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STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE LUNCHEON GIVEN BY THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE
ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 1953

Let me first of all thank you most heartily for your kind invitation to this luncheon. As an old hand in the political science field myself, I take a special pleasure in this opportunity of establishing contacts with your association. Need I tell you that no occasion offering me such an opportunity could have been more welcome than this one because of the honour which you bestow today upon Ralph Bunche. The election of Dr. Bunche as President of your association is a high tribute to his personal qualities and achievements. I am proud to be present here today to join in that tribute.

The political scientists had a great share in the creation of the United Nations Organization. And they are doing much in the classroom, in publications and by their daily influence on public affairs to explain, to strengthen and to help the Organization. Meeting you here today it is natural for me to try and explain how the United Nations' world looks from the inside—to a social scientist who long ago had to abandon scientific work but who, in the back of his mind, in whatever job he has had to try, has given much thought to the challenge that the special activities in which he was engaged presented to his scientific imagination and conscience.

The area covered by your association is very wide—certainly as wide as, but probably not any wider than that covered by the United Nations. On one of the frontiers of the UN activities we find the highly specialized economist working with his statistical tools, at another frontier the expert on public relations and ^{their} psychology. At still another frontier the diplomatic expert with his background in international political history. And at a fourth frontier you have the man specializing in problems of internal administration and institutional developments.

The United Nations and its activities reflect acute needs of our time. The diversification and the scope of its various problems and efforts mirror the diversification and problems of the present social and political situation. In this way the United Nations' experiences are indicative of the challenge of our time to the social sciences and the social scientists.

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In many respects what is done in the United Nations is to apply to practical problems of today conclusions drawn in studies already made in various spheres of the social sciences. In other cases the United Nations embarks upon pioneer work, elaborating its own approaches and presenting practical conclusions to be studied by—and perhaps also challenged by—the independent social scientists. I am tempted to describe the situation in the famous phrase of Max Weber: To a large extent the United Nations is living off truth, as established by the social scientists, but it has also to live for truth, in its creative intellectual and practical activities.

I think that the spheres in which the United Nations, and those working inside its Secretariat, have the greatest wealth of new material to offer to the social scientists for their studies are first, the sphere of institutional problems, proper to a world-wide international administration, and second, that of diplomatic techniques and of international relations as elaborated in an international body, serving all countries irrespective of the split of our world and the differences of national interests represented among the governments by which it has been established.

It would take me too far to go into any detail. It would, indeed, be presumptuous on my part to try to do so. My imagination as an ex-teacher of the University of Stockholm may lead me into temptation, but twenty years of political life has not dulled my scientific conscience nor muffled its warning against large conclusions from inconclusive evidence.

However, let me indicate briefly the nature of the problems I have in mind in the two specific spheres to which I have referred—problems which seem to me to present a challenge to the social scientists.

I imagine that a few of you have already given some thought to the very peculiar organizational and institutional problems developing in an international administration. One of those problems has recently had the honour of figuring even in the newspaper headlines. I refer to the implications of a truly international status for such an administration, a status of full independence. Other problems which affect the day to day work and are just as important, are scarcely noted by the public and certainly only partly known to those scientists who are interested in the field of public administration. Let me mention a few of them briefly.

In the United Nations Secretariat we have nearly sixty different nationalities represented. None of us can make ourselves entirely free from our own background, and why should we? Is not the national accent and the national experience very often

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a great asset in international cooperation? It certainly is, but at the same time it may introduce an element of division. It may tend to split what should be a unity into separate compartments. For the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his collaborators it is necessary to find ways to make the national elements an asset, to overcome the divisive influences and try to create a unity in which the diversity of the national backgrounds of the members of the administration are fully respected and preserved, but in such a way as to be an asset, rather than a liability in the work. I am sure it must be evident to you how difficult and challenging a problem this is.

Another problem in international administration is closely connected with the ways in which such an administration is influenced by different administrative traditions and national legal ideologies. I would like to give you a practical example of significance. In the United Nations Administration as it is now set up, you find a blend between administrative traditions typical of various parts of the world. For example from the American administrative practice the United Nations has derived a tradition calling for a high degree of specialization, from the European side a tradition calling for a high degree of permanency of employment and professional flexibility. The American system of specialization, as it is well known, creates a need for a comparatively larger number of officials. But this number varies from time to time both upward and downward as changes are made in policies and programs and this in turn leads to less emphasis upon, and fewer safeguards for, permanency of tenure. The European system, on the other hand, works with a smaller number of officials and the employees are supposed to be able to adjust to a variety of different responsibilities. This European system makes it possible to give to the employment a high degree of permanency, where the tendency to rigidity is counterbalanced by the flexibility of service. When you combine such traditions, as is being done in the United Nations, you are really trying out a new technique, natural in the light of prevailing circumstances, but fraught with difficulties, and so far insufficiently explored. By methods of trial and error we have to work towards an equilibrium between the various elements, adjusted to the special needs of a universal international administration.

