Telegram from Maurice Couve de Murville to Armand Bérard, 17 August 1960 in Vaisse (ed.), *Documents diplomatiques français 1960 tome II*, p. 220.

the interests of the Africans. The Tunisians were also critical of what they perceived as the colonialism of the Belgians and their French allies.

Ahead of the Security Council meeting, Soviet opposition to Hammarskjöld's plans grew stronger and on 20 August the Soviets rejected his plan for an expanded civilian operation in the Congo.⁶⁴⁵ The Soviets were also preparing a draft resolution, based on a demand made by Lumumba, that a group comprising representatives of the troop-contributing countries should be set up to monitor the implementation of the resolutions. To pre-empt this Hammarskjöld made a similar, but much more informal, proposal for an Advisory Committee of troop-contributing countries. The French were also sceptical: "we should not give Hammarskjöld a blank check concerning his disputes with the head of the Congolese government".⁶⁴⁶ Hammarskjöld's supporters in the council all echoed the view that there was no need for the Security Council to confirm his interpretation; if anyone disagreed they were free to put forward a draft resolution with another interpretation. In practice, this circumvented the veto power and meant that the Secretary-General could follow an independent policy without support from the Security Council until a resolution was voted that said otherwise. The Soviet representative withdrew a draft resolution censuring Hammarskjöld for lack of support. No resolution in support of Hammarskjöld was adopted either. The idea that Hammarskjöld's Congo policy had the backing of the Security Council now rested on a fiction.

Hammarskjöld concluded his remarks to the Security Council by stating "I have the right to expect guidance, but it should be obvious that if the Security Council says nothing I have no other choice than to follow my conviction".⁶⁴⁷ This was the situation Hammarskjöld preferred, the vacuum, that he could fill with his own policy. No longer content merely to fill vacuums when they arose, Hammarskjöld was now showing himself quite adept at creating them as well. He never intended to offer any compromise that would have opened a meaningful dialogue with Lumumba, or made it possible for the Soviet Union to agree to a resolution that did not go so flagrantly against the Central Government; and, arguably, against the two previous Security

⁶⁴⁵ Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 432.

⁶⁴⁶ Telegram from Maurice Couve de Murville to Armand Béard, 17 August 1960, in Vaïsse (ed.) *Documents diplomatiques français 1960 tome II*, p. 220.

⁶⁴⁷ Quoted from Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 435.

Council resolutions. Reigning by ambiguity had long been Hammarskjöld's strategy and in the first months of the Congo crisis it allowed him to control the UN. This was not lost on his collaborators, one of whom suggested that his motto should be *Per Ambigua ad Astra*.⁶⁴⁸ In a cable to Bunche Hammarskjöld savoured the moment "an even greater parliamentary defeat for Lumumba than I had played for... We still have some way to go [at this point the words "break this man, who believes that he can dictate to the world" are crossed out]... but we have won important round and will of course continue on straight line".⁶⁴⁹

Lumumba's destiny had been sealed already before the Security Council meeting. If Hammarskjöld had failed in his design to provoke a coup against Lumumba in the Congo, he had managed to convince the Americans that Lumumba had to go. Hammarskjöld's real triumph over Lumumba in the "showdown" he had provoked came not in the Security Council, but at a meeting of the National Security Council on 18 August. At the meeting, Dillon explained to Eisenhower that while there was no immediate threat to Hammarskjöld's position, the "real danger" was that Lumumba might simply ask the UN to leave the Congo. According to Dillon, Hammarskjöld's view was that "the only way that the Congo can be kept going is for the UN to run it as a UN trusteeship, although it would not be called that". This view did not shock the Americans at all. Instead they focused on Lumumba (who had been right that Hammarskjöld wanted to turn the Congo into a trusteeship) as the problem. Eisenhower concluded that "the possibility that the UN would be forced out was simply inconceivable". When Dillon pointed out that Lodge, as the expert on UN affairs, doubted whether the UN could stay on in the Congo if the Congo was really opposed to the UN, Eisenhower replied "that Mr. Lodge was wrong to this extent – we were talking of one man forcing us out of the Congo; of Lumumba supported by the Soviets." When it came to choosing between the Secretary-General, who had stated that he wanted to run the Congo as a UN trusteeship, and the elected Prime Minister of the Congo, the Americans chose Hammarskjöld: "The situation that would be created by a UN withdrawal was altogether too ghastly to contemplate."⁶⁵⁰ It was not primarily because he was viewed as a Communist that Lumumba had to go,

⁶⁴⁸ O'Brien, p. 47.

⁶⁴⁹ Quoted from James, *Britain and the Congo Crisis*, p. 70.

⁶⁵⁰ Memorandum of Discussion 18 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

it was because he threatened the UN and the Secretary-General's position and this in turn was because he questioned Hammarskjöld's ideas on how to run the Congo. Hammarskjöld had successfully made it a question of him or Lumumba – the Congo could not hold them both. The next day Lodge sent a telegram with contingency plans in the event that the UN was asked to leave the Congo after the Security Council meeting; on the top of the list was the following suggestion: "Find means to get rid of Lumumba".⁶⁵¹

C The Conspirators

C.1 Kasavubu's Coup – the UN Tries to Topple Lumumba

The Americans were not the only ones plotting Lumumba's downfall. On 26 August Hammarskjöld told Lodge that the "issue in Congo must come to crisis shortly and that Lumumba must be 'broken'". Hammarskjöld had "in mind that new crisis between Lumumba and UN, in which UN victorious, will under-cut Lumumba's political power in Congo sufficiently that Kasavubu or Ileo will be able to assume effective control". Hammarskjöld even predicted – with striking accuracy as it turned out – that this crisis would develop at the end of the meeting of the African leaders in Léopoldville that Lumumba had arranged for the beginning of September. Hammarskjöld also told Lodge that he had made various plans for the development of a crisis that would prepare the way for a coup against Lumumba. One likely crisis scenario that Hammarskjöld had planned for was if Lumumba asked the UN to leave the Congo. If Lumumba did so, Hammarskjöld told Lodge that he would call a Security Council meeting and say that the *Force Publique* could not maintain peace and order in the Congo and that the withdrawal of UN troops would therefore threaten world peace as foreign intervention would be inevitable. The UN would then, according to Hammarskjöld's logic, be in a position to use enforcement measures to "restore international peace and security" under Article 42 of the UN Charter. Hammarskjöld later made the same remarks to Beeley, at the British UN mission. Any invocation of Article 42 would, however, require a prior determination by the Security Council under Article 39 that international peace and security was indeed

⁶⁵¹ Telegram USUN to State 19 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

broken or threatened.⁶⁵² It is therefore hard to see how Hammarskjöld would have been able to invoke enforcement measures on his own authority without calling a meeting of the Security Council, where, of course, the Soviets were likely to veto any such move. But Hammarskjöld had thought of this eventuality and thought that the negative tactic of blocking any resolution against his interpretation and counting this as endorsement would succeed again. Hammarskjöld realised that the Soviets might not accept this, but there was little they could do about it. They could play the Uniting for Peace-card and demand that the issue be referred to the General Assembly, but Hammarskjöld was convinced that they would be “defeated by a vote of 70 to 12” in the General Assembly and the Soviets would therefore not attempt this. After a Security Council or General Assembly session that confirmed the Secretary-General’s right to invoke emergency measures, Hammarskjöld told Lodge, the “UN would in effect be taking over control of Congo and that he would then be in position to disarm Force Publique by force if necessary”.⁶⁵³ Hammarskjöld was now proactively planning to turn the Congo into a UN trusteeship.

Despite, or perhaps because, of the great challenges ahead for the UN Hammarskjöld was in high spirits and told Lodge that “he had never worked so hard or enjoyed himself so much since he came here. He is clearly looking forward to forcing issue with Lumumba, but wants latter create the situation. He is confident that he can win with backing of substantially entire UN except Communists.”⁶⁵⁴ State Department was “greatly reassured by Hammarskjöld’s assessment of Congo”⁶⁵⁵ According to Hammarskjöld “there was no Katanga problem between Tshombe and Kasavubu or Ileo but only with Lumumba”. This statement shows that Hammarskjöld was not concerned with the neo-colonial order set up in Katanga, something he was aware of through the reports from Linnér and others. Soon enough, however, Hammarskjöld would be aware that – Lumumba or no Lumumba – there was a very real Katanga problem, and it was only growing worse in the meantime. Herter, also concluded that “SYG’s objectives re Congo are parallel with our own, e.g., keep UN in Congo even over objection Lumumba; Katanga problem to be resolved peacefully and not to

⁶⁵² This was also the view of the legal advisor of the Foreign Office, see F.O. Minutes by E.B. Boothby 1 September 1960; A.D.M. Ross 2 September 1960; and G.G. Fitzmaurice 5 September 1960, JB 2251/245, FO 371/146779.

⁶⁵³ Telegram USUN to State 26 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁵⁴ Telegram USUN to State 26 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁵⁵ Telegram State to USUN 27 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

West's disadvantage; Force Publique to be brought under control; UN to obtain progressive control airports and ports; and Soviet influence in Congo to be minimized".⁶⁵⁶

Rajeshwar Dayal, who arrived in New York at this time before replacing Bunche also noted that Hammarskjöld "carried about him an aura of supreme confidence, the immensity of his responsibilities seeming only to exhilarate him."⁶⁵⁷ The fight that Hammarskjöld was so confidently looking for was now approaching fast. On 29 August, Timberlake reported from Léopoldville: "I think showdown with UN near and I hope they are ready for it".⁶⁵⁸ Hammarskjöld had just despatched his right-hand man, Cordier, to Leopoldville. Cordier's brief stay in Leopoldville would have momentous consequences. Kanza described it in the following terms: "the few days that he was in the Congo at the head of the UN, Cordier could be described as having been in effect the Congolese head of state, with Timberlake as personal adviser and vice-president".⁶⁵⁹ Just like Hammarskjöld, Cordier saw Lumumba as the problem. In a letter to a friend a few days before he set out for the Congo Cordier explained the delicate situation that faced the UN:

*"The only real solution of the problem is a change of leadership. It will not be easy, however, to remove Lumumba from his position. Furthermore there are limits to our own capacity to bring about a change of leadership. We can produce such a situation in the international climate as to affect political pressures within the country, but we are excluded under the Charter from direct action of a political character which would affect the political balance of leadership within the country. In various ways the Secretary-General has given encouragement to the moderates and they are also receiving encouragement from other powerful political sources."*⁶⁶⁰

But the international pressure was clearly not enough to affect the political balance of leadership within the Congo. The Americans had for some time been scouting for a horse to back against Lumumba. Kasavubu presented himself as the most obvious contender, but Timberlake reported that Kasavubu was not a feasible alternative, at least not as long as Lumumba was around. Timberlake also warned that "[w]hile

⁶⁵⁶ Telegram State to USUN 3 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁵⁷ Dayal, p. 11.

⁶⁵⁸ Telegram Leopoldville to State 29 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁵⁹ Kanza, p. 276.

⁶⁶⁰ Letter from Cordier to Schwalm, 18 August 1960, Cordier Papers Box 47.

Lumumba's elimination would remove one problem, it might well create many more". One of them was that the "UN would also be accused at least of negligence, if not of complicity".⁶⁶¹

Soon after arriving in the Congo, Cordier met with Kasavubu who seemed at last ready to move against Lumumba. Kasavubu discussed his plans for dismissing Lumumba with Cordier and wanted to know how the UN would react. Cordier made no attempt to stop Kasavubu and likely encouraged him in his designs against Lumumba. Cordier instituted special measures for the cable traffic with New York on 3 September and afterwards asked his secretary to make sure all sensitive cables had been disposed of and asked her to bring "the originals of the three or four short letters which Kasavubu addressed to me on the night of 5 September".⁶⁶² Considering Kasavubu's phlegmatic personality and the fact that he sought out Cordier's advice it can be assumed that he would not have proceeded with his coup if Cordier had tried to dissuade him. Kasavubu also asked Cordier to close the radio station and the airports, which Cordier did. The decision to close the radio and the airports – and its relation to the role of the UN in the Congo – would be greatly debated both at the time and in later studies of the Congo crisis.

The measures hurt Lumumba infinitely more than Kasavubu (who had asked for them). Kasavubu had access to the powerful radio of Abbé Youlou over the river in Brazzaville, and was hardly affected by the closure of the radio in Leopoldville. The airports were also much more important to Lumumba as he had the bulk of his supporters outside of Leopoldville, whereas Kasavubu's stronghold was the capital and the surrounding area. Kasavubu's supporters were also allowed to use the airport on at least one occasion to fly out to build up support in the provinces.⁶⁶³ The British representative in Leopoldville, Ian Scott, who Cordier informed in advance of Kasavubu's coup, also urged Cordier to take over the radio station and prevent Lumumba from going to Orientale province. Scott's report to London, sent before Kasavubu's coup took place, also throws additional light on Cordier's role: "The

⁶⁶¹ Telegram Leopoldville to State 17 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁶² Letter from Cordier to Pauline Lacerte 7 October 1960, Cordier Papers Box 96. The letter makes reference to "the measures we took regarding cables in the period beginning 3 September and covering the next four or five days".

⁶⁶³ Collins, Carole J.L. "The Cold War Comes to Africa: Cordier and the 1960 Congo Crisis" in *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 47, No 1, 1993, p. 261.

United Nations is faced with a delicate situation”, Scott reported to London, “but Cordier is fully behind Kasavubu. He will provide Kasavubu with a Sudanese and Moroccan guard and will take other necessary precautions.”⁶⁶⁴ Cordier also refused to see Lumumba after his dismissal, as he was now a “private citizen”.⁶⁶⁵

Hammar skjöld was aware of, and supported, Cordier’s actions.⁶⁶⁶ Hammar skjöld had, for some time, been actively trying to provoke a “showdown” and had even predicted, accurately, that it would occur after the African conference in Leopoldville. The fact that he sent Cordier to the Congo at this precise time is intriguing. Officially, Cordier was to serve in the interim period between Bunche and Dayal, while Dayal was briefed by Bunche in New York. But there was no obvious reason why Dayal could not have been briefed in Leopoldville, nor why none of the persons already in Leopoldville could fill the interim instead of Cordier. Dayal also arrived in the Congo on 5 September, yet Cordier, stayed in control for several days.⁶⁶⁷ Hammar skjöld’s cables to Cordier throw an interesting light on the perceived principles of impartiality that the UN followed in the Congo. On 5 September Hammar skjöld cabled Cordier with the hope that he would “find the proper balance between strictly legal and extraordinary latitudes” – clearly something that might not be “strictly legal” was encouraged. Hammar skjöld also added what he termed “an irresponsible observation”: “that responsible people on the spot may permit themselves, within framework of principles which are imperative, what I could not justify doing myself – taking the risk of being disowned when it no longer matters”.⁶⁶⁸ Hammar skjöld also added that he would come up with an “elaboration of thesis we would use” to defend the UN actions.⁶⁶⁹ Within a few hours Hammar skjöld had come up with a defence for the UN actions that he cabled to Cordier: “Our suggestion would be that your defence... should be elaborated on basis of thesis of “law and order” in roughly the following terms...”. Presented this way, the actions would be seen to “not involve any

⁶⁶⁴ Telegram from Leopoldville (Scott) to FO, 5 September 1960, No. 619, JB 1015/288, FO 371/146643.

⁶⁶⁵ Telegram USUN to State 7 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁶⁶ Hammar skjöld was in close contact with Cordier via cable and teleprinter and encouraged Cordier, see e.g. Teleprinter Conversation between Cordier and Hammar skjöld, 3 September 1960, UN Archives Series 845 Box 1 File 9.

⁶⁶⁷ Dayal, p. 46.

⁶⁶⁸ Cable from Hammar skjöld to Cordier 5 September 1960, UN Archives Series 217 Box 2 File 3.

⁶⁶⁹ Cable from Hammar skjöld to Cordier 6 September 1960, UN Archives Series 217 Box 2 File 3.

taking of sides”.⁶⁷⁰ This succession of cables shows in a remarkable way how Hammarskjöld, famous for his stand on principles and the impartiality of the UN, first urged his Special Representative to conduct political actions that in fact were, at best, abetting a *coup d'état*, and then came up with the principles to justify the actions afterwards. The principles followed the actions; not the other way around. Rather than adopting a policy that was derived from principles of impartiality and non-intervention in an internal conflict, Hammarskjöld's policy was to intervene in the internal conflict. The principles of impartiality were created afterwards to defend actions that were motivated by partiality.

C.2 “A Lumumba victory” followed by a new coup

Meanwhile, Cordier was shocked by the lack of aptitude for coup-making that Kasavubu showed and called “the whole situation... a story out of Gilbert and Sullivan”. Cordier, who had done his best to support Kasavubu's coup, reported in amazement that “after the President returned from the radio station he went to bed around midnight and assumed I guess that his job had been done. There were most essential contacts that he should have made in the early hours of Tuesday morning but he was unavailable. On the other hand Lumumba... worked around the clock without regard for sleep or meals... rounding up support and generally beating down efforts made by the President and his few active supporters”.⁶⁷¹ The next day Lumumba turned the tables on Kasavubu when he received a double vote of support from parliament. Now Hammarskjöld was starting to get cold feet. He told the British that he “was obliged to consider the situation which would confront him if Lumumba won the present constitutional conflict... He must, therefore, adhere formally to the terms of his mandate.” And he continued by explaining that “while in practice the action of the United Nations favoured and was designed to favour Kasavubu, it could be represented as being strictly impartial”.⁶⁷² Just like Cordier, Hammarskjöld lamented the fact that “As an organiser of a *coup d'état* Kasavubu had revealed himself to be extraordinarily incompetent, and had given Lumumba the opportunity to fight back.” Hammarskjöld felt that the UN needed to hedge against the possibility that Lumumba

⁶⁷⁰ Cable from Hammarskjöld to Cordier 6 September 1960, UN Archives Series 217 Box 2 File 3.

⁶⁷¹ Letter from Cordier to Schwalm 15 September 1960, Cordier Papers Box 47. See also, Letter from Cordier to Edward H. Buehrig 6 February 1961, Cordier Papers Box 56.

⁶⁷² Telegram from UKUN (Beeley) to FO, 7 September 1960, No. 733 JB1015/295 FO 371/146643.

emerged as the victor; but he was hoping that this could still be prevented, “and that a Government with which it is possible to do business on a reasonable basis may emerge”.⁶⁷³

On 7 September Wieschhoff was scolded by the Americans for the failed coup, which the Americans now described as a “Lumumba victory”, and the amateurishness of the UN coup-makers. Like Cordier and Hammarskjöld, Wieschhoff blamed Kasavubu. Rikhye and Liu, Bunche’s translator and advisor, who doubled as political advisor and had been sent by Cordier to discuss “next steps” but had not been able to reach Kasavubu. “How can you make a revolution with such material?”, Wieschhoff asked. The Americans told Wieschhoff that the perceived impartiality of the UN had been jeopardised without results: “UN should not have gone half-way against Lumumba; [this] seemed to produce disadvantages of interference without desired results”. Wieschhoff replied that the UN had planned for stronger intervention and among other things “had planned mount massive display of UN force at Parliament during its deliberation” and to intervene against the *Force Publique*. However, when the reluctant coup-makers Kasavubu and Ileo took no action and the *Force Publique* was “welcomed by both sides” the UN had found it impossible to act. “[T]here were limits as to how far UN could stretch its authority”, Wieschhoff explained, “Such action by UN force would have been too clearly intervention in internal affairs”.⁶⁷⁴ The coup against Lumumba did not fail for lack of backing from the UN but because Kasavubu’s inactivity tied the hands of the UN.

Later on 7 September, the US mission, after talks with Hammarskjöld himself, reported that the “pattern” of the UN actions over the last days was now clear: “[Hammarskjöld] admitted at end that what he was trying to do was get rid of Lumumba without compromising UN position and himself through extra-constitutional actions. (He compared his activities to “gamesmanship—how to win without actually cheating.”)”⁶⁷⁵ The reference Hammarskjöld made is to the classic 1947 book *Theory and Practice of Gamesmanship: Or the Art of Winning Games Without Actually Cheating* by Stephen Potter, first published in 1947 but still in print

⁶⁷³ Telegram from UKUN (Beeley) to FO, 7 September 1960, No. 733, JB1015/295 FO 371/146643.

⁶⁷⁴ Telegram USUN to State 7 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁷⁵ Telegram USUN to State 7 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

today. Gamesmanship, as explained by Potter, has been summarised as “pushing the rules to the limit without getting caught, using whatever dubious methods possible to achieve the desired end”. At first light, this hardly squares with Hammarskjöld’s many public statements about diplomacy being based on the ethics of the person involved. But Hammarskjöld was convinced that he was engaged in a fight that was so important that all means were permitted. Indeed, Hammarskjöld’s oft cited inspiration Meister Eckhart can be interpreted as saying that if you have the right strength of spirit and ethics, the means are less important than the goal.⁶⁷⁶

The UN was now being harshly criticised for its actions in the press as well as by the Soviet Union, Ghana, Guinea and the UAR.⁶⁷⁷ Hammarskjöld felt compelled to convene a new Security Council meeting as he “wanted a broad resolution giving him freedom of action”; to achieve this he would need to keep the support of the Africans to pressure the Soviets.⁶⁷⁸ On 10 September, ahead of the Security Council meeting, the Americans told Hammarskjöld “U.S. Govt continues stand behind you in supporting Kasavubu’s effort to oust Lumumba and, in spite setback of last few days, hopes you can take further action to reinforce his position.”⁶⁷⁹ Hammarskjöld told the Americans that he was “still convinced he must break Lumumba and believes he will be able to do it”, but that it was “extremely difficult ‘to break Hitlers when alternatives were Hindenburgs’”.⁶⁸⁰ Herter also called Hammarskjöld before the Security Council meeting to tell him that the US were “with him 1000 %”. They also briefly discussed that the Congo crisis might be put before a special emergency session of the General Assembly, where Hammarskjöld was sure of getting 60 or 70 of the votes.⁶⁸¹ At the beginning of the Security Council meeting on 9 September, Hammarskjöld, with his usual penchant for legal arguments, mentioned the “fact” that Kasavubu had a constitutional right to revoke the mandate of the Prime Minister.⁶⁸² In

⁶⁷⁶ For an interesting discussion of the closeness of Eckhart and Machiavelli in this regard see Musil, Robert, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2011 (first edition 1930)), p. 121.

⁶⁷⁷ Hoskyns, p. 208.

⁶⁷⁸ Memorandum on the Substance of Discussion at the Department of State-Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting 9 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁷⁹ Telegram USUN to State 10 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁸⁰ Telegram 631 from USUN to State Department 10 September 1960, quoted from FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV, p. 475, footnote 1.

