# ‘A Force for Peace’:
# Expanding the Role of the UN Secretary-General under Trygve Lie, 1946-1953


Ellen Jenny Ravndal, St Antony’s College

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DPhil in International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford

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## Abstract

The UN secretary-general plays an important political role in world politics, yet the UN Charter describes him merely as “the chief administrative officer of the Organization.” How did such a development come about? The existing narrative tends to emphasise the contribution made by Dag Hammarskjöld, the United Nation’s second secretary-general from 1953 to 1961. This thesis argues that there are two problems with this narrative. First, it overlooks the precedents set under the first UN secretary-general, Trygve Lie, who was in office from 1946 to 1953. Second, it places too much emphasis on the personal role played by Hammarskjöld, and fails to adequately consider the importance of institutional factors.

The main empirical contribution of this thesis is to highlight the importance of precedents set during the first years of the UN’s existence while Lie was secretary-general. Through his active stance on political issues in relation to Iran, Palestine, Berlin, Chinese representation, and Korea, as well as his consistently strong defence of the UN’s unity and principles, Trygve Lie succeeded in carving out space for the secretary-general to act autonomously on political issues, which later secretaries-general could build on.

The thesis’ main theoretical contribution is to emphasise the importance of institutional factors in the development of the UN secretary-general’s political role. In a conceptual framework based on institutionalism, the thesis explains how the UN secretary-general should be understood to play a ‘role’ within the ‘institution’ of the United Nations, and how this makes change of the role and the institution possible. Furthermore, through an examination of the founding of the United Nations and early expectations for the role of the secretary-general, the thesis shows that the institution of the United Nations had been set up from the start in such a way that it not only allowed for an expansion of the office of UN secretary-general, but also made such an expansion likely. The body of the thesis demonstrates how this process played out over time, by examining Lie’s activities as secretary-general, and offering a historical narrative of several episodes where the institution ‘pulled’ to expand the office, just as much as, or even more than, Lie ‘pushed’ for the same outcome.

**Contents**

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# Abbreviations

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|---|---|
| ACC | UN Administrative Committee on Coordination |
| CCC | Andrew W. Cordier Collection, Columbia University |
| CCOHC | Columbia Center for Oral History Collection |
| CEB | UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination |
| DPKO | UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations |
| ECOSOC | United Nations Economic and Social Council |
| FAO | The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations |
| FBI | US Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| FRUS | *Foreign Relations of the United States* |
| GA | United Nations General Assembly |
| GAOR | *General Assembly Official Records* |
| IBRD | The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) |
| ILO | The International Labour Organisation |
| IMF | The International Monetary Fund |
| IO | international organisation |
| IR | International Relations |
| ITU | The International Telecommunications Union |
| KB | The National Library of Sweden, Stockholm |
| NAN | The National Archives of Norway, Oslo |
| NARA | United States National Archive and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NLN | The National Library of Norway, Oslo |
| PCC | United Nations Palestine Conciliation Committee |
| PRC | The People's Republic of China |
| P5 | The five permanent members of the Security Council |
| RBP | The Ralph Bunche papers, UCLA |
| R2P | "Responsibility to protect" |
| SC | United Nations Security Council |
| SCOR | *Security Council Official Records* |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SG | United Nations secretary-general |

| | |
|---|---|
| SRSGs | Special Representatives of the Secretary-General |
| SSR | ... Soviet Socialist Republic |
| TPL | Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri |
| UCB | The Brian Urquhart Collection of material on Ralph Bunche, UCLA |
| UK | The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| UKNA | United Kingdom National Archives, Kew Gardens, London |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNA | United Nations Archives and Records Management Section, New York |
| UNCIO | *Documents of the United Nations Conference of International Organization* |
| UNCOK | United Nations Commission on Korea |
| UNDHL | United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library, New York |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEF | United Nations Emergency Force |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNISPAL | United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine |
| UNSCOP | United Nations Special Committee on Palestine |
| UNTSO | United Nations Truce and Supervisory Organisation |
| UPU | The Universal Postal Union |
| US | The United States of America |
| USSR | The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| WFP | The World Food Programme |
| WHO | The World Health Organisation |
| WW2 | World War Two |

# 1 Introduction

"I had no calculated plan for developing the political powers of the office of Secretary-General, but I was determined that the Secretary-General should be a force for peace. How that force would be applied I would find out – in the light of developments."[1]

Trygve Lie, 1954

## 1.1 Research problem

Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations' eighth secretary-general, will conclude his term in office on 31 December 2016, and, at time of writing, preparations to elect his successor are already underway. Eastern European governments claim this is their 'turn,' and the next secretary-general should be elected among candidates from their region.[2] Others lament the fact that all secretaries-general so far have been men, and hope to finally see a woman appointed to the post.[3] In parallel to these familiar discussions is a more drastic call to reform the election process itself. The '1 for 7 billion' campaign, a joint effort of several high-profile NGOs, argues that "the UN Secretary-General plays a crucial role in tackling global challenges and improving the lives of seven billion people."[4] Upon this basis, the campaign calls for a more transparent and democratic election process aimed at choosing the best-qualified candidate, regardless of nationality or gender. The call for reform gained prominence when the Elders, an independent group of global leaders founded by Nelson Mandela and currently chaired by former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, added their voice to the debate. As part of their call

[1] Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the United Nations* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 42.
[2] Barbara Crossette, "Eastern Europe Presses Its Claim to the Secretary-General's Office," *PassBlue*, 13 April 2015, http://passblue.com/2015/04/13/eastern-europe-presses-its-claim-to-the-secretary-generals-office/ (accessed 14.05.15).
[3] Gillian Sorensen and Jean Krasno, "A Woman Should Lead the U.N.," *The Washington Post*, 26 April 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-woman-should-lead-the-un/2015/04/26/8519c652-e9fa-11e4-9a6a-c1ab95a0600b_story.html (accessed 14.05.15). See also http://www.womansg.org/ (accessed 14.05.15).
[4] http://www.1for7billion.org/ (accessed 14.05.15).

to reform the United Nations as it reaches its 70th anniversary, the Elders recommended that the Security Council should nominate more than one candidate for the General Assembly to consider, and also suggested that the secretary-general could be appointed for a single seven-year non-renewable term to make the office more independent.[5]

These debates and campaigns highlight the extent to which both governments and the global public consider the office of UN secretary-general to be a significant factor in international affairs. The UN secretary-general is a highly visible figure in world politics: the media constantly invites him[6] to offer comment on current global crises and conflict situations; he frequently speaks out on issues such as climate change, human rights, and human development; and he represents the organisation in meetings with heads of state, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, and the global public. In short, the secretary-general is the chief diplomatic and political representative of the world's primary international organisation.[7]

Beyond his representative and ceremonial duties, the secretary-general plays a number of political roles on the international stage. First, he acts as a mediator in the traditional diplomatic role of providing 'good offices,[8] including all "steps taken publicly and in private, drawing upon his independence, impartiality and integrity, to prevent international disputes from arising, escalating or spreading."[9] In recent years, this role has been expanded to include the so-called 'groups of friends' approach, which

[5]Kofi Annan and Gro Harlem Brundtland, "Four Ideas for a Stronger U.N.," *The New York Times*, 6 Feb 2015, http://nyti.ms/1ul8xQh (accessed 11.02.15). See also http://theelders.org/un-fit-purpose (accessed 14.05.15). For more on election procedures, see section 3.5.
[6] So far all eight secretaries-general have been men, and throughout this thesis I will therefore use 'he' and 'his' for describing 'him.'
[7] Kofi A. Annan, "Foreword," in *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, ed. Simon Chesterman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xi.
[8] Teresa Whitfield, "Good offices and 'groups of friends'," ibid.; Thomas M. Franck and Georg Nolte, "The Good Offices Function of the UN Secretary-General," in *United Nations, Divided World: The UN's Roles in International Relations*, ed. Adam Roberts and Benedict Kingsbury (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
[9] United Nations, "The Role of the Secretary-General," http://www.un.org/sg/sg_role.shtml (accessed 05.03.13).

brings together "informal and issue-specific small coalitions of states," such as for example the Middle East Quartet of the 2000s, to deal with a pressing international concern.[10] Second, the secretary-general acts as a "spokesman for world interests,"[11] using his 'bully pulpit' to direct the world's attention to problems, shame states into action,[12] or function as a 'norm entrepreneur' as he tries to persuade states to adopt certain policies.[13] These two functions, acting as a neutral mediator and a normative spokesman, often come into conflict, requiring the secretary-general to strike a careful balance in order to remain effective at his job.[14]

Third, the secretary-general plays an important part in the effort to maintain international peace and security, the foremost of the UN's many tasks. To this end, the secretary-general works closely with the Security Council: he can bring any issue he wants to its attention, and the Council will often provide him with mandates in pursuit of peace and security. The Council is able to request the secretary-general to report on events in a given country, or to appoint a special representative or personal envoy to send to a particularly troubled spot.[15] In fact, the secretary-general has a seat at the table of the Security Council and can participate in its discussions alongside representatives of the permanent and rotating members, to the extent that observers portray him as a "sixteenth" Council member.[16] The secretary-general and the Secretariat are also

[10] Whitfield, "Good offices and 'groups of friends'," 86, 95.
[11] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 88.
[12] Quang Trinh, "The bully pulpit," in *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, ed. Simon Chesterman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[13] Ian Johnstone, "The Secretary-General as norm entrepreneur," ibid.
[14] Kofi A. Annan, "Foreword," ibid.
[15] Manuel Fröhlich, "The John Holmes Memorial Lecture: Representing the United Nations - Individual Actors, International Agency, and Leadership," *Global Governance* 20, no. 2 (2014).
[16] In 1951 Schwebel likened the secretary-general to a "twelfth member" of the then eleven-member large Security Council. Stephen M. Schwebel, "The Origins and Development of Article 99 of the Charter: The Powers of the Secretary-General of the United Nations," *British Year Book of International Law* 28(1951): 378. Gordenker also begins with a description of the Security Council table and the secretary-general's seat on it, Leon Gordenker, *The UN Secretary-General and Secretariat*, 2nd ed., Global Institutions (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 1. See also Simon Chesterman, "Article 99," in *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary, Volume 2*, ed. Bruno Simma, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2010.

heavily involved in one of the most prominent UN activities in the area of peace and security – peacekeeping – primarily through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).[17] A bewildering array of committees, departments, and missions work on peacekeeping, and the secretary-general and the Secretariat are crucial to guiding, supporting, and coordinating all these UN bodies. By appointing mission commanders, negotiating agreements with the involved parties, and drafting proposals for the implementation of new operations, the secretary-general exerts considerable influence over the process.[18]

In 2007, the seventh UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, asserted that "for better or worse, the role of the Secretary-General has come to be seen as primarily *political*."[19] And yet, the UN Charter of 1945 describes him merely as the "chief *administrative* officer of the Organization."[20] Overall the Charter is circumspect regarding both the secretary-general and his Secretariat, awarding them only five articles and just over 300 words of 111 articles and nearly 9,000 words in total.[21] 'Peacekeeping' is not mentioned at all, and what is now understood as the political power of the secretary-general derives solely from article 99, which simply states that the secretary-general has the right to "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."[22]

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[17] United Nations, 'Department of Peacekeeping Operations,' http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/about/dpko/ (accessed 04.02.13).
[18] Kjell Skjelsbæk and Gunnar Fermann, "The UN Secretary-General and the Mediation of International Disputes," in *Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation*, ed. Jacob Bercovitch (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 97-98.
[19] Annan, "Foreword," xi. Author's emphasis.
[20] UN Charter, article 97. Author's emphasis.
[21] The text of the UN Charter is available on http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml (accessed 05.03.13). This point was borrowed from Shashi Tharoor, "'The most impossible job' description," in *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, ed. Simon Chesterman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 33.
[22] UN Charter, article 99. As argued by Schwebel, "Article 99."; Wilfried Fiedler, "Article 99," in *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary*, ed. Bruno Simma (München: C.H. Beck, 1995), 1044; Paul Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The United Nations and the Quest for World Government* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 44; James Traub, "The Secretary-General's political space," in

Despite the inclusion of article 99, the general expectation among government representatives, UN officials, and independent observers in early 1946 was that the secretary-general would adhere to this administrative role. Brian Urquhart, who worked in the Secretariat at the time and has since written extensively on the office of UN secretary-general, wrote in 2007:

> The general concept of the position and functions of the Secretary-General in 1946 bear little relation to the office's responsibilities today. There [was] then ... a highly restrictive and conservative view of the functions, let alone the independence, of the world's top international civil servant. He was considered, especially by the Europeans, to be an almost exclusively administrative official, and efforts ... to assist in political matters were often resented or ignored.[23]

Most observers believed that article 99 would seldom be used,[24] a belief which proved prescient, as in the past seventy years, it has been formally invoked only twice.[25] As Leo Pasvolsky, a central figure in the Charter drafting process at the US State Department, explained to a meeting of the American delegation to the General Assembly in January 1946: "this provision of the Charter was only for convenience in bringing situations involving non-members to the attention of the Council and ... too much importance should not be attached to it."[26] Similarly, at the San Francisco conference in 1945, several delegates explicitly articulated their conviction that "the Secretary General is to be chief administrative officer, not a political representative."[27]

Given these institutional origins, how was the role of the secretary-general transformed from its initial incarnation as primarily administrative into the highly visible, political and diplomatic role it is today? The distinction between 'political' and

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

[23] Brian E. Urquhart, "The Evolution of the Secretary-General," ibid., 17.

[24] Schwebel, "Article 99."

[25] By Dag Hammarskjöld during the Congo Crisis in 1960, and by Kurt Waldheim over the occupation of the US Embassy in Teheran in 1979. Chesterman, "Article 99," 2013-14.

[26] "Minutes of the Meeting of the United States Delegation (Executive Session)," 26 January 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS), *1946*, I, 172-182.

[27] "Summary Report of the Eleventh Meeting of Committee I/2," 23 May 1945, *Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization* (hereafter UNCIO), VII, 96.

'administrative' is important throughout this thesis and requires a definition. Simply put, 'administrative' are those tasks of the secretary-general which concern the functioning of the Secretariat, like hiring staff or organising meetings. 'Political' are those matters in the realm of world affairs with which the member states concern themselves. Discussions in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) are 'political,' and whenever the secretary-general expresses an opinion on them he is acting 'politically.' In his political role, the secretary-general is an autonomous actor comparable to heads of government.[28] Examples of political acts by the secretary-general include Ban convening a summit on climate change in September 2014,[29] and Annan's public designation of the 2003 invasion of Iraq as "illegal."[30]

The development of a political role for the secretary-general is particularly puzzling when considered in light of the fact that negotiating international peace and security is a highly sensitive area of interstate politics – touching the nerves of state sovereignty and national interests – and therefore highly resistant to encroachment by non-state actors. Yet with the right to bring matters to the attention of the Security Council, the secretary-general was given a seat at the table of high-politics. This position is not merely ornamental; some go so far as to argue that the secretary-general enjoys more rights than many member-states, especially those that are not members of the Security Council.[31] But the secretary-general is not a state, and possesses no

[28] This is not to discount the fact that questions of employment in the UN Secretariat, particularly to the higher ranks, are deeply political and divisive issues, but for the sake of simplicity, Secretariat matters will be considered 'administrative,' while 'political' is reserved for the domain of the states. This definition parallels the distinction between politics and bureaucracy within states. For an act to be considered 'political,' moreover, it would also involve an element of autonomy. A full definition of 'autonomy' is given in section 2.3.
[29] http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/about/ (accessed 24.06.15).
[30] Stanley Meisler, *Kofi Annan: A Man of Peace in a World of War* (Hoboken, NJ: J. Wiley & Sons, 2007), 274-75.
[31] Schwebel, "Article 99," 378.

territory, no army, nor sovereignty. Despite this, the secretary-general participates at the highest levels of world politics, an individual actor amongst states.

This development runs contrary to the tenet of rational choice theory suggesting that states rarely allow international organisations autonomy of any substance.[32] The principal-agent literature examines the ways in which states establish international organisations for specific purposes, and then seek to control them as they perform their tasks.[33] And indeed this thesis will show that in conformity with this prediction the original signatory states did not intend for the secretary-general to play the extensive political role he does today. With this in mind, it might be expected that states would exert constant pressure against particularly 'activist' secretaries-general, and undertake concerted efforts to recoup any powers that may have been seized. Yet, as the empirical analysis will demonstrate, this is not what happened after creation. Instead, despite a succession of more or less activist secretaries-general, the opposite has occurred, as seized powers were not only maintained, but in fact further expanded after the end of the Cold War.

Several researchers have tried to answer the question of how this expanded political role became possible.[34] The traditional narrative of the office's development focuses on the contribution of Dag Hammarskjöld, secretary-general from 1953 to 1961, and, in his biographer Urquhart's words; "undeniably the most remarkable of the Secretaries-General so far appointed."[35] According to the conventional account, Hammarskjöld built the foundations for the political role of the secretary-general, and

[32] Barbara Koremenos, Charles Lipson, and Duncan Snidal, "The Rational Design of International Institutions," *International Organization* 55, no. 4 (2001): 762.
[33] Henning Tamm and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Choice and Principal-Agent Theory," in *International Organization and Global Governance*, ed. Thomas G. Weiss and Rorden Wilkinson (London: Routledge, 2014); Darren G. Hawkins et al., eds., *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2006).
[34] See for example the various chapters in Simon Chesterman, ed. *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[35] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 19.

all who follow(ed) are to be evaluated on how they compare to the 'Hammarskjöld model.'[36] Kofi Annan said in a 2001 lecture that "there can be no better rule of thumb for a Secretary-General, as he approaches each new challenge or crisis, than to ask himself, 'how would Hammarskjöld have handled this?'"[37] Indeed, of all secretaries-general to date, Hammarskjöld has inspired the largest amount of scholarly debate, with several publications dedicated to his term in office.[38] He is, moreover, credited with inventing the concept of peacekeeping, almost single-handedly, in response to the 1956 Suez crisis.[39] In short, according to this narrative, the role of the secretary-general in the 1940s was essentially administrative, but then Hammarskjöld – by virtue of his personality – expanded the office to include political tasks, with every secretary-general since having only continued what Hammarskjöld had started.

This thesis argues that there are two problems with the traditional Hammarskjöld narrative. First, from an empirical perspective, it neglects the fact that Hammarskjöld was the second, not the first, UN secretary-general, and that, as such, he was not in

[36] James Barros, "The Importance of Secretaries-General of the United Nations," in *Dag Hammarskjöld Revisited: The UN Secretary-General as a Force in World Politics*, ed. Robert S. Jordan, *International Relations Series, Institute of International Studies, University of South Carolina* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1983), 34-35; Simon Chesterman, "Introduction: secretary or general?," in *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, ed. Simon Chesterman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Shashi Tharoor, "'The most impossible job' description," ibid.; Stanley Meisler, "Dateline U. N.: A New Hammarskjöld?," *Foreign Policy*, no. 98 (1995); Traub, "The Secretary-General's political space."

[37] Kofi A. Annan, "Dag Hammarskjöld and the 21st Century," The Fourth Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture, Uppsala, Sweden, 6 September 2001, www.dhf.uu.se/pdffiler/Kofi%20Annan.pdf.

[38] Leland M. Goodrich, "Hammarskjold, the UN, and the Office of the Secretary-General," *International Organization* 28, no. 3 (1974); Robert S. Jordan, ed. *Dag Hammarskjöld Revisited: The UN Secretary-General as a Force in World Politics* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1983); Brian E. Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, Paperback ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994); Sten Ask and Anna Mark-Jungkvist, eds., *The Adventure of Peace: Dag Hammarskjöld and the Future of the UN* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Manuel Fröhlich, *Political Ethics and the United Nations: Dag Hammarskjöld as Secretary-General* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008); Jodok Troy, "Dag Hammarskjöld: An International Civil Servant Uniting Mystics and Realistic Diplomatic Engagement," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 21, no. 3 (2010); Roger Lipsey, *Hammarskjöld: A Life* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013); Carsten Stahn and Henning Melber, eds., *Peace Diplomacy, Global Justice and International Agency: Rethinking Human Security and Ethics in the Spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[39] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 20-21; Shashi Tharoor, "'The most impossible job' description," ibid., 42; Ian Johnstone, "The Secretary-General as norm entrepreneur," ibid., 123; Manuel Fröhlich, "The 'Suez Story'," in *Peace Diplomacy, Global Justice and International Agency: Rethinking Human Security and Ethics in the Spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld*, ed. Carsten Stahn and Henning Melber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

office when the organisation faced its first challenges. Second, in terms of theoretical explication, the narrative places inordinate weight on the personality of a single post-holder, thus underestimating the importance of institutional factors in the development of the secretary-general's role.[40] This thesis seeks to address these two shortcomings by examining the development of the office under Trygve Lie, UN secretary-general from 1946 to 1953, and establishing a conceptual framework with which to understand the office of UN secretary-general in institutional terms. Lie's time in office was tumultuous, and he warned his successor that he was taking on "the most impossible job in the world."[41] Lie faced the dual challenge of having to "shape and fill out the unique and largely unprescribed role of the Secretary-General under the unanticipated constraints of the Cold War."[42] Under his leadership, the organisation had to establish itself, set up headquarters, recruit staff and start operations, all the while facing its first crises of peace and security in the context of growing superpower rivalry. Many contemporary and later observers view(ed) Lie largely as the wrong man, in the wrong job, at the wrong time.[43] Given this reputation, Lie presents something of a 'hard test,' with the result that his successful expansion of the political rights of the office would strongly challenge the literature's deification of Hammarskjöld.

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[40] As Newman noted, "the personality of the Secretary-General can only take advantage of these opportunities; it cannot create the environmental and constitutional parameters itself. Personality is an interesting – and certainly a popular – explanation for the history of the Office but it is not sufficient. The environmental backdrop is an essential part of the equation." Edward Newman, *The UN Secretary-General From the Cold War to the New Era: A Global Peace and Security Mandate?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998), 27-28. This thesis further adds the institutional context within the UN as a crucial element to understand the role of the UN secretary-general.

[41] As told by Hammarskjöld in "Statement by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld at a General Meeting of the Staff," UN Press Release SG/299, 1 May 1953, the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library, New York (hereafter UNDHL).

[42] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 17-18.

[43] James Barros, *Trygve Lie and the Cold War: The UN Secretary-General Pursues Peace, 1946-1953* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 45-47; Brian E. Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 100-01. Or as Gladwyn Jebb of the British Foreign Office remarked as early as 23 May 1946: "Mr. Lie is not, in my humble opinion, the right man for this job, which is, however, admittedly about the most difficult one in the world." FO 371/57060, the United Kingdom National Archives, Kew Gardens, (hereafter UKNA).

This thesis thus addresses the primary research question: *How did the role of the UN secretary-general develop under Trygve Lie, and why did it develop in this way?* The study's emphasis is primarily empirical, as it seeks to reconstruct an account of the development of the UN secretary-general's role under Lie. It is not, however, a purely descriptive exercise.[44] The thesis also discusses how such a development became possible and why this particular development was the most likely outcome, and in considering these issues the thesis presents a more generalisable, theoretical understanding of the conditions for expansion of international executive roles.

## 1.2 Literature review

This project contributes to the literature on the early development of the UN in general, and the political role of its secretary-general in particular. It also engages with international relations theory, in particular the literature on institutional theory, which will be reviewed in chapter 2, and discussions of the role of executive heads of international organisations, reviewed in this section and in chapter 9.

Surprisingly few studies explore the founding period and early development of the United Nations.[45] This can be partially explained by the dominance of the realist school in International Relations (IR) and international history for most of the post-war period. In recent years, however, two factors have generated new scholarly interest in the United Nations. First, the end of the Cold War gave rise to a brief period of renewed hope in the organisation and in what it could achieve. Second, the unilateral foreign policy pursued by the United States post-9/11 under President George W. Bush stirred heated debate over whether the United Nations matters (to the United States). Most

[44] For an explanation of why and how a historical narrative is also 'analytical' and offers more than mere 'description' of events, see the methodological framework in section 1.4.
[45] A point also made by Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).

books written about the UN in this climate focused on the development of the organisation, its work on human rights and other issues, and prospects for its reform.[46] There is also a growing body of literature examining the founding of the United Nations.[47] These studies, however, tend to describe the thoughts and ideas of the founders, and conclude in June 1945 with the signing of the UN Charter. Apart from a few biographies[48] and works written in the 1950s and 1960s,[49] few scholars have conducted in-depth examinations of the early development of the United Nations and the political role of the secretary-general. A notable recent exception is Gaiduk's 2012 book on Soviet and American relations with the United Nations during 1945-65.[50] Although that book discusses many of the same events covered in this thesis, its purpose is to compare Soviet and American policy *toward* the United Nations, not to provide an analytical narrative of the United Nations in the period, let alone explain the development of the political role of the secretary-general. The only comprehensive history of the United Nations in this period does include a chapter on the secretary-

[46] See for example Kennedy, *Parliament of Man*; David L. Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All: The UN Security Council and the Making of the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Adam Roberts and Benedict Kingsbury, eds., *United Nations, Divided World: The UN's Roles in International Relations*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Stanley Meisler, *United Nations: A History*, Revised and updated ed. (New York: Grove Press, 2011).

[47] Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation, The Founding of the United Nations: A Story of Superpowers, Secret Agents, Wartime Allies and Enemies, and Their Quest for a Peaceful World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003); Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*; Dan Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN: How the Allies Won World War II and Forged a Peace* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010); Dan Plesch and Thomas G. Weiss, eds., *Wartime Origins and the Future United Nations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015).

[48] Barros, *Trygve Lie*; Anthony Gaglione, *The United Nations under Trygve Lie, 1945-1953*, Partners for Peace (Lanham, MD, and London: Scarecrow Press, 2001).

[49] See Stephen M. Schwebel, *The Secretary-General of the United Nations: His Political Powers and Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952); William L. Tung, *International Organization under the United Nations System* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969); H. G. Nicholas, *The United Nations as a Political Institution*, 5th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1975). (first edition 1959); and a special issue of *International Organization* from 1965 (19:3) on "The United Nations: Accomplishments and Prospects."

[50] Ilya V. Gaiduk, *Divided Together: The United States and the Soviet Union in the United Nations, 1945-1965*, Cold War International History Project Series (Washington, DC, and Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2012).

general and the Secretariat,[51] but does not address in any significant detail the expanding role of the secretary-general.