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The general problem just mentioned leads up to a whole series of questions which will have to be settled in the light of further experience. Let me mention only two. How is the specialized scientific expert to be fitted into the framework of the international administration? What is his proper function and what kind of status should he be given? And further, how is the problem created by the aging of specialized employees—a problem facing all administrations—to be solved in an international administrative system?

But let me leave this field and say just a few words also about the sphere where the United Nations Administration is pioneering into fields where it may be said to break new ground for the political scientists. Traditional diplomatic techniques are, of course, in principle, bilateral. That is true even if many nations happen to be represented at the conference table. A truly multilateral approach to diplomacy does not come into being until an instrument is created which represents a denationalized platform for negotiations or a denationalized instrument for a number of governments. In the Annual Report to the Eighth Assembly I have said that I believe we have only begun to explore the full potentialities of the United Nations as an instrument for multilateral diplomacy, especially the most fruitful combinations of public discussion on the one hand and private negotiations and mediation on the other. I added that the opportunities are there to be tested and used.

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This is a fascinating field where the experience of classical diplomacy, the successes and the errors of the League of Nations and of the United Nations, and the knowledge of the technique and psychology of a public debate utilizing to the full the modern media, all have to be taken into account by the political scientist as well as by those who are put in positions where they have to explore possibilities by action. Looking at my present job from the point of view of the social scientist, but looking at it also just as much from the point of view of somebody deeply engaged in the common effort to save peace and to build a world of peace, I cannot find any part of my present task more challenging than the one which consists in trying to develop all the potentialities of that unique diplomatic instrument which the Charter has created in the institution called the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

At this point I would like to depart from the beaten track of my prepared text and venture into wider fields even at the risk of losing my way.

I called the Secretariat and the institution named the Secretary-General instruments the full potentialities of which should be further explored. Instruments for whom? Well, of course, for the governments, but to be handled by the men and women assigned to the various posts in the Administration. I would not say anything here about how they are using the instruments. That would take me into the field of policy-making which I think is more properly discussed from other platforms. But I would like to indicate what they need as a background for the proper handling of the instruments, because these needs throw light on the challenge of our time to the political sciences in the spheres where the United Nations is in no way a pioneer but gratefully may reap where others have sown.

The Secretary-General -- and I use him as a symbol for all of the Secretariat -- is facing a public relations problem of a delicate and difficult nature. He is not out for "selling" anything. His is not a propaganda operation. But he has to try and reach the minds and hearts of people so as to get the United Nations' efforts firmly based in public reaction. As I said, we are not selling anything, but we feel that what we are doing is something that should have the support of the simple reactions of plain men, if we manage to tell them our story in the right way. So, the question of public relations to the Secretary-General develops into a question of human relations.

Human relations. The United Nations has to activate in its support people's urge to live together and work together in peace and decency. For that reason the United Nations has to try and create a new awareness of human and national

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interdependence. In order to be able to do so it will have to understand what makes so difficult the development of such an awareness. It will have to understand -- and challenge -- the fear that motivates so much of human action, the fear that is our worst enemy but which, somehow, seems to taint at least some corner of the heart of every man.

So the Secretary-General of the United Nations is led into very wide fields which are under the reign of political science. In his efforts he may have to enter the world of "An American Dilemma" and the land of "The Lonely Crowd," and he must give such knowledge its proper background in the broodings of the Toquevilles and Schumpeters.

When tackling the question of interdependence the United Nations must try and analyze for itself what determines group relations of the kind which international political history so often mirrors. I have already mentioned the element of fear but there are other factors. We would be misled if we thought about international relations only in terms of diplomatic history. Economic policies and power are other forces doing their work in the background. We move here in the shadow of Burckhardt. We have to listen to those who analyze the dynamics of the great population movements and the national revivals. Finally we may arrive at a point where we have to analyze the situation with the finest tools of political economy in order to see how material factors determine or clash with human reactions.

You may feel that my departure from the beaten path has led me very far, indeed, when I try to cover in one sweeping movement spheres studied by the theoretical economist, the historian and the student of the human mind. However, all the parts of political and social science are linked together. The man mastering all the various aspects does not exist. But we may be able to make, all of us, our contributions and so to build up a picture which, although far from complete, gives us a rough map of the waters that we have to sail.

The ultimate challenge to the political sciences -- and to us all -- is whether man shall master his world and his history or let himself be mastered by a world and a history which after all is made by man. There cannot be more than one reply to this question. Man must master his world, but in order to do so, he must know it.

I have already taken much too much of your time, and yet I have only mentioned very superficially a few of the aspects of the challenge of our time to the social scientists, as reflected in the work and experiences of the United

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Nations. I ask myself if there has ever been a period where the social scientists have had a greater task than today, where the challenge has been broader and more inspiring and where the results achieved are potentially of greater significance.

In concluding let me add this. Recognizing the important part you as social scientists and as teachers and research scholars have played, are playing and will play also in the future, it is from my point of view imperative for the United Nations and for its Secretary-General to establish and develop the closest possible working relationship with the group you represent. We are grateful for your help and count heavily on it for the future and I give you the pledge that to the extent the Secretariat of the United Nations can help you in return we will be happy to do so.

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