⁶⁸¹ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Herter and Hammarskjöld 10 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁸² Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol V*, p. 164. Hammarskjöld had informed his lieutenants of this in advance, Cable Hammarskjöld to Dayal 9 September 1960, UN Archives Series 217 Box 2 File 3.

fact it was not clear how the Congolese constitution should be interpreted on this point.⁶⁸³ Hammarskjöld also supported Cordier's actions while distancing himself somewhat from them stating that "I was not consulted, but I fully endorse the action taken and I have not seen any reason so far to revise the decisions of my representatives".⁶⁸⁴

Things did not go as smoothly as Hammarskjöld had hoped. The American mission reported that there was a clear danger that the Security Council would not support Hammarskjöld. A resolution drafted by Hammarskjöld was turned down by Slim as unacceptable to the Africans. The Americans were also averse to calls for a good offices committee to reconcile Kasavubu and Lumumba as this "inevitably would seek to find some mid-point compromise between Lumumba, Kasavubu, and Tshombe. This would tend strengthen Lumumba rather than advance our objective of increasing UN control and consolidating Kasavubu's position."⁶⁸⁵ Both the Americans and Hammarskjöld would continue to actively work against a political reconciliation in the Congo in favour of "UN control".

In the search for a new horse to back in the Congo, more and more eyes had been trained on the newly appointed Chief of Staff of the *Force publique*, Joseph Mobutu. The Moroccan General Kettani – originally recommended to Hammarskjöld by the Americans⁶⁸⁶ – had been assigned as adviser to Mobutu. Kettani soon gained a strong influence over Mobutu, who referred to him as "my military advisor and best friend".⁶⁸⁷ But Mobutu's influence over the *Force Publique* was small and after the Kasavubu coup he moved with his family into a house close to Kettani for protection.⁶⁸⁸ On Kettani's advice, Cordier now decided to strengthen Mobutu's sway over the *Force Publique* and keep the unpaid soldiers calm by arranging for a

⁶⁸³ The President's right to revoke the Prime Minister in Article 22 of the *Loi Fondamentale* was based on Article 65 of the Belgian constitution, which gave the Belgian King the same right. According to Belgian constitutional practice, however, the largely ceremonial role of the King in modern times meant that Article 65 could probably not have been invoked in Belgium. Therefore it could arguably not be invoked in the Congo either. See Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo Decolonization and Independence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 326.

⁶⁸⁴ Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol V*, p. 164.

⁶⁸⁵ Telegram State to USUN 12 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁸⁶ Telegram State to USUN 11 July 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁸⁷ Weissman, Stephen R., *American Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 96.

⁶⁸⁸ Rikhye, p. 95.

payment of 1 million dollars that Hammarskjöld approved, so that Mobutu could take the credit.⁶⁸⁹ But Kettani was not the only friend Mobutu had made. In the memoirs of Devlin, the CIA station chief in the Congo, there is a photo of Mobutu with the inscription: “To my old and excellent friend, L. Devlin, to whom the Congo and its chief owe so much”.⁶⁹⁰ After the UN paid the troops and thus gave Mobutu a real platform of power in the *Force publique*, Mobutu seems to have never lacked funds and according to Dayal several Western military attachés “visited Mobutu with bulging brief-cases containing thick brown paper packets which they obligingly deposited on his table”.⁶⁹¹ On 14 September, while the Security Council was deliberating in New York, Mobutu, backed by the *Force publique* dismissed both Kasavubu and Lumumba and appointed a “college” of students to rule for an interim period. Mobutu also suspended parliament. In his first public address, Mobutu stated that it was his aim to cooperate with the UN and asked all Soviet and Czech personnel, including their embassies, to leave the country. The CIA were definitely better coup-makers than the UN and the Mobutu coup, unlike the amateur Kasavubu coup, ended in what seemed like a resplendent victory for the UN and Western interests with the Soviet Bloc literally sent packing.

On 16 September a Tunisian and Ceylon sponsored resolution was introduced but vetoed by the Soviet Union. The Americans then introduced a resolution calling for an emergency special session of the General Assembly. This was considered a procedural question so the Soviets could not use the veto and the resolution was adopted. Hammarskjöld’s “gamesmanship” – “how to win without actually cheating” – so far seemed to have paid off. His tactical objectives to “break Lumumba” and “explode what the Soviets were up to” seemed to finally have succeeded. But the methods employed, as more and more voices were complaining, actually looked like “cheating”. The short term tactical gains also undermined the strategic long-term goal: the subversion of Lumumba had made sure the UN could stay in the Congo for now, but the partial interventions of the UN against Lumumba jeopardised Hammarskjöld’s support among the Afro-Asian block and the “neutrals” that was

⁶⁸⁹ Cable from Hammarskjöld to Cordier and Dayal 6 September 1960, UN Archives Series 217 Box 2 File 3. Rikhye, p. 92; see also Kalb, p. 96.

⁶⁹⁰ Devlin, Larry, *Chief of Station, Congo: a memoir of 1960-1967* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), photo inserted after p. 132.

⁶⁹¹ Dayal, p. 66.

crucial to his position. The days when Hammarskjöld could set the agenda were quickly coming to an end. With the referral of the Congo issue to the special emergency session of the General Assembly Hammarskjöld could no longer control the situation and the limits of the Secretary-General's political role would become obvious.

Chapter 6: “A Completely Do Nothing Impartiality”: The Congo Crisis from September 1960 to January 1961

As the Congo crisis moved from the Security Council to the General Assembly Hammarskjöld had predicted that he would get 60 or 70 of the votes, easily reaching the required two-thirds margin.⁶⁹² The support base Hammarskjöld had built over the years was frail and Hammarskjöld would only get support by changing his Congo policies radically. Although Hammarskjöld and the Americans tried to portray the Congo crisis as a Cold War conflict – steering discussions in New York to a Soviet-UN conflict – the evolution on the ground in the Congo increasingly put the focus on the neo-colonial aspects of the crisis as Belgian and other Western interests backed Tshombe in Katanga and Mobutu and Kasavubu in Léopoldville.

A The Congo Crisis in the General Assembly

A.1 The Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly

As the delegates assembled in New York for the special emergency session of the General Assembly the Americans were trying to make the most of the Cold War schism that had developed between the Soviets and the UN. In order to prevent a “Soviet-US confrontation” the Americans wanted to turn it into a “Soviet-UN confrontation” to “the maximum possible extent”. This way the focus would be on the Soviets as opposed to the UN in general rather than the pro-American policies of the UN in the Congo in particular. The Americans were aware that although the Afro-Asians did not like recent UN policy in the Congo, they were still strong supporters of the UN as an organisation and would not appreciate Soviet attacks on the UN as such. When the debate started, the Soviet representative Zorin promptly accused the Americans of using Hammarskjöld to force Lumumba out of office. In his reply to the Soviet accusations, Hammarskjöld turned the issue into a vote of confidence stating that “The General Assembly knows me well enough to realize that I would not wish to serve one day beyond the point at which such continued service would be, and

⁶⁹² Memorandum of Telephone Conversation 10 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

would be considered to be, in the best interests of this Organization”.⁶⁹³ As he had done on many earlier occasions, Hammarskjöld avoided a discussion of policy by offering to resign in a gesture that made all criticism of his actions a criticism of his integrity, thus turning the criticism into a vote of confidence. In doing so, Hammarskjöld, like the Americans, turned the discussion into one that focused on the UN and the Secretary-General as institutions rather than a discussion of the policies of the UN in the Congo. And as institutions both the UN and its Secretary-General had a strong support among the Afro-Asians. In the end, the Ghanaian ambassador introduced a draft resolution that was sponsored by 17 of the Afro-Asian states, based on the Tunisian-Ceylonese draft resolution that had been vetoed by the Soviets in the Security Council. Introduced by Ghana and backed even by those Afro-Asian states who had been most critical of Cordier’s actions in the Congo, this appeared to be a ringing endorsement of the Secretary-General in light of the Soviet attacks.

But the Afro-Asians were no longer content with generally worded resolutions that left implementation to the interpretation of the Secretary-General. The Ghanaian draft resolution was both stronger in tone and more detailed than the Ceylon-Tunisian draft resolution. The resolution supported Hammarskjöld and the UN against the Soviet attacks – partly since Hammarskjöld had manoeuvred to turn the vote into a vote of confidence – but it also clearly spelled out that the Afro-Asians were not content with the current UN policy and called for a number of specific actions that the UN should take in the Congo; actions that the UN had so far been counteracting, such as conciliation between the different political parties in the Congo. Even the moderate Afro-Asians were critical, a Ceylonese diplomat summed up the feelings of support for Lumumba and suspicion of Hammarskjöld shared by many of the Afro-Asians when he asked rhetorically of a British colleague “was not Lumumba the true explosion of nationalist progressive forces?”, adding that “some of the Secretary-General’s actions did not appear impartial, e.g. use of Swedish troops in Katanga”.⁶⁹⁴ The Americans and the British supported the resolution because of the humiliating defeat it would bring the Soviets – when seen as a vote of confidence in the Secretary-General – but they did not appreciate the wording of the resolution nor the intention

⁶⁹³ Statement on 17 September 1960 in Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol. V*, p. 186.

⁶⁹⁴ Telegram from Colombo to Commonwealth Relations Office, No. 423, 18 September 1960, JB2251/269, FO 371/146780.

of the sponsoring Afro-Asian states.⁶⁹⁵

The resolution was finally adopted on 20 September 1960 as General Assembly resolution 1474 with a vote of 70 to none – the very result Hammarskjöld had predicted – with eleven abstentions, including the Soviet bloc, France and South Africa. To all outward appearance, this was a resounding victory for the Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld's prediction of the result boded well for his ability to hold sway over the General Assembly, which started its 15th regular session the same day that the special emergency session ended.

Hammarskjöld had long cultivated the Afro-Asians. In a cable to Dayal, who had taken over as his Special Representative in the Congo after Bunche and Cordier, directly after the vote in the special emergency session of GA, Hammarskjöld explained this strategy and how the vote had proven him right:

*"if the Afro-Asians stick together, or if only the Africans stick together, they represent a new big power to which certain others have to bow. You know this theory on which I have worked now for two months. Today it was fully vindicated and I regard the fact that the Afro-Asian group in this way stood up to the test, found its own strength and a new cohesion, is more important than any other result. Hope that Nehru, who is coming Sunday, will use this to the full"*⁶⁹⁶

This was of course Hammarskjöld's interpretation of the vote, and in writing to Dayal Hammarskjöld was hoping to impress this interpretation and the need for a solid Afro-Asian support for the UN not only on Dayal, but on the man who perhaps held the best claim to speak for the non-aligned movement – Nehru. But as would soon become apparent to Hammarskjöld, the support from the Afro-Asian bloc had not come without conditions and did not represent a support for his policies in the Congo. Hammarskjöld's cables to Dayal are often written in a style that defends the UN operation to a third-party, and are much less frank than the cables to Bunche and Cordier. Dayal's memoirs do not give a clear picture of this as he quotes from some very outspoken cables that were not sent to him but to Bunche or Cordier (when Dayal wrote his memoirs he had access to all the cables in the UN archives and he

⁶⁹⁵ See Hoskyns, p. 234.

⁶⁹⁶ Dayal, pp. 84-85.

quotes from them without distinguishing to whom they were originally addressed). Hammarskjöld also later told the Americans that he wrote to Dayal with the idea that Dayal would show his cables to Nehru. “SYG made point that at present time Dayal served useful political purpose in keeping Indian support for UN action in Congo. He believes Dayal has sent direct reports to Nehru which help account for more moderate position India is taking in comparison with certain other Afro-Asians.”⁶⁹⁷

When the Americans, the British and the French summed up the situation after resolution 1474, Charles Lucet, the man who had been sounding the alarm in Paris regarding Hammarskjöld's African ambitions five years earlier, now the Director of Political Affairs in the French Foreign Ministry, explained that the French had abstained as they felt that the UN was not the proper forum for the question, echoing de Gaulle. Lucet added that “The French felt that the goal of the United Nations was to expel white influence from Africa”. Nonetheless, he admitted that the “French were extremely pleased with the result of the latest vote, but [also] pointed to the ambiguity in the resolution”. The problem was that the UN did not know where they were going. The American representative, Merchant, replied that the “United States felt it had no alternative but completely to back Hammarskjöld” for fear of losing all Western influence in the Congo. Without wanting to elaborate on the point, he added that “Hammarskjöld in walking the tight rope had done some things we didn't like” but differed strongly from the French view and said that “there was no question of Hammarskjöld trying to have the white Western elements evicted from Africa”. Merchant also added that “he knew that Hammarskjöld has as a continuing long-term goal the utilization of white Western technicians, preferably Belgians, in the Congo”.⁶⁹⁸

A.2 Khrushchev v. Hammarskjöld in the General Assembly

The fifteenth session of the General Assembly saw an unparalleled number of world leaders descend on New York City. Eisenhower and Khrushchev; Nasser and Nehru, everyone with a stake in the Congo crisis attended – with the exception of de Gaulle, whose absence was demonstrative of French feelings towards the UN. The fact that the number of African countries in the General Assembly was about to rise from 10 to

⁶⁹⁷ Telegram from USUN to State 14 December 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁶⁹⁸ Memorandum of Conversation 21 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

25 with the accession of newly independent states during the 15th General Assembly and in the Introduction to the Annual Report, published on 31 August 1960, Hammarskjöld's focus was on Africa.⁶⁹⁹ The last section read like an election manifesto aimed at the Afro-Asians in which Hammarskjöld portrayed the UN and its Secretary-General as the defender of the small states: "The United Nations has increasingly become the main platform – and the main protector of the interests – of those many nations who feel themselves strong as members of the international family but who are weak in isolation. Thus, an increasing number of nations have come to look to the United Nations for leadership and support [...] They look to the Organization as a spokesman and as an agent for principles which give them strength".⁷⁰⁰ But with their growing power in the General Assembly, the Afro-Asians also grew more assertive. They were not looking to the UN for leadership. On the contrary, they were not very happy with the current leadership of the UN and they were not content to leave Hammarskjöld to his own devices.

Despite the "vote of confidence" in the Secretary-General at the emergency special session, the confidence in Hammarskjöld was less than absolute among the Afro-Asians. Dayal wrote that "Hammarskjöld, however, hoped that in private talks with the visiting world statesmen he might be able to secure some degree of support for his policies in the Congo which might be denied him in their public utterances."⁷⁰¹ As it turned out, it would be the other way around. While Hammarskjöld received praise and support in public from many of the Afro-Asians, in private talks the leaders of the Third World criticised his Congo policies and demanded a change of course in exchange for their continued support.

The first speaker at the General Assembly was Eisenhower, who praised the UN and its Secretary-General. In the present circumstances, Hammarskjöld felt embarrassed over the strong American support and complained to Dayal that Eisenhower's strong endorsement of the UN was not helpful.⁷⁰² The day after the Soviet leader Khrushchev set the tone when he flew out in a harsh attack on "the colonialists" who

⁶⁹⁹ Introduction to the Fifteenth Annual Report of the United Nations in Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol V*, p. 124.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139-140.

⁷⁰¹ Dayal, p. 92.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

“have been doing their dirty work in the Congo through the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his staff”. So far, the criticism of Hammarskjöld was somewhat measured and Khrushchev only asked the General Assembly to “call Mr. Hammarskjöld to order and ensure that he does not misuse the position of the Secretary-General but carries out his functions in strict accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the decisions of the Security Council”.⁷⁰³ Khrushchev then launched his famous troika proposal, aimed at the very mechanism that had allowed Hammarskjöld to direct the UN operation in the Congo so far – the wide margin of discretion of the Secretary-General in interpreting and implementing resolutions. The situation, Khrushchev explained, had reached “a point where the post of Secretary-General, who alone directs the staff and alone interprets and executes the decisions of the Security Council and the sessions of the General Assembly, should be abolished”. Instead, he suggested that the UN should be led by an executive consisting of three persons, a troika, representing the Western powers, the Soviet Block and the neutralist states.

The troika proposal would have given the Soviet Union the same kind of veto right over decisions made by the Secretariat as it had in the Security Council. Often portrayed as a ploy and a personal attack on Hammarskjöld after he had thwarted Soviet plans to infiltrate the Congo, the troika proposal made great sense from a Soviet perspective and variations of it were favoured by several Afro-Asian leaders for similar reasons. The veto right in the Security Council ensured the five permanent members that the UN would not follow policies contrary to their interests. With the rise of the political role of the Secretary-General, political decisions were now taken directly by the Secretary-General. When these decisions were taken against the interests of the Soviet Union – and Khrushchev was not aware of the extent to which Hammarskjöld’s policy in the Congo was directly aimed at keeping the Soviets out – there was no longer any way to oppose this. The Soviets had even tried to censure Hammarskjöld in the Security Council without success. “It is not our organization”, Khrushchev told his confidants on his way to New York. And the reason that the Soviets no longer felt that the UN was their organisation was the Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld – or “Ham” (“bore” in Russian) as Khrushchev referred to him – “is

⁷⁰³ General Assembly Official Records, Fifteenth Session, 869th plenary meeting in Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol V*, p. 194-195.

sticking his nose in important affairs which are none of his business... He has seized authority that doesn't belong to him. He must pay for that. We have got to get rid of him by any means. We'll make it really hot for him" Khrushchev is reported to have said on his way to New York.⁷⁰⁴ Regardless of how Hammarskjöld's actions in the Congo are viewed, Khrushchev was right on this – the UN was no longer an organisation where the Soviets were treated as equal members. The Secretary-General was actively pursuing an anti-Soviet goal as the very basis of his Congo policy. Whether one thinks that Hammarskjöld was right or not in pursuing his anti-Soviet policies is beside the point. Given that the UN as an organisation should serve all its members it cannot be correct to use it against some members, especially without informing them. Barco, the deputy US permanent representative sympathised with the Soviet position and thought the US would have acted in a similar manner if the UN had been in opposition to US policies.⁷⁰⁵

Hammarskjöld took Khrushchev's attack with ease and was in great spirits, revelling at the chance to cross swords with the Soviet leader. He cabled Dayal that he "had great fun in preparing proper reply" to Khrushchev's speech.⁷⁰⁶ Hammarskjöld replied to Khrushchev that "it is a question not of a man but of an institution" and immediately made it a Soviet-UN confrontation, rather than a Soviet-Hammarskjöld confrontation. "Time and again", Hammarskjöld continued, "the United Nations has had to face situations in which a wrong move might have tended to throw the weight of the Organization over in favour of this or that specific party in a conflict of a primarily domestic character. To permit that to happen is indeed to intervene in domestic affairs contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Charter."⁷⁰⁷ The disingenuousness of this remark, when compared to how Hammarskjöld had thrown the weight of the UN in favour of the anti-Lumumba party, is striking. By his own definition, Hammarskjöld had clearly intervened in domestic affairs. Khrushchev renewed his attacks on the Secretary-General and on 3 October explicitly asked him to resign. In the afternoon of 3 October Hammarskjöld gave his reply in an eloquent idealistic appeal that also catered directly to the sensibilities of the Afro-Asians and portrayed the UN under attack as their organisation. "It is not the Soviet Union or

⁷⁰⁴ Namikas, pp. 107-108.

⁷⁰⁵ Oral History Barco, p. 1045.

⁷⁰⁶ Dayal, p. 94.

⁷⁰⁷ Statement of reply, 26 September 1960, in Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol V*, p. 197.

indeed any other Big Powers which need the United Nations for their protection. It is all the others. In this sense, the Organization is first of all their Organization and I deeply believe in the wisdom with which they will be able to use it and guide it. I shall remain in my post during the term of office as a servant of the Organization in the interest of all those other nations as long as they wish me to do so".⁷⁰⁸ After these words, a standing ovation broke out in the General Assembly.

Most of the literature point to this exchange between Hammarskjöld and Khrushchev as the high point of Hammarskjöld's career, where he stood up against the big powers for the small powers, and this was certainly how Hammarskjöld wanted to frame the debate.⁷⁰⁹ The discussion that Khrushchev was seeking, however, was that Hammarskjöld had supported one big power (the USA) against another. In this Khrushchev was correct. It might have been for enlightened reasons, but Hammarskjöld's policies had been parallel to US policies and constructed and implemented in close coordination with the Americans. Moreover, they had been expressly designed to be anti-Soviet. The fact that Hammarskjöld was now trying to portray it as if he stood up on behalf of the small states was part of his long-term strategy to position himself as a leader of the neutralist countries and increased by the tactical need to keep Afro-Asian support for the UN operation in the Congo, which had been crucial from the outset of the Congo crisis.

Khrushchev's attack on Hammarskjöld, especially coming so soon after the "vote of confidence" might have appeared headless. On the other hand, Khrushchev might not have had as his goal the actual adoption of the troika proposal or Hammarskjöld's resignation, but rather to induce him to take a more careful approach in the Congo and curb his pro-Western policies. At least this was what the Americans thought that the goal of the Soviet tactic had been already in the Security Council.⁷¹⁰ As Khrushchev pointed out, Hammarskjöld's victory was a "pyrrhic victory".⁷¹¹

The support of the Afro-Asian bloc would only come at the price of a radical change in UN policy in the Congo. All of the leaders of the neutralist countries were present in New York. They now tried to push Hammarskjöld to change his Congo policy in a

⁷⁰⁸ Statement of reply, 3 October 1960, Cordier/Foote (eds.), *Public Papers Vol V*, pp. 200-201.

⁷⁰⁹ See e.g. Lipsey, pp. 446-448; Urquhart, pp. 471-472.

⁷¹⁰ Telegram from USUN to State 26 August 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷¹¹ Kalb, p. 111.

direction more favourable to Lumumba, who, with all his flaws, they still regarded as the legitimate Prime Minister of the Congo, in return for their support against Khrushchev's troika proposal. The new policy that most of the Afro-Asians demanded included "the ending of the vendetta against Lumumba, the refusal of any kind of recognition to Mobutu, and a real effort to encourage political reconciliation and to prevent Belgian military assistance from bolstering the Katanga regime".⁷¹² In private discussions with Hammarskjöld they made it clear that their support was conditional on changing UN policy in this direction. Nasser organised a meeting between the nonaligned leaders and Hammarskjöld. Nasser summed up the feelings of the nonaligned countries when he told Hammarskjöld: "You are facing us with a very difficult problem... You have told me that various things happened without your knowledge. You are not able to control what is going on. That is why we criticize you. We know you. We trust you, yet we cannot approve of what you are doing. You are asking for a mandate from us, and we are going to back you against the troika idea, nevertheless we feel that you are undertaking something you cannot control and we can blame nobody but you."⁷¹³

Hammarskjöld was growing increasingly worried and wrote to Dayal, in an obvious attempt to win the support of Nehru, that "The role of Nehru will now be decisive. If he sways, the public Afro-Asian front may break with very far reaching consequences for the Organization."⁷¹⁴ To the dismay of Hammarskjöld, Nehru did not think that the troika proposal was without merit; he had even planned to propose his own troika proposal as a compromise. Finally, on 3 October, Nehru spoke out against the troika proposal but he also criticised the UN and said that the Secretariat was too weighted in a pro-Western fashion. Both Nkrumah and Touré suggested that three assistant secretaries-general should be appointed to represent the three blocks and supervise the Secretary-General. Touré, as the only Afro-Asian leader, joined in Khrushchev's attacks on Hammarskjöld.⁷¹⁵ This would also lead to a dramatic change in UN policy in the Congo – where the restoration of democracy and a reconvening of parliament, as suggested by Nehru at the General Assembly, would become the new goal of the

⁷¹² Hoskyns, pp. 247 and 234.