An ever-increasing body of literature analyses the role of the UN secretary-general, but exhibits similar characteristics to that discussing the development of the organisation as a whole. Recent work tends to focus on the development of the office to the present day and its prospects for the future.[52] Most of the generalist work on the role of the secretary-general was written in the 1950s, 1960s, or 1970s,[53] making it problematic from both a theoretical and a historical perspective, as it does not reflect newer debates and perspectives, and was written before most primary archival sources were accessible to researchers. Many good books have been written about the role of individual secretaries-general, in particular about Hammarskjöld, but these accounts tend to offer insights into the personality of the post-holder rather than the development of the office.[54] As a result, there is room for a historically-grounded, theoretically-

[51] Evan Luard, *A History of the United Nations: Volume 1: The Years of Western Domination, 1945-1955* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1982), 343-60.
[52] Newman, *UN Secretary-General*; Kent J. Kille, *From Manager to Visionary: The Secretary-General of the United Nations* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Edward Newman, "Secretary-General," in *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, ed. Sam Daws and Thomas G. Weiss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Chesterman, *Secretary or General*; Kent J. Kille, ed. *The UN Secretary-General and Moral Authority: Ethics & Religion in International Leadership* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007); Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Secretariat*. The most recent addition to this literature is Lucia Mouat, *The United Nations' Top Job: A Close Look at the Work of Eight Secretaries-General* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014)., but this book was written by a journalist for a general public, and cannot be considered a contribution to the academic debate about the secretary-general.
[53] See for example Schwebel, *Secretary-General of the United Nations*; Arthur W. Rovine, *The first fifty years: The Secretary-General in World Politics 1920-1970* (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1970); Leon Gordenker, *The UN Secretary-General and the Maintenance of Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967); Mark Zacher, "The Secretary–General and the United Nations' Function of Peaceful Settlement," *International Organization* 20, no. 4 (1966); Charles Henry Alexandrowicz, "The Secretary-General of the United Nations," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 11(1962).
[54] As argued by Chesterman, "Introduction," 4. See for example Barros, *Trygve Lie*; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*; Jordan, *Hammarskjöld Revisited*; June Bingham, *U Thant: The Search for Peace* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1966); Seymor Maxwell Finger and Arnold A. Saltzman, *Bending with the Winds: Kurt Waldheim and the United Nations* (New York: Praeger, 1990); George J. Lankevich, *The United Nations Under Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, 1982-1991* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001); James Traub, *The Best Intentions: Kofi Annan and the UN in the Era of American World Power* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006); Meisler, *Kofi Annan*.

informed exploration of the early development of the role of the secretary-general, generating insights regarding the office and not merely the person.

This project examines the early development of the role of the secretary-general during Trygve Lie's period in office from 1946 to 1953. This thesis draws on Lie's private papers, an archival source that hitherto has not been applied to these questions, and thus offers fresh insights to the debate. Lie published his own memoirs in the 1950s, one volume of which deals with his time at the United Nations.[55] At the time of writing, historian Guri Hjeltnes is working on an authorised biography of Lie, in Norwegian. It will cover the entirety of his life and work, with sections devoted to his term as secretary-general, but not with the objective of understanding the development of the office.

Only three academic books (and two book chapters) on Lie as secretary-general currently exist. Barros' 1989 volume[56] is by far the most thorough, but his account is coloured by the views of the American and British officials upon whose reports he relies. As a result, this thesis argues, he offers an unjustifiably negative picture of Lie. Barros' analysis, furthermore, seems to be limited by an underlying realist conception of international relations, which leads him to largely dismiss the notion that the secretary-general had any influence on world affairs. All the same, Barros' remains the best account to date. Muldoon's study offers a kinder assessment of Lie, but only in a short chapter written for the purpose of examining Lie's 'ethical framework.'[57] A further chapter by Ravndal and Daws examines the precedents established under Lie for

[55] Trygve Lie, *Syv år for freden* [Seven years for peace] (Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag, 1954); Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*. Though the book was published simultaneously in Norwegian and English, the two accounts are not identical, with some differences in the order of the chapters, and significantly, the English version is shorter than the Norwegian one. Lie's expressions are more direct and forceful in the Norwegian version. In this thesis I rely mainly on the English text, but supplement this with the Norwegian version when this reveals new sides to the story.
[56] Barros, *Trygve Lie*.
[57] James P. Muldoon, "The House That Trygve Lie Built: Ethical Challenges as the First UN Secretary-General," in *The UN Secretary-General and Moral Authority: Ethics and Religion in International Leadership*, ed. Kent J. Kille (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007).

the secretary-general's relationship with the Security Council.[58] Two short books by Gaglione and Nævdal are marred by factual inaccuracies and shoddy referencing, and Nævdal's main purpose seems to be arguing that Hammarskjöld was assassinated.[59] None of these publications has attempted a systematic analysis of Lie's contribution to shaping the political role of the secretary-general.

In examining the development of the role of the secretary-general, this thesis also engages with theoretical literature on the role of executive heads of international organisations. Three early studies of international organisation offered ideas about the roles of executive heads and their potential for autonomous action,[60] but with the rise of positivism and neo-realism, and a shift of focus toward the study of international regimes rather than international organisations, this research agenda was largely left dormant.[61] The post-Cold war era has witnessed renewed interest in the question of how secretaries-general and secretariats of international organisations exert an independent influence in international politics. Barnett and Finnemore, building upon the theory of Max Weber, argued that international organisations are essentially bureaucracies, and as such are endowed with rational-legal authority and the potential for independent action.[62] Their work opened up a new avenue of constructivist studies of international

[58] Ellen Jenny Ravndal and Sam Daws, "Trygve Lie," in *The UN Secretary-General and the Security Council*, ed. Manuel Fröhlich and Abiodun Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2016).
[59] Gaglione, *United Nations under Trygve Lie*; Bodil Katarina Nævdal, *Drømmenes palass: Trygve Lie og Dag Hammarskjöld - en beretning* [The Palace of Dreams: Trygve Lie and Dag Hammarskjöld - an account] (Oslo: Schibsted Forlag, 2000).
[60] Inis L. Claude, *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization* (New York: Random House, 1956); Ernst B. Haas, *Beyond the Nation-State: Functionalism and International Organization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964); Robert W. Cox, "The Executive Head: An Essay on Leadership in International Organization," *International Organization* 23, no. 2 (1969); Robert W. Cox and Harold K. Jacobson, *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization* (New Haven1973).
[61] See also the review of literature on leadership in international organisation by Bob Reinalda and Bertjan Verbeek, "Leadership of International Organizations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*, ed. R. A. W. Rhodes and Paul 't Hart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[62] Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (1999); Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore,

organisations, and several scholars followed up with studies of international bureaucrats in organisations such as the UNHCR, UNDP, and various environmental governance organisations.[63] Lastly, a small group of scholars are presently engaged in the systematic study of executive heads. Schroeder is constructing a framework for understanding the actions of executive heads in formulating a vision for the organisation and mobilising support to have that vision implemented,[64] while Kille and Reinalda are developing a database of the biographical details of executive heads for their IO BIO project.[65] This study contributes an additional perspective to this growing literature by examining how the role of the UN secretary-general developed within the context of the UN as an institution, as outlined in the conceptual framework in chapter 2.

## 1.3 The argument

This thesis challenges the dominant explanation of the development of the UN secretary-general's role. The main empirical contribution of the thesis is to demonstrate that Lie set important precedents in expanding the political tasks of the role of UN secretary-general. Thus Dag Hammarskjöld, during his tenure in the 1950s, drew on earlier precedents established by Lie; historians have therefore exaggerated the singularity of Hammarskjöld's actions. The main theoretical argument also challenges the Hammarskjöld narrative, with its emphasis on the force of personality of the office-holders. Rather than a heroic narrative of individual post-holder(s) pushing to expand

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*Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell Univeristy Press, 2004).

[63] Gil Loescher, *The UNHCR and World Politics: A Perilous Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Frank Biermann and Bernd Siebenhüner, eds., *Managers of Global Change : The Influence of International Environmental Bureaucracies* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009); Tana Johnson, *Organizational Progeny: Why Governments are Losing Control over the Proliferating Structures of Global Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Sikina Jinnah, *Post-Treaty Politics: Secretariat Influence in Global Environmental Governance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).

[64] Michael Bluman Schroeder, "Executive Leadership in the Study of International Organization: A Framework for Analysis," *International Studies Review* 16, no. 3 (2014).

[65] See http://www.ru.nl/fm/iobio (accessed 18.06.15).

the role of the secretary-general in the face of strong state opposition, this thesis argues that the secretary-general's 'push' to expand the role aligns with a corresponding *institutional 'pull'*, as from the start the organization was established in a way that made an expansion of the role both possible and likely.

The thesis shows that though the Charter describes the secretary-general as "the chief administrative officer of the Organization,"[66] the office was actually political by design. The requisite room to expand the role of the secretary-general was built into the institution both formally and informally in 1946. Two provisions in the UN Charter in particular gave the secretary-general political rights. The most obvious, and best recognised, is article 99, which 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."[67] The three short words 'in his opinion' are of key significance, as they provide the secretary-general with a discretionary right of political initiative. He can decide what matters to bring to the attention of the Council, and this reveals that the office has agency and autonomy. The use of 'may bring' is also important, because this implies that while the secretary-general *can* bring issues to the attention of the Council, he may also pursue an alternative course of action.

As early as 1945-6 observers noted that article 99 provided the secretary-general with political rights beyond those ascribed to his closest predecessor, the League of Nations secretary-general. In a December 1945 report, the UN Preparatory Commission recognised that article 99 gave the secretary-general "a quite special right which goes beyond any power previously accorded to the head of an international organization." The report went on to observe that "it is impossible to foresee how this article will be

[66] UN Charter, article 97.
[67] UN Charter, article 99.

applied; but the responsibility it confers upon the Secretary-General will require the exercise of the highest qualities of political judgement, tact and integrity."[68] Further, in 1946, in response to the secretary-general's actions in the Iranian crisis, another observer noted that article 99 "certainly gives the Secretary General an important and far-reaching right of political initiative, the exercise of which is left entirely to his discretion."[69]

A second provision in the Charter implying a broadly political position for the secretary-general is article 7, which lists the Secretariat (i.e. the secretary-general) as one of the principal organs of the United Nations alongside the General Assembly, the Security Council, ECOSOC, the Trusteeship Council, and the International Court of Justice.[70] This establishes the secretary-general as an equal of the other organs of the organisation, and gives him "equal responsibility for promoting the purposes and principles set out in Articles 1 and 2."[71] Secretaries-general have used this article to legitimise independent activities that fill the vacuum when other UN organs proved unwilling or unable to act.

Informal elements of the UN institution also implied a broadly political position for the secretary-general. This thesis demonstrates that during the process of Lie's election in 1946, the assembled government delegates and journalists expected that the secretary-general would play a political role, and that precisely for that reason the P5 chose Lie – a politician and former foreign minister, not a technocrat – to be the first to hold office. Furthermore, early observers of the UN recognised that the secretary-general would likely be seen as representing not only the organisation as a whole, but also the UN Charter, its principles and values, and even the 'international' itself –

[68] Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, UN Doc. PC/20, 23 Dec 1945, 87.
[69] Josef L. Kunz, "The Legal Position of the Secretary General of the United Nations," *The American Journal of International Law* 40, no. 4 (1946): 790-91.
[70] UN Charter, article 7(1).
[71] Johnstone, "Secretary-General as norm entrepreneur," 131.

despite the fact that nothing to this effect was written in the Charter. The UN Preparatory Commission wrote in December 1945 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."[72] The equality of the office of secretary-general with the other organs of the United Nations, combined with the officeholder's embodiment of the institution overall, constitute a key mechanism by which the institution 'pulled' to expand the secretary-general's role. When 'someone' needs to do 'something,' that 'someone' has often turned out to be the secretary-general. Kofi Annan frequently joked that 'SG' – the common acronym for the UN secretary-general – actually stood for 'scapegoat,' as the member states will offload the tasks they do not want onto the secretary-general and the Secretariat.[73] This vacuum effect is further described in section 2.5.

This thesis argues that the inclusion of broad political rights for the secretary-general in the Charter occurred partially as the result of an oversight on the part of the UN's founders, in so far as the states never actually gave much thought to what such rights would entail in practice. By 1951, one observer went so far as to note that "the role of the Secretary-General in practice has developed in a manner precisely contrary to [its] seeming intention."[74] This study contests this interpretation of the evolution of the role, arguing instead that the founders in fact had no clear conception of what the secretary-general would, or should, do. The UN Charter was largely written by the United States and Britain, but during initial planning, American and British politicians spent little time thinking about the role of the secretary-general, leaving the drafting of

[72] Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, UN Doc. PC/20, 23 Dec 1945, 87.
[73] Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 149; Kofi A. Annan and Nader Mousavizadeh, *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 139.
[74] Schwebel, "Article 99," 375.

these articles mainly to lower-level staff in the US Department of State.[75] When states came together at Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco, the main discussion over the secretary-general concerned how he and his deputies should be elected.[76] Beyond this, the assembled government delegates largely failed to discuss what it would mean in practice to give the secretary-general the political rights implied by article 99. Chapter 3 discusses in detail the resultant flexibility this gave the office, and elaborates upon the formal institutional rules and informal expectations for the role of the UN secretary-general when the UN began operations in 1946.

Thus, from the outset, the institution was sufficiently flexible to allow expansion of the secretary-general's role. This does not, however, account for *why* the role expanded. The nascent character of the institution permitted change, but did not ensure it – the role of the secretary-general might have remained the same, developed in a different direction, or even contracted. The two final pieces of the puzzle to explain why an expansion of the role was the most likely outcome are the individual post-holder and the historical geopolitical context. As chapter 2 explains, any secretary-general will experience a significant degree of 'implicit' autonomy in the act of interpreting and deciding on what he is supposed to be doing. An activist secretary-general can decide to 'push' to expand his role, where a more modest individual might think that the proper role of the secretary-general lies in managing the Secretariat and that it his duty to resist pressure for an expansion beyond this. Trygve Lie was an activist secretary-general, who was "determined that the Secretary-General should be a force for peace,"[77] and therefore sought every opportunity to consolidate and strengthen the position of his office. Another man (or woman) might have acted differently.

[75] Ruth B. Russell, *A History of the United Nations Charter: The Role of the United States 1940-1945* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1958), 369-71.
[76] Ibid., 431-32, 854-60.
[77] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 42.

Second, the historical geopolitical context of the late 1940s and early 1950s also served to make an expansion of the secretary-general's role the most likely outcome. The United Nations had been founded on the assumption that the great powers, as the P5, would continue to cooperate through the Security Council to maintain international peace and security. Instead, conflicts between these crucial member states emerged even before the UN started operations, and the ensuing Cold War would define international politics for the next four decades. In this situation, a vacuum of authority emerged, which 'pulled' the secretary-general into assuming broader responsibilities and a more autonomous role. In the interest of protecting the UN Charter and ensuring the organisation's survival, the secretary-general engaged in new activities, and in the process expanded his political role.

At first glance, the combination of the secretary-general's desire to expand his role with institutional facilitation in the context of member-state conflict in the Cold War, appear to make the outcome overdetermined. To the contrary, however, it is not the intention of this project to suggest that expansion was a smooth and inevitable process. Indeed, the process of expanding the secretary-general's political role faced considerable *state* opposition. I suggest that in order to understand the source of this push-back, a useful heuristic is to distinguish between the states as 'members' and as 'founders' of the United Nations. As 'members', as predicted by the principal-agent literature, states' primary interest lies in limiting the powers of the secretary-general as much as possible, but as 'founders', states have an interest in the continued functioning of the organisation, and therefore see value in a political and autonomous secretary-general. A key aspect of the explanation therefore derives from the manner in which the secretary-general builds alliances with 'founder' states to persuade the 'members' to accept the office's political expansion as in the long-term interest of the organisation.

At the theoretical level, this thesis thus offers an explication of how 'individuals' – as institutionally-embedded roles – rather than specific persons, come to occupy positions of influence in international politics – the traditional purview of states. The conceptual framework, outlined in chapter 2, may thus be applied to the analysis of potential change in the roles of executive heads of other international organisations. In doing so, the thesis engages with one of the perennial questions of both IR and social science writ large, namely the relationship between individuals and institutions, or the structure-agent problem. It accounts for how a structure (the United Nations as an institution) created agency (in the role of secretary-general). The thesis's findings therefore complement the subsection of institutionalist literature examining the ways in which international organisations are empowered or gain autonomy through the performance of the tasks delegated to them by states.[78]

## 1.4 Methodological framework

This research project analyses key aspects of the early development of the United Nations, and it is therefore primarily a project of institutional and international history. Within IR, researchers have employed the 'historical institutionalist' approach to questions of institutional development,[79] seeking to contribute "to the study [of] patterns of change and continuity in international institutions."[80] This statement mirrors the aims of this project, conducted using historical methods.

[78] One study discussing how the European Court of Justice gained autonomy is Anne-Marie Burley and Walter Mattli, "Europe before the Court: A Political Theory of Legal Integration," *International Organization* 47, no. 1 (1993). See also Karen J. Alter, "Delegation to international courts and the limits of re-contracting political power," in *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, ed. Darren G. Hawkins, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Karen J. Alter, "Agents or Trustees? International Courts in their Political Context," *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 1 (2008).

[79] Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 938.

[80] Orfeo Fioretos, "Historical Institutionalism in International Relations," *International Organization* 65, no. 02 (2011): 369.

When the conventional historical method of archival research and primary-source analysis is applied to case studies of a general problem in the social sciences, it is referred to as "detailed narrative process-tracing."[81] What (broadly speaking) distinguishes historians and political scientists in this regard is that while historians employ this method for the purpose of explaining a particular historical event, political scientists seek to generalise across cases.[82] As a result, some political scientists dismiss the method as leading to 'merely' a historical narrative. This perspective, however, reflects a misunderstanding of what it is to explain in history.[83]

Historical explanations centre on narrative, the story of what happened. In a sense all explanation is narrative, in that it provides an account of how something came about and how the world went from one state to another. In this story, the raconteur may incorporate three different elements: chance coincidences, mechanistic processes, and human acts (volitional causation).[84] Social scientific explanations tend to favour mechanistic or structural causation, whilst historians emphasise human agency and contingency.[85] That said, historical narrative is more than just a focus on actors and chance coincidences; it is itself an explanation. In essence, narrative explanation renders a historical episode intelligible by placing events 'prior' and 'subsequent' to one another. Telling a story of events with respect to temporality – as prior and subsequent – is not only to present a chronology or description of them, but also to *explain* them, as it

[81] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, BCSIA Studies in International Security (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004), 210; Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George, "Case Studies and Process Tracing in History and Political Science: Similar Strokes for Different Foci," in *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*, ed. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001).
[82] Jack S. Levy, "Explaining Events and Developing Theories: History, Political Science, and the Analysis of Intrnational Relations," ibid., 40-41.
[83] Probably linked to the common distinction between 'explaining' and 'understanding'. See e.g. Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
[84] Hidemi Suganami, "Narrative Explanation and International Relations: Back to Basics," *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 37, no. 2 (2008); Hidemi Suganami, "Agents, Structures, Narratives," *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 3 (1999).
[85] Suganami, "Narrative Explanation."; Suganami, "Agents, Structures, Narratives."

provides at least an implicit account as to why they happened.[86] To narrate events, to tell the story of *how* they happened, is also to explain them – an understanding of historical explanation that guides this project.

There are limitations and strengths to this form of explanation. Narrative explanation is indeterminate, and allows for open-endedness.[87] Historians tend to layer several different causes for each event they describe, and to emphasise how the interaction in each particular case has rendered the event in question possible, or even inevitable. For some political scientists, concerned with parsimony, strong causation and generalisability, this embrace of multi-causality and contingency is negative.[88] Historians also recognise this problem in the risk of presenting events as overdetermined, as it is easy to create "the illusion of a steadily building causal pressure; the factors pile up on top of each other pushing down on the events; political actors become mere executors of forces long established and beyond their control."[89] Nonetheless, given the way historians view the world as complex and interdependent,[90] narrative explanation is the only feasible means of incorporating all the elements deemed necessary for an explanation. Narrative explanation also draws on concepts and words used in everyday language, and by the subjects being studied.[91] When asked to explain *why* an event happened, most people will tell the story of *how* it came about. As

[86] M. C. Lemon, *The Discipline of History and the History of Thought* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 49-50, 56.
[87] Ibid., 56-58.
[88] Robert Jervis, "International History and International Politics: Why Are They Studied Differently?," in *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*, ed. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001).
[89] Cristopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, Kindle ed. (London: Penguin, 2012), loc. 265.
[90] John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 64.
[91] Lemon, *Discipline of History*, 52.

the most intuitive approach to explanation, narration also has a long history in the study of international relations and political science.[92]

## 1.5 Sources

This study relies on primary documents from a range of state, organisational, and private archives in different countries. Lie's personal papers, including documents from his work at the United Nations, are held at the National Archives of Norway (Riksarkivet) in Oslo (hereafter shortened to 'NAN'). Another collection of Lie's letters is available in the National Library of Norway (Nasjonalbiblioteket), also in Oslo (NLN). Lastly, copies of the correspondence between Lie and Hammarskjöld were obtained from the National Library of Sweden (Kungliga biblioteket) in Stockholm (KB). These sources, as any source, are potentially biased. In the course of research, it became clear that the archival collections in Oslo contain only a selection of Lie's papers, those he himself selected in the process of writing his memoirs, and later in life when going through his personal files. Given this selective inclusion, it may be speculated that the content of Lie's papers may render an overly-positive view of the UN and of his own work within the organisation. To compensate for these biases, Lie's papers are triangulated with other sources, so as to support the narrative with evidence from other archives and secondary literature.

Relevant official UN documents, including resolutions and minutes, many of which are available online or in published collections, were also collected. I spent three months at the United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (UNA) in New York, which holds internal Secretariat documents from this time, and the United

[92] Sven Steinmo, "Historical institutionalism," in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, ed. Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library (UNDHL), which holds copies of the secretary-general's press releases and press conferences.

Papers from the same timeframe relating to other UN officials are another valuable source. I consulted documents relating to Ralph Bunche, a director in the Trusteeship Department who played a central role in negotiations in Palestine, in the research library at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCB). The papers of Andrew Cordier, executive assistant to Lie, at Columbia University (CCC) also contain many of the secretary-general's files. While at Columbia University in New York, I also consulted interview transcripts with UN officials and diplomats in that library's extensive oral history collection (CCOHC).

Various national archives also offer valuable insights into how the states perceived the actions of the secretary-general. I visited the National Archives of the United Kingdom in London (UKNA) and the United States National Archives and Records Administration outside Washington DC (NARA), both containing reports about the UN and the secretary-general. The United States archives' published collections of documents in the *Foreign Documents of the United States* (FRUS) series also proved useful. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo (also in NAN) offered some relevant files as well. Whenever possible, I tried to ascertain the Soviet Union's reactions to Lie's initiatives from digitised and translated Soviet documents available through the Cold War International History Project, although there will inevitably be gaps in the incorporated documents. Gaiduk's recent book on the history of the United Nations,[93] as well as an unpublished Norwegian MPhil thesis on the

[93] Gaiduk, *Divided Together*.

relationship between Lie and the Soviet Union,[94] both proved useful in this respect, as they reference Soviet documentary sources.

These archival sources are supplemented by memoirs written by involved actors, newspaper articles from the time available in online databases, and secondary literature about the origins and early development of the United Nations, the crises and events it faced in this period, and general discussions on the role of the secretary-general. As most of the involved individuals are deceased, interviews were not considered.[95] I did, however, acquire copies of interview transcripts from two large projects on UN history, as well as from the online collection of the Truman Presidential Library (TPL), where they have interviewed both Secretariat staff and diplomats stationed in New York.

## 1.6 Chapter outline

Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 lays out a conceptual framework based on institutional theory and structuration theory. The chapter outlines the interactive process by which the 'role' of the UN secretary-general develops within the United Nations as an 'institution.' The chapter constitutes an important initial explication of the theoretical argument of the thesis, tracing pathways through which action by the UN secretary-general may lead to changes in the overall institution. Due to the UN secretary-general's special symbolic importance within the UN – as the role which more than any other 'represents' the UN overall – his actions will affect the global standing and prestige of the United Nations, as well as the content of the other roles within the institution.

[94] Sverre Olav Dølvik, "Sovjetunionen og FNs første generalsekretær Trygve Lie, 1946-1951" [in Norwegian] [The Soviet Union and the UN's first secretary-general Trygve Lie, 1946-1951] (Hovedoppgave/ MPhil dissertation, University of Oslo, 2002).
[95] Brian Urquhart, who worked in the Secretariat under Lie, and has since written biographies on Ralph Bunche and Dag Hammarskjöld, and several articles on the role of the secretary-general, is now in his 90s and still lives in New York. Unfortunately, however, he did not respond to attempts to arrange access for an interview.

Chapter 3, the first empirical chapter of the thesis, sketches the range of expectations attached to the role of the secretary-general when Lie first came into office in February 1946. It explores early models for the UN secretary-general's role offered by the League of Nations secretary-general and the director of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and goes on to cover both the wartime planning process, and the secretary-general's election process of late 1945/early 1946. This chapter substantiates the argument that the institution was designed to allow for an expansion of the role of the secretary-general. It shows that from the UN's inception, it was expected that the secretary-general would play a 'political' role, though the exact implications of this were never spelled out, giving the role inherent flexibility and autonomy.

Chapter 4 examines how secretary-general Lie sought to clarify and consolidate the political rights of his office at a time when the United Nations faced its first crisis in Iran. This chapter also explores the first and, thus far, last, time the institution altered its formal rules to accommodate an expansion of the role of the secretary-general. During 1946, it was recognised that article 99 implied both that the secretary-general had the right to present oral and written statements to the Security Council, and that he had an independent right to appoint investigative committees or send his representatives to gather information in trouble spots. The chapter presents a case of the institution 'pulling' the role of the secretary-general further even then the secretary-general had tried to 'push,' in the formulation of the Council's rules of procedure.

Chapter 5 explores a case wherein Lie 'pushed' to expand the role of secretary-general. In the case of Palestine, moreover, historians have criticised Lie's conduct for being overtly 'political' – accusing him of acting on a personal bias, supposedly in breach of the 'proper,' impartial role of the secretary-general. Lie held strong views regarding the resolution of the 'Palestine problem,' which he regarded as a crucial test

for the United Nations. Throughout this period, the secretary-general was confident in his role, and unafraid to seek to pressure the member states to get the organisation to do what he believed was right. The chapter argues that Lie's notion of what was 'right' derived primarily from his concern for the coherence, prestige, and survival of the organisation, rather than personal political bias.

In chapter 6, the thesis turns to explore the historical geopolitical context of Lie's tenure. It examines the secretary-general's relationship with the two superpowers, and Lie's efforts to mediate the growing Cold War tensions and deal with high-stakes crises such as the Berlin blockade and the outbreak of the Korean War. The chapter demonstrates the ways in which Lie's actions followed logically from his views of the duties, or role, of the secretary-general. He believed that his primary duty as UN secretary-general was to preserve the UN as a functioning universal international organisation, and this consideration drove his efforts to mediate between the two sides in the emerging Cold War, aiming to retain the United States and USSR as members while avoiding perennial deadlock in the Security Council. Likewise, when one side committed an act in breach of the UN Charter – the North Korean invasion of South Korea – secretary-general Lie took a principled stand against that act, in line with the UN Charter, and thus alongside the United States. The chapter argues that the Cold War served to facilitate an expansion of the secretary-general's role, as he was 'pulled' in to fill 'vacuums' left by member state inaction.

The final empirical chapter, chapter 7, charts the decline in Lie's fortune during the last three years of his tenure. The year 1950 represents the highpoint of Lie's activity as secretary-general – he took initiatives to seat the Communist Chinese government in the Security Council, presented an ambitious "twenty-year programme for peace" to end the Cold War, strongly supported the US-led UN-intervention in the

Korean War, and was re-appointed for a further three years in November 1950. Yet merely two years later, Lie gave in to US pressure to allow the FBI to enter UN headquarters to interview and fingerprint US nationals employed there, while he himself resigned from office. The chapter argues that Lie tried to 'push' his role too far, and suffered the consequences. He alienated too many (powerful) member states at the same time, and was left no option but to resign. Simultaneously, though the 1950 peace plan, the chapter explores the secretary-general's function of 'representing' the United Nations and acting as a 'guardian' of the Charter. These actions mobilised widespread public and small-state support for the secretary-general, but in the end such support cannot compensate for lack of support or outright hostility from powerful member states. In this way the chapter explores the limitations of the secretary-general's role.

