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TEXT OF ADDRESS BY SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJOLD BEFORE THE  
STAFF OF THE UN OFFICE AT GENEVA, TUESDAY MORNING, 26 MAY

(The following was received here from the UN Information Center in Geneva.)  
"You have seen my statement to your colleagues in New York. I had a talk

with your staff committee. And I met you all in your offices. Is there anything more for me to say?

"Yes, I think there is.

"Most of you, certainly have been to the museum arranged in this house, with collections commemorating the days of the League of Nations. There we see portraits of Nansens and Cecils, Stresemanns and Briands, of decades between the two wars. The memory of these men is justly honoured by us. They were pioneers for an internationalism, universal in scope and with world peace as its aim, which, whatever its shortcomings, represents one of the elements in our world of today. on which we have to base what hope we may have in future.

"The organization whose life and contribution is reflected in our museum belongs already to the past, but many of those who worked in it are with us. From personal experience they can tell of the change taken place between the days of the League of Nations and the days of the United Nations. Although perhaps profiting from wider support of the common man than our predecessors, we have to work in a much harsher climate. Where our predecessors dreamt of a new heaven, our greatest hope is that we may be permitted to save the old earth. Behind that hope, however, are now rallied all peoples of the world.

"You may not agree with me, but it is my personal conviction that in order to keep alive that internationalism of which I spoke, in order to translate it into action, we must work harder and hope for less than those who built the League. The museum is not a tomb. The memory it celebrates is a challenge and a source of strength for those who have the privilege of serving the organization which now embody the hope for peace. We are expected to succeed where our predecessors failed. We remember their selflessness and courage, but we know that even more may be required of us, if only in order to save what they achieved.

"Why do I stress this? Why the theme of blood, sweat and tears? Don't we read in newspapers of developments towards greater understanding between nations?

30. (more)

In other fields of activity than ours, don't we meet the spirit of optimism and faith in steady, quiet progress? And around us, is not early summer just as brilliant as ever? Well, all this is true, but it is just for these reasons, so tangible in this prosperous, peaceful and highly civilized part of the world, that I feel I should give you as true an expression as I could of my reaction to our situation. I felt it my duty to do so on this occasion, when I face for the first time as UN Secretary-General the Geneva tradition and all it represents of great and challenging international history.

"What I have said may also serve as background to a few words about your duties and rights as members of the staff of organizations in <sup>the</sup> UN family. When we speak about the status of staff members, we argue too often as if there were no differences between this service and the service of private interest. As a private citizen, a staff member is, of course, entitled here to all security that any private enterprise could give him and to fair recompense for his work, but he must not forget that over and above those rights of his are other rights, as well as obligations, which derive from the character of the work in which he is engaged and expectations which the world has for the success of that work.

"On many occasions I have had reason to stress the independence of the Secretariat and of staff members. This independence is both a right and a duty. It represents a right to freedom from political pressure from outside, but also represents a duty to remain individually independent in the political fights of today, between nations and within nations.

"You have probably seen in the papers what importance I attach to the rule that every staff member should be free from engagements in political activities which might reflect unfavorably on his status as an international civil servant and on the status of the UN Secretariat as a whole. Experience has shown that the only interpretation of this rule, possible in practice and valid as a long-term policy, is that staff members should abstain from all political activities which do not follow from their duties to the UN.

"My view of this problem means I feel I have to ask of staff members to sacrifice part of their normal rights as private citizens. I feel I am right in doing so, as the public interest which they serve just by their sacrifice is one which must guide both you and me in our posts in the UN Secretariat; that is the interest of preserving the Secretariat as a body enjoying the full and unreserved confidence of all member nations. We have to choose which way we want to further social and political progress. If we have chosen the way of an international civil servant, we have to abstain from alternative ways of action.

(more)

"To sum up, the right of the Secretariat to full independence, as laid down in the Charter, is an inalienable right. But it can only be defended on the basis of full recognition by every staff member of his own unlimited obligation to remain politically independent.

"I should like to draw your attention also to the independence of staff members in another sense. I think of independence of the mind and independence of character. In all sports where a group is acting, be it football or mountain climbing, success requires perfect teamwork. But teamwork does not reach perfection without independent individual initiative, disciplined by loyalty but free in expression. The same is true of our work. The kind of team spirit which should be fostered and which will make us strong is one where everybody feels the significance of his contribution and is given the full possibility to express his ideas and initiatives in that contribution. In practice this means sound criticism between colleagues and from senior officials to junior officials, but just as well from any staff member in relation to those who carry the final responsibility for our operations, is a welcome, indeed a necessary part of our life. Just as welcome and necessary, indeed, as on the other hand mutual lack of confidence, slander or cheap ridicule would be harmful.

"I have not mentioned here any one of the specific problems which interest you today in your capacity as staff members. Some of them are under active consideration by special committees or other bodies in the UN family. Others are sub judice. But I hope, although what I have said has been put in very general terms, it may have given you <sup>an</sup> idea of the philosophy which will guide me when taking my part of the responsibility in a solution of those various problems.

"One of the conclusions you may draw from what I have said is that I will be eager to learn your view points and observations on questions concerning the Secretariat, and that I will do what I can to maintain open discussion between us on all points of mutual interest. I hope this attitude will find response in the willingness of your side to give me the benefit of your doubt also in cases where I have had <sup>to</sup> go against what you might have liked. In concluding, I wish to say once again, as I have said privately to several of you, how glad I am to have had the opportunity of coming here and meeting you all at this very early stage of my time in office.

"I wish you all success in your future work and I hope for close and fruitful cooperation."

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