⁷¹³ Heikal, Mohamed, *The Cairo Documents: The Inside Story of Nasser and His Relationships with World Leaders, Rebels and Statesmen* (New York: Doubleday, 1973), pp. 183-184.

⁷¹⁴ Dayal, p. 100.

⁷¹⁵ Kalb, p. 122.

UN. This change in UN policy was being implemented on the ground by another Indian, Hammarskjöld's new man on the spot, Rajeshwar Dayal, who had replaced Bunche.

B “The Search for Legality”

B.1 The Change in Hammarskjöld's Congo policy

Dayal arrived in the Congo on the verge of Kasavubu's coup and in his memoirs he describes how the Western ambassadors congratulated the UN on the “courageous initiative on the part of the United Nations” to support Kasavubu; and, he added “Some of them made it plain that since their countries paid a large contribution to United Nations funds they had a right to expect their notions of what ONUC should do to guide the Operation.”⁷¹⁶ If this was indeed what they thought they were in for a disappointment. Dayal eventually rescinded Cordier's decision to close the radio and the airports.⁷¹⁷ The African ambassadors also paid their respects to Dayal, and, contrary to the Western ambassadors, their sympathies lay with Lumumba: “They appeared certain that Lumumba enjoyed the confidence of Parliament and would be able to regain his position. Some of them conceded that Lumumba was inclined to be erratic and unbalanced, but all agreed that he was a true patriot, working, according to the best of his lights, in the interests of his country.”⁷¹⁸ Less exigent than their Western homologues, the African ambassadors only demanded “even-handed action” from the UN; “they did not doubt its purposes, although they questioned some of its decisions”.⁷¹⁹ “Even-handed action” was what Dayal was determined to give them.

From the outset, Dayal's views were aligned with the general ideas of the neutralist countries, in particular Nehru's emphasis on parliament and a return to democracy coupled with the non-recognition of Mobutu. As Dayal put it in his memoirs: “It was obvious that ONUC could have no truck with a régime whose only sanction was force.” All through September, Ghana, Guinea and the UAR had been trying hard to negotiate a reconciliation between Kasavubu and Lumumba, intent on a return to the status quo ante the dismissal of Lumumba, or at least his inclusion in government as a

⁷¹⁶ Dayal, 51.

⁷¹⁷ Dayal, p. 46. Dayal did, however, uphold the decision longer than he claims in his memoirs, see e.g. Cable from Dayal to Hammarskjöld, 11 September 1960, UN Archives Series 217 Box 2 File 1.

⁷¹⁸ Dayal, p. 51.

⁷¹⁹ Dayal, p. 52.

minister.⁷²⁰ The American ambassador, Timberlake, instead urged Kasavubu to resist any attempts at reconciliation and to arrest Lumumba on 26 September. Kasavubu replied that he had already issued an arrest order, but the UN was making difficulties about the legality of such a move.⁷²¹

On 30 September, Hammarskjöld told the new British Permanent Representative to the UN, Sir Patrick Dean, who had replaced Dixon, that those who thought that a strong central government could be established in the Congo had no understanding of the real situation: “All the leaders were third-rate politicians, and the best that could be hoped for was the establishment of a weak government which would lean on the United Nations”. Hammarskjöld also “confessed for the first time that he did not see any clear line to follow”, but “felt that the Afro-Asians must be kept at arms length”. He would not suggest that any action was taken to achieve conciliation as paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1474 outlined. Dean thought that the “explanation of Hammarskjöld’s passivity in the face of increasing chaos in the Congo is no doubt to be found in the divisions among the governments represented on the Advisory Committee and the need for him to preserve the utmost possible neutrality. He presumably considers it impossible for him to convene a round table conference without including Lumumba, and fears that the inclusion of Lumumba would mean either the latter’s return to power or the total breakdown of the effort”.⁷²² The pressure of the Afro-Asian countries on Hammarskjöld in New York was starting to have an effect. Since Hammarskjöld did not want to take any positive action that might favour Lumumba, he resigned himself to a passivity that he hoped would pass as impartiality and neutrality – the passivity was motivated by the political situation, but was then raised to a principle that guided actions, while the causal effect was in fact the opposite.

After several foiled attempts to arrest Lumumba Timberlake protested to Dayal on 11 October. Dayal explained to Timberlake that the support of the Afro-Asians at the General Assembly had been “won by narrow margin” and that the Afro-Asians would strongly object to Lumumba’s arrest. The “eventual solution Congo depended on united support Afro-Asian group”, Dayal concluded. Timberlake asked if this meant

⁷²⁰ Telegram Leopoldville to State 22 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷²¹ Telegram from Leopoldville to State 26 September 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷²² Telegram from UKUN (Dean) to FO, No. 956, 30 September 1960, JB2251/272, FO 371/146780.

that Dayal supported a reconciliation with Lumumba to which Dayal replied simply that “he hoped democratic solution could be obtained”.⁷²³ Timberlake commented in a telegram to State Department that Dayal was looking for solution “which might be viable in civilized environment but not in Congo” and that Dayal would not change his view without specific instructions from Hammarskjöld.⁷²⁴

The same day Herter paid a courtesy call on Hammarskjöld. Hammarskjöld started by saying that the situation continued to be “extremely messy”. “No one person there strong enough to depend upon for future. Kasavubu was doing absolutely nothing. Mobutu was weak reed. Lumumba very likely dope addict. Bomboko suspected of being imperialist stooge. In short there was no one on scene who could be really helpful in bringing order out of chaos.”⁷²⁵ In this situation Hammarskjöld could do nothing but steer a careful course and await developments. Hammarskjöld now also for the first time told the Americans that he was against the arrest of Lumumba. Instead Hammarskjöld proposed to build toward a leadership for the legislative body in the Congo – noting in passing that a problem with this was that “some members were ‘bought up’, some were in hiding and many of course could not be relied upon”. Hammarskjöld “seemed in excellent spirits despite severity of recent attacks upon him” and Herter told him that the US “stood back of him one-thousand per cent”.⁷²⁶

After this discussion, the Americans resigned themselves to Hammarskjöld’s argument that Lumumba’s arrest would play “in hands extremists in UN”, and in any event, they noted, nothing could be done as long as Hammarskjöld was against the arrest. Instead, the Americans focused on getting Hammarskjöld to agree to move Lumumba from the Prime Minister’s residence as this was perceived as adding to his legitimacy.⁷²⁷ When Wadsworth, who had replaced Lodge as permanent representative, went to see Hammarskjöld regarding this new proposal, Hammarskjöld first prevaricated and said that the Prime Minister’s residence was “merely one house in row of others along river”. But Wadsworth insisted that these

⁷²³ Telegram Leopoldville to State 11 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷²⁴ Telegram from Léopoldville to State, No 950, 11 October 1960, NARA RG 59 CDF 1960-63 Box 1956.

⁷²⁵ The notetaker was unclear if Bunche referred to the UN or the US and wrote, in what was perhaps a Freudian slip of the pen indicating a general difficulty in differentiating US from UN, that “In this connection, Bunche commented it would be ruinous for US [UN?] to tie its policy closely to any one of these individuals.” Telegram USUN to State 11 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷²⁶ Telegram from USUN to State 11 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷²⁷ Telegram from State to USUN 12 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

symbols should be taken from Lumumba. When Hammarskjöld told Wadsworth that he “still regarded Lumumba as being PM” the extent of the realignment of UN policy in the Congo really dawned on the Americans. In a strange argument for someone normally so concerned with legal decorum Hammarskjöld explained this volte-face by saying that he had always regarded Kasavubu’s sacking of Lumumba as legal, but “because of surrounding circumstances and general situation this act did not have intended legal consequences”. In other words, it had become opportune to consider Lumumba the Prime Minister. After exchanging some further legal arguments to no avail, Wadsworth said that recent UN actions had tended to strengthen Lumumba and weaken any alternative government and asked whether Hammarskjöld, if he could not move Lumumba from the Prime Minister’s residence, could take “other steps” to bolster Lumumba’s opponents. Hammarskjöld’s reply must have given Wadsworth a small shock. Hammarskjöld calmly told Wadsworth that “this was perfectly valid objective for Timberlake and U.S. but it could not be objective for UN; on this our views would simply have to differ”.⁷²⁸ Hammarskjöld added “that UN had to act on basis of principles; these principles had previously worked in favor of Kasavubu and others; they were now working in favor of Lumumba”. This oft repeated mantra of impartial principles must have seemed a bit rich to the Americans considering that Hammarskjöld had told them a month earlier that his aim was to “break Lumumba” and that his “actions were designed to support Kasavubu”.⁷²⁹ In his comment on the report of the meeting Wadsworth summed up Hammarskjöld’s new position as he perceived it⁷³⁰:

“While we have no reason to believe [Hammarskjöld] has changed his views about Lumumba, it seems apparent that heavy Soviet attack against him coupled particularly with support of Lumumba and public or private criticisms by usual group of Afro-Asians, have resulted in SYG shifting toward position involving accommodation with Lumumba. [...] Our estimate is that this is effort on his part to accommodate himself to what he feels are realities of political forces at play, that while he would be delighted to see Lumumba out of way he feels he can no longer take any hand in it but must leave it entirely to others, and that he must now play UN hand along indicated lines even if result is to bolster Lumumba.”⁷³¹

⁷²⁸ Hammarskjöld was also critical of Menon who was trying to become the leader of the committee.

⁷²⁹ See previous chapter.

⁷³⁰ Telegram USUN to State 15 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷³¹ Telegram USUN to State 15 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

The British were less alarmed but thought that “the Secretariat have run out of ideas” and this would lead to “an obvious danger” that the Secretariat might cave in to pressure from “the more militant elements among the Africans”.⁷³² The Foreign Office wrote to the British mission in New York that “the Secretariat must of course maintain their reputation for impartiality [...] but if the problems of the Congo are approached in too legalistic a spirit we shall get nowhere”. Adding “I should feel happier if there were some evidence that Mr. Hammarskjöld himself had some idea of where he was going”.⁷³³ After a long interview with Dayal in an effort to find out what the UN policy was for the future, the British ambassador in Leopoldville, Scott, reported that “The short answer is that they do not know”. The long answer seemed to be that “a legal government with new constitution to reign in Lumumba” was the goal, although this could only be envisaged after “a period of quiet and order had elapsed”. At the end of the talk, Dayal implied to Scott that “the United Nations was compelled by its own limitations and pressure of the fourteen nation Advisory Group in New York to seek a legalistic way forward”. Scott concluded that “the search for legality in fact is evidently the basis of the United Nations policy”.⁷³⁴

B.2 “Who is the UN neutral against?”

The State Department were “seriously concerned” by the conversation Wadsworth had had with Hammarskjöld.⁷³⁵ From Leopoldville, Timberlake reported that the UN policies on the ground ran on similar “or more neutralist lines”. Furthermore “Men in street, particularly opponents of Lumumba, are simply not convinced UN is impartial [...] Question now being asked is ‘who is the UN neutral against?’”.⁷³⁶ The Commissioners were being rebuffed by Dayal who “considers members unimportant schoolboys”. Ironically, after first being criticised for his actions by the Lumumbists, Hammarskjöld was now being criticised for his inaction by the anti-Lumumbists. This was the problem of not intervening in internal affairs. As Timberlake put it: “I am first to agree that UN is in position where it has been and will be accused at times by both sides for partiality to opponents. However, it is also true that plain inaction or

⁷³² F.O. Minute by E.B. Boothby 21 October 1960, JB 2251/294, FO 371/146782.

⁷³³ Telegram from FO to UKUN, No. 2183 Saving, 25 October 1960, JB 2251/294, FO 371/146782.

⁷³⁴ Telegram from Leopoldville (Scott) to FO, No. 958, 29 October 1960, JB 2251/292, FO 371/146782.

⁷³⁵ Telegram from State to USUN 18 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷³⁶ Telegram from Leopoldville to State 19 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

simple interposition can and often does have direct bearing on outcome. It is in such position today.”⁷³⁷

The Americans concluded from the discussion with Hammarskjöld that there had been a “basic change” in his position. The fact that Hammarskjöld now said he regarded Lumumba as Prime Minister marked “a shift from SYG position both from legal as well as political point of view”.⁷³⁸ Herter understood the pressures Hammarskjöld was under: “We appreciate fully pressure that SYG has been under from USSR. Moreover, we understand completely reasons for doing everything feasible for maintaining maximum support among Africans and Asians.” But if Hammarskjöld’s new policy was more than just a temporary measure to accommodate the Afro-Asians, then the US would have to reassess their support for ONUC.⁷³⁹ In a National Security Council meeting the next day, 20 October, Herter said that “the most disturbing aspect of the [Congo] situation was Hammarskjöld’s apparent change of heart”. Especially as Cordier had told Herter that if Lumumba returned, that would spell the end of ONUC as he would be likely to ask the UN to leave.⁷⁴⁰ Herter decided to send the seasoned diplomat Charles E. “Chip” Bohlen to discuss “frankly” with Hammarskjöld and explain the American conclusions on his new policy.

Bohlen met with Hammarskjöld on 22 October. Hammarskjöld expressed “complete” disagreement with the legal analysis of the Americans, although he had, as the Americans noted, previously been of the same opinion, even stating this on the record to the Security Council.⁷⁴¹ Hammarskjöld now made a strange legal exposition to the Americans and claimed that since Ileo’s new government had not been sworn in, and after the closure of parliament, “whatever fragments of Prime Minister’s authority

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁸ Here, the Americans outlined some of the occasions when Hammarskjöld had said that he did not see Lumumba as PM: “On September 7 he told Wallner he would recognize, deal with and by implication, strongly support Kasavubu in his struggle with Lumumba. On September 10 he told USUN he still must break Lumumba and believed he will be able to do it, but that it was extremely difficult “to break Hitlers when alternatives were Hindenburgs.” Moreover, SYG made statement in SC meeting of ____ to effect that he was dealing with Kasavubu.” Telegram State to USUN 19 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷³⁹ Telegram State to USUN 19 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁴⁰ Memorandum of Discussion 20 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁴¹ Hammarskjöld also told the Americans that he refused to accept that Belgian constitutional practice should be accepted in the interpretation of the Loi Fondamentale, although he had himself interpreted the Loi Fondamentale in the light of Belgian precedents earlier, see Telegram from USUN to State 22 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

remain are, due largely to Kasavubu's way of handling it, in Lumumba"; Lumumba "was 'more PM' than anyone else". This meant that the UN could not deal with him as PM, yet could not disregard him completely. Hammarskjöld then explained that UN must "keep clean on the record, wherever it may lead". He added that "What in past actions or behavior seemed to indicate an anti-Lumumba line by SYG now seemingly indicated opposite." The Americans must have been astonished to hear this from the man who had spoken of "breaking Lumumba" and told them his actions were designed to support Kasavubu.⁷⁴² In a thinly veiled threat of withdrawing US financial support for ONUC Bohlen made it "absolutely clear US regarded present application SYG's rule of impartiality as inevitably operating in favor of Lumumba, and of consequences this might have for US policy". The discussion then turned to a more positive note to discuss what could be done in the future. Hammarskjöld "felt UNGA's inaction re seating rep of Congo made his impartial behavior as between different govt'l figures absolutely consistent with overall UN stand. Way to change it, he appeared to hint, would be by GA decision".⁷⁴³ This "hint" would lead to a full-on American campaign to seat Kasavubu in the General Assembly. Bohlen's comment to Herter after the two-hour conversation with Hammarskjöld was that "Our strongest impression is that he sees no clear course of action in Leopoldville to deal with the present situation and has fallen back on a completely do nothing 'impartiality', although he realizes that this may be working in Lumumba's favor." Regarding the harsh notes to the Belgians, Bohlen thought Hammarskjöld was "taking this attitude in order to do something and in particular to gain favor with African states". Bohlen did, however, believe that they could change Hammarskjöld's attitude if they came up with a serious plan for a caretaker government that would have at least the trappings of legality. The Americans also felt that Dayal was a "major factor in situation which SYG refused to face".⁷⁴⁴

The Americans now launched two ambitious attempts, based on their discussions with Hammarskjöld, that were aimed at giving the de facto government in the Congo a cloak of legality in order for the UN to be able to cooperate with them. The first was an attempt to appoint a caretaker government that would get approval by parliament

⁷⁴² Telegram USUN to State 22 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁴³ Telegram USUN to State 22 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁴⁴ Telegram USUN to State 22 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

and the second to seat Kasavubu's delegation in the General Assembly. In a follow up discussion on 29 October, Barco got Hammarskjöld to agree in vague terms to a US push to get Kasavubu to appoint a caretaker government that could be approved by parliament to escape the current constitutional limbo. Hammarskjöld immediately replied that it would be most useful if the Americans could "put some 'fire' into Kasavubu" so long as they did it "delicately" and not "visibly", adding that they should "put nothing in his pocket" and "keep [their] skirts from showing".⁷⁴⁵

Hammarskjöld was also showing his Machiavellian traits in his handling of the Conciliation committee that had been decided on by the General Assembly resolution. Calling it "idiotic" from the outset, Hammarskjöld had been trying to stall it from ever getting on its way.⁷⁴⁶ According to the resolution, it was to be a sub-committee to the Advisory Committee, so Hammarskjöld could not prevent it by any open means as the Advisory Committee would decide on it. Instead, he had used what he referred to in discussions with the Americans as a "socratic" method: "he had asked questions designed to frighten them away from taking such step, so far with some success".⁷⁴⁷ Now, however, the group seemed to be preparing to go to the Congo despite Hammarskjöld's best "socratic" efforts. Hammarskjöld then came up with another device to forestall the group's departure to the Congo. Hammarskjöld suggested that they should obtain clear instructions on the terms of reference from their respective governments that they could all agree on before departing. To the Americans Hammarskjöld noted laconically that he "doubted group could ever agree on anything".⁷⁴⁸

C Democracy and its Limits

C.1 Winning Elections in the Congo and New York

The American ambassador in Leopoldville, Timberlake, was tasked with preparing the ground for a parliamentary approval of a caretaker government. Timberlake thought that the prospects for a democratic government emerging in the Congo were

⁷⁴⁵ Telegram from USUN to State 29 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁴⁶ Telegram from UKUN (Dean) to FO, No. 1212, 31 October 1960, JB 2251/295, FO 371/146782.

⁷⁴⁷ Telegram USUN to State 22 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁴⁸ Telegram from USUN to State 29 October 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

very bleak: “Idealistically, UN hopes for democratically approved, relatively stable government with which it can deal with some confidence and which has international respectability according to democratic standards. I do not, unfortunately, see such government emerging for very long time.”⁷⁴⁹ Timberlake also thought that Lumumba was the most likely person to get approval by parliament.

By the end of October newspapers were full of reports of the return of Belgians. Dean reported from New York that this “could easily provoke an explosion of feeling”; anything that could be represented as “the restoration of Belgian influence in the Congo” would reunite the Afro-Asians on a harsher anti-colonialist line and “drive a wedge between the United Nations and the anti-Lumumba forces in the Congo”.⁷⁵⁰ To take some of the steam out of these attacks, Hammarskjöld asked Dayal to write a report on the situation in the Congo, which was made public on 2 November. The report was very critical of both Mobutu and the Belgians. It is striking that Hammarskjöld let the report be published in Dayal’s name. Hammarskjöld had written all previous reports on the Congo himself and it was well known that he drafted the reports himself with extreme consideration for the weight of every word. Now, all of a sudden the Special Representative wrote the report, which was ordered by Hammarskjöld who accepted it with minor adjustments. Hammarskjöld no doubt felt that there was a need for the UN to come out publicly against the Belgians and Mobutu to keep their credibility with the Afro-Asians. Leaving it to Dayal to write and publish the report in his name, Hammarskjöld could do so and still take cover behind Dayal. The Americans also thought that the report reflected more of Dayal than Hammarskjöld. Instead, the US decided to focus all its efforts on having Kasavubu’s delegation seated as the representative of the Congo to strengthen him and make him the preferred partner of the UN.⁷⁵¹

On 11 November, Herter and Bohlen met with the Belgian Foreign Minister Wigny in New York. Wigny mentioned the difficulties the Belgians were having with Hammarskjöld and noted Hammarskjöld’s expressed desire to “crush Tshombe”. Wigny thought it would be a mistake to deal with Katanga before Leopoldville. Only after a moderate government had been securely installed in Leopoldville should Katanga reenter the fold of the central government in the Congo. Not wanting to

⁷⁴⁹ Telegram from Leopoldville to State 2 November 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁵⁰ Telegram from UKUN (Dean) to FO, No. 1200, 28 October 1960, JB 2251/293, FO 371/146782; and Telegram from UKUN (Dean) to FO, No. 1212, 31 October 1960, JB 2251/295, FO 371/146782.

⁷⁵¹ Telegram from State to USUN 4 November 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

entrust the future of the Congo to anything as risky as a democratic election – and convinced that this would, like the first time the Belgians had tried this, lead to a Lumumba victory – Wigny told the Americans that they should first settle on “some satisfactory group of leaders” and only then convene Parliament to approve them: “to ask Parliament itself to select the leaders would almost inevitably lead to the return of Lumumba”.⁷⁵²

For the Americans, the initial triumph over Soviet machinations in the Congo had, with the failure of Kasavubu to get parliamentary approval for his new government, led them into the awkward position of siding with the colonialists against the legal government of a newly independent state. The Americans realized the need to give an aura of legality to the whole project. The Americans were concerned not so much with elections as with the result of the elections. An election that would see Lumumba returned to power was never an option. The only problem was that even with cajoling and bribery it was an uphill climb to secure a vote for a new government that was not Lumumbist. The State Department also preferred to keep Mobutu in place (“maintain his strong-man role”) and “leaving Ileo as little more than figurehead”.⁷⁵³

In the United Nations the question of whether to seat Kasavubu’s delegation as the representatives of the Congo in the General Assembly was coming to a head. Several countries were opposed to seating Kasavubu’s delegation as it would send a signal that Kasavubu was recognized and Lumumba was not. The Americans had already managed to get a clear vote in the Credentials Committee (a committee of the General Assembly in which questions of credentials are discussed and voted on before referral to the General Assembly for a normally routine vote).⁷⁵⁴ Wadsworth, asked the State Department to put additional pressure on the capitals of a list of countries in addition to the pressure from the US representatives in the corridors of the UN building.⁷⁵⁵ Wadsworth had been right to make every effort to secure the necessary votes and it was only with a slim margin that the Americans managed to get Kasavubu’s delegation seated. The General Assembly met in plenum seven times to discuss the

⁷⁵² Memorandum of Conversation 11 November 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁵³ Telegram from State to Leopoldville 12 November 1960; see also Telegram Leopoldville to State 15 November 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁵⁴ The six countries that voted for the seating of Kasavubu’s delegation were the US, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Haiti, the Philippines and Spain.