The thesis concludes with two chapters that open up the temporal and theoretical scope of the thesis. Chapter 8 briefly discusses the development of the UN secretary-general's role under Lie's seven successors, and how they dealt with challenges similar to those Lie faced. Chapter 9 then synthesises arguments from the preceding chapters to offer an assessment of Lie's contribution to the development of the political role of the UN secretary-general. The chapter takes stock of Lie's legacy, and discuss the many precedents established during his tenure. Finally, the chapter returns to the theoretical argument of the thesis, and suggests ways of building upon this research in analysing the roles of executive heads across international organisations more broadly.

# 2 Expanding the 'Role' of the UN Secretary-General: A Conceptual Framework

"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."[1]

Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, December 1945

## 2.1 Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapter, this thesis poses the following research question: *How did the role of the UN secretary-general develop under Trygve Lie, and why did it develop in this way?* The thesis argues that the secretary-general's role expanded during Lie's tenure to assume a number of political functions that had not been included in the UN Charter. Principal-agent literature tells us that such an expansion was not to be expected as the most likely outcome. Rather, from this perspective, states establish international organisations for specific purposes, and then seek to control their performance as tightly as possible. Even in such a situation some international organisation autonomy is possible, because states will not be able to perfectly monitor their activities. This gives rise to the problem of 'agency slack,' which is the term used in this literature to describe activities undertaken by the agent (the international organisation) that are not in the interest of the principal (the states).[2] Although the principal-agent literature also recognises the possibility that agents may increase their autonomy, so far the majority of research in this tradition has focused on the various

[1] Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, UN Doc. PC/20, 23 Dec 1945, 87.
[2] Darren G. Hawkins et al., "Delegation under anarchy: states, international organizations, and principal-agent theory," in *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, ed. Darren G. Hawkins, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 24-25. See also Darren G. Hawkins and Wade Jacoby, "How agents matter," ibid.

control and sanction mechanisms available to states.[3] For this reason the principal-agent literature, which builds on rational choice institutionalism, does not offer a satisfactory explanation for why the role of the secretary-general expanded to include political rights that allowed him autonomy over questions of peace and security, when we would expect states to resist such an expansion because peace and security issues are closely linked to state sovereignty.

In order to understand why expansion of the role of the secretary-general was the most likely outcome, as the rest of the thesis demonstrates, we must first answer the question of how change was possible at all. Before moving on in the discussion, it is also necessary to explain the thesis' understanding of what 'the United Nations' and 'the UN secretary-general' are, and which other actors are relevant to the story. This chapter establishes a conceptual framework based on normative/sociological and historical institutionalism to answer these questions.[4] The chapter argues that the UN secretary-general must be understood to perform a 'role' within the 'institution' of the UN, and incorporates insights from structuration theory to explain how the institution may change as a result of the activities undertaken within it. The relationship between 'role' and 'institution' is summarised in the figure below:

[3] As also argued by Tamm and Snidal, "Rational Choice and Principal-Agent Theory," 138.
[4] For a description of different kinds of institutionalism, see Hall and Taylor, "Three New Institutionalisms."; B. Guy Peters, *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The New Institutionalism*, 3rd ed. (New York and London: Continuum, 2012).

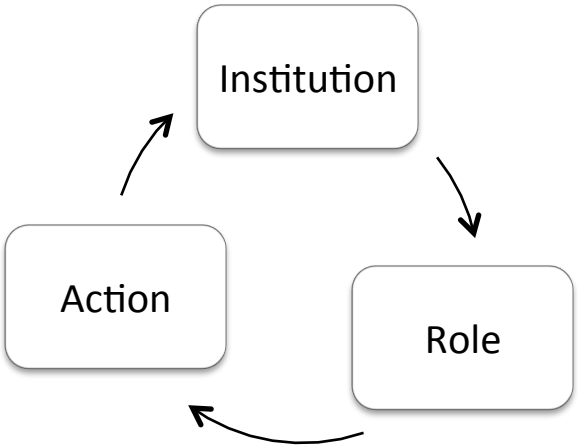


**Figure 2.1: The 'role cycle' showing the relationship between institution and role[5]**

Within an institution actors occupy different positions or roles, and the institution specifies what action is appropriate for an actor in a given situation, that is, the institution defines the role of an actor within the setting of the institution. When faced with a situation, an actor will therefore have to interpret which role applies (or if there are several, which one takes precedence), and what action that role specifies as appropriate. Yet actors are not always free to act on whatever the institution specifies (or whatever they want to do), but will also be limited by the availability of resources. They may "know what to do but not have the capabilities to do it," to borrow March and Olsen's phrase.[6] The institution empowers or constrains different actors in different situations, and one of the ways in which it does this is through giving them different access to material and human resources. Lastly, because the institution is a social construction and exists as patterns of action and interaction, it can also change through that action. Institutions are produced, reproduced, and changed by the actions of the people within them. This is the process of institutionalisation. Over time the institution

[5] This model is inspired by the description of the link between institution, role (identity), and action given in James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "Institutional Perspectives on Political Institutions," *Governance* 9, no. 3 (1996): 251-52. However, their model has a structural bias and does not discuss how action can in turn change the institution. More on this later in the chapter.
[6] Ibid., 252.

solidifies and becomes entrenched in social life, but it can also change as a consequence of actions undertaken in attempts to fulfil what the institution prescribes.

Understanding the position of the secretary-general as a role within the institution of the United Nations is important for three reasons. First, it helps explain where the role of secretary-general comes from and the importance of rules and procedures to the performance of that role. Second, it explains how the secretary-general's performance of his role can and will change the institution of the United Nations. The secretary-general's enactment of the role of secretary-general will impact on what the UN 'institution' is. That is, it may change the content of its principles and values, its structure and working procedures, or the way it is perceived by other actors (its standing and prestige). Furthermore, the secretary-general's performance of his role may also change the content of the roles of other actors within the UN. These other actors include the Security Council and the General Assembly (as collective actors), staff in the Secretariat, the member states' permanent representatives, and also the member states themselves. Because all of these actors perform roles within the same institution, and that institution is being produced and reproduced by the enactment of these roles, the performance of any one of them may lead to changes in one or more of the other roles.

Third, the secretary-general can be said to hold a role of special symbolic importance within the United Nations. His role more than any other is linked directly to the overall values and principles of the United Nations, and he can thus be described as a 'custodian' of the UN Charter. This means that a single individual has been placed in a position from where he could potentially wield great influence inside the United Nations and in international politics in general.

The rest of this chapter describe these issues in more detail. It begins with explaining why the United Nations can be considered an 'institution' and what an institution is. The second section then explains how we can understand the secretary-general as performing a 'role' within the institution of the UN. It defines what a role is, and introduces three dimensions for distinguishing roles from each other: scope, autonomy, and 'representation.' The third section discusses what other actors within the UN are relevant to this story, and how they should be understood. The last section of the chapter then returns to the question of change. It explains how change is possible within this framework, how we can measure change in the role of the secretary-general, and outlines the main mechanisms behind the change observed in the role of the secretary-general in the period under study in this thesis.

The chapter thus contributes to making the theoretical argument of this thesis – the United Nations had been set up in a way which both allowed for and facilitated an expansion of the secretary-general's role – by explaining how such change was possible. The chapter on its own, however, cannot explain the direction change took after the UN was established. That is, it only shows that change was possible, not that such change would mean an expansion of the secretary-general's role. A contraction or limitation of the role would also be theoretically possible, and might still happen in the future. To complete the argument and explain why expansion of the role was the most likely scenario, the thesis relies on individual and environmental factors. Because of the autonomy inherent to the process of interpretation, two different individuals occupying the same role facing the same situation might still act in different ways. An activist secretary-general may 'push' to expand his role, where a more modest individual would resist pressure for an expansion. Furthermore, given the international situation at the time of increasing conflict between the member states as expressed in the Cold War, an

expansion of the secretary-general's role was the most likely outcome, as the secretary-general was 'pulled' in to fill the vacuum left by member state inaction.

## 2.2 The United Nations as an institution

It is important to understand what the United Nations is. The United Nations is an intergovernmental organisation encompassing all the world's states as members and with an international secretariat to service the organisation. It is also an institution. Several different definitions of institution have been offered, but for the purposes of this study *institutions will be understood to "comprise regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life."*[7] This definition is taken from organisational studies, where there is a clear distinction between organisations, as actors, and institutions, as the general field in which they operate or, in North's words, "the rules of the game."[8] However, the United Nations, as many other international organisations, also functions as an institution, in that it provides a set of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that structure and give meaning to the behaviour of actors within that organisational setting. This is different from for example the studies of hospitals, schools, or firms undertaken in sociology and organisational studies where many institutional constraints are external to the organisation being studied, but the definition of institution developed in that context still offers helpful guidance to research in international relations. This is not to say that there are no institutions operating outside or above the United Nations, such as for example the norm of

[7] W. Richard Scott, *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014), 56.
[8] Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 3.

sovereignty or the rules of diplomatic practice, but for the purposes of this study the focus will be on the institutional setting within the United Nations.

The United Nations as an institution incorporates both regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements, as well as a set of resources and activities. The *regulative* elements are the formal rules of the institution. In fact, many studies of institutions focus almost exclusively on these elements, to the extent that institutions can be defined simply as rules.[9] The UN Charter, the rules of procedure of the various organs, staff regulations, organisational charts and other written rules, as well as the systems of monitoring and sanctioning associated with them, are the regulative institutional elements of the United Nations. The UN Charter is an interesting document in that it provides both regulative elements in setting out specific procedures that are to be followed, and forms part of the United Nations's normative content.

*Normative* elements "define goals or objectives ... but also designate appropriate ways to pursue them."[10] The UN's values, principles, and norms form part of the UN's normative system. Articles 1 and 2 of the UN Charter, as well as the preamble, describe the overarching goals of the United Nations as peace, security, justice, and freedom. The Charter also specifies how to reach these goals through international cooperation, the promotion of human rights, peaceful settlement of disputes, promotion of economic and social development, collective security, and self-determination.[11]

*Cultural-cognitive* elements of an institution are "the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and create the frames through which meaning is made."[12] Institutional studies in anthropology and in organisational sociology have examined how organisational cultures can develop, or how political and economic

[9] Steinmo, "Historical institutionalism," 126; North, *Institutions*, 3.
[10] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations, 4th ed.*, 64.
[11] UN Charter, preamble, articles 1 and 2.
[12] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations, 4th ed.*, 67.

ideologies form part of the institutional context. It is beyond the scope of the present project to undertake a similar study of the United Nations.

Scott's definition quoted above also lists activities and resources as elements of an institution. *Activities* or behaviour have long been recognised to form a part of institutions, because "rules, norms, and meanings," the three symbolic elements of an institution, "arise in interaction, and they are preserved and modified by human behavior."[13] Therefore, any study of institutions must take account of the human behaviour which represents it. Some have offered definitions of institutions emphasising this element: "An 'institution' can be viewed as a relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behavior for specific groups of actors in specific situations."[14] Institutions are collections of behaviour which in turn shape future behaviour. Such a view of institutions has been informed by structuration theory and the understanding that reality is socially constructed. Specific examples of activities which form part of the UN institution abound; from the conduct of delegates at meetings, to the work of translators and secretaries, their activity creates and sustains the UN.

Material or human *resources* can also form part of an institution.[15] Giddens and Sewell have described how resources form part of social structures. They are unevenly distributed mediums of power, and taking account of resources can therefore help explain power asymmetries.[16] Resources provided by the institution create capabilities

[13] Ibid., 57.
[14] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 948.
[15] The inclusion of resources as part of institutions indicates Scott's commitment to the understanding of structures as 'rules and resources.' This understanding of structure is common in much constructivist and English School writing in IR, and is also compatible with neoliberal approaches, although Wight argues that it fails both to resolve the structure-agency problem and to account for some social phenomena. Colin Wight, *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 137-38.
[16] William H. Sewell, Jr., "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 1 (1992): 9-10.

for action,[17] and institutions will empower or constrain different actors by assigning them different access to resources.

## 2.3 The 'role' of the UN secretary-general

Before moving on to questions of change, we also need to understand what kind of an actor the UN secretary-general is. The UN secretary-general performs a 'role' within the context of the UN institution. He is the UN secretary-general precisely because of the position he holds in the organisation. The link between institution and role is well established in the literature.[18] *Roles are "conceptions of appropriate goals and activities for particular individuals or specified social positions."*[19] A role carries with it prerogatives and obligations for what an actor in that position is expected or allowed to do.[20] In other words, the role defines what an actor has the authority to do in a given situation. The content of a role is determined by the institution, or, said differently, by the position of an actor in relation to other actors and to the social structures. All institutions "are embodied in individual experience by means of roles,"[21] that is, roles are part of the institution, and are how individual actors relate to the institution. The institution "define[s] relationships among roles in terms of what an incumbent in one role owes to incumbents in other roles."[22] These expectations about appropriate behaviour for actors in a specific role will be held by other salient actors in the

[17] Johan P. Olsen, "Change and continuity: an institutional approach to institutions of democratic government," *European Political Science Review* 1, no. 1 (2009): 9.
[18] Some scholars prefer to use words like 'identity' or 'social position' for the same concept. March and Olsen talk about 'identities' while Wendt discusses 'role identity' as one of four sub-categories of 'identity'. Giddens prefers to use the term 'social position' because he does not like the implication that the script is already written which comes from the use of 'role.' March and Olsen, "Institutional Perspectives on Political Institutions," 251-52; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 224-28; Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), 84.
[19] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations, 4th ed.*, 64.
[20] Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, 84.
[21] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Allen Lane, 1967), 91.
[22] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 23.

institution, and as such can be experienced by the actor as external pressure.[23] But over time actors will also be socialized into the role they occupy and they will therefore internalise the role and its associated norms.[24] This understanding of roles as both internal and external is compatible with Wendt's discussion of how identities consist of ideas held both by Self and Other.[25] Some roles are formally constructed within an organisation where different positions have specified rights and responsibilities and different access to material resources. Other roles emerge informally through interaction over time.[26]

Understanding action as based on rules, identities, or roles is commonly referred to as the logic of appropriateness, in contrast to the logic of consequences which sees action as based on interests. Appropriateness can be either a cognitive or ethical concept. "As a cognitive matter, appropriate action is action that is essential to a particular conception of self. As an ethical matter, appropriate action is action that is virtuous."[27] This means that the secretary-general and other actors within the UN system will decide what to do not merely on the basis of their own personal interests, but by trying to fulfil the duties and expectations of their role as they see it. We would therefore expect to find them talking in a language of duty and responsibility, rather than referencing the consequences of various acts.[28]

In this thesis I distinguish roles from each other through their variation along three dimensions: scope, autonomy, and representation – the extent to which the role 'represents' the institution overall. The rest of this section describes these three in more

[23] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations, 4th ed.*, 64.
[24] Hall and Taylor, "Three New Institutionalisms," 948.
[25] Wendt, *Social Theory*, 224.
[26] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations, 4th ed.*, 64.
[27] March and Olsen, "Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders," 951.
[28] Although this is often precisely the debate actors are having: claiming to be doing the appropriate thing, while accusing their opponents of acting out of selfish reasons. One example of this in relation to FAO and the WFP was described by Sebastian Schindler, "Man versus State: Contested Agency in the United Nations," *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 1 (2014).

detail, and briefly discusses how much scope, autonomy, and representation the role of the UN secretary-general enjoys. We can use these three dimensions to measure change in a role over time, as section 2.4 will explain in more detail.

**Scope**

The scope of a role describes what kind of activities the incumbent of a role may engage in and how much she can do in each area of activity. Within institutions there will be specialised roles for specific actions. In a hospital, for example, doctors, nurses, and administrators all have their areas of expertise and responsibility. The same applies to an international organisation such as the United Nations. The role of the secretary-general is different from the role of the translators and typist in the Secretariat, the President of the Security Council, and the national delegations. Each role has been assigned its own issue area(s) and specific rights and responsibilities in that area.

The UN secretary-general today, in 2015, can broadly be described to be performing five different functions in different areas of activity, as summarised in the following table:

| Function | Description | Political activity |
|---|---|---|
| Manager | Administration of the Secretariat; servicing meetings; coordination; channel of communication | |
| Investigator | Fact-finding; writing reports; seeking information | (x) |
| Diplomat | 'Good offices'; 'groups of friends'; negotiation and mediation | x |
| General | Nominal head of UN peacekeeping forces; servicing and coordinating peacekeeping operations | (x) |
| Advocate | Promoting one cause or another; 'norm entrepreneur'; using the 'bully pulpit' | x |

**Table 2.1: Typology of the functions of the UN secretary-general**

The previous chapter observed that the UN secretary-general today performs a broadly political role, even though the UN Charter of 1945 assigned him primarily administrative tasks. This distinction between 'political' and 'administrative' is important, and can be observed through an examination of the role's scope. Simply put, 'administrative' are those tasks of the secretary-general which concern the functioning of the Secretariat, like hiring staff or organising meetings. 'Political' are those matters in the realm of world affairs with which the member states concern themselves through discussions in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and ECOSOC.[29] Some of the secretary-general's functions can be designated as 'political,' indicating that he plays a 'political' role, while others are primarily or wholly 'administrative.'

[29] For a more detailed definition, see section 1.1.

As a *manager* the secretary-general is the "chief administrative officer" of the United Nations,[30] and he has also been given specific tasks in relation to the other organs of the United Nations.[31] He is responsible for hiring staff and administering the Secretariat, and he oversees the organisations programs and meetings. The secretary-general is also the hub for the UN's internal and external communications, he performs certain roles in examining credentials and in regard to the depositing of international treaties, and he coordinates the activities of the various organs of the United Nations, and with the specialised agencies of the broader UN family.[32] By definition, this function is entirely 'administrative.'[33]

The secretary-general also works in the field of information. Article 99 gives the secretary-general implicit rights as an *investigator*. For the secretary-general to be able to bring matters to the attention of the Council, he must be informed of what is going on in the world, and he must therefore be allowed to ask questions, to form fact-finding committees, or to send his representatives to trouble-spots to ascertain what is going on, and whether or not he should use his Charter-given right.[34] Article 99 gives the secretary-general an independent authority to investigate, but other UN organs have also often asked the secretary-general to provide it with reports on situations, thus reinforcing the role of the UN secretary-general in this regard, and in 1991 the General Assembly explicitly endorsed the secretary-general's right to send fact-finding missions

[30] UN Charter, article 97.
[31] UN Charter, article 98.
[32] Chesterman, "Article 97."; Chesterman, "Article 98."
[33] This is not to discount the fact that questions of employment in the UN Secretariat, particularly to the higher ranks, are deeply political and divisive issues, but for the sake of simplicity, Secretariat matters will be considered 'administrative,' while 'political' is reserved for the domain of the states. See also section 1.1, note 28.
[34] Leland M. Goodrich, Edvard Hambro, and Anne Patricia Simons, *Charter of the United Nations: Commentary and Documents*, 3rd ed. (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969), 576; Kennedy, *Parliament of Man*, 44; Bertrand G. Ramcharan, *Preventive Diplomacy at the UN* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), 17; Chesterman, "Article 99," 2012; M. Christiane Bourloyannis, "Fact-finding by the Secretary-General of the United Nations," *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 22, no. 4 (1990).

on his own initiative in the Declaration on Fact-Finding.[35] The secretary-general's investigative role also includes his reporting functions. Article 98 tasks him with writing an annual report to the General Assembly,[36] and the other organs have reinforced this role by asking him to provide them with reports on a variety of subjects. This field of activity can be either political or administrative, depending on the subject matter and circumstances of the secretary-general's reports.

The role of the secretary-general further extends into the important areas of peace and security. He is a *diplomat*, a role which builds on the precedents set by the League of Nations secretary-general as a mediator, negotiator, and channel of communications.[37] The secretary-general's provision of 'good offices' falls under this category, as does his use of the 'groups of friends' approach. The UN website defines good offices to include all "steps taken publicly and in private, drawing upon his independence, impartiality and integrity, to prevent international disputes from arising, escalating or spreading."[38] In recent years this role has been expanded to include the so called 'groups of friends' approach, which is to bring together "informal and issue-specific small coalitions of states" to deal with a pressing international concern.[39] The UN Charter originally intended that the states in the Security Council should work together and solve problems of peace and security and enforce the UN's solutions, however, with the growing Cold War those dreams were soon shattered, and the organisation as a whole shifted to a greater emphasis on diplomatic means, and the secretary-general's use of 'good office' played an integral part in this strategy.[40] But the

[35] Chesterman, "Article 99," 2012.
[36] UN Charter, article 98.
[37] For more on the League of Nations secretary-general and precedents for the role of the UN secretary-general, see chapter 3.
[38] United Nations, "The Role of the Secretary-General," http://www.un.org/sg/sg_role.shtml (accessed 12.04.14).
[39] Whitfield, "Good offices and 'groups of friends'," 86, 95.
[40] Alys Brehio, "Good Offices of the Secretary-General as Preventive Measures," *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 30, no. 3-4 (1998).

practice proved useful, and has been continued, and even expanded, after the end of the Cold War. Lacking the obvious sources of leverage in military forces and financial resources, the secretaries-general have had to rely on sending envoys or representatives and trying to secure the backing of one or more member state as their two primary tools.[41] When the secretary-general acts as a diplomat, he is by definition engaging in political activities, because diplomacy is the conduct of relations between states.

In the area of peace and security the secretary-general can moreover be described as a *general*, because he is, "in theory, commander-in-chief of the blue-helmeted UN peacekeepers."[42] This function has developed as the UN's peacebuilding and peacekeeping activity expanded. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) of the UN Secretariat – established in its present form in 1992 – "provides political and executive direction to UN Peacekeeping operations around the world and maintains contact with the Security Council, troop and financial contributors, and parties to the conflict in the implementation of Security Council mandates."[43] In addition, the Department of Field Support provides supportive services to the UN's many peacekeeping missions, and helps with administration, communication, and transportation.[44] Despite being a 'general,' the secretary-general does not have any military power. Even though Dag Hammarskjöld played a crucial role in establishing the first formal UN peacekeeping mission in 1956,[45] the function of the secretary-general in regard to peacekeeping missions today is primarily administrative, while the Security Council makes political decisions of where and when to establish peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, the secretary-general's task of recommending how to launch

[41] Whitfield, "Good offices and 'groups of friends'," 87.
[42] Chesterman, "Article 98," 2005.
[43] "Department of Peacekeeping Operations," http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/about/dpko/ (accessed 12.04.14).
[44] "Department of Field Support," http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/about/dfs/ (accessed 12.04.14).
[45] Alex J. Bellamy, Paul Williams, and Stuart Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004); Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Fröhlich, "The 'Suez Story'."

and carry out the operation, appointing its commander, and negotiating agreements with the parties, means that the secretary-general and the Secretariat can exert considerable influence over the process,[46] and thereby play a 'political' role.

The secretary-general can use his annual report to set the agenda for the United Nations and to highlight issues he finds important. This forms part of his activity in the area of norms and ideas as an *advocate*. Other scholars have discussed how the secretary-general can work as a 'norm entrepreneur,' for example in relation to Boutros Boutros-Ghali's promotion of democratisation,[47] and the activities of Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-Moon in relation to the responsibility to protect (R2P).[48] A common assumption in this literature is that the end of the Cold War opened up new opportunities for the secretary-general to play a more active role in the world.[49] Nevertheless, despite the limitations of the Cold War and superpower rivalry, earlier secretaries-general also acted in ways which we might with hindsight call 'norm entrepreneurship.' Dag Hammarskjöld played such a role on the concept of peacekeeping, and U Thant pushed at the boundary between the international and the domestic when he sent observers to the civil war in Yemen in 1963.[50] The secretary-general can also act as an advocate when he uses his 'bully pulpit' to shame states into action on one issue or another.[51] The activity of the advocate is also deeply political, as the secretary-general offers independent opinions on questions that are important to the member states.

The secretary-general's role today thus has a broad scope to engage in all aspects of the UN's activities, yet his influence in each area may differ. To determine

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[46] Skjelsbæk and Fermann, "UN Secretary-General," 97-98.
[47] Simon Rushton, "The UN Secretary-General and Norm Entrepreneurship: Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Democracy Promotion," *Global governance* 14, no. 1 (2008).
[48] Daisuke Madokoro, "The United Nations Secretary-General as a Norm Entrepreneur: Legitimising the Responsibility to Protect," http://global-studies.doshisha.ac.jp/english/i18n/images/theme5/Daisuke_Madokoro_full_paper.pdf.
[49] Rushton, "UN Secretary-General and Norm Entrepreneurship."; Johnstone, "Secretary-General as norm entrepreneur."
[50] Johnstone, "Secretary-General as norm entrepreneur," 123.
[51] Quang Trinh, "The bully pulpit," ibid.

how much impact the UN secretary-general has on each policy area, we have to consider how much autonomy he enjoys, and to what extent he represents the institution when engaging in an area of activity.

**Autonomy**

One way in which the role of the UN secretary-general may expand is if it is given more autonomy. In this thesis I argue that there are two kinds of autonomy, explicit and implicit. *Explicit autonomy* is seen through rules, regulations, and expectations that assign independence, discretion, or initiative to a role in a given situation, whereas *implicit autonomy* arises in situations which have not been fully described by the institution. Implicit autonomy can arise in new situations where the institution has no predetermined script, in situations where there are conflicting or overlapping instructions, or in situations which are slightly different from earlier ones. These kinds of situations give the actors "room for manoeuvre in interpreting their roles," and means that they are more than merely "puppets on invisible strings," to borrow Hollis' formulation.[52]

As outlined above, institutions define a set of roles for the actors within them. Each role prescribes what that actor is supposed to do, what she has the authority to do, in a given situation. This can be through formal rules (regulative elements of the institution), expectations (normative elements), or through shared understandings, common beliefs, or 'scripts' (cultural-cognitive elements). But as March and Olsen point out, even though these roles exist and prescribe certain actions, they will not determine behaviour precisely; "Fulfilling [a role] through following appropriate rules involves matching a changing (and often ambiguous) set of contingent rules to a

[52] Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science: An introduction*, Revised and updated ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 167-68.

changing (and often ambiguous) set of situations ... [Roles] and rules assure neither consistency nor simplicity."[53] As they try to decide what to do, individuals will therefore start by interpreting what roles exist, which ones are relevant, and what action these roles demand or allow in the given situation.

Roles prescribe what action is appropriate for given situations through a combination of general rules and more specific step-by-step procedures. However, no institution can accurately predict every possible situation it may encounter in the future. This gives rise to 'implicit autonomy' for actors who are faced with new situations which have not been described, or for which only a partial script exist. One way for actors to deal with such situations is through analogies to other more familiar situations, but in any case the act of interpretation gives rise to autonomy.