⁷⁵⁵ Telegram USUN to State 16 November 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

seating of Kasavubu's delegation between 18 and 22 November. On November 22, the Assembly first rejected a motion to adjourn discussions by Ghana by a vote of 50 to 34, with 13 abstentions; a similar motion by Mali was then rejected by a vote of 47 to 32, with 16 abstentions. After a third attempt, this time a Guinean proposal to postpone, was defeated by 50 votes to 32, with 14 abstentions a resolution to seat Kasavubu's delegation was finally adopted by a vote of 53 to 24, with 19 abstentions.⁷⁵⁶ Despite the divisive vote in the General Assembly, the Americans greeted the seating of the delegation as a triumph that would now be used to build momentum in the Congo. State Department hoped that "Hammar-skjold will no longer give undue weight to views of Ghana, Guinea and others in implementing UN decisions and will now be prepared work forth-rightly with Kasavubu and his supporters."⁷⁵⁷ The vote had been won with just a few votes. The Americans and their allies could still command a majority in the General Assembly, but the opponents had grown in number and importance, it was no longer the isolated votes of the Soviet Bloc.

C.2 *"Things fall apart"*

If the Americans were hoping for a fresh start in the Congo with cooperation between the UN and Kasavubu they were wrong. Kasavubu, who had triumphed over Lumumba in a coup abetted by the UN, was no longer interested in working with the UN. Dayal's policy of not working with Mobutu and his commissioners had also included not recognising Kasavubu's authority in any matter except the very limited function of a ceremonial head of state.⁷⁵⁸ On 23 November Hammar-skjöld met with Kasavubu, who asked him to recall Dayal and start preparing for reducing UN troops. Two days later, when Hammar-skjöld met with the Americans he complained about Kasavubu's attitude, which he thought was caused by Belgian influences (Wigny had publicly celebrated Kasavubu's seating as a victory, making it harder for Hammar-skjöld to work with Kasavubu without being criticised by the Afro-Asians). Hammar-skjöld agreed with the US assessment that the vote in the General Assembly had strengthened Kasavubu but added that he saw both advantages and disadvantages with the vote – without specifying what he meant – and that the latter outweighed the

⁷⁵⁶ General Assembly Resolution 1498 (XV).

⁷⁵⁷ Telegram from State to USUN 23 November 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁵⁸ Telegram from State to USUN 23 November 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

former. Barco told Hammarskjöld that the US thought the UN “should cooperate with Kasavubu and not continue to put roadblocks in way of Congolese exercising their authority”.⁷⁵⁹

After meeting with Hammarskjöld Barco saw Kasavubu who told him of his complaints to Hammarskjöld about the UN in general and Dayal in particular: “everything had been fine with Bunche but things started to go badly when Dayal came”. He also complained that “UN conciliation effort should be to help Congolese, not to try to impose solutions”. According to Kasavubu the “UN in Congo had not in past cooperated with Congolese enough but had attempted to take over.” “UN wants to do everything itself”, he exclaimed. To Kasavubu, “UN role was to help Congolese. There could not be two armies in Congo under separate commanders, for example. UN should help Congolese Army establish order.” In almost identical words, this was Lumumba’s complaint against Hammarskjöld. This was also what the invitation signed by both Lumumba and Kasavubu had asked the UN to provide – the invitation that was still the legal foundation for the UN mandate in the Congo – and what the three Security Council resolutions had said the UN should provide.

On 2 December, Hammarskjöld told the Americans that anti-UN feelings in the Congo had increased after the seating of Kasavubu’s delegation. Hammarskjöld told Barco that the “Congolese [*1 line of source text not declassified*] were easily depressed and easily excitable. Recent successes had made them “cocky””. Bomboko had even told Dayal that “Congo at war with UN”. Barco replied diplomatically that: “Perhaps Congolese did need be handled with firmness but they must also be treated with sympathy.” Hammarskjöld agreed to this when it came to specific cases, but when the general attitude was concerned, he thought this was “harder to define but essentially UN must keep them “chastened””. Regarding the potential secession of Stanleyville, Hammarskjöld shared the American concerns, indicating that he thought as many as 20 states were likely to recognize a secessionist Orientale province, and that Lumumba would be able to get supplies, military equipment and possibly even some planes, and might raise 3,000 men. But he differed on the strategy. While the Americans wanted the UN to try and restore order in advance of an attempt at secession, Hammarskjöld saw the UN as taking a passive role acting mainly by

⁷⁵⁹ Telegram from USUN to State 25 November 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

“interposition” between Stanleyville troops and Mobutu’s troops to prevent fighting. To the Americans such action by the UN would be seen as a strong rebuff to Kasavubu.⁷⁶⁰ Although the conversation with Hammarskjöld was the “most cordial and constructive one we had with him for some time”, Barco was “not at all satisfied” that Hammarskjöld was pursuing the right line of action: “His attitude of keeping Congolese “chastened” seems to us be totally wrong psychological approach, for example, and Dayal’s pursuit such attitude in Leopoldville clearly causes sharp Congolese reactions. We tried convey to him our belief this wrong approach but are not sure to what extent we got across”.⁷⁶¹

With Lumumba’s capture on 2 December the political temperature in the Congo went down somewhat and the threat of a rival government under Lumumba in Stanleyville became less immediate. In New York, however, the political heat was on Hammarskjöld over the UN handling of Lumumba’s arrest. Again, UN inaction was criticized from all sides. Timberlake reported from the Congo that he thought this would lead to a renewed “neutralist” attack on the UN that would “take form of concentrated attack on UN and particularly UNOC for favoring “imperialist” policies and on inefficiency UNOC”. Dayal, however, in Timberlake’s words “views scene with Olympian detachment, unconcealed disdain and anxiously awaits day when he can get out of Congo mess [...] He is man of principle but does not understand practical problems involved in translating them into action”.

To add to Hammarskjöld’s woes the Soviet Union had declared that they would no longer finance the UN operation in the Congo and the French were about to do the same.⁷⁶² This meant that Hammarskjöld would loose not only French financial support, but also the votes of the former French colonies in Africa, still in the sway of the *metropole* when it came to voting in the UN.⁷⁶³ When the Congo was next discussed in the General Assembly on 16 December, Ghana tabled a draft resolution that called for the full implementation of the UN mandate and “urged the immediate release of all political prisoners, the immediate convening of Parliament with U.N.

⁷⁶⁰ Barco also reported that “Telegrams he read from Dayal showed further evidence this element UN attitude, frequently using word “rebuked” in connection his talks with Congolese”. Telegram from USUN to State 2 December 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁶¹ Telegram from USUN to State 2 December 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁶² Memorandum of Tripartite Conversation 15 December 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

⁷⁶³ Oral History Barco, pp. 701-2.

protection, and measures to prevent the Congolese Armed Forces from interfering in the country's political life, demanded the immediate withdrawal of all Belgian military and quasi-military personnel, and recommended that all necessary economic and technical assistance should be provided promptly through the United Nations so that it would not be used as an instrument for continuing foreign intervention". The following day, the Americans and the British tabled a draft resolution in support of Hammarskjöld that requested the Secretary-General to "continue to discharge the mandate entrusted to him by the United Nations". It soon became clear that the French African group in the UN was not going to vote for the Anglo-American resolution, and that without their support the resolution would not get the required two-thirds majority.⁷⁶⁴ After discussions, the two rival resolutions were taken to a vote on 20 December. The Ghanaian resolution was rejected by 42 votes to 28, with 27 abstentions. Only two African countries, the Congo represented by Kasavubu and South Africa, opposed the resolution. The Anglo-American resolution received 43 votes in favor, 22 against, and 32 abstentions, failing to get the necessary two-third majority. Not one African nation voted for the resolution; Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, and the United Arab Republic voted against it and all the others, including the Congo, abstained. For the first time, the Americans had lost their control of the General Assembly. The Anglo-American resolution had also been an endorsement of Hammarskjöld and the fact that it was not adopted meant that Hammarskjöld had now also lost his support in the General Assembly. Hammarskjöld had been very confident of his ability to hold sway over the General Assembly and correctly predicted the outcome of the first vote in the emergency special session. He had, however, greatly miscalculated the sentiment of the neutralist countries and their demands on the Secretary-General and the UN. Despite his attempts to placate these, he had failed to get renewed confidence for his leadership of the UN operation in the Congo.

After following an interventionist policy during the first phase of the Congo crisis, culminating with the consecutive coups by Kasavubu and Mobutu, the UN had tried a non-interventionist policy that had failed to address the situation in the Congo and to shore up Afro-Asian support in New York. As the British and the Americans noted, this phase of the crisis was characterized by a lack of ideas and executive action by the UN. In October, Hammarskjöld had said that they needed to wait and see how the

⁷⁶⁴ Telegram from USUN to State 18 December 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

situation would develop. In December, the situation had become much worse. The Orientale Province was on the verge of secession and in Katanga Tshombe, with the backing of foreign mining interests, had used the time since the UN first entered Elisabethville in September to build up a mercenary force to create his “concept of a Shangri-la in Katanga”. Timberlake reported from a visit to Elisabethville that “Belgian colons, led principally by Union Miniere, obviously encouraged Tshombe in separatism”.⁷⁶⁵ The Congo was virtually split into three parts, although this, as well, is a simplification as none of these three parts held any real control of the full extent of its territory. It was clear that no new ideas would come from Hammarskjöld or Dayal who were now merely reacting to events, not proactively trying to steer them. But a young senator from Massachusetts, with a marked interest in Africa, was preparing to be sworn in as the 35th President of the United States – and he was full of ideas for the Congo.

⁷⁶⁵ Telegram from Leopoldville to State 28 November 1960 FRUS 1958-60 Vol XIV.

Chapter 7: “Il faut faire de la politique”: The Congo Crisis from January to September 1961

A An Old Policy with a New Mandate

A.1 Hammarskjöld and the Kennedy Administration: A New Start with Old Friends

The Kennedy administration provided Hammarskjöld with a much-needed opportunity for a new start in the Congo. The new Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and the new permanent representative to the UN, Adlai Stevenson, were both regular guests of Hammarskjöld, often stopping by for luncheon or dinner in New York.⁷⁶⁶ Cordier also regarded both as “close personal friends”.⁷⁶⁷ On 25 January Rusk initiated the process of drafting a new Congo policy. Rusk and his colleagues weighed all options, including action outside the UN.⁷⁶⁸ In the end, however, they found no realistic operational alternatives to a policy that was summed up as “continue to do what we are doing—only better”.⁷⁶⁹

Aware that a new Congo policy was being drafted, Hammarskjöld weighed in already on 26 January with a memorandum to the State Department, via Stevenson. Hammarskjöld appealed for “a strenuous diplomatic effort” by the Americans and suggested a policy that would be more amenable to “neutralistic”, i.e. Afro-Asian sensibilities by putting more pressure on the Belgians and other Western European powers.⁷⁷⁰ A close cooperation developed between Stevenson and Hammarskjöld in these early days. It was not just a case of like-mindedness; Stevenson’s and Hammarskjöld’s cooperation was mutually beneficial as it increased the sway of both: Hammarskjöld got indirect access to the State Department drafting table via Stevenson, and Stevenson’s views carried more weight when given as in line with the thinking of the Secretary-General. As often, this would also prove hazardous as Hammarskjöld tended to mistake the ideas of the permanent representative for those

⁷⁶⁶ See e.g. Letter from Hammarskjöld, via Cordier, to Adlai E. Stevenson 16 October 1960, Cordier Papers Box 55 and Letter from Cordier to Dean Rusk 26 April 1955, Cordier Papers Box 58.

⁷⁶⁷ Letter from Cordier to his brother Dr. Ralph Cordier 17 December 1960, Cordier Papers Box 55. Rusk had recommended Cordier for membership at the select Century Club, see e.g. Letter from Philip C. Jessup to Cordier, 12 February 1954, Cordier Papers. Cordier thanked Rusk personally over the phone and in a letter on 18 March 1954, Cordier Papers Cataloged Correspondence Box 2.

⁷⁶⁸ Quotes are from Dean Rusk’s staff meeting on January 25 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁷⁶⁹ Memorandum of Conversation 26 January 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁷⁷⁰ Telegram from USUN to State 26 January 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX. The telegram consists of the verbatim text of Hammarskjöld’s memorandum.

of the president, thinking that the US line was more UN friendly than what was warranted. Despite Stevenson's great reputation – or, some might say, because of it – he was not one of Kennedy's influential advisors.

Stevenson informed Hammarskjöld on 31 January that "Dept's thinking was moving more or less parallel with that of SYG". Hammarskjöld proposed that a "middle-of-the-road" government should be sought with Ileo as Prime Minister (the result that Hammarskjöld had hoped would be the result of Kasavubu's coup). When it came to Lumumbists, Hammarskjöld was opposed to including Gizenga or Kashamura. Hammarskjöld was also adamant that a government should be put together before Lumumba was released, to make sure that Lumumba could not be part of the government. At the end of the meeting, Hammarskjöld told Stevenson, "There had to be Congolese govt which was political cover at top, but UN should provide hard core of personnel who would make most of decisions. Situation should in reality be one where Congolese consulted UN rather than vice versa".⁷⁷¹

Hammarskjöld had a great influence on the new US Congo policy. As Cordier wrote to a friend: "The new administration in Washington is engaged in a full reassessment of policy and is developing in brief a line which is much more in accord with our Secretariat line. We have had the advantage of having extensive talks with Dean Rusk and Adlai Stevenson, as well as the President and those talks are now bearing fruit."⁷⁷² The US could only hope to successfully implement a strategy that was centered on the UN if the Secretary-General was onboard. And Hammarskjöld needed not just the support of the US, but a more flexible US stance, more willing to pay heed to the concerns of the Afro-Asians and put pressure on the Belgians and their West-European backers, to enable Hammarskjöld to carry the majority of the General Assembly. This was also in line with Kennedy's realisation that the real Cold War objective was to get the newly independent states to support the West as opposed to simply keeping the Soviets out of the Congo. In the final paper outlining the new policy that was submitted to Kennedy for approval one of the main problems with the

⁷⁷¹ Telegram from USUN to State 31 January 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁷⁷² Letter from Cordier to Edward Buehrig 6 February 1961 Cordier Papers Box 56.

new policy was what would happen if Hammarskjöld were to resign as Hammarskjöld's active cooperation was seen as key to US policy.⁷⁷³

The outcome was a memorandum entitled *Suggested New United States Policy for the Congo*, which was submitted to Kennedy on 1 February and approved at an NSC meeting the same day. Point number three of the memorandum read "Establishment of United Nations Administration for Congo". "Ideally", it explained, the UN would "exercise all functions of government and administration" as this would be the "maximum safeguard against a Lumumba takeover". This scenario was, however, probably "not politically feasible" as the Afro-Asians were likely to resent this as "a step backward to a United Nations trusteeship". On the other hand any government would have to rely heavily on the UN for "administration and technical help". This, coupled with the neutralization of the ANC – another of Hammarskjöld's key points – meant that "the operational machinery of government would hopefully be largely in United Nations rather than Congolese hands". This could come about for example if Kasavubu would ask the UN for additional personnel. In that way, "there would be no infringement of Congolese sovereignty, but the United Nations would be running the country on a *de facto* basis". (If the people who had been drafting the new strategy had paid any attention to what Kasavubu actually thought, they would have been aware that he was more inclined to ask the UN to leave the country and would resent any attempt at strengthening the role of the UN, let alone a *de facto* trusteeship.) Lots of technical assistance would also be needed – and keeping Belgian advisors, but bringing them in under the UN umbrella – last but not least, all aid to the Congo would be channelled through the UN.⁷⁷⁴ In essence this was the same policy that Hammarskjöld had advocated and pursued during his period of "gamesmanship" up until the heavy criticism after the coup against Lumumba caused him to change tack. The main difference was a harsher line against the Belgians, although Hammarskjöld still thought that Belgian technicians were welcome, and indeed essential, as long as they were brought in under the UN umbrella.

⁷⁷³ Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy 1 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁷⁷⁴ Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy 1 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

A.2 Selling the New US-UN Policy

The idea of a stronger mandate for the UN and the Secretary-General, let alone a *carte blanche* to institute a *de facto* UN trusteeship, was not going to be an easy sell to the rest of the UN membership or the Congolese. The memorandum that set out the new US policy in the Congo also outlined how to sell the new strategy: it was essential that “suitable Afro-Asians” and Hammarskjöld took the lead in advocating a stronger mandate for the UN. India and Nigeria had been identified as “suitable Afro-Asians” and already on 2 February, the day after Kennedy had approved the new policy, instructions were sent to the ambassadors in New Delhi and Lagos. The same day London, Paris and Brussels were also informed of the new Congo policy. The Americans underlined that they were “particularly concerned” that a fiasco in the Congo would discredit and weaken the UN; it was “essential UN operation in Congo be made to succeed”.⁷⁷⁵

The new US policy landed like a bomb in London, where the new policy looked like putting “the pro-Western elements in the Congo” (Kasavubu, Mobutu and Tshombe) “in the dock”.⁷⁷⁶ The Foreign Secretary, the Earl of Home, personally drafted a long telegram to Dean Rusk on 3 February with his “misgivings about the proposals”, that would turn the Congo into “a sort of protectorate”.⁷⁷⁷ In a meeting the next day with the British Ambassador, Sir Harold Caccia, Dean Rusk told him “With reference to Lord Home's point on ‘turning the Congo into a sort of protectorate’ we see little chance that below the Cabinet level the Congolese themselves can administer the country”. In order to make the point clearer to the British, Rusk explained, in terms that they would supposedly understand better, that “The foreign technicians would thus run the country in much the same way as the British ‘advisers’ to the Maharajas did in India.”⁷⁷⁸

The British scepticism expressed in 1959 and the beginning of 1960 to Hammarskjöld's new African ideas had hardened into a stance that came closer to the antagonistic French view towards the UN and its Secretary-General. The British could

⁷⁷⁵ Telegram from State to New Delhi 2 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX. This was also sent to Lagos.

⁷⁷⁶ David Ormsby-Gore on 2 February 1961 quoted from James, p. 87.

⁷⁷⁷ Earl of Home in a telegram to Rusk, 3 February 1961, quoted from James, p. 87.

⁷⁷⁸ Memorandum of Conversation 4 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

not condone a “UN trusteeship”. Patrick Dean had made this clear in the General Assembly in December 1960: “we do not believe that the United Nations has the right to set up any sort of trusteeship over the Congo”.⁷⁷⁹ On 9 February 1961, the Foreign Secretary made the point very clearly in a debate in the House of Lords: the UN “cannot become a substitute for a colonial power”.⁷⁸⁰

The view that the UN was led by a Secretary-General with delusions of grandeur with the secret wish to replace the old colonial powers with the UN had been the view in Paris since de Gaulle came to power in 1958 and the French reaction to the new US policy was predictable. Both the French and the Belgians were angry at not having been consulted by the Americans before they communicated the new policy to the Afro-Asians. And both the French and the Belgians protested to what they (correctly) termed a “sort [of] UN trusteeship”.⁷⁸¹

From the Congo, the US Embassy reported that Kasavubu and Bomboko “had lost faith in UN” and were opposed to giving the UN additional powers. The fact that no attempt had been made to exchange views with the Congolese on the new policy became a big stumbling block. Kasavubu stated that the Government of the Congo “would view extension UN mandate to include full responsibility for maintenance law and order as infringement on Congolese sovereignty and prelude to UN trusteeship”. Instead Kasavubu suggested that what was needed was a new man, not a new mandate: Dayal was still seen as the root of all problems. The reason for Kasavubu’s stance on the UN was that he “totally lacks confidence in UN ability to maintain neutral posture”. The assessment of the US Embassy was that it would be hard to go ahead with the new policy and a stronger UN mandate in the direct opposition of Kasavubu. The US embassy suggested that the ONUC leadership should be replaced to create a “climate of confidence” after which more vigorous UN action by Hammarskjöld could be achieved under the existing resolutions without the need to ask for a new mandate from the Security Council, something which would also inevitably bring with it the risk of a Soviet veto.⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁹ GAOR: 956th Plenary Meeting, para. 37, 19 December 1960.

⁷⁸⁰ James, p. 81 quoting from H o L Debs: Vol. 228, col. 592 (9 February 1961).

⁷⁸¹ Telegram from State to Brussels 4 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁷⁸² Telegram Leopoldville to State 6 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

On 6 February, Stevenson discussed the British and French objections with Hammarskjöld, who “scoffed” at them and added that Kasavubu “had no prestige”. Regarding the Afro-Asians, Hammarskjöld predicted that the radical Afro-Asians would only demand one thing: “Lumumba, Lumumba, Lumumba”. But Hammarskjöld hoped that the more moderate Afro-Asians could make the radicals understand that Lumumba had no role to play before order was restored. This would hopefully also take the heat out of any Soviet opposition, as the Soviets would not like to criticise a proposal endorsed by the radical Afro-Asians. Hammarskjöld also told Stevenson that rumours of ill treatment of Lumumba had a bad impact in this respect. Nonetheless, Hammarskjöld did not want the UN to take over the responsibility for Lumumba (the idea of the UN taking Lumumba into protective custody to safeguard his safety was being floated at the time). The reason was that “If UN got Lumumba they would have no choice but to release him”; obviously a scenario Hammarskjöld wished to avoid.⁷⁸³ Neither Hammarskjöld nor Stevenson knew that Lumumba had already been dead for several days.

A.3 Lumumba’s Death and Resolution 161

The detailed account of Lumumba’s last gruelling hours at the hands of his enemies did not come to light until the turn of the century, and are still not fully known.⁷⁸⁴ When the rumours that Lumumba was dead first reached New York Hammarskjöld told Stevenson that the UN must, if Lumumba was indeed dead, temporarily take over the Congo. Hammarskjöld planned to take over all airports and transport facilities in the Congo to this end. Hammarskjöld also planned to call a new Security Council meeting to ask for a new mandate to cover this emergency situation, although he told Stevenson he was “way out on thin ice” in doing so. In a strange, pseudo-legal, argument, Hammarskjöld added that he thought this could be based on the precedent of the actions when the UN took over the airports and the radio station after Kasavubu deposed Lumumba in September 1960.⁷⁸⁵ This shows the very fluid ideas of international law and precedents that Hammarskjöld had. Most countries protested against the UN action in taking over the airports and the radio station, yet

⁷⁸³ Telegram USUN to State 6 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁷⁸⁴ See de Witte, Ludo, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (translated by Ann Wright and Renée Fenby) (New York and London: Verso, 2001).

⁷⁸⁵ Telegram from USUN to State 10 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

Hammar skjöld was happy to refer to it as an established precedent. True to his habit, Hammar skjöld was happy to refer to things he had barely managed to get away with as a well-established case law.

Lumumba's death was confirmed in the morning of 13 February and the next day the Soviets accused Hammar skjöld of direct responsibility for Lumumba's death in a formal statement. "The vitriolic attack upon Dag knew no bounds", Cordier wrote to a friend, describing the Soviet attack on Hammar skjöld at the UN.⁷⁸⁶ The Soviet delegate Zorin and his "satellite spokesmen" were "pulling all stops ... Dag is a murderer, assassin, plotter, intriguer, etc. etc. etc."⁷⁸⁷ Zorin also called for Hammar skjöld's dismissal and declared that the Soviet Union no longer recognized Hammar skjöld as Secretary-General.⁷⁸⁸ It appeared that Hammar skjöld had met the same fate as his predecessor Trygve Lie. But Hammar skjöld was undaunted by the Soviet non-recognition. Hammar skjöld hoped that he would now get Afro-Asian support for the new policy or at least to neutralize the ANC and have the UN take over safety in the whole country.⁷⁸⁹

Cordier knew how hard Hammar skjöld had suffered under all the attacks during the General Assembly of 1960 and he now wrote a letter to Per Lind, who, together with Sture Linnér, had stayed with Hammar skjöld in his apartment in New York during the General Assembly in 1960. Cordier asked Lind if he could get his minister's permission to appoint Lind to the Swedish UN delegation to the General Assembly so that Lind could stay with Hammar skjöld as his "house guest" again: "I know how much he valued the presence of you and Sture as house guests last fall and how really important it was to his mental and psychological well-being to be able to talk over the successive developments in the Khrushchev era with two trusted friends. Now the situation is far worse than it was last fall."⁷⁹⁰ Contrary to the common picture of Hammar skjöld as a man who never got tired or emotionally shaken, he was severely strained by the Soviet attacks.

⁷⁸⁶ Cordier to Schwalm 25 February 1961, Cordier Papers Box 47.

⁷⁸⁷ Letter from Cordier to Per Lind 20 February 1961, Cordier Papers Box 44.

⁷⁸⁸ Hoskyns, p. 323.

⁷⁸⁹ Telegram USUN to State 14 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁷⁹⁰ Letter from Cordier to Per Lind, 20 February 1961, Cordier Papers Box 44.

The Afro-Asians did not, like the Soviets, blame Hammarskjöld directly or openly for Lumumba's murder, but many of them gave him some part of the blame as he had directed a UN policy that had led to the prime minister's overthrow. As Nkrumah put it in a broadcast on 14 February, Lumumba died "because the United Nations, whom Mr Lumumba himself, as Prime Minister, had invited to the Congo to preserve law and order, not only failed to maintain law and order but also denied to the lawful Government of the Congo all other means of self-protection".⁷⁹¹ Among the Afro-Asian delegates, there was considerable acrimony towards Hammarskjöld: "In small private wakes for Patrice Lumumba, the Afro-Asian delegates at the United Nations swallow their drinks as if there were a bitter taste in their mouths. Even the wiser among them let this bitterness slur into their speech as they pronounce the name of Hammarskjöld."⁷⁹² Gone were the days when Hammarskjöld was the darling of the Afro-Asians.

By 15 February the UAR and Ghana had recognized the Stanleyville regime and it seemed likely that the rest of the Casablanca powers and the Soviet bloc might soon follow suit. This would create a Cold War split in the UN over the Congo that would make it exceedingly difficult to continue the UN intervention in the Congo. In order to prevent this Nehru urged the Afro-Asians to continue to work through the UN and to accept a stronger resolution. Hammarskjöld and the Americans now found themselves in a delicate situation. While it seemed that they might now get Afro-Asian support for a stronger mandate for the UN, the Afro-Asians were likely to only accept a resolution which was even stronger than what Hammarskjöld and his American allies actually wanted including a strong operational edge against Katanga and the Belgians.

On 17 February Charles Yost, Stevenson's deputy, produced a memorandum entitled "The Stakes in the Congo", which assessed the role of the Congo in the Cold War. Yost doubted that the primary Soviet objective was to establish a Communist or Communist-leaning regime in all or part of Congo. Yost argued that the Soviets lacked the capacity to provide arms and equipment to support a Communist regime in the Congo, that the Soviets were aware that the US could and would block such an

⁷⁹¹ Quoted from Hoskyns, p. 324.

⁷⁹² Philip Deane in the *Observer*, quoted from Hoskyns, p. 324.

event, and, more importantly, that even the radical Afro-Asians did not want to see the Congo turned into a Communist state. Yost wrote that the Soviets “are well aware that isolated they are helpless in Africa; only in association with African states are they formidable”. The important Cold War dimension, according to Yost’s analysis, was the battle for the Afro-Asian states in New York rather than between the different factions on the ground in the Congo. The Soviets, Yost argued, were out to exploit anti-colonial feelings to further “much broader and more serious objectives”. Namely, to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the West in all of Africa and to weaken African support for the UN in order to either reform or “otherwise destroy the usefulness of that organization” (for American purposes). There was hope, however. Yost thought that strong UN action would keep the Soviets out and would be supported by the Africans, but there was an important catch: “The price is that this action be applied to our friends as well as to the Communists”. Yost admitted that this involved risks but foresaw that if it was rejected it “may set flowing an anti-Western, anti-UN, pro-Soviet current in Africa which cannot be reversed for many years if at all”.⁷⁹³ It was the old American dilemma of choosing between the Afro-Asians and their Western colonial allies. So far, the Americans had tried to have it both ways, using UN resolutions only against the Soviets and not against the Belgians. But, as Yost underlined, this might lead to dire consequences. The battle was not for Orientale province or even the whole of the Congo, it was for the whole Third-World and the future of the UN. Yost’s memorandum also caught much of the spirit of the new frontiersmen who had entered the White House and State Department with Kennedy. This was also the direction that Hammarskjöld had been moving in after the coup in September 1960 when he veered off in a much more anti-Belgian direction under pressure from the Afro-Asians.

When the Security Council met on 17 February the Afro-Asian members of the Council submitted a draft resolution in two parts. Part B urged the convening of parliament and a reorganization of the army to eliminate its ability to interfere in politics. This was broadly in line with the new US/UN policy. Part A of the resolution, however, was hard to accept for the Americans, not to mention for the British and the French. The first operative paragraph A(1) urged “that the United Nations take immediately all appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of civil

⁷⁹³ Memorandum by Yost 17 February 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

war in the Congo, including arrangements for cease-fires, the halting of all military operations, the prevention of clashes, and the use of force, if necessary, in the last resort". This was the first reference to the use of force other than in self-defence. This would give the UN the mandate Hammarskjöld and the Americans had wanted, but the edge of the resolution was pointing in the wrong direction. The second operative paragraph A(2) urged "that measures be taken for the immediate withdrawal and evacuation from the Congo of all Belgian and other foreign military and paramilitary personnel and political advisers not under the United Nations Command, and mercenaries". Except for the explicit mentioning of Belgians, this was clearly targeted at Katanga, while it would not necessarily apply to Stanleyville since it did not mention arms or equipment (the difference between Katanga and Stanleyville in this respect was that Katanga had a large presence of Belgian and Western personnel and mercenaries, whereas most of the support Stanleyville was likely to receive from the Eastern bloc was arms and equipment). The first thing that the Americans objected to in the draft was not the words that were in it, but rather the words that were not; and the words that were most conspicuously lacking were "Secretary-General".

The Afro-Asian drafters of the resolution had omitted any reference to Hammarskjöld, in stark contrast to all previous resolutions, partly to show their displeasure with how previous resolutions had been implemented and partly to avoid a Soviet veto, which seemed likely if reference was made to Hammarskjöld after the all-out Soviet campaign against him. The Americans also planned to push for amendments, the first of which was a reference to the Secretary-General. On 20 February the American calculations again changed as news of murder again reached New York from the Congo. Kasavubu had sent six imprisoned Lumumba supporters to South Kasai where they had been killed. This caused an almost greater shock than the death of Lumumba and the Americans decided not to insist on their amendments. At the debate Stevenson therefore mentioned his reservations, but added that he would not fight for them. As far as the reference to Hammarskjöld was concerned, Stevenson simply said that he assumed that the Secretary-General would be responsible for the implementation of the resolution also in the absence of a specific reference to that effect. Regarding the use of force, Stevenson added that "in the last resort" in the American interpretation meant that "every effort will be made to accomplish the purposes of this paragraph by agreement among the contending

elements [...] Clearly, this resolution means that force cannot be used until agreement has been sought by negotiation, conciliation and all other peaceful measures”.⁷⁹⁴ After the Americans gave up on their amendments the British felt they had to follow suit.⁷⁹⁵ Before voting Patrick Dean added the British interpretation for the record stating that the reference to “the use of force” could only be used to prevent clashes between hostile Congolese troops: “There can be no question of empowering the United Nations to use its forces to impose a political settlement.”⁷⁹⁶

The draft Afro-Asian resolution was adopted as Security Council resolution 161 on 21 February 1961 with a vote of nine to zero with the Soviet Union and France abstaining. The Americans had voted for a resolution they did not like, and that their European allies liked even less, and now they wanted to make sure it was implemented in a way that was acceptable to their European allies. The instrument to secure this was the Secretary-General. Cordier commented that “the resolution itself was so broad and vague in its phraseology as to provide many and varied interpretations”.⁷⁹⁷ Hammarskjöld’s first action was to hold a series of intense meetings with the Advisory Committee on the Congo in which he managed to get them to acknowledge that although the resolution referred to “the UN” and not the “Secretary-General” it was the Secretary-General who was responsible for implementing the resolution, this way “the lost gun of the Security Council was retrieved by the debate in the Advisory Committee” in Cordier’s words.⁷⁹⁸

B Creating a Victory in the Congo

B.1 “The International Civil Servant in Law and Fact”

Hammarskjöld was greatly disturbed by the lack of support from the Afro-Asians in the face of the Soviet attacks. “We have been grievously disappointed by the cowardice, the spinelessness, the weakness, the obvious personal ambitions and the confusion of thinking in a number of Afro-Asian states”, Cordier wrote to a friend.⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁴ SCOR 16th year, 941st meeting, 20 February 1961, para. 83.

⁷⁹⁵ Telegram UKUN to FO 21 February 1961, JB 2281/43, FO371/155103.

⁷⁹⁶ SCOR 16th year, 942nd meeting, 20 February 1961, para. 21.

⁷⁹⁷ Letter from Cordier to Schwalm 25 February 1961, Cordier Papers Box 47.

⁷⁹⁸ Oral History Cordier, p. 83.

⁷⁹⁹ Letter from Cordier to Schwalm 25 February 1961, Cordier Papers Box 47.

But it was not simply cowardice and spinelessness that had stopped the Afro-Asians from lining up to defend Hammarskjöld. Their defence of Hammarskjöld at the General Assembly in 1960 in reaction to Khrushchev's attack had only come at the price of a radical change in Hammarskjöld's policy in the Congo. The Afro-Asians were still critical of the way Hammarskjöld was running not just the Congo operation but the Secretariat in general. Hammarskjöld would have a very difficult time repeating his victory against Soviet criticism in the next General Assembly in September 1961 unless he could show progress in the Congo.

Hammarskjöld wrote a series of letters to his former chief, the Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén, to explain the difficult situation that would confront him at the General Assembly. To explain his motives, Hammarskjöld wrote: "Naturally, I am guided solely – and I really mean solely – by what is in the best interest of the UN, and the world community through the UN". "But", Hammarskjöld added, "the judgment on where this criterion leads must primarily be mine." The last word on what was or was not in the "best interest of the UN, and the world community through the UN" rested with Hammarskjöld. Hammarskjöld went on to explain to Undén that the Soviet line calling for Hammarskjöld's resignation only claimed a weak minority in the General Assembly. But Hammarskjöld worried that the Russians might be able to squeeze out many abstentions if it came to a vote. Hammarskjöld added that he would personally regard abstentions as negative votes if it were a quasi vote of confidence. And with the special weight that Hammarskjöld had himself given to the Afro-Asians by his own stratagem of claiming to lead the UN for the smaller states there might well be an outcome where Hammarskjöld would feel compelled to resign if not enough of the Afro-Asians supported him actively.⁸⁰⁰

On 18 March Hammarskjöld thought that the Soviets were going to try and remove him by having an item concerning the Secretary-General inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly and at the same time let "four or five Afro-Asian names of candidates be known as perfectly acceptable to the Soviet Union".⁸⁰¹ This way Hammarskjöld thought that the Soviets might be able to get enough Afro-Asians to at least abstain. In this case, Hammarskjöld felt, he must speak his mind to the General

⁸⁰⁰ Letter from Hammarskjöld to Undén, 26 February 1961, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:141.

⁸⁰¹ Letter from Hammarskjöld to Undén, 18 March 1961, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:141.

Assembly. The day after, Hammarskjöld sent a follow-up letter to Undén in which he outlined an alternative development. Hammarskjöld thought that Khrushchev might try to strike a deal with Kennedy by which the Soviets agreed to shelve the troika proposal on the understanding that the United States would agree with the Russians on an Afro-Asian Secretary-General, so as to “render the Organisation effective again”. Hammarskjöld was convinced that the Soviets would at least try this and thought that Kennedy would at least consider it: “[Kennedy] is not likely to give too much weight to its implications by way of an implicit endorsement of the attempt at character assassination”. If such a deal was made behind the scenes, Hammarskjöld felt that he would have to speak up: “If this development were to come about, I believe that the future interests of the United Nations require that, in some form, the elements of the bargain be on the General Assembly record, so that there is no misunderstanding about what the deal involves in more general political terms.”⁸⁰² Hammarskjöld was worried not just for his position but also for his historical legacy.

Hammarskjöld also addressed Khrushchev’s critique head on in a speech in Oxford on 30 May 1961. Entitled “The International Civil Servant in Law and Fact” this speech represents Hammarskjöld’s most developed view of the political role of the Secretary-General and his political testament.⁸⁰³ In the speech, Hammarskjöld first described the role of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations and concluded that the Secretary-General of the League had played a self-restraining role: “For him to have entered into political tasks which involved in any substantial degree the taking of a position was regarded as compromising the very basis of the impartiality essential for the Secretariat.” Nonetheless, Hammarskjöld observed, this did not mean that political matters were entirely excluded. Sir Eric Drummond, the first Secretary-General of the League, had “played a role behind the scenes, acting as a confidential channel of communication to Governments engaged in controversy or dispute, but this behind-the-scenes role was never extended to taking action in a politically controversial case that was deemed objectionable by one of the sides concerned.”

⁸⁰² Letter from Hammarskjöld to Undén, 19 March 1961, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179:141.

⁸⁰³ The International Civil Servant in Law and Fact, delivered in Oxford 30 May 1961, Cordier/Foote (eds.) Public Papers Vol V, p. 329.

Hammaraskjöld next discussed how the Charter of the UN, in particular articles 98 and 99, “together open the door to the problem of neutrality in a sense unknown in the history of the League of Nations”. Article 98 states that the Security Council and the General Assembly may entrust the Secretary-General with tasks involving the execution of political decisions. (Article 97 says that the Secretary-General is the “chief administrative officer” and article 98 adds that he also “shall perform such other functions as are entrusted to him by these organs”; that these are political functions Hammaraskjöld deduces e contrario from the fact that article 97 concerns administrative functions). But it was article 99 that more than anything else gave the Secretary-General a political role according to Hammaraskjöld (article 99 states that “The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security”). Hammaraskjöld then discussed the fact that an American proposal that the UN should be headed by a “President” as well as a Secretary-General had been made at Dumbarton Oaks. In the end, it was decided to only have a Secretary-General, “but one in whom there would be combined both the political and executive functions of a President with the internal administrative functions that were previously accorded to a Secretary-General”, something which Hammaraskjöld called “a reflection, in some measure, of the American political system”. Hammaraskjöld’s presidential view of the Secretary-General is, however, mistaken and he fails to appreciate the fact that it was decided not to have a President at Dumbarton Oaks. A presidential solution was discussed and dropped, article 97 is pretty clear in stating that the Secretary-General is the “chief administrative officer”; it is quite far-fetched to derive the presidential interpretation from articles 98 and 99.

Hammaraskjöld then stressed that the development of a political role for the Secretary-General that springs from articles 98 and 99 is based on “the basic concept of “neutrality”” as expressed in article 100. Hammaraskjöld here paused to conclude that if the Secretary-General should be neutral in the sense that he could not take a stand on political issues, this would in fact be against the Charter, since the Charter had made it possible for the Security Council and the General Assembly to entrust the Secretary-General with such issues. What neutrality really meant, Hammaraskjöld explained, was that the international civil servant must “remain wholly uninfluenced by national or group interests or ideologies”. The criticism of the political role of the

Secretary-General therefore could be understood as a criticism of the Charter, and “imply a demand for a reduction of the functions of the Secretariat to the role assigned to it in the League” and article 97. But this, to Hammarskjöld, would be “a retrograde development” with regards to how the political role of the Secretary-General had developed.

Hammarskjöld then described how the political role of the Secretary-General had grown under his tenure. This was mainly due to the fact that the Security Council and the General Assembly had entrusted the implementation of controversial political decisions to Hammarskjöld. “In some cases implementation was largely administrative; the political organs stated their objectives and the measures to be taken in reasonably specific terms, leaving only a narrow area for executive discretion”, Hammarskjöld said. “But in other cases... the Secretary-General was confronted with mandates of a highly general character, expressing the bare minimum of agreement attainable in the organs.” Hammarskjöld failed to mention that he had often been the driving force behind the adoption of “mandates of a highly general character”. Hammarskjöld then mentioned how he had cautiously referred back to the Security Council in the Congo crisis so the Council could “express themselves on the interpretation by the Secretary-General to the mandate”. Hammarskjöld did not mention that when he could not get support for his interpretation from the Council he deliberately pushed through his interpretation in the face of a Soviet veto and happily interpreted the Council’s non-adoption of his measures (precisely because the members of the Security Council did not agree) as a go-ahead. Hammarskjöld then lamented the “disintegration of the Central Government” as it was the “party in consultation with which the United Nations activities had to be developed”. Hammarskjöld failed to mention that he had treated the Central Government as a non-entity from the outset and then supported the disintegration of the central government, even backing a coup against the Prime Minister Lumumba exactly because Lumumba disagreed with the Secretary-General about the implementation of the Security Council resolution. Hammarskjöld had his policies clear from the beginning. He did not seek guidance, but only confirmation, from the Security Council and intrigued to cajole the Council and then to back a coup against the Congolese Prime Minister when he did not agree with him. Contrary to Hammarskjöld’s presentation,

Hammar skjöld had not been forced by events into taking a large political role; he had actively sought it and had schemed to achieve it.

Hammar skjöld then discussed the fact that the Secretary-General ought perhaps to refuse a mandate from the Security Council or the General Assembly when “specific cases involving a clash of interests and positions, the required majority in the Security Council or General Assembly may not be available for any particular solution”. This was tempting, Hammar skjöld said, but the Secretary-General was not allowed to do so if he had been mandated according to Article 98: “The Secretary-General remains under the obligation to carry out the policies as adopted by the organs; the essential requirement is that he does this on the basis of his exclusively international responsibility and not in the interest of any particular State or groups of States”.

This led to “ the crucial issue”: “is it possible for the Secretary-General to resolve controversial questions on a truly international basis without obtaining the formal decision of the organs?” Hammar skjöld answered in the affirmative, although “[t]his is not to say that the Secretary-General is a kind of delphic oracle who alone speaks for the international community”. As Hammar skjöld’s correspondence with Undén shows, however, Hammar skjöld did see it as the Secretary-General’s prerogative to do so. The Secretary-General had several resources at his hand. First, there were the “principles and purposes of the Charter”. Secondly, these were “supplemented by the body of legal doctrine and precepts that have been accepted by States generally”. As Hammar skjöld remarked “principles and law” did not suffice, “problems of political judgment still remain”. It would be hard to deduce any of Hammar skjöld’s policies as flowing from an interpretation of the Charter, a document that can, and has, been used to support the most varied policies. To this end, Hammar skjöld had “found several arrangements” by which to “obtain what might be regarded as the representative opinion of the Organization in respect of the political issues faced him”. He mentioned two, the permanent missions and the advisory committees. In this way the Secretary-General could “take steps to reduce the sphere within which he has to take stands on politically controversial issues”. As far as the first is concerned it is clear that Hammar skjöld consulted much more with some, especially the Americans and the British, than others, and as far as the advisory committees are concerned, he only instituted these under pressure and did not ask for their advice. On several occasions

he even tried to undermine their decisions. Hammarskjöld did not try to “reduce the sphere within which he has to take stands on politically controversial issues” – he took steps to increase that sphere.

There remained, Hammarskjöld said, “a serious intellectual and moral problem” as we moved into the area where “personal judgment must come into play”. The problem was all the more serious as Hammarskjöld had worked to enlarge the area where personal judgment came into play. Hammarskjöld set out the standards to which the Secretary-General must adhere in this sphere of personal judgment in the following terms: “The international civil servant must keep himself under the strictest observation. He is not requested to be a neuter in the sense that he has to have no sympathies or antipathies, that there are to be no interests which are close to him in his personal capacity or that he is to have no ideas or ideals that matter for him. However, he is requested to be fully aware of those human reactions and meticulously check himself so that they are not permitted to influence his actions. This is nothing unique. Is not every judge professionally under the same obligation?” The reference to the impartiality demanded of a judge is halting. No judge ever came near the political role that Hammarskjöld played as Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld’s words might have held some guidance for a limited mandate, not for the ambitious political role he had built up in Congo.

Hammarskjöld agreed with this proposition to some extent in a press conference arising from the Oxford lecture. When asked by a journalist, who referred to “a theory of international relations” which went back to Hobbes, that held that “objectivity and neutrality is irreconcilable with the human mind and that there is not a single neutral person on this globe”, Hammarskjöld replied, in an elaboration of his ideas expressed in the Oxford lecture that “there is no neutral man, but there is, if you have integrity, neutral action by the right kind of man”. What was meant was “neutrality in relation to interests” “and there I do claim that there is no insurmountable difficulty for anybody with the proper kind of guiding principles in carrying through such neutrality one hundred per cent.” But Hammarskjöld was not neutral as to Communist interests.

It was not just the Soviets who attacked Hammarskjöld. On 11 April 1961 de Gaulle declared that France would cease to contribute financially to ONUC. In July 1961 the

crisis in Hammarskjöld's relations with France reached its apogee with the Secretary-General's failed mediation attempt in the Bizerte crisis. Rebuffed by de Gaulle, Hammarskjöld's car was stopped and searched by French paratroopers. Neither France, nor the African states, who still voted in line with Paris, would support Hammarskjöld at the General Assembly.⁸⁰⁴

There had long been criticism of how Hammarskjöld ran the Secretariat. To the critique of an overly centralized Secretariat the old problem of the geographical distribution of posts had grown in relation to the large number of newly admitted members. Already during the General Assembly in the fall of 1958 the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), which presents suggestions to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, voiced criticism of the way the Secretariat was run. Hammarskjöld replied that he thought the new arrangements he had adopted worked very well and with self-assuredness told the Fifth Committee "I do not myself see the slightest justification for proposing any changes".⁸⁰⁵ This was in 1958, Hammarskjöld had just been reelected and was at his apogee and could afford to dismiss the criticism. Nevertheless, in 1959 the General Assembly decided to call for an overall review of the Secretariat by a committee of outside experts to be appointed by Hammarskjöld. Final recommendations were to be given to the General Assembly in 1961.