This understanding of autonomy is related to, but not exactly the same as, that used in the principal-agent literature. An influential book on the principal-agent approach defines autonomy as "the range of potential independent action available to an agent after the principal has established mechanisms for control."[54] A chapter by Martin in the same collection further specifies two kinds of autonomy, formal and informal. Formal autonomy comes from "state decisions about the explicit rules that delegate authority to IOs," while informal autonomy is an IO's "ability to maneuver within the existing rule structure."[55] Her concept of formal autonomy is part of what I call explicit autonomy in that it refers to rules explicitly stated, in her case by the states, in my case by the institution. Likewise, her concept of informal autonomy is related to my concept of implicit autonomy, in that it refers to an actor's ability to act autonomously independent of and despite the specific rules of the institution. However, my

[53] March and Olsen, "Institutional Perspectives on Political Institutions," 252.
[54] Hawkins et al., "Delegation under anarchy," 8.
[55] Lisa L. Martin, "Distribution, information, and delegation to international organizations: the case of IMF conditionality," ibid., 141.

understanding of implicit autonomy is broader than this, and implies that an actor will always have some autonomy in the act of interpretation itself, regardless of whether they are trying to follow or deviate from the formal rules of the institution.

**Representation**

The secretary-general and all other actors within the UN represent the UN when they perform the role ascribed to them by that institution. All roles represent the institution they form part of. Representation here should not merely be understood in the sense of 'being a representative of', but in the sense that "roles make it possible for institutions to exist, ever again, as a real presence in the experience of living individuals."[56] Individuals performing roles are the only way an institution is made real. For example, a judge when judging is not acting 'as himself' but as a judge, and he therefore represents the institution of law, and the institution of law would not exist without judges and other actors performing their roles within it.[57] All actors in the UN system, from the translators and typists in the Secretariat to the permanent representatives of the states in the Security Council, represent 'the United Nations' when they perform their roles.

Yet some roles, more than any others, symbolically represent the totality of the institutional order. These roles are important in society as representing the integration of all parts into a meaningful whole, and they therefore hold special importance in legitimating those institutions.[58] Berger and Luckman use the examples of a judge representing society as a whole in a case of special importance (like the trial of Anders Bering Breivik in Norway in 2012-13). Another example of a role which symbolically

[56] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 92.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., 93-94.

represents the totality of an institution is a monarch, who in a constitutional monarchy has few functions beyond being the symbolic representative of the institutional order.[59]

The secretary-general, more than any other actor in the UN system, holds such a role where he represents the totality of the United Nations. The five permanent members of the Security Council occupy a special position within the UN and have special rights and responsibilities, but whenever they act they continuously have to work to convince people that they are acting 'for the United Nations' and not in their own selfish interests. The secretary-general has less trouble convincing people that he is acting for the UN because he is not supposed to have any other loyalties. Article 100 sets up the independence of the secretary-general and the staff of the Secretariat from the national governments, and the obligation of member states to respect this independence.[60] The principle that the secretary-general should be elected from among the smaller and supposedly 'disinterested' states is also meant to strengthen his independence and international status.[61]

This special position of the secretary-general as representing the United Nations can be described as that of a *custodian* of the UN Charter and its principles and values. The secretary-general is "a living symbol and embodiment of the United Nations,"[62] who "alone symbolizes and speaks for the entire international community as represented by the UN."[63] In this way he has become the "personalization" or "personification" of the United Nations.[64] Trygve Lie called the secretary-general "a spokesman for the

[59] Ibid.
[60] UN Charter, article 100.
[61] See discussion of election procedure in section 3.5.
[62] Kent J. Kille, "Moral Authority and the UN Secretary-General's Ethical Framework," in *The UN Secretary-General and Moral Authority: Ethics and Religion in International Leadership*, ed. Kent J. Kille (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 11.
[63] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 204.
[64] Giles Scott-Smith, "The UN and public diplomacy: Communicating the post-national message," in *Wartime Origins and the Future United Nations*, ed. Dan Plesch and Thomas G. Weiss (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 37, 50.

world interest,"[65] while Kurt Waldheim used the phrase "spokesman for humanity."[66] At the heart of the secretary-general's symbolic and representational function is the idea that he is "the bearer of a sacred trust, and ... the guardian of the principles of the Charter,"[67] as Javier Pérez de Cuéllar wrote. Part of the reason for this view of the secretary-general, is that he and the Secretariat "constituted the continuity of the organization in contrast to the periodic proceedings of the intergovernmental organs of the UN structure."[68] Another basis for this role as a custodian lies in the preamble of the UN Charter itself, which opens with the phrase 'We the peoples.' Building on this, some have argued that the secretary-general is "a representative of all of the world's people's."[69] The secretary-general's function as a custodian is an important source of his authority in world politics, as he can claim to represent the 'international' itself.[70]

Because of the secretary-general's close link to the overall purposes and principles of the United Nations, even though the member states will try to limit his autonomy as much as possible, his actions will have an important impact on the way the United Nations itself is being perceived, and what actions are seen as legitimate for the institution and the various actors it encompasses.

## 2.4 Other relevant actors

Within the United Nations there are several different kinds of actors. It is common to talk about three different UNs; the first UN of the states in the General Assembly and the Councils; the second UN of the international Secretariat; and the third UN of

[65] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 88.
[66] Kurt Waldheim, *In the Eye of the Storm* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), 38.
[67] Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, "The Role of the UN Secretary-General," in *United Nations, Divided World: The UN's Roles in International Relations*, ed. Adam Roberts and Benedict Kingsbury (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 126.
[68] Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Secretariat*, 2.
[69] Kille, "Moral Authority," 11.
[70] Ole Jacob Sending, "Diplomats, Lawyers, and the emergence of international authority" (paper presented at the ISA Annual Conference, Toronto, 26-29 March 2014).

various independent NGOs, experts, scholars, and commissions.[71] For the present thesis the 'first' and 'second' UN are the most relevant actors, while the 'third' UN played a much more limited role in this early period of UN history.

In addition to the UN secretary-general and his staff in the Secretariat, the main actors in the story told in this thesis are the UN's member states through their governments, foreign offices, and UN delegations. An important distinction in the role of the states can be made between when they act as 'members' of the United Nations and when they act as 'founders.'

Broadly speaking, as *members* the various states are concerned primarily with protecting their own sovereignty and national interests, and they try to limit and control the roles of the UN Secretariat and secretary-general as much as possible. This is the understanding of states present in the principal-agent literature when states establish international organisations for a specific purpose and then seek to control them as tightly as possible.[72] From this perspective we expect the member states to try and limit as much as possible the autonomy and scope of the UN secretary-general's role.

Yet in contrast to this role as members of the United Nations, the states were also the ones who established the organisation in the first place. As *founders* of the organisations the states have an interest in the continued functioning and health of the United Nations, including in the provisions of the services which an autonomous secretary-general can offer. There was a reason why the states decided to create the organisation in the first place, and whenever they take on the role of 'founder' they remind themselves of this. Establishing an international organisation can be a way for states to solve commitment problems. Such problems arise because states' short- and

[71] The distinction between the first and second UN was first described in Claude, *Swords into Plowshares*. The United Nations Intellectual History Project 'added' the third UN. See Thomas G. Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis, and Richard Jolly, "The 'Third' United Nations," *Global governance* 15, no. 1 (2009).
[72] See for example the various contributions in Hawkins et al., *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*.

long-term interest may diverge, or because costs and benefits of a particular policy are unevenly distributed. In establishing an international organisation (or another contract), the states tie themselves to a particular policy, and give someone else – in the case of the UN, the secretary-general and the Secretariat – responsibility for implementing and enforcing that policy.[73] Such an argument about the creation of international organisations as the result of a demand for supranational rules and regulations, has also been developed in functionalism.[74]

To complicate this picture further, we can distinguish between different groups of states. The small and medium-sized states, for example, may naturally see it in their national interest to have a strong United Nations (and strong international law in general) as protection against the more powerful states. They would therefore also be more likely to support an independent role for the UN secretary-general, as indeed can be discerned in the proposal made by smaller states during the San Francisco Conference to expand the scope of article 99.[75] Thus there is a natural alliance between the UN secretary-general and the smaller member states, and also the peoples of the world, whose interest aligns with strengthening the UN's independence and influence vis-à-vis the more powerful member states.

[73] This argument has been developed most fully in relation to the European Union. See Mark A. Pollack, "Delegation and discretion in the European Union," in *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, ed. Darren G. Hawkins, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Giandomenico Majone, "Two Logics of Delegation: Agency and Fiduciary Relations in EU Governance," *European Union Politics* 2, no. 1 (2001).

[74] Again mainly in relation to the EU. See Alec Stone Sweet and Wayne Sandholtz, "European integration and supranational governance," *Journal of European Public Policy* 4, no. 3 (1997); Wayne Sandholtz and Alec Stone Sweet, "Neo-Functionalism and Supranational Governance," in *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, ed. Eric Jones, Anand Menon, and Stephen Weatherill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[75] For more on the discussions about the role of the secretary-general during the San Francisco conference, see section 3.4.

The public, expressed through *public opinion*, is the last relevant actor in this story. There is no one agreed definition of public opinion.[76] Public opinion can be expressed through the media and opinion polls, but it can also be a more vague reflection of what is perceived as the dominant position in society on an issue. The secretary-general and other actors in the UN will have an opinion of what public opinion is on an issue, and they may either seek to do what public opinion dictates, or to change the opinion in the hope of mobilising support for their ideas. This is an important aspect of the secretary-general's function as an advocate.

## 2.5 The possibility of institutional change

The last task of this chapter is to explain how change of the UN secretary-general's role is possible. A common criticism of institutionalism is to point to its weak explanation or account of change.[77] Focusing on institutions often leads to an emphasis on continuity rather than change; not surprisingly, considering that our common sense understanding of saying that a practice or norm is institutionalised, is that it is hard to change.[78] Olsen's more academic definition of institutionalisation as a process which leads to greater clarity, agreement, consensus, and shared conceptions about what the rules are and how they should be applied,[79] can also be reduced down to a process which solidifies existing patterns and makes them harder to change. Krasner has explained how institutionalisation makes change more difficult through increasing the vertical depth and/or horizontal linkage of an institution. Vertical depth refers to the "extent to

[76] Wolfgang Donsbach and Michael W. Traugott, "Introduction," in *The SAGE Handbook of Public Opinion Research*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach and Michael W. Traugott (London: SAGE Publications, 2008).
[77] See for example Sending's criticism of March and Olsen's theories in Ole Jacob Sending, "Constitution, Choice and Change: Problems with the `Logic of Appropriateness' and its Use in Constructivist Theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 4 (2002).
[78] Stephen D. Krasner, "Sovereignty: An Institutional Perspective," *Comparative Political Studies* 21, no. 1 (1988): 75.
[79] Olsen, "Change and continuity," 10.

which the institutional structure defines the individual actors," while horizontal linkage captures the density of links between different areas of activity.[80]

Because of the static bias of institutionalism, institutional scholars have often been forced to explain change as based wholly on external factors, such as for example the reliance of much historical institutionalist work on 'critical junctures,' 'punctuated equilibria,' or an external shock in some form to provide the drivers of change.[81] Within the literature on 'institutional entrepreneurship' an alternative explanation has been offered which focuses on the presence of internal institutional contradictions which can be exploited by institutional entrepreneurs to change the institution.[82] Although such literature offers a way to explain change in institutions, it "tends to overemphasize the rational and 'heroic' dimension of institutional entrepreneurship," and explain institutional change as the result of the activity of a few powerful actors.[83] It is thus similar to the literature which relies on external sources of change, despite claiming to incorporate internal contradictions as the basis for change.

Nevertheless, it is possible to theorise endogenous institutional change. Despite the common sense understanding of institutionalisation as making something hard to change, the process of institutionalisation, if regarded as the "second moment of structuration,"[84] should properly be seen as an opportunity for institutional change. If we adopt the view of structuration theorists who view institutions (structures) as social constructions and patterns of action and interaction, the process of institutionalisation

[80] Krasner, "Sovereignty," 74-75.
[81] Peters, *Institutional Theory in Political Science*, 78-79.
[82] Myeong-Gu Seo and W. E. Douglas Creed, "Institutional Contradictions, Praxis, and Institutional Change: A Dialectical Perspective," *The Academy of Management Review* 27, no. 2 (2002); John Burns and Klaus Nielsen, "How Do Embedded Agents Engage in Institutional Change?," *Journal of Economic Issues* 40, no. 2 (2006).
[83] Thomas B. Lawrence, Roy Suddaby, and Bernard Leca, "Introduction: theorizing and studying institutional work," in *Institutional Work: Actors and Agency in Institutional Studies of Organizations*, ed. Thomas B. Lawrence, Roy Suddaby, and Bernard Leca (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.
[84] Scott, *Institutions and Organizations, 4th ed.*, 95.

becomes the process by which these patterns solidify and become embedded or entrenched in social interaction. Any institution, as discussed above, empowers and constrains social action and is also reproduced by that action. This reproduction of the institutional structures "is never automatic ... social change, no less than social stasis, can be generated by the enactment of structures in social life."[85] Sewell has offered five ways in which the ordinary operation of structures (institutions) can generate change; (1) because societies contain multiple different institutions, (2) because their roles and rules are transposed to new situations, (3) because the result of applying a rule in any situation is always unpredictable, (4) because resources (social facts, events, actions) can be interpreted in different ways, and (5) because institutions intersect.[86]

Thus the normal operation of any institution may generate change of the institution. In fact, the process of actors seeking to fulfil the roles given to them by the institution will inevitably define and redefine the institution itself. In this way, actions by the UN secretary-general, or any other actor occupying a role within an institution, can change that institution through their action, if that action is recognised by other salient actors as legitimate or effective. Institutionalisation thus also becomes a synonym for legitimation. In judging whether the actions of the UN secretary-general are appropriate and should be allowed to become part of the institution's rule book, the salient actors are the government of the UN's member states, as well as world public opinion.

This framework makes change possible, but does not describe what kind of change we will see or how it will actually happen. What is certain is that change of an institution is not random but will always be structured by the institution. To borrow the

[85] Sewell, "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation," 19.
[86] Ibid., 16-19.

vocabulary of historical institutionalism, change itself is path dependent.[87] Change is "the consequence (whether intended or unintended) of strategic action (whether intuitive or instrumental), filtered through perceptions (however informed or misinformed) of an institutional context that favours certain strategies, actors and perceptions over others."[88] The institutional set-up, with its rules, roles, and resources, structures action, and therefore also the ways in which that institution can change.

**Measuring change in the UN secretary-general's role**

We can measure change in the UN secretary-general's role along the three dimensions of a role outlined above; scope, autonomy, and representation. To measure change in a role's scope is a straightforward exercise of comparing the kinds of activities an incumbent of that role is allowed to undertake, and in what areas, over time. For the UN secretary-general's role, this thesis has put forward a typology of five different areas of activity as summarised in table 2.1. The secretary-general today, in 2015, functions as a manager, an investigator, a diplomat, a general, and an advocate. Chapter 3 will establish which of those functions were explicitly or implicitly included in the UN Charter, while the remainder of the thesis explores how the role of the secretary-general changed in those five areas during Lie's tenure.

It is also possible to measure change in a role along the dimension of autonomy. Over time, implicit autonomy is likely to decrease, as the institution develops a denser net of instructions arising from experience with a larger number of situations. This indicates that there is greater room for autonomous action by the secretary-general early on in the UN's history, and unless he manages to turn some of the implicit autonomy

[87] Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000); B. Guy Peters, Jon Pierre, and Desmond S. King, "The Politics of Path Dependency: Political Conflict in Historical Institutionalism," *The Journal of Politics* 67, no. 4 (2005).
[88] Colin Hay and Daniel Wincott, "Structure, Agency and Historical Institutionalism," *Political studies* 46, no. 5 (1998): 955.

into explicit autonomy, it will be lost for later holders of the post. The same dynamic will apply to any institution in its founding period – the first few tender years allow more room for individuals to leave their mark on the institution.

Lastly, it is possible to measure change in the degree to which a role represents the institution overall. The UN Charter does not mention this aspect of the secretary-general's role at all. The UN Preparatory Commission, on the other hand, as early as December 1945 recognised that this was likely to be an important part of the secretary-general's role as it wrote:

> 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.[89]

Yet the commission failed to spell out in any greater detail what this would mean or how it would look. Over time, under Lie's tenure as well as those of his successors, the link between the secretary-general and the overall institution has been strengthened, such that today he is recognised as "a living symbol and embodiment of the United Nations."[90]

**Mechanisms of change: 'push' and 'pull'**

A role defined by an institution *can* change, and we can *measure* such change along the dimensions of scope, autonomy, and representation. But the conceptual framework outlined in this chapter cannot explain the direction of change, or why expansion rather than contraction was the most likely outcome under Lie's tenure as UN secretary-general. To explain why expansion was the most likely outcome under Lie, this thesis

[89] Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, UN Doc. PC/20, 23 Dec 1945, 87.
[90] Kille, "Moral Authority," 11.

relies on two mechanisms: the 'push' of the individual holding the role of secretary-general, and the 'pull' of the institution through a 'vacuum effect.'

The individual occupant of a role can be a *'push'* mechanism for change. As section 2.3 explained, there is considerable implicit autonomy present in the act of interpretation. This means that the individual occupant of a role may leave her mark on the institution. Two different incumbents of the same role facing the same circumstances may still choose to act in different ways. An individual secretary-general may choose to 'push' to expand his role, where another incumbent might decide to resist pressure for expansion. Trygve Lie was a highly activist secretary-general who was determined to expand his role at every opportunity, while some of his successors were more modest in their ambitions. The individual actor holding a role may decide to 'push' for change, to seek to hold the line, or to accept a contraction of her role. In this way it matters who holds the role of the secretary-general at what time and under which circumstances.

A *'pull'* mechanism for change operates when there are institutional forces bigger than any one actor at work. One such mechanism identified by this thesis is the 'vacuum effect.' The *vacuum effect* operates in two circumstances; when the institution faces a new situation, or when a part of the institution is unable to perform the tasks it is supposed to. As an institution develops and faces new circumstances, new areas of activity or new functions will arise which have not yet been assigned to any role. Sometimes a new role will be established to deal with such situations, as with the formation of UN peacekeeping operations, while at other times these tasks will be assigned to one of the existing actors within the institution. Thus the vacuum effect operates when there are tasks which need to be done which have not yet been assigned to a role. But a similar situation may also arise when an actor within the institution is

unable or unwilling to perform its role. In such a situation too, a vacuum of authority will emerge, and one of the other actors within the institution may be drafted in to fill it.

This vacuum effect is one of the mechanisms through which the role of the secretary-general has expanded over the years, as he has taken on new tasks in different areas of activity, at the demand of the institution. During Lie's tenure we saw both versions operate, both as the organisation faced new challenges which no one had been authorised to deal with, and because the Cold War made cooperation between the member states more difficult. As the Security Council froze and became unable to perform its tasks, the secretary-general had to step up to fill the vacuum. Thus the institution can be a 'pull' factor for expansion, to be distinguished from situations where the secretary-general actively 'pushes' for such an outcome.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This conceptual framework builds on different kinds of institutionalism and incorporates the insights of structuration theory to establish the relationship between the UN 'institution' and the 'role' of the secretary-general. If we think of the United Nations as an institution, this means that it will define a set of roles for the actors within it which say what is appropriate or inappropriate to do in a given situation. As they try to decide what to do, individuals must interpret what roles exist, which ones are relevant, and what action these roles demand in the given situation. Individuals will also be empowered or constrained by their access to resources.

Roles vary along the three dimensions of scope, autonomy, and representation. The UN secretary-general's role today has a broad scope and is authorised to act in all areas of UN activity. The secretary-general is a manager, an investigator, a diplomat, a general, and an advocate. He also enjoys significant autonomy in certain areas.

Although the member states may try to limit the secretary-general's explicit autonomy – that which has been directly assigned – there will nevertheless be room for manoeuvre in the act of interpretation itself. Such implicit autonomy will be most prevalent in the early years of an institution when most of the situations it encounters are new and different, but this autonomy may be lost to later holders of the role if early incumbents fail to establish acceptance for it and thus convert it to explicit autonomy.

The concept of role can help us understand the position of the UN secretary-general, not only as pointing to the process of working out what are appropriate actions in specific situations, but also by highlighting the 'special role' of the secretary-general within the institution of the United Nations. Because all roles are defined by the institution, the individual holding the role will also represent the institution when they perform their role. Within the United Nations the institution is being represented not only by the secretary-general but also by other Secretariat staff, elected UN officials, and the representatives of states acting in UN forums. But some roles more than any other symbolically represent the totality of the institution, for example a monarch within a monarchy, and perform important task in relations to the integration and legitimacy of the institution.[91] The secretary-general performs such a role for the United Nations. More than any other actor within the UN, the secretary-general 'represents' the UN overall and is a 'custodian' of the UN Charter.

Thinking about the secretary-general as a role within an institution also helps us understand how the performance of that role will define and redefine the institution itself. This framework adheres to the understanding of structuration theory that structures are both socially constructed as the result of past action and the context for current action, and that for its part action in turn will produce and reproduce the

[91] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 93-94.

structure. This means that institutional change is not only possible, but inevitable. When individuals act out roles they will be producing and reproducing, defining and redefining, the institution which the role forms part of. The secretary-general of the United Nations, when performing the role of UN secretary-general will therefore not only contribute to defining the role of secretary-general, but also of the overall institution of the United Nations.

This conceptual framework therefore also helps to answer the question of why we should care about the opinions and initiatives of the UN secretary-general. We should care because the actions of the secretary-general not only sets precedents for what the office of secretary-general can do, but because his actions have the potential to change the UN institution overall, as well as the content of the other roles within this institution. Because all the states of the world are members of the United Nations, this means that the actions of the secretary-general – one individual – have the potential to change the role of the state in international politics.

This conceptual framework showed that change within an institution is possible, and that the institution may change as a result of action undertaken by actors performing the roles defined by it. This chapter therefore helps make the case that the United Nations at the outset allowed for an expansion of the role of the secretary-general. However, the conceptual framework on its own cannot explain why the role expanded rather than contracted, or why it expanded in the particular way it did. To account for the actual observed expansion of the role of UN secretary-general under Lie, we must examine the context at the time. As the following five empirical chapters demonstrates, the role of the secretary-general expanded during Lie's tenure both because he 'pushed' to expand his role, and because the institution and the context in certain instances 'pulled' in that direction.

# 3 Setting the Stage: Expectations for the Role of the UN Secretary-General

"The position of SyG should be considered one of such importance and dignity and prestige as to attract an outstanding man."[1]

Acting US Secretary of State Dean Acheson, September 1945

## 3.1 Introduction

On 2 February 1946 Trygve Lie, up until then the foreign minister of Norway, was sworn in as the first secretary-general of the United Nations. He took on the role of secretary-general in a brand new organisation. The UN Charter was signed just seven months earlier in San Francisco on 26 June 1945, and the first General Assembly opened in London on 10 January 1946. As the first secretary-general, to some extent Lie had to make up his own role as he went along. But he was not completely free to do whatever he desired. This chapter provides an answer to the question of what expectations for the role of the UN secretary-general existed before Lie took office. The following four empirical chapters will then examine what Lie did with these expectations and how he the role developed beyond the baseline from 1946.

In canvassing early government and public expectations of the role of the UN secretary-general, the first point of reference is the minimalist description of him as the "chief administrative officer of the Organization" in article 97 of the UN Charter.[2] This would indicate that the secretary-general was expected to play a primarily administrative role. Urquhart, who worked in the Secretariat from the start and later published extensively on the office of the secretary-general, confirmed this when he wrote that

[1] The Acting Secretary of State (Acheson) to the United States Representative on the Preparatory Commission (Stettinius), 18 Sept 1945, *FRUS 1945*, I, 1448-1449.
[2] UN Charter, article 97.

> the general concept of the position and functions of the Secretary-General in 1946 bear little relation to the office's responsibilities today. There [was] then ... a highly restrictive and conservative view of the functions, let alone the independence, of the world's top international civil servant. He was considered, especially by the Europeans, to be an almost exclusively administrative official, and efforts by Lie to assist in political matters were often resented or ignored.[3]

At the same time, most of the generalist literature on the UN secretary-general, as well as the literature on the founding of the United Nations, finds that the office of UN secretary-general was somehow 'different' from its League of Nations predecessor in that it was more 'political.'[4] This observation emanates from the Charter's terse and vague article 99 that opened some space for political initiatives in giving the secretary-general the right to "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."[5] Russell in her book from 1958, which is still the most detailed account of the drafting of the UN Charter, wrote that the UN secretary-general was given "a more important political role than his predecessors in the League."[6] Schlesinger also briefly stated that including the secretary-general as one of the principal organs of the United Nations was to "elevat[e] this post above the clerical/administrative status given it by the League of Nations."[7]

This chapter re-examines the expectations of the UN secretary-general's role prevalent in 1946. It finds that the assumption that the secretary-general was perceived as a principally administrative office doesn't fully hold up against the historical evidence. Neither is the story as simple as saying that the UN secretary-general was 'more political' than the League secretary-general. This chapter argues that the office of UN secretary-general was political by design, and that both government officials and

[3] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 17.
[4] See for example Schwebel, *Secretary-General of the United Nations*; Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Maintenance of Peace*; Barros, *Trygve Lie*; Edward C. Luck, "The Secretary-General in a unipolar world," in *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, ed. Simon Chesterman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Secretariat*.
[5] UN Charter, article 99.
[6] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 371.
[7] Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, 240.

media observers expected that the secretary-general would play an autonomous and political role. Three main observations support this argument. First of all, the League of Nations secretary-general, the most readily available model for the office, had in fact already played a limited political role. The general expectation in 1946 was that the UN secretary-general would build on what the League secretary-general had done, and expand the political scope of the office even further. The second observation supporting the claim that the UN secretary-general should play a political role is that he was given a specific political task in article 99 of the UN Charter. Lastly, the founders of the United Nations, in considering candidates for the post, were looking for a 'statesman,' and the person they ended up choosing, Trygve Lie, was a politician. Even if they had chosen one of the ambassadors or civil servants on the short-list, the expectation of the secretary-general as a 'statesman' would indicate that he was not expected merely to be an ornamental figurehead or an administrative officer.

The expectation that the secretary-general was to be political was not a unanimous consensus. There were those who saw the office as primarily administrative; and even those who wanted a political secretary-general were unclear on what exactly this would entail. The founders of the United Nations thus opened the door for the secretary-general to play a political role, without thinking through what this role might look like in practice. The office was therefore inherently flexible, and the way had been opened for the role to expand its scope and autonomy further, perhaps going beyond what anyone in 1946 had thought possible or desirable.

This chapter makes a contribution to the relatively understudied subject of the founding of the office of UN secretary-general. There is now a growing literature on the process of transition from the League of Nations to the United Nations following more widespread study of the history of the League of Nations. As late as 2003 MacMillan

wrote that "only a handful of eccentric historians still bother to study the League of Nations. Its archives, with their wealth of materials, are largely unvisited."[8] But just a few years later Pedersen, one of the pioneers in the study of the League, claimed that "the relevant question now is not 'why the League failed' but rather the more properly historical question of what it did and meant over its twenty-five-year existence."[9] Pedersen herself focused on the League's mandate system.[10] Clavin and Decorzant have examined the transfer of economic and financial personnel and policies from the League to the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions.[11] Likewise, in parallel to the increased attention given to the League, attention has also been given to the founding of the United Nations. Mazower's work discusses the United Nations within the framework of intellectual history and ideas about internationalism, international organisation, and world government,[12] while Plesch focuses on the broader foundations for the new UN organisation in the operations of the 'United Nations allies' of the Second World War.[13] Marking the 70th anniversary of the San Francisco Conference, an edited collection by Plesch and Weiss brings together scholars to examine the warime origins of the UN system in relation to planning and propaganda, human security, and economic development.[14] However, the majority of books on the founding of the United Nations do not really afford any attention to the role of the secretary-general. For instance, in addition to Russell's book,[15] the US State Department's own account from 1950[16] and

[8] Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: Six Months that Changed the World*, Paperback ed. (London: John Murray, 2003), chapter 7.
[9] Susan Pedersen, "Back to the League of Nations," *The American historical review* 112, no. 4 (2007).
[10] Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[11] Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Yann Decorzant, *La Société des Nations et la naissance d'un conception de la régulation économique internationale* (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2011).
[12] Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*; Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012).
[13] Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN*.
[14] Plesch and Weiss, *Wartime Origins*.
[15] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*.