To a great extent the criticism focused on the high number of American and Western officials in the Secretariat. Not only were all of Hammarskjöld's closest advisers Americans, of a grand total of 79 Under-Secretaries, officials of equivalent rank and directors (D-2 level) in the Secretariat (including Geneva, Regional Economic Commissions, Special Missions etc.) 22 were American and 33 from Western Europe, Australia, Canada or New Zealand. In comparison only two were from the Soviet Union and only one from Black Africa (Nigeria). The only Afro-Asian country with a

⁸⁰⁴ For details on Hammarskjöld's relations with France see the author's article Frielingsdorf, Per-Axel, "Entre poésie et politique – La correspondance entre Dag Hammarskjöld et Alexis Léger" in *Relations internationales* no 138 2009, pp. 75-92 as well as the author's unpublished master thesis *Les relations entre la France et Dag Hammarskjöld 1953-1961* (available in the library of Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po)).

⁸⁰⁵ Urquhart *Hammarskjöld*, p. 523.

strong representation was India with seven.⁸⁰⁶ As the criticism increased, Hammarskjöld felt more and more besieged in New York. First, he had hoped to solve the question by simply adding a number of new under-secretaries general, and keeping all of his current ones. During the spring of 1961 it became clear that this would not be enough.

For some time Cordier's central position in the Secretariat had been criticised. On 17 May 1961, Hammarskjöld formally proposed to Cordier that he would split his office in two and make Cordier under-secretary general for General Assembly affairs and appoint the Indian C.V. Narasimhan to the new position of chef de cabinet, effectively replacing Cordier as Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General. Cordier had for some time been looking for a position outside the UN, as he assumed he would retire from the UN together with Hammarskjöld when his mandate ran out in 1963. Cordier had just turned 60 and had received several interesting offers and was worried that he might not receive the same offers two years later. Cordier therefore replied to Hammarskjöld that he would hand in his resignation. Hammarskjöld was "deeply agitated" by what he perceived to be an "ultimatum" from Cordier's side. Hammarskjöld seemed oblivious to the fact that he was demoting Cordier, who was no doubt hurt by the suggestion. Hammarskjöld said "Andy, you don't know how much I have suffered this winter". Cordier replied that he was suffering with Hammarskjöld. As Cordier correctly deduced, Hammarskjöld was torn between a will to keep Cordier with him to the end and a need to reorganize in a way that effectively meant demoting Cordier. After this meeting Cordier went on a trip and, after an exchange of letters – where Hammarskjöld replied "Dear Mr. Cordier" to Cordier's "Dear Dag" – Hammarskjöld invited Cordier to dinner at his home on his return to discuss the matter again. On this evening Hammarskjöld "elaborated very much upon the spiritual and moral crisis [...] to which he had been subjected by the Russians during the winter. He described in detail [...] the Soviet technique of breaking the moral fiber of a man. He said that they had succeeded in building up a vacuum around him and that many of his friends shied away from him out of the cowardly hope of avoiding involvement in the issue". Cordier said that he had himself sensed this and seen evidences of it "in the corridors, in the dining room and in meetings". Cordier

⁸⁰⁶ Confidential Memorandum on Geographical Distribution of High Level Posts in the United Nations Secretariat, Cordier Papers Box 100.

also at this point mentioned his arrangements to have Per Lind come and stay with Hammarskjöld during the General Assembly of 1961. Hammarskjöld's hoped to keep Cordier as his "personal confidant and aide" while changing his title.⁸⁰⁷ In the end, Cordier agreed to a compromise where he would stay on as under-secretary-general for General Assembly affairs until the end of 1961 (although Hammarskjöld hoped that he would stay on throughout 1962). Cordier also kept his office next to Hammarskjöld's. Hammarskjöld then drafted a letter for Cordier to sign with the reasons for his resignation. This letter, together with Hammarskjöld's reply, was published as a press release. Commenting on Cordier's change of position and eventual resignation, the New York Times called it the "end of an era in the life of the organization".⁸⁰⁸ Under siege in the Secretariat, ostracised by the French and fearful of a renewed Soviet attack when the General Assembly started in September, Hammarskjöld desperately needed a victory in the Congo.

B.2 Getting Rid of Dayal

When the news of the Security Council resolution reached Léopoldville the first reaction was one of direct hostility to the UN and a resolution, which was interpreted as preparing the way for the UN to impose a political solution by force and install a UN trusteeship. Kasavubu appealed in a radio broadcast for a general mobilization against an imminent UN takeover and in Elisabethville Tshombe announced a "total mobilization".⁸⁰⁹

The resolution also led to a temporary rapprochement between Léopoldville and Elisabethville. By getting together they hoped to be able to resist both the UN and the Gizenga-regime in Stanleyville. Additionally, if they could come to an agreement, there would be no need for a UN intervention under the new Security Council resolution. On 28 February a military alliance directed against the UN and Stanleyville was signed by Tshombe, Ileo and Kalonji. This was followed up by a conference in Tananarive on Madagascar, a country known to favour Katangese

⁸⁰⁷ The story of Cordier's resignation as described above is given in a letter from Cordier to his friend David Blickenstaff at the United Nations Information Centre, New Delhi, 8 July 1961, Cordier Papers Box 50.

⁸⁰⁸ Hamilton, Thomas J., "U.N. Juggles Personnel" in New York Times 2 July 1961.

⁸⁰⁹ Kalb, p. 242.

independence. By 12 March five resolutions had been signed at Tananarive. They stated that the Congo would now be a “confederation of states”, as Tshombe had always wanted. One of the resolutions addressed the UN specifically and stated that the resolutions of the Security Council violated both the Charter of the UN and the sovereignty of the Congo, although it also added that the new confederate Congo would be willing to work with the UN as long as it respected the sovereignty of the country. In Belgium news of the outcome of the Tananarive conference were celebrated and shares in both Congolese and Katangan companies rose on the stock market.⁸¹⁰

The rest of the world reacted in a less jubilant way at the newfound friendship between Léopoldville and Elizabethville. Both the Soviet Bloc and most of the Afro-Asians protested the outcome of the Tananarive conference and called it unrepresentative and undemocratic since it was taken outside the parliament. The Americans, with a cautious eye on world opinion, were worried about this development. Something had to be done to improve the disastrous relations between the UN and the Congo. Kasavubu repeated that he “could and would” work with the UN, but not with Dayal. The recommendation of the US embassy in Leopoldville was clear: “Dayal must go if the UN is to assist the Congo to move with any sureness or speed toward stability”.⁸¹¹ On 20 March, Stevenson met with Hammarskjöld and explained that it was President Kennedy’s personal conviction that Dayal should be relieved of his post.⁸¹²

The greatest difficulty in getting rid of Dayal was the strong support he had from Nehru. Rusk summarised his fears of the Indian influence in the Congo: “the big problem was that Nehru seemed to be pursuing a separate Indian policy rather than merging his effort with the United Nations effort.”⁸¹³ To some extent this was certainly true, as the UN policy had changed drastically with Dayal’s arrival to a policy that was more or less identical to that advocated by Nehru. Partly from fear of Nehru, partly to appease the Afro-Asians Hammarskjöld had gone along with this.

⁸¹⁰ Hoskyns, pp. 345-346.

⁸¹¹ Telegram Leopoldville to State 4 March 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸¹² Telegram from USUN to State 20 March 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX (document 51, note 3).

⁸¹³ Memorandum of Conversation 4 April 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

The American efforts to replace Dayal appeared to be paying off when Hammarskjöld showed the first sign of yielding on 22 April. After Dayal left the Congo for consultations in New York UN-Congo relations were also better than in a long while.⁸¹⁴ By 26 April Hammarskjöld had made up his mind to replace Dayal. Instead of appointing a new Special Representative to lead UNOC, Hammarskjöld would substitute Dayal for a number of high officials on the level of Linnér, who would in practice become the new leader of UNOC. Hammarskjöld told Stevenson that the fact that Nehru “had foolishly committed himself in public to Dayal remaining” as the main reason that he had kept Dayal on for so long and now found it hard to get rid of him.⁸¹⁵ On 25 May Hammarskjöld announced that Dayal was returning, on his own request, to his former post as Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan. Although not happy with the way the Congolese treated his special representative, Hammarskjöld was relieved to see the issue resolved with Nehru putting the blame squarely on the Congolese and not on Hammarskjöld.⁸¹⁶

B.3 “throwing all semblance of non-intervention to the wind”

With the Dayal era at an end, a new period of cooperation in UN-US and UN-Congo relations began. The men who took over after Dayal interpreted the mission of the UN more along the lines of Hammarskjöld’s “gamesmanship” period. Actively working behind the scenes to achieve the desired political outcomes that the UN wanted. This attitude was summed up by Linnér’s deputy Khiari in the sentence “il faut faire de la politique”.⁸¹⁷ Sture Linnér has often been described as concerned mainly with technical assistance and delegating political responsibilities to Khiari.⁸¹⁸ As is evident from the following, this view is not supported by the available documents. On the contrary, Linnér played a decisive political role, and was lauded for doing so by the Americans.

⁸¹⁴ Telegram from USUN to State 22 April 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸¹⁵ Telegram USUN to State 26 April 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸¹⁶ Telegram from USUN to State 22 May 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸¹⁷ O’Brien, p. 189.

⁸¹⁸ Khiari has later been depicted in a very negative way and given much of the blame for the UN operations in Katanga. As an example, Urquhart said “Khiari was an extremely Machiavellian and dishonest man who had a very firm view of his own about how things ought to be done in the Congo...”. No such views were, however, recorded at the time of the events; on the contrary, after Hammarskjöld’s death it was Khiari who was entrusted with the sensitive mission of going to negotiate with Tshombe in Hammarskjöld’s place, see Coded cable from Linnér to Bunche 18 September 1961, A-2201, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 8.

On 20 June the American permanent mission in New York received a long instruction that said that the moment was now propitious to have a general review of the Congo with Hammarskjöld. The main point of the instruction was to urge Hammarskjöld to use his influence towards creating a “government of moderate character in which members of Lumumba-Gizenga group would be represented, if the parliamentary majority so desires, without being able to exert overriding influence on basic policies of country”.⁸¹⁹ After meeting with Hammarskjöld, Yost reported back that on the whole Hammarskjöld was “thinking along same lines as we are, maneuvering effectively to produce as sound and moderate government as is possible under circumstances”.⁸²⁰ By 21 June Kennedy had also approved a substantial fund for a covert political action program, devised by the CIA and recommended by the State Department, to elect a pro-US government.⁸²¹

As the Congolese politicians gathered for the reconvening of the parliament at Louvanium, the UN started playing a more and more active role to push for what they considered a moderate government, abetted by the Americans.⁸²² Godley, the American chargé d'affaires, who had replaced Timberlake, was given a great deal of latitude in dealing with the parliamentary assembly at Louvanium. The Americans considered it important to get Tshombe to attend the parliamentary session to guarantee a victory for Adoula and the “moderates”.⁸²³ Linnér shared this objective completely, not least because he thought that a Gizenga-led government might trigger a military coup and a return to the situation after Mobutu’s coup. Since Godley did not want to go and see Kasavubu himself, he got Linnér to carry American messages to Kasavubu to reinforce UN points made to him on the need for the president to work to get Adoula appointed to lead the new government.⁸²⁴ Dean Rusk also “expressed appreciations for the interventions of Linnér with Kasavubu” to Cordier.⁸²⁵ On July 28 Godley reported “We should also of course continue work closely with Linner and

⁸¹⁹ Telegram from State to USUN 20 June 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸²⁰ Telegram from USUN to State 22 June 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸²¹ For details see the CIA documents on this topic in FRUS 1964-1968 Vol XXIII and summary on p. 2 of that volume.

⁸²² Memorandum Cleveland to Rusk 15 July 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸²³ Telegram State to Leopoldville 29 July 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸²⁴ Telegram from Leopoldville to State 25 July 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸²⁵ Note for the record by Cordier 27 July 1961, Cordier Papers Box 138.

use him and his African advisers, Khiari and Gardiner, to disseminate our thoughts and arguments where they would do most good”.⁸²⁶

According to O’Brien, Linnér’s deputies Khiari and Gardiner were “throwing all semblance of non-intervention to the winds”. Ten days before the election, Khiari showed O’Brien a list of the government they wanted and that was the government which was also elected, correct except for one person.⁸²⁷ Hammarskjöld, as had been the case with Cordier’s actions earlier, did not mind that his lieutenants were interfering in the internal affairs of the Congo in a clear breach of his own statements and several Security Council resolutions. After Linnér had sent a cable relating one political discussion with Kasavubu without marking it “top secret” Hammarskjöld reproached him, remarking that since the discussion reported in the cable was “from your side ‘interference in Congolese affairs’” Linnér should have sent it as top secret. The fact that Linnér was interfering in Congolese affairs was, however, not reproached. Instead Hammarskjöld made a distinction between “what you may consider yourself morally entitled to say as a private person and ‘on a man to man basis’, and, on the other side, what can be said by you as officer-in-charge”. And Hammarskjöld added “Naturally it is impossible for the Secretary-General, even indirectly, to become party to personality questions in the internal Congolese manoeuvring and I must therefore stand completely aloof in relation to views expressed of that character”.⁸²⁸ With phrases, such as these, similar to those he had used to encourage Cordier at the time of Kasavubu’s coup, Hammarskjöld now gave Linnér a free hand to interfere in Congolese politics when he felt that he was “morally entitled to” “as a private person”.

On first August, Kasavubu tasked Adoula with forming the next government, and Adoula received a strong vote of confidence from parliament the day after. The outcome that the US and the UN had wanted and worked hard for was achieved although Gizenga complained about the frequent visits of UN officials to parliament. In a memorandum on the successful outcome of the Louvanium session to President Kennedy, Dean Rusk made a special mention of Linnér’s important role: “The UN

⁸²⁶ Telegram from Leopoldville to State 28 July 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸²⁷ O’Brien, p. 189.

⁸²⁸ Coded cable from Hammarskjöld to Linnér 19 July 1961, UN archives Series 217 Box 8 File 9.

representative, Linner, through his efforts had made a large contribution to this successful outcome”.⁸²⁹

After the successful political intervention of Linnér and his friends, a ray of hope seemed to come from the Congo. When Rusk met with the new Belgian foreign minister Spaak a couple of days later, on 8 August, in Paris, he started by telling him that “for first time there seems real hope in Congo picture” and again praised Linnér’s work. The two foreign ministers also agreed that the next big task in the Congo would be the reintegration of Katanga. Spaak informed Rusk that he had sent a message to Hammarskjöld that very morning stressing the need for “peaceful re-integration of Katanga and urging UN and new Congolese Government take no sudden or abrupt moves re Tshombe since this might cause him to react violently”.⁸³⁰

C Intervening in Katanga

C.1 Operation Rumpunch

The dramatic UN “entry” into Katanga, led personally by Hammarskjöld on 12 August 1960, had not changed anything in the secessionist status of Katanga. Instead, the token UN presence had allowed Katanga to build up the gendarmerie under the leadership of white officers, thus allowing Tshombe to create the appearance of a “shangri-la” in Katanga. After the UN entry on 12 August 1960 the number of white mercenaries in Katanga, known locally as *les affreux*, had increased significantly.⁸³¹ While the UN had been focusing almost exclusively first on the perceived Communist threat in the shape of Lumumba and then on a return to something that could pass as a legal central government in Leopoldville the original problem of Katanga’s secession and the continued presence of the Belgians – the reason that Lumumba and Kasavubu had asked the UN to come to the Congo in the first place, the focus of all the UN resolutions, and the reason Lumumba turned against the UN – remained unsolved. Katanga’s secessionist status had only grown more entrenched.

⁸²⁹ Memorandum from Rusk to Kennedy 3 August 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸³⁰ Telegram from Rusk to State (sent from Paris) 8 August 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸³¹ For background on the mercenaries in Katanga, see e.g. Pasteger, Romain, *Le visage des affreux – les mercenaires du Katanga 1960-1964* (Brussels: Labor, 2005).

As part of implementing resolution 161 Hammarskjöld appointed the Irishman Connor Cruise O'Brien as the new UN representative to Elisabethville on 14 June. In the history and myth of the UN intervention in Katanga O'Brien came to play one of the most central roles and also gave his own account in his book "To Katanga and Back". Hammarskjöld had read and greatly appreciated O'Brien's book *Maria Cross* about a group of catholic writers and it has often been suggested that Hammarskjöld chose him more based on this than any other merit. Rikhye thought that the basic rationale for Hammarskjöld's selection of O'Brien was that he was known – he had been the Irish representative in the fourth committee of the General Assembly – as a passionate anti-colonialist. Much as with Dayal, Hammarskjöld wanted an appointment that would go down well with the Afro-Asians, to sweeten the policies that sometimes did not.⁸³²

At the same time as O'Brien arrived in Katanga the pressure was increasing on the UN to act to implement resolution 161. Three months had passed and Tshombe only seemed to be stalling. Adoula's government was pressing the UN hard to act against Katanga and in a public statement on 6 August Adoula threatened to use force to end the secession of Katanga unless Tshombe returned to the fold of the central government in Leopoldville. There was also a significant risk that the Adoula government might split if nothing was done about the situation in Katanga. Meanwhile, in New York, the Afro-Asians and the Soviet Bloc, which had lessened their critique of Hammarskjöld after the formation of the Adoula government, complained about the lack of action to implement the resolution. Rumours started circulating that both the Afro-Asians and the Soviet Bloc were planning to censure Hammarskjöld for his failure to implement resolution 161 at the General Assembly which was due to begin on 19 September 1961.

Hammarskjöld's position and legacy as Secretary-General was intrinsically linked with the success or failure of the UN operation in Congo. The success that the formation of the Adoula government represented was now imperilled by Tshombe's refusal to come to terms with Leopoldville. Hammarskjöld had so far stood up against the Soviet challenge of non-recognition and if he could ride out the storm in the Congo and successfully start winding down the UN operation there he would be

⁸³² UN Oral History Rikhye, p 6.

lauded by the Afro-Asians. This would make it hard for the Soviets to continue their boycott of the Secretary-General. But to this end drastic measures might be needed to subdue Katanga. The question of Katanga had now become a matter on which the future of Hammarskjöld depended.

In the middle of August 1961 plans were made to act against the mercenaries in Katanga in order to diminish Tshombe's strength and force him to go to Leopoldville and negotiate with Adoula. The plans resulted in an operation codenamed "Rumpunch". The plan was drawn up in Katanga by O'Brien and Linnér's deputy Khiari, who were to play a significant role in the events that unfolded.

Operation Rumpunch was launched at 4 a.m. in the early morning of 28 August and came as a complete surprise. UN troops took control over key points and started rounding up the mercenaries. In the course of the same day, the consular corps (with the important exception of the American consul) met with O'Brien. The Belgian consul, Henri Crénier, requested that the arrests stop as there was no need for such humiliating procedures and offered instead to supervise the "voluntary repatriation" of all mercenaries. To his later regret, O'Brien agreed to this; he soon realized his mistake. The next day the Belgian consul told him that Brussels had informed him that he could only supervise the repatriation of Belgian officers, and could only guarantee the repatriation of former *Force Publique* officers, who were still under Belgian control, but not the mercenaries. The early halt of Rumpunch meant that only the mercenaries who had been arrested on 28 August or who later gave themselves up voluntarily were expelled. The rest of the mercenaries slipped out of the grip of the UN.

When Godley chided Linnér for not notifying the Americans ahead of Rumpunch Linnér calmly replied that they would not do so in these kind of operations as the pressure on the UN in New York would then be so strong that nothing could be done. Linnér also added that "he had not informed Hammarskjöld extent of military operations for that would have bound his hands too tightly". When Godley told Linnér that he had taken great risks with Operation Rumpunch Linnér replied that it

was his job “to take risks and assume that responsibility”.⁸³³ As with the activities of Linnér and his colleagues during the Louvanium session it appeared that Hammarskjöld was happy to condone an offensive strategy with a considerable amount of risk in Katanga and that Linnér and the people on the spot were expected to take the blame if anything went wrong. But for the time being, Hammarskjöld was jubilant and sent a congratulatory cable to Linnér: “Congo club, in congress assembled, passed unanimous vote of congratulations, gratification and sincere respect for an exceedingly sensitive operation carried through with skill and courage...”.⁸³⁴ O’Brien was also instructed to “press on vigorously in his previous direction”.⁸³⁵

The Americans agreed with the general objective of Rumpunch – to get rid of the mercenaries – but feared that the UN action might trigger events that the UN could not control. Furthermore, the Americans still saw Tshombe as an important “moderate” force in the Congo that would have an important role to guarantee that the central government stayed “moderate” and resolutely pro-Western. Therefore they did not want to see him destroyed, only weakened to the point where he would be willing to start talks with Adoula.

If the Americans were worried but supportive of Operation Rumpunch, the British were outraged and threatened to withdraw funds.⁸³⁶ There was a flurry of support for Katanga, not only from the conservative press in Britain and Belgium, but also from some American senators. The Western consuls, with the exception of the American, were also showing signs that were ambiguous at best. As O’Brien put it regarding British policy: “Her Majesty’s Government, we are told, never wavered for an instant in support of the United Nations but I doubt whether Mr Tshombe fully understood this”.⁸³⁷ The effect of this was that at the beginning of September “all signs of co-operation and calm had vanished and hate and hostility between the United Nations and the Katangese were growing”.⁸³⁸

⁸³³ Telegram Leopoldville to State 31 August 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸³⁴ Quoted from James, p. 100.

⁸³⁵ Coded cable from Hammarskjöld to O’Brien 31 August 1961, Dag Hammarskjöld Papers L179: 155.

⁸³⁶ James, pp. 100-101.

⁸³⁷ O’Brien, p. 229.

⁸³⁸ Hoskyns, p. 412.

C.2 Operation Morthor

The events in Katanga after Rumpunch are one of the most debated topics in the historiography of the Congo crisis, much like the events surrounding the coup against Lumumba on 5 September 1960. In the same way, the debate has focused on the extent to which Hammarskjöld knew about what his lieutenants in the Congo, then Cordier, now Linnér, Khiari and O'Brien were planning and whether he had given instructions to go ahead. O'Brien and Khiari have more often than not been depicted as acting out of turn and without instructions from Hammarskjöld. The documents now available paint a somewhat different picture.