Hilderbrand's book from 1990[17] are useful sources on the general Charter drafting process, but they hardly mention the secretary-general. And although most general books on the UN secretary-general discuss the founding of the office, these accounts are usually very brief, and few move beyond the simplistic characterisation of the office as 'different' from its League predecessor.[18] In writing this chapter I have therefore gone back to some of the original documents from the planning process to tease out states' expectations about the role of the UN secretary-general.

This chapter is divided into four parts, arranged chronologically. The first looks at the precedents set for the office by the League of Nations secretary-general, as well as the alternative model of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) director. The second part examines thinking about the secretary-general in the first American drafts for the UN Charter and during the proceedings at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944. The third part brings the story of wartime planning forward to the San Francisco conference of 1945, and also discusses the report of the Preparatory Commission. Lastly, the fourth section examines the process of electing the first UN secretary-general, and establishes what characteristics the states' representatives were looking for in candidates for the office.

## 3.2 Earlier models in the League of Nations and the International Labour Organisation

One reason I argue that the UN secretary-general was expected to be political from the start was that his predecessor in the League of Nations had also played a political role,

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[16] U.S. Department of State, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1950).
[17] Robert C. Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks: The Origins of the United Nations and the Search for Postwar Security* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).
[18] Schwebel, *Secretary-General of the United Nations*; Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Maintenance of Peace*; Barros, *Trygve Lie*; Luck, "The Secretary-General in a unipolar world."; Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Secretariat*.

albeit limited. In fact, consensus among the UN's founders was that the League secretaries-general had not been political enough, and it was therefore decided to give the UN secretary-general broader political powers. When the states decided to expand the powers of the UN secretary-general they may have had in mind the alternative example provided by the ILO director. This section discusses these two models.

The planners of the new postwar organisation used the League of Nations as their primary point of reference. The US State Department, for example, included analysis of relevant Covenant articles in its working papers, and discussed the League's experience as 'test cases' for the new organisation.[19] Similarities in the formal design of the two organisations, as much as points of departure, are therefore highly telling of the intentions of the drafters of the UN Charter. The League was set up by the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and the first secretary-general of the organisation was to be Sir Eric Drummond, a civil servant from the British Foreign Office. Drummond has been widely praised for the administrative job he did as secretary-general. His most famous contribution was the development of the concept of the 'international civil service,' that is, that League staff was to be recruited among the most qualified individuals, not upon the recommendation of national governments, and they would therefore owe their primary allegiance to the international organisation.[20] This concept was taken up and formalised in the UN Charter.[21] But Drummond is less known for his political initiatives.

Scholars today generally portray Drummond as a quiet civil servant who "famously refused to speak to the press at all"[22] and "intentionally minimized his public

[19] See U.S. Department of State, *PFPP*, 109, 75, 250, 98.
[20] Francis Paul Walters, *A History of the League of Nations*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 75-76; Egon F. Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1945).
[21] UN Charter, articles 100 and 101.
[22] Chesterman, "Introduction," 8.

role."[23] He had "concentrated on indirect influence while leaving undeveloped the powers which might have given him a more leading public role."[24] The League Covenant had not granted any explicit political powers to the secretary-general. He was to be "appointed by the Council with the approval of the majority of the Assembly," and to "act in that capacity at all meetings of the Assembly and of the Council."[25] In the event of "war or threat of war ... the Secretary-General shall on the request of any Member of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council."[26] The secretary-general had thus been given a part in the League's apparatus for dealing with issues of peace and security, but he had not been given a right of independent initiative, rather his job was an administrative one of calling meetings at the request of member states. In practice, however, the League secretaries-general wielded some, very limited, political influence behind-the-scenes. They took part in mediation between states, and helped resolve potential conflicts.[27] In the dispute between Sweden and Finland over the Åland islands in 1919-21, or the Greek-Bulgarian border skirmish in 1925, Drummond acted as a mediator and a channel of communications between parties to the conflict.[28] Joseph Avenol, the second holder of the office, also tried to negotiate on several occasions, and in 1936 he travelled to Rome to induce Mussolini to rejoin the League.[29]

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[23] Zara Steiner, *The Lights That Failed: European International History 1919-1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 354. See also Barros, "Importance," 34-36; Francis Paul Walters, *A History of the League of Nations*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 559.
[24] Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Maintenance of Peace*, 11.
[25] The Covenant of the League of Nations, article 6.
[26] The Covenant of the League of Nations, article 11.
[27] James Barros, *Betrayal From Within: Joseph Avenol, Secretary-General of the League of Nations, 1933-1940* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), vii; Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 355; James Barros, *Office Without Power: Secretary-General Sir Eric Drummond, 1919-1933* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).
[28] Ramcharan, *Preventive Diplomacy*, 15; Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 59, 72; Walters, *League of Nations*, 1, 311.
[29] Zara Steiner, *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History 1933-1939*, Oxford History of Modern Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 107; Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Maintenance of Peace*, 10.

Neither Drummond nor Avenol developed the political powers of the office to its full potential,[30] however. What is more, Avenol's activities had left him with a near scandalous reputation that could serve as a cautionary tale of the perils of giving the secretary-general too much autonomy in the political field. In particular his appeasement toward Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy are seen as a 'betrayal' of the principles and values of the organisation he had been entrusted to lead.[31] Nevertheless, the League secretaries-general did not offer a merely administrative model for the office of UN secretary-general. And the founders of the United Nations recognised that these political powers were there, and sought to formalise, institutionalise, and enhance them in the UN Charter.[32]

In addition to the recognition that the League secretary-general had held too little political power, another reason why the founders sought to expand the political role of the UN secretary-general may have been the example of stronger executive leadership found in the director of the ILO.[33] The ILO, like the League of Nations, was established by the Paris Peace Conference, but it had a different structure to the League. It operated on a tripartite model where representatives of government, employers, and workers from each country all participated in ILO conferences.[34] This may have helped open the way for the director and his staff to take an active role in proceedings because there were already other non-state actors on the scene. Furthermore, the ILO dealt exclusively with social and economic matters, not issues of peace and security, or 'high politics'. This, however, should not lead us to overlook the model of the ILO

[30] Kunz, "The Legal Position of the Secretary General of the United Nations."; Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Maintenance of Peace*, 11; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *International Secretariat*, 38.
[31] As reflected in the title of Barros' book; Barros, *Betrayal From Within*.
[32] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 203.
[33] Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Secretariat*, 6; David Kennedy, "Leader, clerk, or policy entrepreneur? The Secretary-General in a complex world," in *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, ed. Simon Chesterman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 158.
[34] "How the ILO works," http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/lang--en/index.htm (accessed 23.02.14).

completely. Indeed Britain mentions the principle of election to the governing body of the ILO as a relevant example for the council of the new UN organisation, despite this being a non-political organisation, in its pre-Dumbarton Oaks draft.[35]

The first director of the ILO was Albert Thomas, a French Socialist politician. Thomas had his own vision of the ILO and its work, and the role he would have to play in its proceedings for this vision to come about. He saw the ILO as an organisation of peoples, not of states, but he was also conscious of the many conflicts and disagreements existing between states – as well as between workers and employers within states – in the period. For this reason, he decided that policy proposals would have to come from the ILO secretariat, so that they would be seen as impartial and 'untainted,' otherwise the organisation would never reach any decisions. "Thus the Director had secured a position not very different from that of a Minister making and defending his proposals before a representative body." [36] He largely delegated administrative tasks to a deputy, choosing to focus instead on the policy of the organisation.[37] And Thomas' approach did succeed, as he "turned the International Labor Organization almost overnight into a powerful voice for the protection of workers' rights within a safely capitalist framework."[38] The inclusion in article 98 of the duty of the UN secretary-general to provide an annual report to the General Assembly may have been written into the Charter because the UN's founders sought to have the secretary-general play a greater part in the proceedings of the Assembly, and thus to have the United Nations function closer to the ILO model.

[35] Eden memo, "Future World Organisation – Memorandum A," 3 July 1944, WP(44)370, CAB 66/52.
[36] Edward Joseph Phelan, *Yes and Albert Thomas* (London: The Cresset Press, 1936), 249-50.
[37] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 371.
[38] Mazower, *Governing the World*, 148.

## 3.3 Wartime planning

The UN Charter was largely drafted by the US State Department, while British officials had some influence. The Soviet Union and China were to play much smaller roles in the process, although they did take part in the Dumbarton Oaks conference. Unlike Britain, China, and the Soviet Union, which had been members of the League of Nations, the United States appears not to have been fully aware of the political importance of the office of the secretary-general.[39] This may have contributed to the confusion that was to surround the role of the UN secretary-general throughout the planning process, and thus to the inherent flexibility of the office.

During the internal American drafting process confusion and changes would lead to a concept of the secretary-general in the UN Charter that was less explicitly political than it had been in the earlier American plans. In the summer of 1943, staff in the US State Department produced the first drafts for a new international organisation. These plans included provisions for a 'general secretary'/ 'director general' who would be the non-voting chairman of the (Security) Council, and who would also "in the event of a threat to, or breach of, the peace between nations ... after consultation with the Members of the Council ... request the parties involved to desist from any action which might prejudice a peaceful settlement."[40] The director-general "would give added weight to Council decisions as representing the general interests of all the United Nations."[41] These provisions are not dissimilar to article 99 of the UN Charter, in that they give the secretary-general a voice in the Council and a share of the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Surprisingly, however, this is

[39] Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 3-4.
[40] "The [Staff] Charter of the United Nations," 14 August 1943, appendix 23, and "Draft Constitution of International Organization," 14 July 1943, appendix 13, both in U.S. Department of State, *PFPP*, 472-83, 526-34.
[41] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 372.

not where article 99 originated, because this idea disappeared from later American drafts.

These first plans were never really discussed above staff level,[42] and the memorandum given to the president in December 1943 merely said that "the various component organs and agencies of the organization should have appropriate administrative staffs."[43] It was US President Franklin D. Roosevelt who brought up in subsequent discussions an idea for "a head for the entire institution" that he wanted incorporated into the plan. What exactly Roosevelt had in mind is not entirely clear, but he seems to have used the term 'moderator,' and been thinking "of an individual with the full prestige of the organization behind him who could, as Council chairman, exert great diplomatic influence in 'moderating' differences especially between the great powers."[44] Over the next few months, the staff tried to incorporate this concept in their existing plans with the result that they introduced the role of 'president' in addition to the 'director-general' from earlier drafts. The president, "a person of widely recognized eminence," was to be the non-voting chairman of the Council, and

> in the event that a threat to the peace or breach of the peace occurs at a time when the executive council is in recess, the council should immediately be convened by the [president] who should be empowered also to initiate such emergency measures as may be necessary, subject to review by the council when it resumes session.[45]

The director-general, on the other hand, was reduced to "the chief administrative officer of the organization."[46] In the spring of 1944, the public was also very much in favour of having an elder statesman, someone like Roosevelt or Winston Churchill, the British

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[42] Ibid., 374.
[43] "Memorandum for the President," 29 December 1943, and "Plan for the Establishment of an International Organization for the Maintenance of International Peace and Security," 23 December 1943, appendix 33 in U.S. Department of State, *PFPP*, 576-81., and appendix F in Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 990-95.
[44] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 373-74.
[45] "Possible Plan for a General International Organization," 29 April 1944, appendix 35 in U.S. Department of State, *PFPP*, 582-91.
[46] Ibid.

wartime prime minister, as the head of the new world organisation.[47] Roosevelt himself had in fact toyed with the idea of leading the United Nations after the war.[48] However, State Department officials were unable to work out the relationship between the president and the director-general, and whether the president should be the chairman of the Council or the Assembly or both. Critics also argued that "in a political organization of states, there was no place for an individual with authority in his own person, except to run the machine," and after April the idea of a president disappeared from American plans.[49] In the next comprehensive draft from July all the articles on the president had been deleted, while the articles designating the director-general as "chief administrative officer" remained unchanged.[50] In dropping the idea of a president the State Department did not reconsider whether the director-general should return as the chairman of the Council. By this time "other more pressing questions occupied the group."[51] But such ideas about the secretary-general's political responsibility would return in later discussions.

The next formal step in the drafting of the UN Charter was the Dumbarton Oaks conference in Washington DC from 21 August to 7 October 1944.[52] The main issues of contention at this conference were the question of veto in the Security Council, and the Soviet Union's demand for sixteen representatives in the General Assembly.[53] The main debate about the secretary-general concerned how he (and his deputies – and how many of these) should be elected.[54] The final text of the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals suggested that the secretary-general should be elected by the General Assembly, on the

[47] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 375.
[48] Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN*, 85, 91.
[49] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 376.
[50] "[United States] Tentative Proposals for a General International Organization," 18 July 1944, appendix 38 in U.S. Department of State, *PFPP*, 595-606.
[51] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 377.
[52] See *UN Yearbook 1946-47*, 4.
[53] Meisler, *United Nations*, 10-13.
[54] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 431-32.

recommendation of the Security Council, but said nothing about deputies.[55] This debate over the election of the secretary-general suggests that the great powers considered the office sufficiently important that they wanted to control who would hold it.

The Dumbarton Oaks proposals furthermore included a version of what we now know as article 99: "The Secretary-General should have the right to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten international peace and security."[56] Before the conference, Britain had suggested that "the head of the Secretariat should be given the right of bringing before the World Council any matter which in his opinion threatens the peace of the world."[57] The Chinese draft had also included the following provision:

> Any use of force, or any threat of use of force, whether immediately affecting any member state or not, shall be deemed a matter involving the peace of the world. In such cases, the Secretary-General may, *on his own initiative* or at the request of any member state, immediately convene the Council to take effective measures to safeguard peace.[58]

Although the Chinese proposal was similar to article 11 of the League of Nations Covenant, an important difference lay in the inclusion of 'on his own initiative' which gave the secretary-general the right to convene Council meetings regardless of whether any member state had asked him to or not. At the conference, the United States and the Soviet Union raised no objections, and this right was included in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals.[59] It was thus at the initiative of Britain and China, not of the United States, that article 99 found its way into the UN Charter. Both states had experienced at first hand the shortcomings of the League of Nations during the interwar period when the organisation was unable to prevent wars of aggression and conquest, and it is thus

[55] "Dumbarton Oaks Proposals for the Establishment of a General International Organization," 7 October 1944, appendix 43 in U.S. Department of State, *PFPP*, 611-19., and appendix I in Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 1019-28.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Eden memo, "Future World Organisation: Memorandum A," 3 July 1944, WP(44)370, CAB 66/52.
[58] "Tentative Chinese Proposals for a General International Organization," 23 August 1944, *FRUS 1944*, I, 718-728. Author's emphasis.
[59] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 432.

credible that article 99 was added so that the secretary-general could help defend the integrity of the new world organisation. No longer should serious issues remain off the agenda just because no state wanted to raise them for political reasons. Giving the secretary-general this responsibility reveals that the four considered him to be impartial and independent from the member states and their squabbles.

## 3.4 The San Francisco Conference and the Preparatory Commission

After Dumbarton Oaks the four great powers decided to call a conference of all the allied states to agree on the Charter for the new world organisation. At this conference, which met in San Francisco from 25 April to 26 June 1945, the main disagreement over the secretary-general continued to be the question of how he (and his deputies) should be elected.[60] This concern with the elections, and the great powers' insistence on applying the veto to the Security Council's recommendation of a secretary-general, is evidence that the states saw the office, and the question of who would hold that office, as important issues. Rovine argues that this "was perhaps the best evidence that the Office was to have more than simple administrative functions to perform."[61] The question of the election of the secretary-general became tangled up in discussions of the relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as debates over voting rules in those bodies. More than one committee in San Francisco discussed this issue, but once there was agreement on the Yalta voting formula for use of the veto in the Security Council, the question of the secretary-general's election was also finally settled. The veto would apply to the Council's recommendation, while the election formally was to be done by the Assembly.[62]

[60] Ibid., 854.
[61] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 206.
[62] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, 854-60.

One of the subcommittees of the conference, however, also discussed article 99 in the context of examining all Charter provisions on the Secretariat. No-one argued that the article should be taken out. Rather, the discussion concerned two proposed amendments that would have expanded the article further. Venezuela proposed "that the right of the Secretary-General in respect to matters which in his opinion might threaten international peace and security might be exercised before the Security Council, and/or before the General Assembly."[63] The Venezuelan delegate argued that this would help strengthen the position of the Assembly in matters of peace and security.[64] This proposal was thus part of the attempt by smaller states at San Francisco to strengthen the General Assembly (and the secretary-general) at the expense of the Security Council (and the great powers). Uruguay proposed expanding article 99 to allow the secretary-general to refer "any matters which constitute an infringement or violation of the principles of the Charter" to the Security Council.[65]

States arguing against these two proposals thought they would "extend to the Secretary-General wider authority than had been given to members of the Organization." Furthermore, the proposals "would place the Secretary-General in a very difficult position and would add to the very heavy burdens which have been placed upon him by the Charter," when he might have to "decide between the Assembly and the Security Council ... and having to charge member states with violating the principles of the Organization."[66] Interestingly, the United States had also considered making an amendment allowing the secretary-general to bring matters to the General Assembly, but the idea was dropped without even raising it with the other three sponsoring powers

[63] "Summary Report of Seventeenth Meeting of Committee I/2," 1 June 1945, *UNCIO*, VII, 161-163. Underlined in original.
[64] "Summary Report of Eighteenth Meeting of Committee I/2," 2 June 1945, *UNCIO*, VII, 168-170.
[65] "Summary Report of Seventeenth Meeting of Committee I/2," 1 June 1945, *UNCIO*, VII, 161-163.
[66] "Summary Report of Seventeenth Meeting of Committee I/2," 1 June 1945, and "Summary Report of Eighteenth Meeting of Committee I/2," 2 June 1945, *UNCIO*, VII, 161-163, 168-170.

because the technical experts thought it "would confuse the respective jurisdictions of the two organs and would constitute a substantive change in the Secretary-General's authority."[67] In the end the subcommittee also rejected both amendments, and adopted the text we now know as article 99. But a significant number of states (13 to 16 and 11 to 18) voted in favour of these amendments.[68]

Even though at San Francisco there was little discussion of the exact content of and limits to the secretary-general's political role, at various points in the discussions states let slip comments about the secretary-general's political powers (or lack thereof). During a discussion on the election procedure some states took issue with term 'election' itself, because it "conveys the idea of representation. It was explained that the Secretary General is to be chief administrative officer, not a political representative; he will belong to the international community and his loyalty would be to the Organization."[69] At another meeting the representative of the Netherlands felt the need to point out that "the Secretariat would have only administrative functions and would not have any political functions," a view that "was supported by several other delegates."[70] And lastly, when the committee examining Security Council voting procedures had decided that the veto would apply to the recommendation of a secretary-general, the Netherlands wanted to reopen discussion on the secretary-general's terms of office and eligibility, prophetically stating:

> The new ruling ... would compel the permanent members to reach a compromise, and this might result in the appointment of a 'lowest common denominator'. Furthermore, the Secretary-General would work in the knowledge that his chances of re-election would be small if he were to incur the displeasure of one of the permanent members.[71]

[67] Russell, *History of the UN Charter*, n.26, 608.
[68] "Summary Report of Eighteenth Meeting of Committee I/2," 2 June 1945, *UNCIO*, VII, 168-170.
[69] "Summary Report of the Eleventh Meeting of Committee I/2," 23 May 1945, *UNCIO*, VII, 96.
[70] "Summary Report of Seventeenth Meeting of Committee I/2," 1 June 1945, *UNCIO*, VII, 161-163.
[71] "Summary Report of Twenty-Ninth Meeting of Committee I/2," 17 June 1945, *UNCIO*, VII, 277-281.

The committee agreed, and took out any reference to the secretary-general's term of office from the UN Charter. At the same meeting the Soviet Union made another attempt to put reference to the secretary-general's deputies into the Charter, for, as the Ukrainian representative explained: "The principal officers of the Secretariat would be, in his view, not experts or officials, but politicians, forming a kind of Cabinet. Acceptance of the proposal that there should be deputies would enable the small and medium powers to be represented in this Cabinet." The suggestion was rejected by 24 votes against 12, with 1 abstention.[72] Clearly, the majority at this stage was of the opinion that the secretary-general had primarily administrative responsibilities. But other states argued in favour of giving the secretary-general more political responsibilities and rights, and even talked about the leadership of the Secretariat as 'politicians.' Thus at the end of the San Francisco Conference, although the majority favoured a mainly administrative secretary-general, in the absence of any in-depth discussion, the precise nature of his role had not been finally settled.

The Charter of the United Nations was signed in the San Francisco Opera House on 26 June 1945. Before adjourning, the conference agreed to set up a preparatory commission to meet in London and prepare for the first General Assembly of the organisation. The UN Preparatory Commission[73] showed a greater awareness of the political functions inherent in the office of the secretary-general than had been evident in debates in San Francisco.[74] In its final report the commission wrote:

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[72] Ibid.

[73] The commission consisted of one representative from each of the fifty states that signed the UN Charter in June 1945. In the interest of effectiveness, the commission delegated powers to a fourteen-member Executive Committee. Its members were the representatives of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, France, Iran, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Yugoslavia. Gladwyn Jebb (United Kingdom) served as executive secretary to the Commission and head of the Commission's staff. On 11 January 1946, he was designated the acting secretary-general of the UN, a position he served in until the election of Trygve Lie on 2 February 1946. See http://search.archives.un.org/preparatory-commission-of-united-nations (accesssed 25.06.15).

[74] As also argued by Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 205.

> The Secretary-General may have an important role to play as a mediator and as an informal adviser of many governments, and will undoubtedly be called upon from time to time, in the exercise of his administrative duties, to take decisions which may justly be called political. Under Article 99 of the Charter, moreover, he has been given a quite special right which goes beyond any power previously accorded to the head of an international organization, viz: to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter (not merely any dispute or situation) which, in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. It is impossible to foresee how this Article will be applied; but the responsibilities it confers upon the Secretary-General will require the exercise of the highest qualities of political judgement, tact and integrity.[75]

In earlier discussions the commission also pointed out that there may not be need to often invoke article 99, because the secretary-general already had wide political powers under article 98 in his capacity to report on "*any* developments" in the annual report to the General Assembly.[76]

The preparatory commission had acknowledged that article 99 implied certain rights and responsibilities for the secretary-general, but its report did not spell them out beyond the quote above. If the secretary-general is to be in a position where he can bring the Council's attention to a matter, he needs to be informed of what is going on in the world. This gives the secretary-general a right to ask questions of states or to form fact-finding committees and send them to various trouble spots to ascertain what is happening and whether he should invoke article 99.[77] Furthermore, article 99 uses the words 'may' and 'in his opinion.' These words reveal the extent of the secretary-general's independence and autonomy: he can form and articulate his own mind, and the opinion he holds can stand at odds with the opinions of the member states. He can also decide for himself whether or not to refer a situation to the Council or to do something else with the information he possesses. In this is revealed that the secretary-general has been given a discretionary right of political agency; the right to take initiatives and have

[75] Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, UN Doc. PC/20, 23 December 1945, 87.
[76] Schwebel, "Article 99," 376. Italic in original.
[77] Goodrich, Hambro, and Simons, *Charter of the United Nations*, 576; Kennedy, *Parliament of Man*, 44; Ramcharan, *Preventive Diplomacy*, 17.

opinions on political questions. Article 99 is thus the clearest example assigning 'explicit autonomy' to a role within the UN institution.

The San Francisco Conference left the question of deciding on terms of appointment for the secretary-general to the Preparatory Commission. The Commission suggested an initial five-year term, with the option of re-election. Giving the secretary-general a relatively short term, and providing for rotation in nationality, indicates the symbolic importance attached to the office.[78] The Commission's report also noted the importance of the secretary-general for the organisation as a whole, as it talked about his "moral authority" and stated 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."[79] Thus the Preparatory Commission recognised the important aspect of the role of the secretary-general in 'representing' the United Nations. However, the Commission did not get much closer than earlier drafters and discussants to pinning down exactly what the secretary-general's role meant in practice. It has been suggested that the post was so important that "the founders were unable, or unwilling, to describe it in any detail."[80] Regardless, this left wide room for manoeuvre – implicit autonomy – for the first holders of the office.

## 3.5 The election of Trygve Lie as the first UN secretary-general

On 2 February 1946 Trygve Lie was sworn in as the first secretary-general of the United Nations. Born in Oslo in 1896, Lie and an older sister grew up with their mother who ran a cafeteria for workers from nearby factories. At an early age Lie became active in

[78] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 206.
[79] Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, UN Doc. PC/20, 23 December 1945, 87.
[80] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 15. See also Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Secretariat*, 6.

local Labour Party politics. He studied law at the University of Oslo, and worked for many years as a lawyer for the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions. In 1935 he joined the Norwegian government as minister of justice. When Germany attacked Norway in April 1940, Lie was the minister of supply and shipping, and he has been credited with saving the large Norwegian shipping fleet for the Allied war effort. From December 1940 Lie served as foreign minister in the Norwegian government-in-exile in London, where he built relations with politicians from Britain and other countries. Lie attended the San Francisco Conference and the first General Assembly in London as head of the Norwegian delegation.[81] Lie himself felt that these experiences had not fully prepared him for the job of UN secretary-general, and later wrote in his memoirs:

> I had been nothing less than catapulted into the Secretary-Generalship of this new international organization, to preserve peace and promote progress in a world beset by unrest, poverty, and great-power rivalry. It was a challenge beyond my wildest dreams; but it was a nightmare as well. I hardly dared to think of the days ahead. Instead, I asked myself again and again, Why had this awesome task fallen to a labor lawyer from Norway?[82]

To find out why the job was given to Lie we need to look closer at the election process.

The great powers had started discussing candidates for the post in the latter half of 1945. In practice the secretary-general would be elected by the five permanent members of the Council, because of their veto power, and because the Council and the Assembly wanted to avoid public debate about the nomination and election of the UN's top official.[83] The assembled delegates assumed that it could impede the legitimacy and

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[81] See short biography on Trygve Lie on the website of the Norwegian Parliament, http://www.stortinget.no/no/Representanter-og-komiteer/Representantene/Representantfordeling/Representant/?perid=TRLI (accessed 13.04.09), and on the UN website, http://www.un.org/Overview/SG/sg1bio.html (accessed 13.04.09). Gaglione, *United Nations under Trygve Lie*, 13-16. writes a short biography of Lie, but this is somewhat factually inaccurate (as are other parts of this book) when held against Hans Amundsen, *Trygve Lie: Gutten fra Grorud som ble generalsekretær i FN* [Trygve Lie: The boy from Grorud who became secretary-general of the UN] (Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag, 1946). and the TV documentary by Lasse Solberg and Herbjørn Sørebø, "Trygve Lie - mannen som bygde opp FN," (Oslo: NRK, 1985).

[82] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 17.