On 6 September, Hammarskjöld met with the Americans and the British in New York and "pointed out that coming week extremely critical". If Tshombe could not be brought to Leopoldville for negotiations with Adoula Hammarskjöld was convinced that the ANC would initiate a major assault on Katanga, which in turn would lead to a civil war.⁸³⁹ The Americans, seconded by the British, told Hammarskjöld that while they appreciated the efforts to get rid of the mercenaries the key priority was to keep Tshombe as a moderate counterweight to Gizenga and his supporters. Hammarskjöld "expressed full agreement, said this exactly his intention"; Hammarskjöld was certain that Tshombe would come to an arrangement with Adoula if they could just eliminate the influence of his nefarious interior minister Munungo. The comment that was attached to the American report from the meeting reveals how the Americans understood Hammarskjöld's plans:

*"Comment: We have impression that SYG is determined to eliminate bulk of remaining foreign military in Katanga by end this week and is also determined either neutralize or destroy Munongo whom he considers committed, for reasons of self-preservation, to Katanga separatism. If these objectives can be achieved he believes he can prevent ANC attack and bring Katanga peacefully into fold. Fact he called UK and ourselves in for this lengthy exposé indicates he believes next week or so very critical and he desires our understanding and cooperation."*⁸⁴⁰

⁸³⁹ Telegram from USUN to State 6 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸⁴⁰ Telegram from USUN to State 6 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

On 8 September the newly arrived American ambassador Gullion met with Linnér in Leopoldville to try and learn more of UN plans for the “extremely critical” week ahead. Linnér then mentioned four scenarios:

- “1. Tshombe on his own adopts conciliatory attitude overcome Munongo opposition and enters into substantive discussions with Adoula for Katanga's incorporation in Congo Government on some basis which would be established during negotiation of national constitution.*
- 2. Drastic UN measures continuing pressure on Tshombe including possibly arrest Munongo and other extremists. This contrary general UN preferences and peaceful intentions and only being considered due unacceptable alternatives three and four below.*
- 3. Central Governments bows to nationalists here and undertakes military operations against Katanga.*
- 4. Conservative elements Léopoldville when faced with alternative three back down and country continues in its present divided state but with Katangese separatism reinforced by its successful resistance against UN pressure.”*

Linnér explained that while alternative 2 was “contrary general UN preferences and peaceful intentions” alternatives 3 and 4 were unacceptable. Hence, if alternative 1, which must by then have become increasingly unrealistic, would not materialise alternative 2 was the only alternative left. Linnér also told Gullion that an additional Indian battalion was being moved to Katanga in preparation of alternative 2. Furthermore, in Gullion’s opinion, Linnér would not bow down from drastic measures: “Linner who seems worthy of very considerable trust and respect fully appreciates dangers involved in drastic action but appears resolved to proceed for he is obviously concerned re possibility of civil war and chaos if some solution Katangese problem not arrived at.”⁸⁴¹ Hammarskjöld sent a coded cable to Linnér on the same day, in which he explained the four alternatives as he had explained them to delegations in New York and added that “the organisation [is] being pushed further and further in direction of two, if no evolution according to one takes place, and three and four represent a realistic threat”.⁸⁴²

⁸⁴¹ Telegram from Leopoldville to State 8 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸⁴² Coded cable from Hammarskjöld to Linnér, 7 September 1961, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 7.

Linnér had submitted a plan to Hammarskjöld already on 6 September (probably drafted by Khiari as it was in French) that proposed to give an ultimatum to all mercenaries to give themselves up within 24 hours. If this did not succeed, paragraph 9C of the cable outlined a plan to arrest all the Katangese leaders and neutralise the gendarmerie and the police. Reference was also made to the risk that Adoula would otherwise invade Katanga thereby triggering a civil war. This seems like a reference to paragraph A(1) of resolution 161 which allowed for the “use of force” in the last resort to prevent a civil war. But it seems a strange interpretation to stop a civil war by helping the central government subdue a province in order to prevent the central government from invading that province. It was of course also against resolution 146 from 9 August 1960 which stated very clearly with regards to Katanga that “the United Nations Force in the Congo will not be a party to or in any way intervene in or be used to influence the outcome of any internal conflict, constitutional or otherwise”.

On 7 September, Hammarskjöld also forwarded a memorandum drafted by his favourite legal advisor Oscar Schachter entitled “Observations on the legal aspects of the present Katanga situation”. Schachter made some important points with regard to how events were to develop in Katanga. Regarding the plans for closing the radio and other communication posts, Schachter wrote that this might be done “if circumstances clearly indicate that they are being used or may be presently used for civil war or unlawful purposes”. The reason for taking them according to 9C, however, was so as to prevent any organised resistance against the UN. According to Schachter, they could not be taken as a pre-emptive measure. Schachter was also adamant that arresting persons was allowed if they were caught “in military action or otherwise in flagrante delicto”. If this was not the case, however, it would, in Schachter’s carefully phrased words, “appear to involve a violation of the ban against intervention in domestic political affairs”. The fact that the Central Government had issued an arrest order did not change this according to Schachter. Nothing in Schachter’s memorandum condoned UN initiated attacks.⁸⁴³

In a cable from Khiari to Hammarskjöld on 10 September Khiari explained that while the second part of paragraph 9C would only be implemented as a last resort “we have

⁸⁴³ Memorandum by Oscar Schachter, transmitted with Coded cable from Hammarskjöld to Linnér, 7 September 1961, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 7.

no hesitation in applying it if the other measures do not have the hoped for result". The cable then went on to detail how the implementation of 9C would lead to what Khiari colourfully described as a "*psychose de choc*" in the population which would diminish the risks of armed resistance.⁸⁴⁴ Khiari then wrote that "In conclusion, the development signaled in our cable A-2107 has now created the conditions that necessitate the implementation of paragraph 9C, the authorization for which we requested from you in the same cable".⁸⁴⁵

On 10 September Hammarskjöld sent his green light to go ahead with 9C in a reply to the cables asking for authorisation to proceed:

*"The speed of developments and the stage reached means that short of a change for the better in Katanga we are beyond point of no return as regards your plans under 9-C. You are therefore authorised to pursue the policy, outlined by you also to the central government, but we must impress on you the necessity in the course of its implementation to keep in mind the various views we have found necessary to express in the course of our exchange, views of principle of which we know from your own cables that you share."*⁸⁴⁶

On 11 September, Linnér informed Hammarskjöld in a coded cable that Khiari and Fabry had gone to Elisabethville "to set up program of implementation on paragraph 9C".⁸⁴⁷ Based on these cables, it is clear, that Hammarskjöld was fully informed of the plans for the operation and that he authorised it.

Linnér made a lightning visit to Brussels for discussions with Spaak. Spaak found Linnér "charmant et gentil" and appreciated the frankness with which he spoke; what he had to say, he appreciated less. Linnér did not tell Spaak the details of the UN plans, but from what he did tell him, Spaak concluded that the UN was "contemplating major moves", which, at least to Spaak, went far beyond the mandate of the organization. What troubled Spaak most was that the "UN did not seem to have any definite plan for peaceful political reintegration of Katanga by GOC at

⁸⁴⁴ Coded cable from Khiari to Hammarskjöld, A-2109, 10 September 1961, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 5.

⁸⁴⁵ The access to cable A-2107 sent on 9 or 10 September is still restricted. I have made an official request to the Head of the United Nations Archives to see the cable but have so far not received a reply.

⁸⁴⁶ Coded cable from Hammarskjöld to Linnér, 10 September 1961 (sent with reference to cables A-2107 and A-2109) UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 7.

⁸⁴⁷ Coded cable from Linnér to Hammarskjöld, 11 September 1961, A-2120, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 5.

Léopoldville and was groping, improvising and playing it by ear”. “This”, Spaak later told the American ambassador, “could be very dangerous and result in disaster”.⁸⁴⁸

Linnér informed the Americans on 11 September that Adoula’s government had issued arrest warrants for Tshombe, Munungo and the leading ministers in Katanga. Linnér thought that “Katangans would not be taken by surprise he expects some shooting would take place”. A comment that shows, contrary to what the UN command both in New York and the Congo would later claim, that they had foreseen resistance and violence. Linnér ended the meeting by again stating that this week would “be decisive one for Katanga operation”.⁸⁴⁹

Operation Morthor – a Hindi word meaning “smash”, the chosen codename for the operation described in paragraph 9C – was launched at 04.00 in the morning of 12 September.⁸⁵⁰ It was planned as a re-run of operation Rumpunch. As UN troops moved into position it soon became clear that it would be nothing of the sort. The first, and arguably most important, thing that went wrong was the blockade of Tshombe’s villa; when the UN arrived Tshombe had already fled. Tshombe had gone to the house of the British Consul Denzil Dunnett, after which he left for Rhodesia.⁸⁵¹ In all only one minister was arrested. At the post office intense fighting broke out as the Indian UN troops tried to force their way in. Once the Indians had managed to fight their way in, “after heavy hand to hand fighting”⁸⁵², they were soon counter-attacked from the outside by armoured cars. In the ensuing chaos, the nervous Indians fired at an ambulance. The fierce battle was witnessed by a large group of journalists who were staying at a hotel in the same square. Soon stories of the brutality of the UN – with special mentioning of the shots fired at the ambulance – were coming out of Elisabethville. At the radio station, similar scenes of resistance and violence followed before the Indian UN troops could secure the building. Despite the resistance, O’Brien initially viewed the operation as a success and at 8 p.m. he held a press

⁸⁴⁸ Telegram Brussels to State 12 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸⁴⁹ Telegram from Leopoldville to State 11 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸⁵⁰ Coded cable from Maceoin to Hammarskjöld 13 September 1961 ONUC 5278 UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 5.

⁸⁵¹ Hoskyns, p. 420.

⁸⁵² Coded cable from Maceoin to Hammarskjöld 13 September 1961 ONUC 5278 UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 5.

conference where he declared that Katanga's secession was ended and referred to the action as having been taken under paragraph A(1) of resolution 161.

The first telegram sent from the American consulate in Elisabethville on Operation Morthor, in the evening of 13 September, reported that European-led Katangan forces had launched strong attacks against the UN. The next day the American consul in Elizabethville reported that the UN had committed "inexcusable blunders" which had led to what was quickly becoming a "'war of liberation' against UN" in Katanga.⁸⁵³ In the following days sniping and shelling of UN positions increased and in Jadotville an isolated Irish company was cut off and besieged by Katangese forces. The Irish company in Jadotville had been surrounded already on 11 September but this "was not taken as a positive indication of serious trouble but was considered at that stage to be just another typical Congolese incident" in a striking example of the poor intelligence and poor analysis of available intelligence in ONUC.⁸⁵⁴

C.3 The Americans Say No

When the American ambassador, Gullion, met with Hammarskjöld and Wieschhoff, who had just landed in Leopoldville, accompanied by Linnér Hammarskjöld and his colleagues were "unfailingly optimistic". Hammarskjöld made it clear that UN troops would not pull back from the positions they now held after operation Morthor and Hammarskjöld seemed convinced that Tshombe would agree to a cease-fire that would effectively mean that the foreign mercenaries were expelled once and for all. O'Brien was preparing to meet Tshombe and discuss a cease-fire. Hammarskjöld dismissed the continuing attacks on UN troops in Katanga as "terroristic uncoordinated actions of desperadoes". Hammarskjöld emphasized how the UN actions in Katanga were crucial to support Adoula's government.⁸⁵⁵

The same day, 15 September, Dean Rusk called Ralph Bunche to find out what was going on in Katanga and why the US had not been informed. Bunche explained that Morthor was only meant as a "follow-up" on Rumpunch, and that the UN had not

⁸⁵³ Telegram from Consulate Elisabethville to State 14 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸⁵⁴ Coded cable from Quinn to Bunche 19 September 1961 ONUC 5417 UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 8.

⁸⁵⁵ Telegram from Leopoldville to State 15 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

expected any resistance (which was clearly wrong as at least Linnér had foreseen some resistance and violence). To reassure Rusk, Bunche also said that “our people including especially Linner are acting under direct instructions from headquarters”. At the same time, Bunche said – and this was later often repeated to show that Hammarskjöld was not aware of the launch of Operation Morthor – that Hammarskjöld first heard of the fighting from a Reuters report in Accra while on his way to Leopoldville. But the fact that he first “heard” that there had been fighting while en route to Congo does not mean that he had not given the order for the operation. The Americans also interpreted this in the same way and added within brackets in the report of the conversation between Rusk and Bunche “(Presumably reason SYG made this point was to deny assumption that he had gone out to Congo in order to direct a big new military operation.)”.⁸⁵⁶ And the Americans were not the only ones who suspected that the real reason Hammarskjöld had gone to the Congo was to facilitate a reconciliation between Adoula and Tshombe (by force if necessary) in order to return triumphant to the General Assembly that was to open in New York on 19 September. The Belgian ambassador to Washington told the Americans that he thought Hammarskjöld authorized Operation Morthor to have a clear record on Congo by September 19 when the General Assembly would start in New York.⁸⁵⁷

But, while Hammarskjöld was “unfailingly optimistic”, time was working against him. One reason he had not informed any of the Western governments was that he knew how much they resented the sort of intervention Operation Morthor was. Hammarskjöld’s plan had been to present them with a *fait accompli* and quickly bring Tshombe to an agreement with Adoula, after which the critical voices regarding the methods would be drowned by the triumphant chorus of Afro-Asians, singing the praises of the Secretary-General and the UN for ending the Katanga secession and bringing stability to the Congo under a legal government. By 15 September the moment when such a scenario might have been possible had passed. Kennedy and Rusk were now “deeply concerned” with UN actions and dismayed that Hammarskjöld had not consulted them in advance of operation Morthor. They put strong pressure on Hammarskjöld to agree to an immediate cease-fire with Tshombe. Rusk sent instructions to Gullion to press Hammarskjöld “as strongly as is necessary

⁸⁵⁶ Telegram from State to Leopoldville 15 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸⁵⁷ Telegram State to Brussels 15 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

to make certain he accepts and follows through on this philosophy”. Regarding Hammarskjöld and the rest of the UN command, Gullion was also urged to do his best to make sure they “substitute statesmanship on their part for present emotions”.⁸⁵⁸

The Americans were soon in a position to put severe pressure on Hammarskjöld, as ONUC had always been dependent on the Americans for logistics. As the situation in Katanga deteriorated Hammarskjöld sent two urgent requests regarding reinforcements in the night between the 15 and 16 September to Bunche, who was left in charge in New York. First Bunche received a request from Hammarskjöld for “2 or 3 jet fighters with personnel and equipment” to deal with the single Fuga jet that gave complete air superiority to the Katangese.⁸⁵⁹ A few minutes later Hammarskjöld also requested Bunche to contact Washington for help to airlift reinforcements to Katanga.⁸⁶⁰ Bunche called Assistant Secretary of State Harlan Cleveland to request American help with the air lift. In the morning of 16 September the Americans consulted with the British and together they came up with a response that Cleveland then communicated to Bunche. The main message was that they strongly believed UN should seek an “immediate cease-fire”. Regarding Hammarskjöld’s request, Cleveland answered:

*“While we are not at this time saying we will not provide the assistance requested, we could provide such assistance only if (a) we know clearly what SYG intends to do and what his plans are; and (b) that we agree with these plans.”*⁸⁶¹

These two conditions had always been a sine qua non of Hammarskjöld’s political actions and he had been reckless to stray from them. The UN could not act without US agreement in the Congo.

The same day, new instructions, more succinct than those of the day before were cabled to Gullion in Leopoldville to make sure that the UN stopped all military operations and work for a “prompt cease-fire, even if this means UN military

⁸⁵⁸ Telegram from State to Leopoldville 15 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸⁵⁹ Coded cable from Hammarskjöld to Bunche, 15 September 1961 (sent at 00.11 a.m. on 16 September), A-2150, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 5.

⁸⁶⁰ Coded cable from Hammarskjöld to Bunche, 16 September 1961, A-2154, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 5.

⁸⁶¹ Telegram from State to Brussels 16 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

operation falls short of achieving its full objective of rooting out by military means all mercenaries in Katanga”.⁸⁶² From the UK, the pressure was even stronger and Macmillan called Kennedy and urged him to put pressure on Hammarskjöld.⁸⁶³ On 16 September, the American ambassador in Leopoldville made a demarche to Hammarskjöld on behalf of Kennedy, Rusk and Lord Home requesting Hammarskjöld to stay in the Congo “as long as the hostilities in Katanga continue” as it was jeopardizing everything they had sought to accomplish. Hammarskjöld, still defending Morthor, replied that “the impact of the Katanga problem on reconciliation of the rest of the Congo and on the balance between leading personalities in the cabinet was such that what we did was indeed the minimum necessary in order to not repeat not ‘to jeopardize what it is sought to accomplish’”.⁸⁶⁴ Hammarskjöld was still defending operation Morthor and his first choice would have been to carry on, but with no reinforcements and strong pressure he had to cave in to Western demands for an immediate cease-fire.

Hammarskjöld decided that he would go and see Tshombe himself to negotiate an immediate cease-fire and he was keen to report to Bunche that he had done so before meeting with the British ambassador and Lord Lansdowne, the British Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign Office who had been flown in to Leopoldville.⁸⁶⁵ But Hammarskjöld’s preferred first option had been to send in reinforcements and keep up the pressure on Tshombe. He changed his mind only after both the request for an airlift of reinforcements and the request for overflight permission for the Ethiopian fighter jets had been refused by the Americans and the British respectively. Hammarskjöld knew that Lansdowne and the British ambassador, and later the Americans, would pressure him hard to go and see Tshombe. As he did not want to be

⁸⁶² Telegram from State to Brussels 16 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

⁸⁶³ Macmillan, Harold, *Pointing the Way, 1959-1961* (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 442.

⁸⁶⁴ Coded cable from Hammarskjöld to Bunche, 16 September 1961, A-2173, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 5.

⁸⁶⁵ Hammarskjöld wrote to Bunche: “I am certain that just as every paper believes that I went to Leo for the Katanga problem, every paper will take for granted that, if and when the approach to Tshombe is made known, that this is result of “constructive proposals” made by Lansdowne for Western powers. Both groups of governments would rather like this interpretation. (For the record it may be said that the approach was decided upon and message written before I received Lansdowne.)” Coded cable from Hammarskjöld to Bunche, 16 September 1961, A-2173, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 5. See also the American embassy’s report from a discussion with Lansdowne, Telegram Leopoldville to State 17 September 1961 FRUS 1961-63 Vol XX.

seen as giving in to pressure, Hammarskjöld decided to do, by himself, what they wanted, before they forced him to.

As Hammarskjöld's plane took off into the dark African night on 17 September Operation Morthor had turned into a nightmare.⁸⁶⁶ During the day attacks had worsened, as UN headquarters in Elisabethville was "mortared and machine-gunned" for an hour followed by an attack that was repulsed. In Jadotville, the reinforcements that were trying to relieve the beleaguered Irish company met with heavy fighting at a bridge 29 kilometres east of Jadotville and were repulsed. The Fuga jet also harassed them.⁸⁶⁷ At noon on 17 September word got out that the Irish company in Jadotville had surrendered.⁸⁶⁸

Hammarskjöld's plane never arrived in Ndola. There have been several investigations into what caused the Secretary-General's plane to crash and a new one has recently been launched.⁸⁶⁹ Previous investigations have not been able to establish clearly once and for all either that the crash was the result of an accident or that it was the result of some kind of outside interference or sabotage.⁸⁷⁰

In pursuing the high stakes policies of Rumpunch and Morthor, Hammarskjöld not only went outside what the UN was mandated to do when it came to the use of force, but he also did so without consulting his main allies. This was reckless at best and can only be explained by the extreme pressure Hammarskjöld was under to deliver a success in the Congo in order to secure his position at the General Assembly in September 1961. The end justified the means.

⁸⁶⁶ Coded cable from Linnér to Bunche, 18 September 1961, A-2194, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 8.

⁸⁶⁷ Coded cable from Maceoin to Hammarskjöld, 17 September 1961, ONUC 5375, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 8.

⁸⁶⁸ Coded cable from Quinn to Bunche, 18 September 1961, ONUC 5376, UN Archives Series 217 Box 9 File 8.

⁸⁶⁹ See Letter dated 2 July 2015 from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the President of the General Assembly regarding Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him, which, together with the Report of the Independent Panel of Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/246 has been published as UN document A/70/132.

⁸⁷⁰ For a recent book on this which summarises the findings of earlier investigations, see Williams, Susan, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld?*.

Conclusion

One of the most important political concepts Hammarskjöld elaborated was the ideal of the civil servant who was not a party member but who still played a political role. Hammarskjöld described the ideal civil servant as someone who was capable of political action, but as “the servant of society”; his “moral loyalty in the first hand towards society, as it appears in the shape of the nation, but secondly towards the wider view of society that is represented by internationalism”. Key to Hammarskjöld’s concept was the idea that it would somehow be possible to determine objectively what was in the interest of society and the world community. But this was hardly something to build a policy on. Indeed, it sounds very close to the “Delphic oracle who alone speaks for the international community”, that Hammarskjöld had said that he was not.

In Sweden, he had been the trusted advisor to his government; a role that he set out to reprise on the international level when he was elected Secretary-General. In reality, Hammarskjöld had been a political player with the role of a “grey eminence” in Sweden. Hammarskjöld’s ideas represented an old conservative view of civil servants as above party politics. Hammarskjöld thought that “impartial” civil servants had an important political role to play. Dag Hammarskjöld developed very close ties to some leading Social Democrats, the party that was almost constantly in power during his career in Sweden. Yet Hammarskjöld insisted on being sworn in by the King when he was made a minister (a ceremony no longer used by that time) and his views on social welfare were those of a Bismarck. As his brother Bo Hammarskjöld, who also served as State secretary under the Social Democrats, put it: “I am a conservative man, but the best thing a conservative man can do is to put forward welfare measures”. Dag Hammarskjöld’s work with the Marshall plan and the OEEC led him to espouse aid and economic development as a means to stave off revolutionary tendencies that he would later apply in the Third World.

As deputy foreign minister, Hammarskjöld had supplemented the rigid neutrality of foreign minister Undén and made it possible for Sweden to align firmly with the West while remaining ostentatiously neutral. For this he was duly lauded as “the most pro-Western of Swedish ministers” in Washington and London. Hammarskjöld played an

important role in ensuring that Sweden was the kind of neutral country that was palatable in Washington. This is the reason why Hammarskjöld was elected Secretary-General: he was the most pro-Western candidate that the Soviets would not veto. Real compromise candidates were rejected out of hand by the US administration.

Hammarskjöld reorganized the UN Secretariat to centralise power in the person of the Secretary-General as the “only political officer in the UN”. Hammarskjöld chose his closest advisors regardless of UN hierarchies and bypassed UN practices on geographic diversity. Thus, he ended up working with a team of mainly Americans and Westerners, a few Afro-Asians and none from the Soviet Bloc. Since many of Hammarskjöld’s advisors owned their position only to Hammarskjöld’s favour and not to a secure position in the organization, they were unlikely to provide him with too much dissenting advice. There are several attested cases where one of Hammarskjöld’s former favourites had fallen from a high and influential position to be left completely in the cold.

Hammarskjöld did not attain his political role because he was seen as “neutral and impartial”. “Leave-it-to-Dag” was only a phrase employed by journalists and never the basis for any decision. On the contrary, the permanent members of the Security Council were hesitant to leave anything to Dag unless he was restrained by a limited mandate. It was not appreciated when he overstepped his mandate as the Peking episode shows. In his mission to Peking in 1955, as well as his Middle East mission in early 1956, Hammarskjöld tried to play the role of mediator and trusted advisor to governments. In both cases reacted strongly against Hammarskjöld’s aspirations in the field of mediation. Nevertheless, Hammarskjöld used these cases to expand the role of the Secretary-General. While he had in fact a limited mandate as special envoy, he expanded his role by affirming that, in his capacity as Secretary-General, he was virtually without limits, free to discuss anything with his interlocutors. And so he did. From the records of his negotiations with Chou En-Lai in Peking it is clear that Chou thought that he had a mandate to discuss a much wider deal with the Americans than he had. When Hammarskjöld was given an audience with Dulles he spoke at length about the outlines and merits of a wider deal with the PRC. Dulles was less than impressed by Hammarskjöld’s venture into high international politics and found him

“naïve”. The eventual release of the prisoners was done as a confidence building measure by the PRC ahead of direct negotiations with the Americans in Geneva.