[83] Stettinius to Acheson, 19/20 September 1945, *FRUS 1945*, I, 1449-1450; James Reston, "UNO Council Picks Lie, A Norwegian, For Secretaryship: Security Body Is Unanimous After Russia Vetoes Lester

effectiveness of the secretary-general – as a symbolic representative of the UN overall – if his election was preceded by public debate in which member states made their objections against him known.[84] In the great powers' discussion, the question of the secretary-general's nationality became tied up with questions of the location of the UN's permanent headquarters and the nationality of the first General Assembly president. In fact, the United States had first approached Lie in August 1945 to ask if he would be willing to be Assembly president.[85] Lie's name came up in debate among the big five for the first time on 8 October, on a list of candidates prepared by the US representative on the preparatory commission.[86]

In addition to considering the secretary-general's nationality, the five were looking for a great statesman to fill the post. As the Acting US Secretary of State, Acheson, observed:

> We attach great importance to securing for the position a man of the highest ability who will be wholeheartedly devoted to his service as the chief administrative official of the United Nations and the head of its international secretariat. The position of SyG should be considered one of such importance and dignity and prestige as to attract an outstanding man.[87]

The General Assembly likewise agreed on the importance of finding a statesman for the position, and decided that "the terms of the appointment of the Secretary-General shall be such as to enable a man of eminence and high attainment to accept and maintain the position." He would therefore be offered an annual salary of $20,000 with a further representation allowance of $20,000, as well as a furnished house.[88] As noted before, the initial five-year term suggested by the preparatory commission was also part of the

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Pearson Of Canada: Geography Plays Part: Fact That Headquarters Will Be in North America Militated Against Dominion Man," *New York Times*, 30 January 1946.
[84] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 206.
[85] Lie, *Syv år for freden*, 14-15.
[86] Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 10-11.
[87] Acheson to Stettinius, 18 Sept 1945, *FRUS 1945*, I, 1448-1449.
[88] General Assembly resolution 11(I), 24 Jan 1946.

strategy to "secure the best man" for the job.[89] Public opinion agreed that the office of secretary-general should be held by a man of eminence and repute, and names such as General Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, or Antony Eden, foreign minister of Britain, were mentioned in public discussions.[90]

Despite agreement on the importance of the secretary-general, the great powers did not manage to agree on a candidate for the post during their meetings in 1945. In January 1946, the United States' preferred candidate was Lester Pearson, the Canadian ambassador in Washington DC, and his candidacy was also supported by Britain and China. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, argued that the secretary-general should come from Eastern Europe, and suggested Stanoje Simic, Yugoslavia's ambassador to the United States, or the Polish foreign minister, Wincenty Rzymowski.[91] Another candidate favoured by the Western powers was Henri Spaak, the foreign minister of Belgium. Spaak was also one of the names being considered for Assembly president, and so was Lie. The United States, the Soviet Union, and China had made an agreement to support Lie for the presidency, while Britain pressed for Spaak.[92] However, at this point in the proceedings someone talked to Spaak and learned that he did not want the job of secretary-general because he wanted to become prime minister of Belgium, and Britain, France, the United States, and China therefore decided to offer Spaak the Assembly presidency instead, as that office could be combined with holding national office.[93] The United States (and China) had thus entered into two conflicting deals about the Assembly presidency.

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[89] "Minutes of the First Meeting of the US Delegation on Board the Queen Elizabeth," 2 January 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 117-126.
[90] Lie himself hope to see the job go to Eden. Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 12-13; Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 16.; "Minutes by the United States Delegation of the Five-Power Informal Meeting," 23 January 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 166-169.
[91] Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 23.
[92] Ibid., 17-18.
[93] Ibid., 19.

This list of candidates tells us something about the characteristics the states were looking for in the new secretary-general. Eisenhower and Eden were famous in their own right because of the part they had played for the Allied cause during the Second World War, and were thus the candidates discussed by the media, however, the representatives on the Security Council also discussed these names in meetings, and included them on their lists of candidates under consideration.[94] Yet neither Eden nor Eisenhower held much chance of getting elected because the five permanent members of the Security Council early on decided that the secretary-general should not be one of their nationals.[95] When we look at the rest of the names on the list, one of the shortcomings of the election process of the secretary-general, as has also been pointed out by later researchers,[96] becomes obvious; since there was no formal search or nomination process, these were all people who were somehow known to the permanent five. Both Pearson and Simic were ambassadors in Washington DC, while Rzymowski and Lie were foreign ministers of their countries. The fact that these four were all in their countries' foreign service also points to the criteria for potential secretaries-general to have international experience. But as France pointed out, if would be preferable to choose "a statesman rather than a diplomat, perhaps someone who had been foreign minister of his country," because "this would bring to the post a broader experience than that of a diplomat."[97] There was a tension here between wanting to attract a politician, ideally a cabinet minister, and the recognition, evident in Spaak's rejection of the offer,

[94] "Minutes by the United States Delegation of the Five-Power Informal Meeting," 23 January and 28 January, 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 166-169, 183-184; Foote to Stevenson, 21 Jan 1946; Stevenson to the Secretary of State, 15 Jan 1946; Hiss to the Secretary of State, 18 Jan 1946, with "Memorandum regarding selection of Secretary General," 18 Jan 1946, all in RG 84, 1030E, box 16, folder 7, United States National Archive and Records Administration, College Park, MD, (hereafter NARA).
[95] See Acheson to Stettinius, 18 Sept 1945, *FRUS 1945*, I, 1448-1449. This did not prevent the continued mention of French and Chinese names at later stages of the debate. See e.g. "Minutes by the United States Delegation of the Five-Power Informal Meeting," 23 January 1946, and "Minutes of the Meeting of the United States Delegation (Executive Session)," 26 January 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 166-169, 172-182..
[96] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 25.
[97] "Minutes by the United States Delegation of the Five-Power Informal Meeting," 23 January 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 166-169.

that being secretary-general of the United Nations was less prestigious than holding national political office.[98]

The manner of the election of the Assembly president would give the appearance that Lie was 'Moscow's man' while also opening the way for Lie to become secretary-general. At the first General Assembly meeting on 10 January 1946 Andrei Gromyko of the Soviet delegation spoke out in favour of Lie as "a very capable and experienced statesman, enjoying respect not only in his own country, but abroad as well."[99] Gromyko was followed by the Polish, Ukrainian, and Danish representatives. The American representative said nothing. As the Ukrainian representative suggested election by acclamation, and then proceeded to vote both for and against his own proposal, confusion about the procedure was complete. Spaak was never openly nominated by anyone, but still won the secret ballot by 28 votes to Lie's 23.[100] Lie was "pleased by the demonstration of Soviet goodwill toward Norway," but "embarrassed by the clumsiness of the Soviet attempt to push things through."[101]

With Spaak elected president, the big five returned to the question of the secretary-general. The United States still wanted Pearson,[102] while the Soviet Union insisted on Simic or Rzymowski. The United States therefore offered Lie's name as a compromise, and on 28 January the other four agreed.[103] In a private meeting on 29

[98] See also "Minutes of the First Meeting of the US Delegation on Board the Queen Elizabeth," 2 January 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 117-126.
[99] *Official records of the General Assembly*, (hereafter GAOR*)*, 1st session, 1st mtg., 10 January 1946.
[100] *UN Yearbook 1946-47*, 56; Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 21-22; Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 8-10.
[101] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 9-10.
[102] The general understanding seems to be that Pearson was the forerunner for the post of UN secretary-general. Thus his Wikipedia entry says "Pearson nearly became the first Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1945, but this move was vetoed by the Soviet Union." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lester_Pearson, accessed 06.05.14) Barros also goes far towards arguing that Pearson would have been elected if only the Soviet Union hadn't vetoed him. See Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 5-25; James Barros, "Pearson or Lie: The Politics of the Secretary-General's Selection, 1946," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (1977). However, as Gaiduk points out, British support for Pearson was lukewarm, while both the French and the Latin Americans would have preferred someone else. Gaiduk, *Divided Together*, 53-54.
[103] "Minutes by the United States Delegation of the Five-Power Informal Meeting," 28 Jan 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 183-184. See also Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 25.

January the Security Council nominated Lie for the office of secretary-general,[104] and he was duly elected by the General Assembly on 1 February with 46 votes in favour, 3 against, and 2 abstentions.[105] Lie's election was therefore a compromise between East and West in the early Cold War. He was probably elected because Norway was on a very short list of countries that could be acceptable to both sides.[106] Norway had not yet firmly joined the Western camp, and Lie had himself in speeches to the General Assembly talked about the need to build bridges between the two sides.[107] This theme of mediation between the great powers would reappear later on in Lie's thinking about his role as UN secretary-general, as we shall see in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

## 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that, contrary to the impression we might get from the UN Charter's description of him as merely "the chief administrative officer of the Organization,"[108] the UN secretary-general was expected to play a political role from the start. The office was designed with this goal in mind, and it can be discerned in statements by delegates at the San Francisco conference, and in the considerations that guided the search for the first holder of the office. The chapter furthermore argued that the office was inherently flexible because the exact implications of giving the secretary-general a more political role was never fully spelled out.

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[104] *Official records of the Security Council*, (hereafter SCOR*)*, 1st year, 4th mtg., 29 January 1946.
[105] *GAOR*, 1st session, 20th plenary mtg., 1 February 1946.
[106] Latin America, the Dominions, and Western European countries were unacceptable to the Soviet Union, and any Eastern European country was unacceptable to the West. The secretary-general could obviously not come from a former enemy country (like Finland or Austria), and Sweden was not yet a member of the UN. No-one ever considered any candidates from the few independent African or Asian countries. This effectively left Denmark and Norway, but no candidate from Denmark was as well-known as Lie, because Lie and the Norwegian government-in-exile had been in London during the war, while the Danish government had stayed in Copenhagen.
[107] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 17-20, 22-24.
[108] UN Charter, article 97.

The foremost model for the office of the UN secretary-general was the secretary-general of the League of Nations. Although the claim that the UN secretary-general was to be 'more political' than the League secretary-general may lead us to believe that the League secretary-general was essentially non-political or administrative, Barros and others have shown that the League secretaries-general actually played an important political role behind-the-scenes.[109] The founders of the United Nations recognised that these political functions were there, and sought to formalise, institutionalise, and enhance them in the UN Charter.[110] However, it was also recognised that the League secretary-general had not been political enough, and so the UN secretary-general was given a specific task in helping to maintain international peace and security though article 99. At San Francisco, representatives of smaller states even argued that article 99 should be expanded to give the secretary-general (and the General Assembly) broader political scope.

Furthermore, beyond the political rights and responsibilities built into the office in the Charter, the search for the first secretary-general and discussions about the desired characteristics of the candidates, also reveal that the office was meant to be political. The founders of the United Nations were looking for a 'statesman' to fill the role. The press speculated freely about the possibility that Eisenhower or Eden would get the job. They were both famous and respected because of the role they had played during the war. The French representative in a meeting in January 1946 also said he would prefer a statesman to hold the office, preferably one who had been foreign minister, and not just an ambassador or civil servant.[111] Clearly, if you gave the job to Eisenhower or Eden, you could not expect them to stay out of matters that came before

[109] Barros, *Betrayal From Within*; Barros, *Office Without Power*.
[110] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 203.
[111] "Minutes by the United States Delegation of the Five-Power Informal Meeting," 23 January 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 166-169.

the institution. Such a person would necessarily take an active role in the organisation's proceedings, beyond merely administering its Secretariat.

Yet, there were still those who saw the office as primarily administrative, as shown by committee discussions at San Francisco. And several government officials would have preferred to see article 99 remain a dead letter. As Lie later wrote in his memoirs; "there were – and still are – many traditionalists in the foreign chancelleries of the world who would like to see Article 99 of the Charter, and all the implied power deriving from it, consigned to an unused constitutional corner to gather dust."[112] The general expectation in 1946 was that article 99 would probably not be used much in its literal task (and indeed it has only formally been invoked twice[113]), because of the provision that the secretary-general should report annually to the General Assembly on "*any* developments."[114] Leo Pasvolsky of the US State Department explained to a meeting of the US delegation to the General Assembly that "this provision of the Charter was only for convenience in bringing situations involving non-members to the attention of the Council and that too much importance should not be attached to it."[115] But as the following chapters will show, there is more to this article than its formal invocation, and quite often private consultations by the secretary-general with members of the Security Council on whether or not he should invoke the article is enough to make them aware of the issue and (hopefully) spur them to action.

The fact that the main debates about the secretary-general at the San Francisco conference, during the proceedings of the preparatory commission, and at the first session of the General Assembly concerned the election and terms of office of the

[112] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 42.
[113] By Dag Hammarskjöld during the Congo Crisis in 1960, and by Kurt Waldheim over the occupation of the US Embassy in Teheran in 1979. Chesterman, "Article 99," 2013-14.
[114] Schwebel, "Article 99," 376. Italic in original.
[115] "Minutes of the Meeting of the United States Delegation (Executive Session)," 26 January 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 172-182.

secretary-general, also reveals that the office was considered important. The debate about election procedures reveals the states', in particular the great powers', concern to control who would hold the job. Later discussion about how many years his initial term of office should be, as well as comments about whether or not it would be possible to fire an unsatisfactory secretary-general,[116] point in the same direction. The office of UN secretary-general was important and not merely symbolic or administrative, and the question of who would occupy it mattered to states. The terms of office and the salary levels were eventually settled so as "to enable a man of eminence and high attainment to accept and maintain the position."[117]

Yet despite this concern to attract an outstanding candidate and a statesman, the office was still generally considered less prestigious than a national political office. Spaak turned the offer down because he wanted to become prime minister in Belgium, and US officials also frequently discussed this point in relation to the other candidates they considered. Furthermore, many of the actual candidates under discussion were diplomats (ambassadors or high-ranking officials in Foreign Ministries), not ministers or otherwise well-known political leaders. This offers an interesting parallel to the process of selecting the first League of Nations secretary-general in 1919, where the dream at first was to give the job to a politician from a small nation,[118] but the job was eventually given to a British civil servant.

This chapter has furthermore argued that the UN secretary-general was not only expected to play a political role from the start, but that this role was inherently flexible. Partly this flexibility came from the mere fact that there was disagreement and

[116] See "Minutes of the First Meeting of the US Delegation on Board the Queen Elizabeth," 2 January 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 117-126.
[117] General Assembly resolution 11(I), 24 Jan 1946
[118] Such as the Greek prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos, President Tomas Masaryk of Czechoslovakia, or General Jan Smuts of South Africa. See Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 354; Barros, *Office Without Power*, 2-5.

confusion about what exactly the role should be. Even the discussions about whether he was to be political or administrative contributed to the flexibility of the office. Because the role was not firmly settled, the holder of the office would have to interpret what the role dictated in each situation. This 'implied autonomy' meant that the office-holder would have room to expand the role if he wanted to. The flexible nature of the role also came from the existence of alternatives beyond the model provided by the League secretary-general. The ILO director played a much more active political part in proceedings of the organisation, making his own policy proposals and defending them at meetings. He thus offered an example of what a more active political secretary-general could do. Likewise, the fact that earlier concepts, such as a 'mediator' or 'president' had been discussed in United States plans, showed that there was room for taking the role in different directions. The proposals by some states at San Francisco to expand article 99 even further also reveals that the secretary-general would have allies in his quest to expand his role. On top of this, the wording of article 99 built this flexibility into the Charter by giving the secretary-general broad implied political rights – and 'explicit autonomy' – and a basis on which to expand the scope and autonomy of the role even more.

All of this is to say that both the simple story that the UN secretary-general started out as administrative and that subsequent secretaries-general expanded the office to the political figure we know today, as well as the equally simple story that the UN secretary-general was to be 'more political' than the League secretary-general are wrong. They both touch on important parts of the story, but in simplifying the narrative they both miss the point. The UN secretary-general was expected to play a political role from the start, yet the exact implications of this were not recognised, and this made the role inherently flexible and open for subsequent secretaries-general to expand.

# 4 Exploring the Role: The UN Secretary-General and the Iranian Crisis, 1946

"My personal position in relation to the Security Council has also been highly floating and vague. I feel strongly that the eleven members of the Security Council do not wish any 'interference' from the Secretary General … Since the 2nd February I have performed a 'balancing-act' of which I never saw the like … the time had come to clarify my own position towards the Council. For me it was 'to be or not to be.' I felt the whole foundation of my future activities failing."[1]

Trygve Lie, April 1946

## 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter showed that when the United Nations started operations in 1946 the general expectation among member states was that the UN secretary-general would play a 'political' role; however, the precise implications of this were never discussed or spelled out. Article 99 gave the secretary-general the unprecedented right to "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."[2] But what exactly did this article entail? What was to be the relationship between the secretary-general and the Security Council in practice? What role should the secretary-general play in the UN's efforts to maintain international peace and security? The UN's founders had left these questions unanswered, but they quickly gained importance as the UN organisation faced its first crises in Iran and Greece.

The Iranian crisis, the Greek civil war, and the Cold War's origins in the growing tensions of 1946, have all been thoroughly discussed in the literature.[3] The role

[1] Lie to Halvard Lange, 29 April 1946, Brevs. 410, the National Library of Norway, Oslo, (hereafter NLN).
[2] UN Charter, article 99.
[3] On the Iranian crisis see Louise Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Louise Fawcett, "Revisiting the Iranian Crisis of 1946: How Much More Do We Know?," *Iranian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2014); Jamil Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the*

of the UN and its secretary-general in these events is usually mentioned in passing, if at all. The literature on the history of the United Nations in this period naturally include discussions of the Iranian crisis and Greece,[4] but few of these accounts offer an analysis of the role of the secretary-general. This chapter discusses the role the secretary-general played in relation to the problems in Iran or Greece, but its main purpose is to establish how the role of the secretary-general developed as such through the UN's involvement with the political crises of the day. Other relevant literature is therefore to be found among articles and books that discuss the development of the role of the secretary-general,[5] as well as the limited number of books specifically discussing Trygve Lie as UN secretary-general.[6] In order to piece together what happened 'behind-the-scenes' in the discussions about the role of the secretary-general in 1946, this chapter also relies heavily on primary documents from the UN Archives, supplemented by observations from British and American national archives and Lie's own archive.

The chapter demonstrates how the expansion of the secretary-general's role in this period was not solely the result of Lie trying to 'push' for it, but also of the institution exerting a 'pull,' or demand for, a broader secretary-general role. In this chapter we observe the states performing not just as 'members' of the UN organisation trying to limit the powers of the secretary-general as much as possible, but on occasion also as 'founders' whose interest lies in strengthening the institutional structure they had

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*Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941-1946* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006). On the Greek civil war and related conflicts see David H. Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War* (London: Longman, 1995); Robert Frazier, *Anglo-American Relations with Greece: The Coming of the Cold War, 1942-47* (London: Macmillan, 1991); André Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* (New York: Basic Books, 2004). Some authors have discussed both Iran and Greece as part of the origins of the Cold War in the Middle East. See Bruce Robellet Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

[4] Luard, *History of the United Nations*; Gaiduk, *Divided Together*.

[5] Such as these relatively recent books Chesterman, *Secretary or General*; Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Secretariat*; Newman, *UN Secretary-General*. Or some older articles which should almost be considered primary sources: Kunz, "The Legal Position of the Secretary General of the United Nations."; Schwebel, "Article 99."; Schwebel, *Secretary-General of the United Nations*.

[6] Barros, *Trygve Lie*; Gaglione, *United Nations under Trygve Lie*.

just established. In this period the secretary-general possessed considerable autonomy in trying out his new role, because the role and its relationship to the Security Council had just recently been vaguely defined by the institution. Lie's interpretation of his powers under article 99 and his actions based on this interpretation, as well as the principled opinions of some member states remembering their task as 'founders,' forced changes on the institution, not only to its informal practices, but for the first and only time also to the written rules of procedure of the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The chapter starts with a brief overview of the Security Council's treatment of the Iranian question from January to April 1946. In this period the secretary-general remained on the sidelines. But in April 1946 Lie took the bold initiative to present to the Security Council a legal memorandum with his opinions on the case. This memorandum and its (minor) bearing on the Iranian crisis are discussed in the second part of the chapter. The third part explores the memorandum's weightier effects in precipitating a change in the Security Council's rules of procedure, leading it to formally recognise the right of the secretary-general to present oral or written statements to the Council. The fourth section examines the first time the secretary-general used this right in issuing a statement on UN membership in August 1946. The fifth section discusses the recognition of the secretary-general's right to send investigative committees in the context of the Greek civil war in September 1946. Thus by the end of 1946 the implied rights granted to the secretary-general under article 99 had been formally recognised by the institution.

## 4.2 The Iranian Crisis at the United Nations, January – April 1946

The Iranian complaint against the Soviet Union was one of the first questions on the agenda of the Security Council. The origins of the troubles in Iran lay in the joint Anglo-Soviet occupation of the country during the Second World War. The government in Teheran had been on friendly terms with Germany, prompting Britain and the Soviet Union to enter Iran in order to secure this vital supply route of aid from the Western states to the Soviet Union. The two occupying powers agreed they would both leave Iran within six months after the end of the war (by 2 March 1946). But in 1945 it became clear that the Soviet Union had no immediate plans to leave, and the presence of its troops on Iranian territory became tied to questions of a Soviet oil concession and autonomy for Iranian Azerbaijan.[7] On 19 January the Iranian government asked the Security Council to examine the situation.[8] The first round of discussions ended fairly quickly on 30 January, when the Council adopted a resolution noting the willingness of both parties to negotiate, and requesting Iran and the Soviet Union to keep the Council informed of the progress.[9] The discussion ended before Trygve Lie was appointed secretary-general, but the question would return in March 1946, and this time the UN secretary-general would become more closely involved in proceedings.

The deadline for all foreign troops to leave Iran came and went on 2 March, but Soviet troops remained in the country. During February the Iranian prime minister had travelled to Moscow to negotiate with the Soviet government, but no settlement was reached, and with promises of support from the United States he instructed his representative to the UN and ambassador to Washington DC, Hussein Ala, to request

[7] Good accounts of the background and developments of the Azerbaijan crisis can be found in Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War*; Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War*; Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War*.
[8] Letter reproduced in *FRUS 1946*, VII, 304.
[9] Security Council resolution 2, 30 Jan 1946.

renewed discussions in the Security Council.[10] On 18 March, just as Lie arrived in the United States to establish the UN's new headquarters, Ala approached him to request that the Council resume discussion on Iran's complaint against the Soviet Union. Lie later described the meeting in his memoirs. In Lie's opinion "debate in the Security Council now would probably intensify rather than ease the dispute." Although he was "disturbed by the inexcusable delay in the Soviet troop withdrawal," he believed the Soviet Union could still be persuaded to leave Iran, just as it had left northern Norway and the Danish island of Bornholm at the end of the war. The best way to achieve this result would be through quiet negotiations, and he offered to provide an informal channel of communications between Teheran and Moscow by way of the Soviet assistant secretary-general Arkady Sobolev.[11] According to Lie, Ala then proceeded to inform the US State Department of the secretary-general's advice, and the State Department took offence. In Lie's opinion,

> Washington did not in this instance seem to be disposed to recognize that the Secretary-General of the United Nations might in all honor and intelligence take a view of a problem legitimately at variance with that of the United States. This experience was to be repeated with many governments throughout my service ... When he agrees with us, governments tend to feel, the Secretary-General is within his rights, and is a good fellow besides; when his views differ from ours he clearly is exceeding his authority, his reasoning is bad, and even his motives may be suspect.[12]

Thus a hint of the disagreement between the secretary-general and the United States and its allies which was to follow could be discerned already in March.

Iran had asked for its complaint to be put on the agenda for the upcoming Council meeting on 25 March. This did not suit the Soviet Union, which wanted to avoid public discussion of the Iranian complaint. On 19 March the Soviet representative

[10] Murray (Teheran) to Secretary of State, 14 March 1946, *FRUS 1946*, VII, 354-356; Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War*, 313-14, 23-24.
[11] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 74-75.
[12] Ibid., 75-76.

Andrei Gromyko asked Lie to postpone discussions until 10 April,[13] but Lie felt the Security Council itself would have to decide whether or not to postpone discussion, and left the Iranian complaint on the provisional agenda for the 25 March meeting.[14] As the Council meeting approached, the Soviet government tried to bully Teheran into an agreement by publicly announcing that such an agreement had already been reached, while handing the Iranian government three notes: one saying the Soviet troops would leave Iran within five to six weeks "if no unforeseen circumstances occurred"; one to establish a joint Iranian-Soviet oil company; and one to offer Soviet help to negotiate autonomy for Azerbaijan.[15] The Soviet Union continued to call for the postponement of discussion, arguing that the Iranian complaint was baseless, and besides since the Soviet Union had already declared that an agreement had been reached the Council had no justification to consider the question. When a majority in the Council, led by the United States and Britain, decided to admit the item onto the agenda and turn down the Soviet request for a postponement, Gromyko marched out of the Council chamber, marking the first Soviet boycott of the UN. [16] With Gromyko absent, the Council proceeded to invite the Iranian representative to give a statement, before deciding to adjourn until 6 May, awaiting further information.[17]

## 4.3 Lie's legal memorandum, April 1946

On 4 April, the same day the Security Council deferred consideration of the question until 6 May, Iran and the Soviet Union concluded an agreement: Soviet troops were to withdraw within 5 to 6 weeks from 24 March; a joint Iranian-Soviet oil company would be set up, subject to approval of the Iranian parliament within 7 months; and the Soviet

[13] Gromyko to Lie, 19 March 1946, *FRUS 1946*, VII, 366-367.
[14] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 76.
[15] Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War*, 328.
[16] SCOR, 1st year, 26th mtg., 26 March 1946.
[17] SCOR, 1st year, 30th mtg., 4 April 1946.

Union recognised Azerbaijan as an internal Iranian matter.[18] Two days later the Soviet Union again asked that the Iranian question be removed from the Council's agenda. The Iranian government at first instructed Ala to ask for the item to remain on the agenda until 6 May, then argued that the Council itself should decide its course of action, before finally on 15 April instructing Ala to inform the Council that "the Iranian Government has complete confidence in the word and pledge of the Soviet Government and for this reason withdraws its complaint from the Security Council."[19] The Soviet representative returned to argue that the question ought to be removed from the agenda, but received little support in the Council. The United States, Britain, the Netherlands, Australia, Mexico, Brazil, and Egypt spoke out against the Soviet proposal, and argued that Iran no longer had the option of withdrawing its complaint, as the matter was now under the Council's jurisdiction. France and Poland supported the Soviet Union (and Iran). France noted that the matter could easily be brought back to the Council if a new situation should arise, and proposed that the secretary-general could be asked to continue collecting information and keep the Security Council informed. Poland argued that the purpose of the Council was to aid understanding between states, not to cause trouble for them after agreements had been reached, and furthermore it was important that the Council should protect small states from becoming footballs in the great powers' game.[20]

At this point secretary-general Lie decided to present his opinions on the matter. Once the Soviet Union had given assurances that it would withdraw its troops, and Iran had stated its satisfaction with the Soviet promise and withdrawn its complaint, Lie "saw no point in keeping the question on the agenda. The United Nations, I felt, should aim to settle disputes, not to inflame them. If both Iran and the U.S.S.R. agreed that

[18] Murray to Byrnes, 4 April 1946, *FRUS 1946*, VII, 405-407.
[19] *UN Yearbook 1946-47*, 332.
[20] SCOR, 1st year, 32nd mtg., 15 April 1946.

their quarrel had been resolved, the Security Council should not indicate the contrary."[21] Already on 8 April he had suggested privately to the president of the Security Council that Iran could "volunteer to call it all off."[22] Consequently, before the next Council meeting on 16 April the secretary-general asked his legal advisers to prepare a memorandum setting out what he saw as the legal implications of the case. The memorandum argued a fairly restrictive view of the question of the Security Council's agenda. Since the Council had not ordered an investigation under article 34, and had not under article 36 declared the existence of a dispute or a like situation under article 33, "it may well be that there is no way in which it can remain seized of the matter," once Iran had withdrawn the complaint which was the basis for the Council's discussions.[23] Lie claimed he had prepared the memorandum merely for the discretionary use of the Council president. Although he did not expect that any state would change its stance on the matter, he felt it important to point out the Council's "error" in deciding to keep the case on the agenda and to explain how this decision violated the letter and spirit of the Charter.[24]

Lie gave his memorandum to the Security Council president at the start of the meeting on 16 April, and the drama that followed would have lasting implications for the relationship of the secretary-general with the Security Council, even though Lie's argument about the Iranian question itself met little support. The president read the memorandum out loud before the Council agreed to send it on to the Committee of Experts – its procedural subcommittee[25] – for closer examination. After a brief debate

[21] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 79-80.
[22] Quote reproduced in Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 72.
[23] Letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council concerning the question of the retention of the Iranian case on the agenda of the Security Council, UN doc. S/39, 19 April 1946.
[24] Lie to Halvard Lange, 29 April 1946, Brevs. 410, NLN.
[25] The Committee of Experts is a subsidiary organ of the Security Council which was set up at the Council's first meeting to examine and report on the provisional rules of procedure drafted by the Preparatory Commission. Until 1953 the Security Council would occasionally refer other constitutional and procedural matters for consideration by the Committee of Experts. The Committee was seen as a

on the Iranian issue, in which no one mentioned or engaged with the opinions contained in the secretary-general's memorandum, the president moved to call a vote on the original question – the Soviet Union's proposal to have the item removed from the agenda. But at this France and Poland protested that the Council could not move to vote before it had heard back from the Committee of Experts regarding the secretary-general's memorandum. "The Secretary-General is an important official of the United Nations, invested by the Charter with special and important powers and ... we cannot vote now as if his opinion did not count or exist," argued the Polish representative Oscar Lange.[26] The president of the Council, Quo Tai-chi of China, admitted that he had made a mistake in calling for a vote, but argued against Poland's interpretation of the role of the secretary-general and pointed out that article 97 named him "the chief administrative officer of the Organization." Therefore, "whatever observations we may receive from him – and I am sure the Council will wish to give due weight and due consideration to his observations – the decision remains with the Council."[27] At this Gromyko entered the debate, quoting article 99 and making a sweeping argument in favour of a broad interpretation of the secretary-general's role:

> As regards the functions of the Secretary-General – a question which has arisen in passing – these are, of course, more serious and more weighty than was indicated just now. It is sufficient to recall [Article 99] of the Charter to realize the heavy responsibilities incumbent upon the Secretary-General ... Thus, the Secretary-General has all the more right, and an even greater obligation, to make statements on various aspects of the questions considered by the Security Council.[28]

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working body, not a political organ, and debates in the Committee of Experts were generally less heated compared with its parent organ. Its membership consisted of the same states as the Council, and the meetings were usually attended by the delegations' legal advisers. Although the committee has been largely inactive since 1953, only being called into action once in 1987 to examine the question of membership of the Republic of Nauru in the International Court of Justice, the committee still formally exists as one of the standing committees of the Security Council. *UN Yearbook 1946-47*, 327, 410; Sydney D. Bailey and Sam Daws, *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 334; Loraine Sievers and Sam Daws, *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 479-80.

[26] SCOR, 1st year, 33rd mtg., 16 April 1946.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

As Lie pointed out in his memoirs, no Council member challenged "the remarkably broad interpretation of the Secretary-General's powers" presented by Gromyko.[29] Instead the Council adjourned for a few days to await the report of the Committee of Experts.

The "memorandum fell like a bombshell," Lie later wrote in summary.[30] This was the first time the secretary-general publicly injected his opinion on a matter under consideration by the Security Council. The American representative, Edward Stettinius, was particularly angry, and wrote back to the Secretary of State that Lie's memorandum "was drafted with other than purely legal considerations in mind," and furthermore, "it was considered extremely dubious practice for the Secretary General to put in an unsolicited interpretation concerning a matter which should be decided by the Council alone." In Stettinius' view, the secretary-general's opinion was particularly inappropriate in this case, because the majority of the Council held a different view.[31] A few days later, the *New York Times* reported that Secretary of State James Byrnes had told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Lie had "overstepped the bounds of the Secretary General's authority" in submitting the memorandum.[32] Lie claimed that Byrnes apologised for his remarks a few days later, and admitted he had not actually read the memorandum.[33] The British Foreign Office confined its discussion to the legal points raised by Lie and disagreed with his interpretation of articles 34 and 36 and the word 'investigation.'[34] Still, once the Committee of Experts had submitted its report, one Foreign Office official took pleasure in noting that "it [was] encouraging that the

[29] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 84.
[30] Ibid., 85.
[31] Stettinius to Byrnes, 16 April 1946, 501.BC/4-1646, NARA.
[32] "Envoy Shifts Declared Out As U.S. Gestures of Protest," *New York Times*, 20 April 1946.
[33] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 85.
[34] Fitzmaurice minute, 17 April 1946; FO to New York, 17 April 1946, FO 371/52673, UKNA.

Secretary-General [had] received a rebuke for his feeble and defeatist letter."[35] Moscow was the only capital to enthusiastically welcome Lie's memorandum. At the Council's meeting on 23 April Gromyko praised its "impartial and detailed analysis" and used it to support his arguments that the "so-called Iranian question" should be removed from the Council's agenda.[36] It is significant that Gromyko gave such a positive characterisation of the memorandum at this later meeting, rather than at the first meeting on 16 April, because this means he must have received explicit instructions from Moscow to endorse it.[37] In fact, Lie's actions on Iran probably caused the Soviet Union to see him as an ally within the United Nations, and thus to favour expanding his role to grant him broad political scope and more autonomy.[38] In a 1950 assessment of Lie, two Soviet officials characterised the Iranian memorandum as a 'friendly' or 'neutral' stance by the secretary-general.[39]

Meanwhile, on 17 and 18 April the Committee of Experts discussed the secretary-general's memorandum. At the outset the Committee decided not the deal with the specifics of the Iranian question, but rather to discuss in the abstract the principle of retaining or removing agenda items.[40] The majority of the Committee of Experts, like the majority in the Council itself, argued against the idea that there could ever be any 'automaticity' in the removal of an item from the Security Council's agenda, as the Council was master of its own agenda, and criticised Lie's analysis of the Council's functions and competence.[41] Given the identical national composition of the Committee of Experts and the Security Council proper, secretary-general Lie was not surprised that the Committee reflected the balance in the Council, voting 8 to 3 in

[35] Ward minute, 25 April 1946, FO 371/52673, UKNA.
[36] SCOR, 1st year, 36th mtg., 23 April 1946.
[37] Dølvik, "The Soviet Union and UNSG Lie," [in Norwegian] 70-71.
[38] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 85-86.
[39] Dølvik, "The Soviet Union and UNSG Lie," [in Norwegian] 71.
[40] Committee of Experts, 28th mtg, 16 April 1946, S/Procedure/60, 18 April 1946; Committee of Experts, 29th mtg, 17 April 1946, S/Procedure/62, 3 April 1946, UNDHL.
[41] Report of chairman of Committee of Experts, S/Procedure/59, 17 April 1946, UNDHL.

favour of the Council's competence to keep the item on its agenda.[42] As expected, on 23 April the Security Council rejected the Soviet proposal to remove the question from the Council's agenda.[43]

Even though the Iranian question remained on the Security Council's agenda, in reality the crisis was over. Iran reported back on 6 May that Soviet troops had withdrawn from most of northern Iran, but that it had been impossible to verify the evacuation of Azerbaijan. The United States therefore introduced a draft resolution asking Iran to report back as soon as it could verify the situation and in any case not later than 20 May.[44] The Council, not being satisfied with the Iranian report, on 22 May decided to defer discussion indefinitely, but still retain the question on the agenda.[45] No further meeting was ever called on this question, and the matter was finally removed from the Council's agenda in 1976.[46] Once Soviet troops had left Iran, the Azerbaijan autonomy movement soon crumbled, and Teheran was able to reassert its control over the province within a few months. The following year, in October 1947, the new Iranian parliament also rejected the agreement for a joint Iranian-Soviet oil company, hence snubbing the Soviet Union of the oil concession it thought it had secured in April 1946. But by then the Soviet leaders had turned their attention elsewhere, and they merely objected verbally to the Iranian decision. Thus the Iranian crisis, the first crisis of the emerging Cold War, came to an end.[47]

[42] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 84-85.
[43] SCOR, 1st year, 36th mtg., 23 April 1946.
[44] Security Council resolution 5, 8 May 1946.
[45] SCOR, 1st year, 43rd mtg., 22 May 1946.
[46] Bailey and Daws, *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, 80.
[47] Fawcett, "Revisiting the Iranian Crisis of 1946," 384.

## 4.4 Changes to the Security Council rules of procedure, May 1946

The most important consequence of Lie's memorandum lay in its implications for the relationship between the secretary-general and the Security Council. As noted earlier, secretary-general Lie claimed to have been motivated solely by the need to point out the legal implications of the Security Council's 'error.' Writing to Halvard Lange, his successor as Norwegian foreign minister, on 29 April, Lie concluded that his memorandum had served the purpose he intended in this respects: "the three members who were in the minority, were supported in the legal field by me as an objective judge, and the discrimination which was aimed at the Soviet Union, did not have the expected effects."[48] Lie was surprised by the uproar his memorandum had stirred. He believed that article 99 already gave him "not merely the right to submit legal opinions to the President, of which the latter would take notice, but that he should be able to address the Council on any question it might consider."[49] In Lie's opinion, the discussion during the Council meeting on 16 April had recognised the secretary-general's "right to have his own opinion and to submit it to the Council,"[50] and James Reston, a journalist with the *New York Times* who followed the United Nations closely, likewise observed that the secretary-general's action had "established the principle – which nobody questioned and which the Russians have now supported – that he has the privilege of addressing the Council on substantive matters."[51] Nonetheless, although Lie argued that his "right to intervene" had now been firmly established, he "should be very happy" if that right could be written into the Council's rules of procedure.[52]

[48] Lie to Halvard Lange, 29 April 1946, Brevs. 410, NLN.
[49] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 83.
[50] Lie to Halvard Lange, 29 April 1946, Brevs. 410, NLN.
[51] James Reston, "Trygve Lie's Precedent: U.N. Secretary General Won Right to Intervene in Council - At a Cost," *New York Times*, 19 April 1946.
[52] Transcript of SG press conference, 6 May 1946, UNDHL.

The formal rules regulating the relationship between the secretary-general and the Security Council can be found in the UN Charter and the Security Council's rules of procedure. 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,"[53] while article 98 says that "the Secretary-General shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the ... Security Council ... and shall perform such other functions as are entrusted to him by these organs."[54] The preparatory committee working in the autumn of 1945 had drawn up a set of provisional rules of procedure for the Security Council, and one of the Council's first acts was to ask the Committee of Experts to examine these and present a suggestion to the Council.[55] In the first few months of 1946 the Committee examined the chapters relating to meetings, agenda, credentials, the Secretariat and secretary-general, and the presidency, and an annex on communications from non-governmental sources, and the Security Council adopted these rules with minor changes on 9 April. The four rules on the Secretariat and the secretary-general were adopted unanimously without any discussion. These four rules stated that the secretary-general "shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the Security Council" or appoint a deputy in his place, provide the staff required by the Council, give notice of meetings to all members of the Council, and be responsible for preparing the documents required by the Council.[56] In other words, the Council adopted four rules specifying the tasks of the secretary-general as 'the chief administrative officer' in relation to the Security Council, but left undefined the political role of the secretary-general.

[53] UN Charter, article 99.
[54] UN Charter, article 98.
[55] SCOR, 1st year, 1st mtg., 17 Jan 1946.
[56] At the time these were rules 20-23 of the rules of procedure. *SCOR*, 1st year, 31st mtg., 9 April 1946.

With the political role of the secretary-general still largely undefined, Lie found his position in relation to the Security Council "highly floating and vague." He had the strong impression that, despite article 99, "the eleven members of the Security Council do not wish any 'interference' from the Secretary General." Lie therefore felt that "the time had come to clarify [his] own position towards the Council. For [him] it was 'to be or not to be'. [He] felt the whole foundation of [his] future activities failing."[57] As a result, after presenting the memorandum in mid-April, the secretary-general and his staff started suggesting informally that there ought to be some rule recognising the right of the secretary-general to present his opinions on matters of substance in the Security Council. According to Sobolev, the Soviet assistant secretary-general for Security Council affairs, Lie found it embarrassing that there was no written rule giving him the right to intervene in the proceedings of the Security Council when both the General Assembly and ECOSOC had them.[58] Secretary-general Lie and his executive assistant Andrew Cordier broached this question with the Americans, who were inclined to agree with the secretary-general that it would be desirable to have such a written rule in the Security Council rules of procedure.[59]

On 15 May, when the Committee of Expert held its first discussions on 'the powers and functions' of the secretary-general, Lie nevertheless took a back seat and allowed assistant secretary-general Sobolev to take charge of the process. Sobolev suggested a new rule based on rule 24 of the rules of procedure of ECOSOC, which read as follows:

> The Secretary-General or his deputy may at any time, upon the invitation of the President of the Council or of the Chairmen of the Committees of the Council

[57] Lie to Halvard Lange, 29 April 1946, Brevs. 410, NLN.
[58] Committee of Experts, 47th mtg., 15 May 1946, S/Procedure/100, 23 May 1946, UNDHL.
[59] Memorandum of conversation (Johnson, Hiss), 10 May 1946, 501.BC/5-1046; Stettinius to the Secretary of State, 11 May 1946, 501.BC/5-1146, NARA.

> and subsidiary bodies, make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.[60]

The United States confessed its surprise at Sobolev's suggestion, as earlier discussions with Lie and his staff had led them to believe that rule 48 of the General Assembly rules of procedure would be acceptable.[61] The US representative proposed this rule as a model at the same meeting;

> The Secretary-General may at any time, upon invitation of the President, make to the General Assembly either oral or written statements concerning any question which is being considered by the General Assembly.[62]

The difference between the two was in the question of the explicit inclusion of subcommittees, but they both included the provision that the secretary-general would have to be invited by the president to give a statement. In his memoirs Lie claimed not to have wished for such a limitation on the right, and he felt this was not merely an academic point, as the president of the General Assembly had twice denied him the floor in debates in London. But at the same time both the Assembly and ECOSOC had this provision in their rules, and Lie felt it would be "impolitic to press openly for a more extensive right in the Security Council."[63]

The Soviet and Australian representatives came to the secretary-general's rescue, however, and insisted on removing the words 'at the invitation of the president' from the draft rule. The ensuing debate on whether or not the secretary-general had an absolute right to intervene continued over the next two weeks and revealed interesting differences of opinion regarding the role of the UN secretary-general. Australia and the Soviet Union argued that the secretary-general was a "co-equal with the Council,"[64] and

[60] Committee of Experts, 47th mtg., 15 May 1946, S/Procedure/100, 23 May 1946, UNDHL.
[61] Stettinius to the Secretary of State, 15 May 1946, 501.BC/5-1546, NARA.
[62] Committee of Experts, 47th mtg., 15 May 1946, S/Procedure/100, 23 May 1946, UNDHL.
[63] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 87.
[64] Stettinius to the Secretary of State, 15 May 1946, 501.BC/5-1546, NARA.

his right to intervene was therefore "absolute and not limited," and should not be subject to an invitation. The Soviet representative referred to article 99 to support this view.[65]

The Chinese representative took the lead on the opposing side, and insisted that the words 'upon the invitation of the president' would have to be included. Those who wanted to retain the phrase put forth four general arguments. Firstly, they argued that this phrase was merely a formality, and that the Council should adopt only a minimum rule which would allow later interpretation and practice to develop in light of experience.[66] Secondly, these states argued that the Committee could not prejudice and prejudge the relationship of the secretary-general with the Military Staff Committee, the Atomic Energy Commission, and other subsidiary bodies of the Council. For this reason they also opposed Sobolev's suggestion to base the rule on the ECOSOC model.[67] Thirdly, the United States in particular questioned whether the secretary-general did indeed have an unlimited right, and in particular whether article 98 or 99 gave him the right to give statements on substantive and political matters.[68] Fourthly, these states argued that the rule could not afford to the secretary-general greater powers than those possessed by the members of the Council, and that including the phrase would indicate that the president had discretion on the timing of the secretary-general's statements.[69]

Australia remained the strongest advocate for the opposing view of the secretary-general's unlimited right to give statements. Even when the Soviet Union and other states that had been supportive of these arguments gave in to the majority in the interest of consensus, the Australian delegate continued to insist on reserving his rights

[65] Committee of Experts, 47th mtg., 15 May 1946, S/Procedure/100, 23 May 1946, UNDHL.
[66] Committee of Experts, 47th mtg., 15 May 1946, S/Procedure/100, 23 May 1946; Committee of Experts, 48th mtg., 20 May 1946, S/Procedure/103, 5 June 1946; Committee of Experts, 49th mtg., 21 May 1946, S/Procedure/104, 3 June 1946; Draft report of chairman of Committee of Experts on the secretary-general's right to make communications to the Security Council, S/Procedure/97, 23 May 1946, UNDHL.
[67] Stettinius to the Secretary of State, 15 May 1946, 501.BC/5-1546; Stettinius to Secretary of State, 17 May 1946, 501.BC/5-1746; Stettinius to Secretary of State, 21 May 1946, 501.BC/5-2146, NARA.
[68] Committee of Experts, 48th mtg., 20 May 1946, S/Procedure/103, 5 June 1946, UNDHL.
[69] Committee of Experts, 48th mtg., 20 May 1946, S/Procedure/103, 5 June 1946, UNDHL; Byrnes to US UN delegation, 24 May 1946, 501. BC/5-2346, NARA.

to return to this question when the rule was discussed in the Security Council proper. The other delegations put strong pressure on Australia to change its mind, pointing out that it would be embarrassing both to the secretary-general and the Security Council if this issue had to be discussed in a public meeting.[70] Nonetheless, Australia would not give in. According to Stettinius, even Sobolev joined in urging the Australian delegate to accept the inclusion of language on the president's invitation, and Sobolev would apparently also ask Lie himself to have a word with the head of the Australian delegation.[71]

In the end Britain was responsible for a change in the Committee's overall position. Cadogan's reports had been doing the rounds at the Foreign Office. Philip Noel-Baker, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, was the first to point out that "surely" the secretary-general should address the Council "of right, and not by invitation of the Chairman."[72] John Ward, head of the UN Department, agreed that although it seemed unnecessary to include this rule given the position the secretary-general already enjoyed under article 99, "if he wants a rule there is obviously no objection ... he ought to be able to do it as of right." The question of an invitation would presumably be a mere formality, and it was unfortunate that it had been raised as a matter of principle, "but since it has I think the Australian delegation is in the right and that perhaps we should say so," Ward concluded.[73] The Foreign Office consequently sent new instructions to its UN delegation to support the Australian committee member, telling Cadogan that "it seems to us quite wrong and inconsistent with the commanding position given by the

[70] Committee of Experts, 49th mtg., 21 May 1946, S/Procedure/104, 3 June 1946, UNDHL.
[71] Stettinius to Secretary of State, no. 212, 21 May 1946, 501.BC/5-2146, NARA.
[72] Noel-Baker minute, [no date], on Cadogan to FO, 15 May 1946, FO 371/57247, UKNA. Underlined in original.
[73] Ward minute, 21 May 1946, FO 371/57247, UKNA.

Charter to the Secretary-General that he should be obliged to obtain an invitation before expressing his views."[74]

When the UK representative, who was late arriving, revealed his new instructions to the Committee on 23 May, several other states quickly changed sides too. By the end of the meeting, only the United States, China, Egypt, and the Netherlands still insisted on the need for an invitation, and the Committee decided to adjourn the meeting to give these delegations time to consider a new draft rule.[75] By the next committee meeting four days later, all four had been authorised to approve the new draft, which the Committee adopted unanimously.[76] Finally, on 6 June the Security Council unanimously adopted the proposed new rule without any discussion. The new rule 21 of the Security Council's rules of procedure read as follows:

> The Secretary-General, or his deputy acting on his behalf, may make either oral or written statements to the Security Council on any question under consideration by it.[77]

The secretary-general's right to make statements to the Council was now formally recognised.

Although Lie had played an important role in this process, by submitting the legal memorandum on Iran that prompted the discussion, and urging for the rights he felt he already had to be recognised, the secretary-general cannot take credit for the unlimited right enshrined in the final rule adopted. Lie took a back seat in the process, and would have accepted the inclusion of the phrase 'upon the invitation of the president.'[78] Instead, as a result of the Australian delegation's tenacity, as well as the Foreign Office recognising the interests of Britain as a 'founder' in standing on the principles of the UN Charter, the Committee of Experts in the end accepted that the

[74] FO to UK UN delegation, 22 May 1946, FO 371/57247, UKNA.
[75] Committee of Experts, 50th mtg., 23 May 1946, S/Procedure/105, 31 May 1946, UNDHL.
[76] Committee of Experts, 51st mtg., 27 May 1946, S/Procedure/106, 6 June 1946, UNDHL.
[77] SCOR, 1st year, 44th mtg., 6 June 1946.
[78] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 87.

secretary-general's right to present statements was unlimited. This is one example of how the secretary-general's role came to expand not only through his 'push,' but also through an institutional 'pull.' The rules of procedure on the relationship between the secretary-general and the Security Council set in June 1946 remain unchanged to this day.

Once the Security Council had adopted this new rule of procedure, the other UN organs soon followed. The General Assembly conducted a substantial revision of its rules of procedure during its second session, and adopted new rules of procedure on 17 November 1947. Going beyond rule 48 quoted above, the new rule 64 read as follows:

> The Secretary-General, or a member of the Secretariat designated by him as his representative, may at any time make either oral or written statements to the General Assembly concerning any question under consideration by it.[79]

ECOSOC undertook a major review of its rules of procedure before its 8th session in February and March 1949.[80] During these discussions the United States proposed retaining the provision on invitation by the president, but the Secretariat's legal department insisted that the secretary-general considered this an important issue,[81] and the United States dropped the idea. In the end ECOSOC adopted a new rule as follows:

> The Secretary-General, or his representative, may, subject to rule 47, make oral as well as written statements to the Council, its committees or subsidiary bodies concerning any question under consideration.[82]

Despite the concern during discussions in the Committee of Experts on the role of the secretary-general in the Military Staff Committee, this committee was quite agreeable to allowing the secretary-general to participate, and adopted the appropriate provisions in its rules of procedure in September 1946.[83] At the same time, the Trusteeship Council

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[79] *UN Yearbook, 1947-1948*, 326.
[80] *UN Yearbook, 1948-49*, 98, 103.
[81] Daily report to the secretary-general from the Legal Department ,15 March 1949, S-0188-0002-01, the United Nations Archives and Records Management Section, New York, (hereafter UNA).
[82] ECOSOC resolution 217(VIII), 18 March 1949.
[83] Memorandum of conversation (Hiss, Dennison, Claxton), 12 June 1946, 501.BC/6-1246, NARA; Committee of Experts, 71st mtg., 9 Sept 1946, S/Procedure/133, 12 Sept 1946; Committee of Experts,

declined to adjust its rules, leading Lie to speculate that some of the colonial powers might be hesitant to let the secretary-general and his deputies take full part in those discussions.[84] Nonetheless, with the changes in the General Assembly and ECOSOC, following the earlier change in the Security Council, the secretary-general's unlimited right to participate in political discussions had been established in all the major bodies of the United Nations.

## 4.5 Lie's statement on UN membership, August 1946

By the summer of 1946 the new rule governing the relationship between the secretary-general and the Security Council was formally in place. Yet there would be other times when the secretary-general explored his implied powers. His memo on the Iranian question had dealt ostensibly with procedural matters, not with substance. In August 1946 the secretary-general took the opportunity to express his opinion to the Council, for the first time, on a contested political issue. He did so over the issue of UN membership.

The question of UN membership plagued the United Nations throughout its first decade. Article 4 of the UN Charter simply stated that UN membership was open to "all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations," and established the procedure for admission. Just as in the election of the secretary-general, new UN members were to be recommended by the Security Council, while the final admission decision rested with the General Assembly.[85] As a substantive question, the veto of the permanent members applied to the Council's recommendation,

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72nd mtg., 10 Sept 1946, S/Procedure/134, 11 Sept 1946; Committee of Experts, 74th mtg., 16 Sept 1946, S/Procedure/137, 17 Sept 1946, UNDHL.

[84] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 88.

[85] UN Charter, article 4.

and membership applications therefore quickly became tied up with Cold War politics. In May 1946 the Security Council decided to defer consideration of all membership applications until August, and in the meantime established a subcommittee to examine all incoming applications.[86] Finally, on 28 August the Council was due to start discussing the applications of Afghanistan, Albania, Iceland, Ireland, the Mongolian People's Republic, Portugal, Siam, Sweden, and Transjordan.

Before the first formal meeting on 28 August, Council members discussed the issue informally, and the secretary-general took an active part in the proceedings. From the moment he was elected secretary-general, Lie had developed strong loyalty to the organisation and its Charter and principles, and he felt strongly that membership had to be universal. On 23 August Lie invited the P5 and the Council president to an informal meeting on the UN membership question. The secretary-general made "an earnest plea for admission of all 9 candidates," and "implored the members having the right of veto not to exercise this right in the case of applications for membership in the UN." In Lie's opinion, "use of the veto for this purpose would be damaging to the prestige of the UN and would further lower the esteem of the Security Council in the eyes of the world."[87] The United States, Mexico, and Brazil indicated that they would support the admission of all candidates, and the United States let it be known that it would introduce a proposal to admit all nine when the Council met. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, continued to express doubts about some of the applicants, and gave its delegation strict instructions to oppose the admission of Ireland, Portugal, and Transjordan. Over the next few days the secretary-general and the Council members continued their informal consultations, and Lie reported to the US delegation that both Sobolev and Gromyko had been impressed by the US proposal to admit all nine, and he believed they would

[86] Security Council resolution 6 (1946), 17 May 1946.
[87] Johnson to the Secretary of State, 23 Aug 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 432-434.

both attempt to persuade the Soviet government to change its policy on the issue. Lie also "talked personally with each member of the Security Council and urged that [the US] proposal be accepted."[88]

Given the secretary-general's strong opinions on the issue, it did not come as a surprise when he stated his unequivocal support for the American proposal to admit all nine applicants at the Council meeting on 28 August. If the United Nations was to fulfil its purpose, it would require "the active support and co-operation of every respectable nation and of every decent man and woman in the entire world," Lie argued, and pointed out that the founding members of the UN, including the P5, had agreed that the organisation "must be as universal as possible ... For this reason, in my capacity as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I wish to support the admission to membership of all the States which are applying today."[89] At the time no state raised any objections to the secretary-general's statement, and the Council proceeded to discuss the subcommittee's report and the US proposal to admit all nine applicants.