The Suez crisis became the watershed in Hammarskjöld’s career and established him as a “force” in world politics. Hammarskjöld was less important to Suez than Suez was to Hammarskjöld. The modalities were fixed by Suez: a blocked Security Council that hands a question to the General Assembly according to the Uniting for Peace mechanism followed by a vague General Assembly resolution that leaves the Secretary-General free to implement it as he thinks fit. This formal way of giving all powers to the Secretary-General, adopted in the context of the Suez crisis for the first time, would later be used to great effect by Hammarskjöld. At Suez it was used with moderation. Hammarskjöld and the American administration viewed Suez through a Cold War lens and Hammarskjöld presented the Western permanent members of the Security Council with a face-saving device to allow them to gloss over their differences to the outside world when in fact the Americans had bluntly pressured the British and their French brothers-in-arms into a humiliating defeat. Without the strong American backing for all his efforts, Hammarskjöld would not have been able to play the role he did.

Hammarskjöld could develop the political role of the Secretary-General because he managed to offer a solution to the American dilemma of how to balance the Cold War with the problems of decolonisation. In the wake of Suez Hammarskjöld elaborated his “vacuum theory” that said that it was the role of the Secretary-General to fill any vacuum that was created when the Security Council and the General Assembly were unable to act. When he added a geographic dimension to the vacuum theory – the idea that the UN should impose itself in newly decolonized countries so as to fill the political vacuum left by the old metropolitan powers, before it became drawn into the Cold War by Western/Soviet competition – Hammarskjöld created a potential solution to the great dilemma that the mix of decolonisation and Cold War created for the Americans, as illustrated by the Suez crisis. The US wanted to support their colonial NATO allies in Western Europe, but helping them in the Third-World meant allowing the Soviets to pose as the anti-colonialist heroes and alienating the new states. It was also a matter of keeping the Third-World firmly aligned with the First World, as far as capitalist economic models were concerned and avoiding radical

regimes tempted to introduce socialist or even communist models and nationalize the use of resources. Hammarskjöld offered the solution to both problems: the UN could step in instead of the US and the West could count on Hammarskjöld to produce policies that would be friendly to Western capitalist concerns.

Hammarskjöld was close to the strand of American economists, led by Paul Hoffman, who advocated technical and economic assistance to the Third World to keep it from falling into the Soviet orbit. Much like the Marshall Plan had saved parts of Western Europe from falling to the Soviet temptation this was seen as part of “winning the Cold War”. Hammarskjöld recruited Hoffman to head the new UN Special Fund which was to lead the charge in Hammarskjöld’s plans for an increased UN technical assistance program. Hammarskjöld argued that all aid and assistance to the newly independent countries in Africa should be multilateral and go via the UN.

Hammarskjöld’s idea was to use the UN and multilateral aid to stave off revolutionary tendencies in the Third-World and save it from Communism and Soviet expansionism as well as radical nationalism. Special Envoys of the Secretary-General would assist the new leaders in the economic planning and progress of their countries as well as with political advice. The solution he offered appealed mainly to the Americans as it addressed their dilemma of choosing between their Western allies in NATO and the emerging countries in the Third-World. The British and the French were too confident in their own ability to handle the problems arising from the decolonization, although the British could see some merit for Hammarskjöld’s African ideas when it came to French and other non-British territories.

The justification for Hammarskjöld’s new vision of an enlarged political role of the Secretary-General – that the Secretary-General could take political action if based on “neutrality and impartiality” – remained the same despite the dramatical increase in scope of the role. Before Suez Hammarskjöld had limited his role to mediation and had been mindful of Soviet concerns. Now he was arguing for special political representatives and advisors to new African states that would report directly to the Secretary-General coupled with multilateral assistance on a massive scale. Countering perceived Soviet expansionism was also an explicit goal of Hammarskjöld’s policies. The British criticized Hammarskjöld’s African plans for being too political as

decisions on, for example, economic development models could never be apolitical, not to mention the goal of keeping the Soviets out of Africa. Democratic governance did not necessarily enter into Hammarskjöld's plans and he readily admitted that "the Westminster model was not suitable for automatic export to independent African countries" and happily dealt with African "strongmen".

Hammarskjöld based his political role on support from the West and the Afro-Asians. Hammarskjöld translated his idea for a UN role in the Third-World into a political deal with the Americans and the British to support him in this venture in exchange for Hammarskjöld's aid in controlling and securing the backing of the Afro-Asians in the UN. Hammarskjöld's influence, especially among Afro-Asians, had been carefully built up to the extent that the British spoke of the "mystic significance" of the UN in the eyes of many African countries. (Although the British were also sceptical of "the magical personality Mr. Hammarskjöld tends to give the United Nations Organisation as a projection of himself"). What he now offered the Americans and the British was to give them the support of the UN, not just its Secretary-General, but also "the House" (as he referred to the General Assembly), confident in his ability to deliver a majority of the General Assembly. This was a tempting offer at a time when the new influx of newly independent countries meant that the US could no longer control a majority in the General Assembly with the help of its Western European and Latin American allies. What Hammarskjöld offered was a prolongation of the American moment at the United Nations.

For Hammarskjöld's "African ambitions" Congo became the perfect storm. As the head of an intervention numbering 20.000 soldiers in addition to technical assistants – never before and never after has the Secretary-General played a more direct political role – he was keen to use his new powers. Hammarskjöld's two main, and interlinked, objectives were to keep the Soviets out and institute a system of exclusive multilateral assistance so that all assistance to the Congo would go via the UN. He referred to this policy publicly as "keeping the Cold War out of the Congo" but in private he made clear that this meant keeping the Soviets out.

Hammarškjöld treated the Congolese government as a non-entity from the outset. When the Congolese prime minister Lumumba objected to Hammarškjöld's plans for exclusive multilateral aid because he thought they "smacked of trusteeship" and undermined Congolese sovereignty, Hammarškjöld started to actively undercut him. When Lumumba threatened to ask the UN to leave the Congo unless they got the Belgians to leave, the reason why the Congolese government had asked for UN assistance, Hammarškjöld tried to "break" him and encouraged and supported Kasavubu's coup against Lumumba.

The procedural basis that enabled Hammarškjöld to wield such influence in the Congo was the Security Council resolutions that gave the Secretary-General a wide margin to implement a resolution that was sufficiently ambitious. This was made possible due to support from moderate Afro-Asians on the Security Council like Tunisia and the Western permanent members. A moderate Afro-Asian on the Council would present a resolution largely drafted by Hammarškjöld. This way a Soviet veto was avoided as the Soviets did not want to veto Afro-Asian resolutions. The formulations of the resolutions were deliberately left vague and referred to the Secretary-General for their implementation. Although vague about the implementation, the resolutions were still clear enough on the basic need for the Belgians to get out, a sine qua non of both Afro-Asian and Soviet support. As my research shows, the Americans and the British, as well as the Belgians and the French, supported these resolutions because Hammarškjöld consulted closely with them and they were reassured that Hammarškjöld would implement the resolutions in a manner favourable to them and their interests. Hammarškjöld's policy during the period until the coup against Lumumba was also strongly pro-American and pro-Western.

This resulted in the phase of "gamesmanship" or "how to win without actually cheating" as Hammarškjöld himself referred to it, which culminated in the UN backed coup against Lumumba. It was a policy driven by political calculations that were afterwards explained in terms of principles of neutrality and impartiality. It was, however, not a policy based on these principles as Hammarškjöld portrayed it; politics came first, principles were added as an afterthought.

Hammar skjöld strongly believed that his policies were in the interest of the UN and the international community. It is important to keep these two apart as what is in the interest of the international community is not necessarily in the interest of the UN and vice versa. Even more to the point, what was in the interest of the UN was not necessarily in the interest of the Congo and its government. Hammar skjöld rejected Communism what he perceived as Soviet expansionism. Based on this assumption, shared by most in the West, Hammar skjöld did what he thought best to counter Soviet influence in the Congo. Whether this was a “good” or a “bad” policy depends on the subjective outlook of the observer. In Washington, it was perceived as a “good” policy whereas in Moscow it was obviously considered “bad”. Hammar skjöld, however, justified that this policy on the grounds that it was neutral and impartial and it is against this claim that we must evaluate it.

The question of neutrality is of central importance to the political role of the UN and its Secretary-General. Hammar skjöld based the very idea of a political role for the Secretary-General and the UN on the fact that the Secretary-General could be impartial and neutral while taking political action as he had explained in the Oxford speech:

“one of the essential points on which these experiments in international cooperation represent an advance beyond traditional ‘conference diplomacy’ is the introduction on the international arena of joint permanent organs, employing a neutral civil service, and the use of such organs for executive purposes on behalf of all members of the organizations. Were it to be considered that the experience shows that this radical innovation in international life rests on a false assumption, because ‘no man can be neutral’, then we would be thrown back to 1919, and a searching re-appraisal would become necessary.”

Hammar skjöld’s philosophy of the “neutral” intervention can only be true if it is possible to deduce what is, in a given situation, in the interest of the world community. Hammar skjöld claimed that this was indeed his prerogative as Secretary-General. He said as much in a letter to the Swedish foreign minister Undén:

“Naturally, I am guided solely – and I really mean solely – by what is in the best interest of the UN, and the world community through the UN. But the judgment on where this criterion leads must primarily be mine.”

The argument is circular. The definition becomes subjective in the extreme: impartial is whatever Hammarskjöld decides is impartial. Ergo, Hammarskjöld's actions are per definition impartial.

Hammarskjöld was a firm believer in the rule of the expert as we have seen. But there was also a mystical inspiration for his ideas. Among the Christian mystics that Hammarskjöld was inspired by there was a potentially darker strain, if their words are pushed to their logical ends. As Robert Musil put it with a reference to Eckehart, one of Hammarskjöld's main inspirations in *Markings*, "They were all, in a bourgeois sense, immoralists. They made a distinction between the sins and the soul, which despite sins could stay pure, almost like Machiavelli makes a distinction between the end and the means". Like Machiavelli distinguishes between the end and the means, they distinguish between the soul and the sins; the former can be pure even if the latter are not. This goes a long way towards explaining Hammarskjöld's actions in the Congo that he himself referred to as "gamesmanship". In this sense Hammarskjöld really was, as one of his lieutenants described him, a "Machiavelli of peace" – using immoral means for a perceived moral end. It appears that Hammarskjöld struggled with these thoughts in *Markings*, where he wrote:

"The most dangerous of all moral dilemmas: when we are obliged to conceal truth in order to help the truth to be victorious. If this should at any time become our duty in the role assigned us by fate, how strait must be our path at all times if we are not to perish."

Hammarskjöld's closest advisors further illustrate the problem. Hammarskjöld saw his closest American advisors as neutral and impartial civil servants. Hammarskjöld's closest advisor, Andrew Cordier, has given an interesting testimony to how he viewed this: "I feel that you can be pursuing the interests of all of humanity while at the same time you are giving full and complete and loyal support to the proper and positive and constructive interests of your own people and your own country. The two are not incompatible. They supplement each other." This was, however, not possible for the Soviets as their national interest had global aspirations in that it advocated world revolution according to Cordier. Cordier saw no conflict in American interest and UN

interest as they were one and the same. Now logically, if US interests and Soviet interests are not the same, then UN interests cannot at the same be in line with both US and Soviet interests. What Cordier failed to realise was that the American national interest had the same global aspiration as the Soviet national interest as it sought a world that was safe for American interests.

The core members of the so called “Congo Club” – the small group of advisors that met on the 38th floor of the UN building to lead the UN operation in the Congo – were all Americans who had worked for the OSS (predecessor of the CIA) during the war and then State Department. No one from the Soviet bloc ever came close to the Congo Club. Hammarskjöld’s defence was that they were international civil servants that fulfilled his criteria of being impartial. It is strange to see how the Soviets and others could accept this. How would the Americans have viewed it if Hammarskjöld’s three closest advisors had been Soviets with a background in the KGB?

The problem was not so much the fact that Hammarskjöld’s inner circle of advisors worked closely with Washington and shared many top secret reports with the American administration; this is to some extent normal procedure as the UN is there to serve its members who should have insight. The problem was that no Soviet diplomats were given insight. Hammarskjöld’s motivation for this was that the Soviet UN employees did not fulfil the criteria of impartiality as they were still working for Soviet interests. As we have seen, Cordier and Bunche, although they could differ with specific US policies, felt that their UN work was in line with US interests. The difference was that Hammarskjöld considered it perfectly natural for Americans to liaise closely with their government. The reason for this was that Hammarskjöld was pursuing a pro-American and outspoken anti-Soviet policy in the Congo. This was the reason why American UN employees could work for UN interests and sleep well at night whereas the same was impossible for their Soviet counterparts.

Apart from the problem of “neutrality and impartiality”, the Congo crisis highlighted a second problem with the political role of the Secretary-General. Hammarskjöld’s policy was dictated to a large extent by the need to keep the support of the West and the Afro-Asians that he had based his political role on. Policy was driven more by what was possible to get support for in New York and actions were taken to ensure

that support. Hammarskjöld's anti-Lumumba policies led to a wave of criticism from the Soviet Bloc and many Afro-Asians. At same time the Congo crisis moved from the Security Council to the General Assembly after the Americans used the Uniting-for-Peace-mechanism to circumvent a Soviet veto. This increased Hammarskjöld's reliance on the Afro-Asians, and not just the moderate Afro-Asians on the Security Council. Consequently Hammarskjöld changed his Congo policy 180-degrees to accommodate the Afro-Asians. The "completely do nothing impartiality" was the antithesis of the interventionist and partial policies of the Gamesmanship-period. But as the reactions of the opponents of this policy showed this was no more neutral than the previous policy of gamesmanship. (Timberlake summarised it well when he asked "who is the UN neutral against?") This clearly explains how Hammarskjöld was no longer driving policy but rather adapting policy to be able to sustain his position as Secretary-General. Developing an independent political role for the Secretary-General had become an end rather than a mean.

In this mix of Cold War and decolonization that caused frequent headaches to Western policy makers, Hammarskjöld focused on the East-West aspect rather than the North-South aspect. In the Congo this led him to pursue a policy in the first phase that had as its main goal to keep the Soviets out. Once this was achieved, however, Hammarskjöld realized that he was about to loose the crucial support of the Afro-Asians, who cared little for the East-West aspect and saw the Congo crisis from a North-South, or decolonization, angle. This led him to completely change his policy in the second phase (from September 1960 to the arrival of the Kennedy administration) where the UN policy of zero intervention was the direct antithesis of the UN policy in the first phase. This was followed by a third policy, which was a synthesis of the two as the incoming Kennedy administration understood better the need to win the hearts and minds of the Afro-Asians in order to win in the Cold War. This allowed Hammarskjöld to again argue for a "de facto UN trusteeship" in the Congo, but paired with strong words and actions against the Belgians and the secessionist regime in Katanga.

Hammarskjöld was in desperate need to present a victory in the Congo to survive the General Assembly in September 1961. This led Hammarskjöld to the great gamble of Operation Morthor and the fateful events in Katanga in September 1961.

Hammarhjöld had built up this pressure by playing to the small countries in the General Assembly in his attempts to build a majority. In 1961 Hammarhjöld had ended up in the same situation as his predecessor Trygve Lie, whom the Soviets refused to recognise after his pro-Western actions in the Korean crisis. When the Soviets declared that they no longer recognised Hammarhjöld as Secretary-General after the murder of Lumumba, Hammarhjöld stated that if he had lost the support of a permanent member of the Security Council he would nonetheless stay in his post as long as he had the support of two-thirds of the General Assembly. Although he had neither a mandate nor a legal justification for the use of force against the Katanga regime Hammarhjöld gambled on Operation Morthor to achieve the end of Katanga's secession and that it would be accepted as a *fait accompli*. Operation Morthor failed and the Americans showed that without their approval the Secretary-General could not achieve anything. Hammarhjöld had no option but to agree to direct negotiations for a cease-fire with Tshombe. Hammarhjöld had overestimated his own powers to sway the General Assembly and in particular the Afro-Asians. To keep their support, he had to go against American and Western interests, which meant that he could not keep up his part of the deal. In the end, the Kennedy administration came down on Hammarhjöld in full force, easily bringing him back to order by refusing the logistical support to continue Operation Morthor and thereby showing that the Americans had the means to control the UN operation in the Congo when they chose to.

Hammarhjöld followed his vision and transformed an office without power into a key political actor, turning the UN into an independent political stakeholder implementing its own policies. The political grounds for doing so were, however, deeply flawed. He based his right to political action on the impartiality of his office, drawing its inspiration "solely from the Charter". The "ideology of the Charter", however, was whatever its high priest the Secretary-General decided it to be, as the sole interpreter of the Charter. As an example, the Charter was used to argue against intervening in Katanga in 1960, and later, in 1961, in favour of an intervention.

Despite Hammarhjöld's claims to have built up firm legal precedents for the political role of the Secretary-General the political role of the Secretary-General was, as one

British diplomat had put it, based on what he could “get away with”. This also shows the limits to the claim of “neutrality and impartiality” in the exercise of the political role of the Secretary-General. The political role of the Secretary-General was inherently dependent on the good-will of Hammarskjöld’s Western backers in the Security Council and actually lacked a real legal base (which it could be argued is a prerequisite for any impartial exercise of power). He had managed to build his political role for the Secretary-General because the Americans and the British thought that this was in their interest. When he acted against their interest, their support, and with it the foundation for his political role, disappeared. Hammarskjöld’s aspirations for the political role of the Secretary-General of the United Nations perished together with Hammarskjöld in the chaos of the Congo crisis.

Hammarskjöld allowed the Americans to use the UN as a tool for American foreign policy in the Cold War for a little bit longer than they would otherwise have. After Hammarskjöld, it was clear that the UN had lost its usefulness as an instrument of American foreign policy as it was dominated by the Afro-Asians with no one to rally them in support of a pro-Western line. The Uniting for Peace resolution was used much more sparingly, and not on the initiative of the US; the General Assembly was seen as too fickle a body to trust. This is evidenced by the statistics of the use of the veto power in the Security Council. Until the beginning of the sixties, the Soviets stood for the vast majority of vetoes, with the British-French vetoes during the Suez crisis as the main exception. After 1961 the Americans became the major users of the veto.

After Hammarskjöld, the UN largely became an uninteresting organisation to the Americans. The Kennedy administration focused on USAID instead of UN technical assistance, although some interest remained in the newly created UNDP, headed by Paul Hoffman. U Thant did not attempt to play the political role that Hammarskjöld had. He stayed at mediation, more in the manner of Sir Eric Drummond or Hammarskjöld’s early conception of his role. The US discarded Thant’s efforts in the Cuban missile crisis and Vietnam the same way they had discarded Hammarskjöld’s first mediation attempt in Peking. Several steps were also taken to make sure that the Secretary-General would never again amass the kind of powers that Hammarskjöld had. All peacekeeping missions after the UN Operation in the Congo have also been

given detailed and time limited mandates to ensure that permanent members of the Security Council could veto their continuation every six months or so.

Hammar skjöld's arguably most lasting legacy was the focus on the African continent, peace keeping and development aid. These three key features of the UN of today were the result of Hammar skjöld's ideas. In terms of a genealogy of the UN this thesis argues that these, as well as many of the guiding principles and concepts of the UN – especially concerning neutrality and impartiality, such as not having permanent members of the Security Council contribute with troops to peacekeeping forces – were created to serve specific Cold War objectives and counter Soviet influence. In the Congo, Hammar skjöld on several occasions tried to get American and British backing for instituting a UN trusteeship over the Congo in everything but name, where UN advisors would rule behind the scenes. In many ways, this model is not far from what the UN is doing today in many parts of the world. It is interesting to see how this model of the UN “administration of experts” and “technocratic governments” was actually devised as a very political solution to counter revolutionary influence. Today as well, the UN is ruling several territories through its “experts” and many call for the UN to do much more. Before we do so, however, we should think about what the UN is actually doing. The UN does not act in a neutral and impartial way, indeed, it could not from a philosophical perspective and the example of Hammar skjöld shows that it does not. When the UN seeks to promote a liberal agenda, which it often does, it does so against an alternative. We might prefer the liberal agenda, but then we should say so, and not pretend that it is a neutral and impartial policy.

If Hammar skjöld's political role died together with Hammar skjöld in Ndola it also saw an apotheosis in the form of Hammar skjöld's elevation to a symbol for a more potent UN with a political role based on ethics and principles. While it is outside the scope of this thesis to trace this development in detail the outlines can be sketched. Urquhart's biography and the five volumes of Hammar skjöld's public papers and speeches edited by Cordier and Foote were both published in 1972. Cordier and Hammar skjöld's legal advisor Oscar Schachter, who helped draft the Oxford speech, both played an important role in promoting the role of an active and executive UN in academia. Cordier as dean of the School of International Affairs at Columbia

University, and later as dean of Columbia, and Schachter at Columbia Law School. Cordier raised the interest in the UN and Hammarskjöld's role and was supervisor for several studies of Hammarskjöld and the UN. Schachter became a leading light in the "New York school", a strand in international public law that argued for UN peacekeeping interventions often referred to Hammarskjöld as an ideal. After the fall of the Soviet Union and the renewed interest in UN peacekeeping missions there have been a plethora of studies that have turned to Hammarskjöld as a model.

If we agree that there can be no really neutral and impartial political action – as opposed to what Hammarskjöld argued – then we should try and limit the area where the Secretary-General has to take political decisions of his own. This would also limit the problem of policy being driven by UN interests. It could be argued that Hammarskjöld's actions undercut the Charter to the extent that it went around a Security Council that was blocked because there was no solution agreed by all its permanent members. When the Security Council is blocked it means that the UN should not take action. Hammarskjöld argued that the Secretary-General should do so anyway and in doing so threw the organisation squarely on the side of the West against the Soviet Bloc. Any Secretary-General who acts without the backing of the Security Council is bound to be on very thin ice. To the extent that the Secretary-General should play a political role, it seems appropriate that it should be more in the manner of Sir Eric Drummond who, to quote Hammarskjöld, "played a role behind the scenes, acting as a confidential channel of communication to Governments engaged in controversy or dispute, but this behind-the-scenes role was never extended to taking action in a politically controversial case that was deemed objectionable by one of the sides concerned." This is also in line with Hammarskjöld's early thoughts on the role of the Secretary-General before the Suez crisis.

To answer the question Hammarskjöld put in his Oxford lecture, we are perhaps not back in 1919, but "a searching re-appraisal" of the political role of the UN and its Secretary General is certainly necessary.

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