It quickly became clear that the US proposal, supported by the secretary-general, would not carry. Soviet representative Gromyko opposed admitting all states as one, arguing that "countries cannot be regarded as things and dealt with in accordance with a standard measure," and the Council therefore had to consider the merits of each application separately.[90] The Australian representative likewise stated that although his country supported universality of UN membership, the proposed method of admitting them all as one was wrong. Although Brazil and China gave their unequivocal support for the US proposal, and the Netherlands indicated that it would vote in its favour, it was obvious that the proposal would not carry. The Soviet Union suggested that the

[88] Johnson to the Secretary of State, 26 Aug 1946, *FRUS 1946*, I, 436.
[89] SCOR, 1st year, 54th mtg., 28 Aug 1946.
[90] SCOR, 1st year, 55th mtg., 28 Aug 1946.

United States should withdraw its proposal in the interest of saving time, to which the US delegation agreed.[91]

Over two long meetings on 29 August, lasting more than 10 hours in total, the Council discussed each individual case.[92] In the end the majority of the applications were turned down, while the Council agreed to recommend Afghanistan, Iceland, and Sweden for membership.[93] This was the end of immediate Security Council discussion of UN membership for the time being, but further discussions and controversies would continue over the next few years. Soon the position of the United States and the Soviet Union reversed, as the Soviet bloc started to support wholesale admission of all applicants, while the United States and its allies insisted on treating each application individually. At one point or another, the deadlock kept 16 applicants outside the United Nations, until a package deal was agreed in 1955.[94] That year the Council finally agreed to admit Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Laos, Libya, Nepal, Portugal, Romania, and Spain,[95] soon leaving only the divided states of Germany, Korea, and Vietnam on the outside.[96]

As for the secretary-general's statement of UN membership, no state openly challenged his right to intervene in this matter of substance. Behind the scenes, however, some delegations muttered their annoyance at Lie's actions. Cadogan, the British representative, wrote back to the Foreign Office that he had approached Lie after the meeting to suggest that the last phrase of Lie's statement was improper. Cadogan argued that the secretary-general should be allowed to make a statement on UN membership and the principle of universality, but felt that he had no right 'supporting' a

[91] SCOR, 1st year, 55th mtg., 28 Aug 1946.
[92] SCOR, 1st year, 56th and 57th mtgs., 29 Aug 1946.
[93] Security Council resolution 8, 29 Aug 1946.
[94] Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote, eds., *Public papers of the Secretaries-general of the United Nations: Vol. 1: Trygve Lie, 1946-1953* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 44.
[95] Security Council resolution 109, 14 Dec 1955.
[96] Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 44.

proposal by a member state. Lie admitted that the use of the word 'support' might have been unfortunate, but went on to argue that his position as secretary-general of the United Nations was "quite different from that of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, and that he was entitled to participate in the discussion of any subject." Cadogan "remained unconvinced" and suggested to Lie "in a friendly and personal way ... if he really had this right he should in his own interest, be very careful in his exercise of it. Secretary-General remained quite obstinate on the point of principle but conversation was quite friendly, and I do not think he took it amiss when I said that I was going to keep a look-out in the future to prevent him voting!"[97] For some British diplomats, the bigger problem was that Lie's statement implied that he spoke on behalf of the United Nations overall. This assumption was incorrect; "he has no right to intervene as if he, so to speak, spoke for the United Nations as a whole as opposed to a body which is one of the organs of the United Nations." Cadogan was therefore right to rebuke Lie for saying, "in effect ... that the interests of the United Nations (of which he is not a judge) required a certain course of action and therefore he supported a particular proposal."[98]

Nonetheless, the British kept their concerns private, and the episode passed without noticeable reaction from other delegations or the press. Other British diplomats pointed out the dangers of trying to limit the secretary-general's powers too much. Gladwyn Jebb, Assistant Under-Secretary for United Nations Affairs, recalled that "it was the intention of the drafters of the Charter to give substantially more powers to the Secretary General of U.N.O. than were vested in the Secretary General of the League of Nations," and that Britain should therefore be careful not to "attempt to curtail the powers, real or imagined, of Mr. Lie more than is absolutely necessary." Furthermore,

[97] Cadogan to FO, 30 Aug 1946, FO 371/59733, UKNA.
[98] Beckett minute, 18 Sept 1946, FO 371/59733, UKNA.

should Lie abuse his powers, "it will be his own funeral and I doubt whether our own interests are likely to suffer very much." Ultimately, "if on the other hand we clip his wings we may be prejudicing the position of his successor who may, for all we know, be an infinitely wiser and more powerful personality who will be able to get away with much more than the present Secretary General."[99] Jebb thus recognised the importance of precedents being set in these early years, as well as Britain's long-term interests as a 'founder' of the United Nations in allowing the office of secretary-general some autonomy and independence.

## 4.6 The right to appoint investigative committees, September 1946

In September 1946, secretary-general Lie seized the opportunity to establish firm recognition of another implied power of article 99: the right of the secretary-general to appoint investigative committees. The opportunity arose in relation to the Security Council's discussions of the Greek civil war. The civil war in Greece was one of the earliest questions on the Security Council's agenda. On 21 January, in response to the Iranian complaint against Soviet troops in northern Iran, the Soviet Union lodged a complaint against the presence of British troops in Greece, while the Ukrainian representative filed a complaint against British troops in Indonesia. Britain had sent troops to Greece in October 1944 as German forces were withdrawing, and almost immediately became embroiled in a civil war between the right-wing government in Athens (monarchist and supported by Britain) and left-wing armed groups who had fought against the Germans since 1941 (communist and supported by Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria).[100] The Council first took up the question of Greece on 1

[99] Jebb to Gore-Booth, 1 Oct 1946, FO 371/59718, UKNA.
[100] Svetozar Rajak, "The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945-1956," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume 1: Origins*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

February – the first meeting attended by the newly elected secretary-general[101] – but the debate quickly came to an end with a statement by the Council president on 6 February.[102]

The next time the Greek question reappeared on the Council agenda, however, the secretary-general would take the opportunity to assert his political powers. On 24 August the Ukrainian foreign minister sent a telegram to the UN secretary-general asking that the Security Council look into the situation on the Greek border where "as a result of the irresponsible policy of the present Greek Government a situation had arisen ... which represented a grave danger to peace and security in this part of Europe."[103] During Council discussions on the issue, the Soviet Union and its communist allies attacked the Greek government, while the Greek government responded with accusations of its own. The United States proposed sending a commission of three impartial individuals "to investigate the facts relating to the border incidents along the frontier between Greece, on the one hand, and Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia on the other," and to submit a report to the Security Council.[104]

Before the United States formally introduced its draft resolution, the issue was discussed in private among the delegates on the Council and with the secretary-general. On 17 September Lie told Hershel Johnson, acting US ambassador to the UN, that if the American proposal for an investigative commission was vetoed by the Soviet Union (which seemed likely), the secretary-general would be prepared to send his own committee of three Secretariat officials to investigate the matter.[105] The US response was that the secretary-general would of course have to decide for himself if that was the right thing to do, but they "would not think it appropriate for the Secretary General to

[101] SCOR, 1st year, 6th mtg., 1 Feb 1946.
[102] SCOR, 1st year, 10th mtg., 6 February 1946.
[103] *UN Yearbook 1946-1947*, 351.
[104] SCOR, 1st year, 70th meeting, 20 Sept 1946.
[105] Memorandum of conversation (Hiss, Johnson, Noyes), 17-18 Sept 1946, *FRUS 1946*, VII, 219-220.

send a group of members of his own staff to investigate a subject which the Council had considered and rejected because of the lawful use of the veto."[106] Furthermore, the State Department warned Lie that there was a danger that Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia would not allow his committee to enter their territories. "This prospect of the inability of the Secretariat group to accomplish anything makes it ... unwise to run the serious risk of impairing Lie's effectiveness in his relationship with the Russians and of perhaps adversely affecting the Russian relationship to the United Nations as a whole."[107]

Nevertheless, before the vote on the American draft resolution at the Council meeting on 20 September, Lie asked for the floor and told the Council:

> Just a few words to make clear my own position as Secretary-General and the rights of this office under the Charter. Should the proposal of the United States representative not be carried, I hope that the Council will understand that the Secretary-General must reserve his right to make such enquiries of investigations as he may think necessary, in order to determine whether or not he should consider bringing any aspect of this matter to the attention of the Council under the provisions of the Charter.[108]

Immediately the Soviet representative expressed his support for Lie's statement:

> I think that Mr. Lie was right in raising the question of his rights. It seems to me that in this case, as in all other cases, the Secretary-General must act. I have no doubt that he will do so in accordance with the rights and powers of the Secretary-General as defined in the Charter of the United Nations.[109]

None of the other delegates present said anything on this, and Lie "had thus established a solid base in the record" for his investigative powers.[110] These investigative powers are implied by article 99 of the UN Charter. If the secretary-general is to be in a position where he can bring matters affecting peace and security to the attention of the Security Council, he needs to be informed of what is going on in the world. This gives the secretary-general an independent right to ask questions and to form fact-finding

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[106] Ibid.
[107] Quoted in *FRUS 1946*, VII, 220n.
[108] SCOR, 1st year, 70th mtg., 20 Sept 1946. Also quoted in Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 46-47.
[109] SCOR, 1st year, 70th mtg., 20 Sept 1946.
[110] Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 47.

committees.[111] It was this right that Lie and Gromyko referred to at the Council meeting on 20 September. Although some British diplomats would later grumble that "in taking action of the sort contemplated ... the Secretary-General would be exceeding his functions as an official of the United Nations,"[112] the secretary-general's right to investigate issues and seek information to decide whether or not he should use article 99 had now been firmly established. Lie never sent a committee to Greece, but the secretary-general's services as an investigator would come to be important to the United Nations in coming decades.

## 4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the role of the UN secretary-general was largely undefined when the United Nations started operations in 1946. This inherent flexibility would allow the role to expand both its scope and autonomy. The organisation's early years also saw the first – and last – change to the formal rules of procedure regulating the role of the secretary-general, when the Security Council recognised his right to present it with oral or written statements. A second right implied by article 99 – the secretary-general's right to appoint investigative committees and to ask questions – was implicitly recognised when no state protested on the record against the secretary-general's statement that he had this right.

Lie 'pushed' both for recognition for the rights he considered that the Charter had already granted the secretary-general, and for an expansion of his role even further. In Lie's opinion, the secretary-general had a duty to inform the Security Council when it was committing a legal error in retaining the Iranian question on the agenda as a complaint of Iran against the Soviet Union. The storm of criticism and comment which

[111] Goodrich, Hambro, and Simons, *Charter of the United Nations*, 576; Kennedy, *Parliament of Man*, 44; Ramcharan, *Preventive Diplomacy*, 17.
[112] Peck minute, 24 Oct 1946, FO 371/59719, UKNA.

his act unleashed took Lie by surprise. He considered the secretary-general's right to present his opinions to the Council as explicit in article 99. Nevertheless, he wrote in his memoirs that he was "glad that these rights were secured at an early stage in the Organization's history when the fluid state of procedures lent itself to [his] initiative."[113] As Lie saw the process, it was a question of recognising the rights that the secretary-general already had and a matter of clarifying his position vis-à-vis the Security Council and the other organs of the United Nations, rather than trying to attain new and broader rights which he did not already possess.

This chapter also showed that Lie was not the only actor pushing in this direction. Indeed, in one instance the institution 'pulled' for the expansion of the secretary-general's role further than Lie himself had envisioned. When the Committee of Experts met in May 1946 to discuss inserting a rule to recognise the secretary-general's right to present oral or written statements to the Security Council, Lie took a back seat, and allowed one of his assistant secretaries-general to represent the Secretariat view in the proceedings. Lie was also willing to accept that his right to intervene in the Council would be limited by requiring an invitation from the Council president. Such a provision was already included in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, and Lie felt it would be unwise to push for broader powers in the Security Council. Instead it was at the insistence of Australia, the Soviet Union, and later Britain, that this provision was removed from the draft rule, and the Council recognised the unlimited right of the secretary-general to intervene in Council discussions. The General Assembly and ECOSOC followed up by aligning their rules with the Security Council's. This represents an example of the institution 'pulling' the secretary-general's role in the direction of more autonomy and a broader scope.

[113] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 88.

The chapter furthermore highlighted the tension inherent in the states' dual role as 'members' and 'founders' of the United Nations. As members the states have an interest in limiting the role of the secretary-general and preventing him from interfering in their affairs, but as founders they recognise that their long-term interest lies in protecting the UN Charter and organisation, and that this may come at the price of having an independent and autonomous secretary-general with a broad political scope. Throughout his term in office, Lie often appealed to the states as 'founders,' reminding them of the principles and values they already signed up to, and of their long-term interest in and duty to protect the effective functioning of the UN organisation. The Iranian crisis was one of the first confrontations of the Cold War, which would soon make the secretary-general's job more difficult. Chapter 6 will return to the secretary-general's struggle to navigate between the conflicting views of the great powers in the Security Council. For now, chapter 5 examines the secretary-general's activity in relation to the case of the Palestine problem.

# 5 Defending the Organisation's Coherence and Prestige: The UN Secretary-General and the Palestine Problem, 1947-1949[1]

"I regard the Palestine question as a crucial test for the United Nations. No greater challenge could be offered to the wisdom and statesmanship of this organisation. I believe that in this organisation are to be found the will, the wisdom and statesmanship necessary to break the horns of the Palestine dilemma and to bring long-delayed peace to the Holy Land."[2]

Secretary-general's draft statement, February 1948

## 5.1 Introduction

UN scholars often overlook Trygve Lie's contribution to the development of the political role of the UN secretary-general. To the extent that he is remembered for his political actions, it is in the case of the Palestine problem.[3] Lie himself would later regard the State of Israel "as his child," and he took pride in the part he played in helping to establish the Jewish state in Palestine.[4] Lie was an enthusiastic supporter of Israel's UN membership application in 1949 and sought to use every means at his disposal to ensure the necessary majority in the General Assembly. Ralph Bunche,[5] the acting UN mediator, described in his diary how, "Lie phoned me in evening – very

[1] An earlier version of this chapter was published as Ellen Jenny Ravndal, "'The First Major Test': The UN Secretary-General and the Palestine Problem, 1947-1949," *The International History Review* (published online 2015).
[2] Bunche to Lie with "Draft Statement on the Palestine Question," 23 Feb 1948, PA-1407/D/L0013, the National Archives of Norway, Oslo, (hereafter NAN).
[3] This is one reason why I have chosen Palestine as one of my case studies for this thesis, rather than for example Kashmir, another regional conflict from this period that is still unsolved today.
[4] Statement by Haakon Lie in TV documentary by Solberg and Sørebø, "Trygve Lie - mannen som bygde opp FN." Author's translation from Norwegian.
[5] Ralph Bunche was a director in the trusteeship division of the UN Secretariat who played a central role in every phase of the UN's involvement with Palestine. He travelled to Palestine as principal secretary or as the secretary-general's representative with UNSCOP, the Palestine Commission, the Palestine Conciliation Commission, and the UN mediator, and in the spring of 1949 he negotiated armistice agreements between Israel and four Arab states as acting UN mediator. See Brian E. Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche: An American Life* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993); Elad Ben-Dror, "Ralph Bunche and the Establishment of Israel," *Israel Affairs* 14, no. 3 (2008).

upset – said Israelis had to be admitted now; wanted me to make a statement in favor."[6] Allegedly, Lie also passed 'secret' information to the Zionists/Israelis on several occasions,[7] and he attempted to leverage his contacts in Norway to vote in favour of the Israeli membership application.[8] These episodes have led contemporary observers and later researchers alike to accuse him of harbouring a pro-Zionist bias that came into conflict with what they perceive to be the proper way of fulfilling his role as UN secretary-general.[9] Ironically, in the one instance that historians recognise Lie's efforts to expand the political scope and autonomy of his role – the case of Palestine – they hurl the adjective 'political' as an accusation against him. In regard to Palestine, Lie supposedly overstepped the boundaries of what was appropriate for the UN secretary-general by acting on a personal political bias. This chapter will argue, to the contrary, that although Lie may have supported the Zionist cause, there is not sufficient evidence to substantiate the corollary position that such support constituted the key driver of his actions. Instead, this chapter will show that in this particular case, Lie's personal pro-Zionism aligned with the secretary-general's interest in promoting and protecting the organisation he had been entrusted to lead, and that it was this *institutional* interest that provided the main impetus for his actions.

What in the interwar years came to be known as the Palestine problem – the question of the future organisation and government of the territory that was the British

[6] Bunche diary note, 4 May 1949, box 2, folder 13, the Brian Urquhart Collection of material about Ralph Bunche, collection 364, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, (hereafter UCB). Underlined in original.
[7] Hilde Henriksen Waage, "The Winner Takes All: The 1949 Island of Rhodes Armistice Negotiations Revisited," *The Middle East Journal* 65, no. 2 (2011): 289-90; Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 162.
[8] Hilde Henriksen Waage, *Da staten Israel ble til: Et stridsspørsmål i norsk politikk, 1945-49* [When the state of Israel was formed: A controversy in Norwegian politics, 1945-49] (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1989), 213-18.
[9] The strongest proponent of these arguments today is Waage; Waage, "The Winner Takes All."; Waage, *Da staten Israel ble til*; Jørgen Jensehaugen, Marte Heian-Engedal, and Hilde Henriksen Waage, "Securing the State: From Zionist Ideology to Israeli Statehood," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 23, no. 2 (2012); Marte Heian-Engdal, Jørgen Jensehaugen, and Hilde Henriksen Waage, "'Finishing the Enterprise': Israel's Admission to the United Nations," *The International History Review* 35, no. 3 (2013). See also Barros, *Trygve Lie*; Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*; Odd Karsten Tveit, *Alt for Israel: Oslo - Jerusalem 1948-78* [All for Israel: Oslo - Jerusalem 1948-78] (Oslo: J. W. Cappelen, 1996).

mandate of Palestine – first appeared on the UN agenda in February 1947, when the British government referred the question to the new world organisation. Since the late 1800s Zionists had arrived in Palestine with the aim of establishing a Jewish 'national home,' a goal endorsed by Britain during the First World War and later confirmed by the League of Nations mandate for Palestine. The local Arab population resented this intrusion of newcomers, and nationalists demanded that Palestine be given independence as an Arab state. Tensions heightened in the 1930s, when more Jewish settlers arrived following persecution in Europe, and increased again after the Second World War, when Holocaust survivors tried to reach Palestine to start a new life. In an attempt to maintain peace and order within its mandate, Britain started sending 'illegal immigrants' to camps in Cyprus, but these policies caused much negative publicity in Europe and the United States. Eventually the British government conceded its inability to govern Palestine and decided to refer the entire issue to the United Nations, in the hope that the world organisation might succeed where Britain had failed.[10] Presented with the Palestine problem, secretary-general Lie decided to view it as a 'test case,' and an opportunity for the new organisation to prove its worth. In his memoirs, published in 1954, Lie entitled the chapter on Palestine "The first major test."[11] Referring to Palestine as a "crucial test ... to the wisdom and statesmanship" of the UN organisation was a common theme in the secretary-general's draft statements at the time.[12]

Looking back at over six decades of the Arab-Israeli conflict, we might today find Lie's designation of the Palestine problem as a test case puzzling. Current scholarship on the subject reflects a general consensus that this conflict was intractable

[10] Ellen Jenny Ravndal, "Exit Britain: British Withdrawal From the Palestine Mandate in the Early Cold War, 1947–1948," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 21, no. 3 (2010).
[11] In his Norwegian memoirs Lie titled the chapter on Palestine "Den første store prøven," i.e. "The first major test." Lie, *Syv år for freden*, 126.
[12] Bunche to Lie with "Draft Statement on the Palestine Question," 23 Feb 1948, PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN.

from the start, not least because of the Zionists' 'iron wall' policy.[13] Yet if secretary-general Lie chose to seize on the Palestine problem as an opportunity to prove the merits of the United Nations, he must not have shared this perception. Indeed, he would later go so far as to claim that the United Nations had solved the problem successfully.[14] In 1947 not only was there still significant uncertainty regarding the role of the UN secretary-general, but the fate of the United Nations itself was far from determined. The young organisation faced a number of challenges and setbacks in its first years of operation, not least due to the emerging Cold War. Why, in the midst of such uncertainty, did Lie believe that Palestine – an intractable conflict – offered a good opportunity to prove the UN's abilities?

This chapter argues that Lie believed Palestine could demonstrate the UN's potential precisely because this problem was not yet a conflict between East and West. The secretary-general saw Palestine as a relatively minor regional conflict, and believed that if the United Nations could "succeed in seeing through the plans here in understanding between the great powers ... it would have a tremendous psychological effect,"[15] demonstrating the UN's abilities to governments and peoples alike. As he wrote in his memoirs, Palestine was a case where the great powers "should still be able to act in unison" and "do something positive through the United Nations."[16] Hence, in

[13] The 'iron wall' was a concept first used by the revisionist Zionist Ze'ev Jabotinsky in the 1920s to describe the strategy that the Zionists, in his opinion, would have to follow in Palestine. He argued that the Arabs would never accept the Zionist state-building project, and that the Zionists therefore had to build an 'iron wall' to be strong enough militarily to defeat the Arabs again and again until they accepted the existence of the Jewish state. Later researchers have used this concept to describe the actual policy of Israel toward the Arab states. See Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "The Iron Wall," *Razsviet* 1923; Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "The Ethics of the Iron Wall," *Razsviet* 1923; Ian S. Lustick, "To Build and to Be Built By: Israel and the Hidden Logic of the Iron Wall," *Israel Studies* 1, no. 1 (1996); Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, Paperback ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2000); Ian S. Lustick, "Abandoning the Iron Wall: Israel and 'The Middle Eastern Muck'," *Middle East Policy* 15, no. 3 (2008); Avi Shlaim, "The Iron Wall Revisited," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41, no. 2 (2012).

[14] See for example "Address by Secretary-General Trygve Lie at Annual Convention of Rotary International," 14 June 1949, and "Tale av Generalsekretær Trygve Lie, Bergen, Norway," 8 August 1949, both in PA-1407/D/L0017, NAN.

[15] Lie to Gerhardsen, 9 March 1948, in PA-1407/D/L0019, NAN. Author's translation from Norwegian.

[16] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 159.

relation to the Palestine problem Lie's main concern was neither the situation in Palestine itself, nor the Zionist establishment of a Jewish state, but rather the effects the UN's involvement with the Palestine problem might have on the UN organisation and its place in the world.

When secretary-general Lie wrote that Palestine was a 'test' for the UN organisation, he actually identified two testing elements, though he never fully explicated them. The first related to the UN's ability to solve regional conflicts; it was a test of the organisation's capacity to fulfil its explicit mandate to maintain international peace and security. The second test identified by Lie concerned the UN's potential to bring the great powers together. One of the main purposes of the new UN organisation was to preserve the cooperation among the victorious powers of the Second World War, and it was intended to serve as a forum, or concert, for the great powers.[17] This chapter adds a third analytical test to those identified by Lie, and argues that in taking on the Palestine problem as a test case of the UN's capability to solve regional conflicts and create unity among the great powers, Lie also set himself a test. The Palestine problem was therefore also a significant test of the office of the secretary-general and its abilities to protect and promote the United Nations.

In addition to its focus on the evolution of the role of the secretary-general, this chapter will add an important perspective to our knowledge of the role of the United Nations in the Palestine problem, a critically understudied subject. Some researchers have focused on the role of UN mediators Count Folke Bernadotte and Ralph Bunche, and in particular on the armistice talks at Rhodes in the spring of 1949.[18] Others have

[17] Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All*; Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*; Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN*.
[18] Sune Persson, *Mediation and Assassination: Count Bernadotte's Mission to Palestine, 1948* (London: Ithaca Press, 1979); Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*; Ben-Dror, "Ralph Bunche."; Waage, "The Winner Takes All."; Jørgen Jensehaugen and Hilde Henriksen Waage, "Coercive Diplomacy: Israel, Transjordan and the UN—a Triangular Drama Revisited," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 1 (2012); Neil Caplan, "A Tale of Two Cities: The Rhodes and Lausanne Conferences, 1949," *Journal of Palestine*

written about the various UN commissions, or the early development of peacekeeping and peacemaking.[19] There are, of course, numerous books and articles on the Arab-Israeli conflict, but although they all discuss the process *at* the United Nations, most pay minimal attention to the actions *of* the United Nations and its agents, and focus instead on the policies and actions of the two local parties, the great powers, or other state actors.[20] In this chapter I therefore go back to the primary documentary sources – Lie's own papers, the UN archive, Cordier's and Bunche's archives, as well as the British and American national archives – to piece together the story of the positions and initiatives of the UN secretary-general in regard to the Palestine problem.

The chapter is divided into five sections largely arranged chronologically. The first sets the stage by looking at the UN's first involvement with the Palestine problem and the process leading to the adoption of the partition resolution in November 1947. The second examines the secretary-general's efforts to push for implementation of the partition plan in the winter of 1947-48. The third considers the conflict that developed between the secretary-general and the United States over the implementation of partition in the spring of 1948. The chapter goes on to discuss Lie's efforts to encourage the Security Council to take forceful action in response to the outbreak of the first international Arab-Israeli war in May 1948. Finally, the chapter examines Lie's

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*Studies* 21, no. 3 (1992); Joseph Heller, "Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, no. 3 (1979); Cary David Stanger, "A Haunting Legacy: The Assassination of Count Bernadotte," *Middle East Journal* 42, no. 2 (1988).

[19] Neil Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy, Volume 3: The United Nations, the Great Powers and Middle East Peacemaking, 1948-1954* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997); Nathan A. Pelcovits, *The Long Armistice: UN Peacekeeping and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1960* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993); Elad Ben-Dror, "The success of the Zionist strategy vis-à-vis UNSCOP," *Israel affairs* 20, no. 1 (2014).

[20] These are too numerous for me to provide a comprehensive list, but some good accounts are Benny Morris, *1948: The First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008); Ilan Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951*, Paperback ed. (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1994); Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, 2nd ed., Cambridge Middle East Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Avi Shlaim, "The Debate About 1948," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 3 (1995).

attempts to establish an armed guard to deploy to Palestine to enforce the partition plan during 1948.

## 5.2 Deciding what to do with Palestine: Feb-Nov 1947

The British government announced it would turn the Palestine problem over to the United Nations on 18 February 1947; just two days later, Lie raised the problem with his staff for the first time.[21] Shortly afterwards, Bunche, then a director in the trusteeship division,[22] wrote in a memorandum that the UN Secretariat had been given "an unparalleled opportunity to take useful and constructive initiative" in preparing for the consideration of the Palestine problem.[23] Such an opportunity was a welcome change from the challenges and setbacks the organisation had faced in its first years of operation. In March 1947, Lie was concerned by growing East-West tensions and the accompanying tendency of the great powers to sidestep the organisation in dealing with these problems. These concerns regarding UN prestige were redoubled by the fact that member states ignored its recommendations on Spain[24] and South Africa.[25] The secretary-general complained that "there was no doubt that the United Nations was at present going through a very serious political crisis,"[26] and "had suffered a series of serious setbacks in the last year."[27] It was against this background that Lie and the

[21] Minutes of meeting in Mr. Lie's office, Lake Success, 20 Feb 1947, S-0194-0003-04, UNA. See also Ben-Dror, "Ralph Bunche," 519.
[22] See footnote 5 in this chapter.
[23] Bunche memorandum to Cordier, "Suggested procedural arrangements for a Secretariat work-program on the Palestine question," 3 March 1947, S-0159-0001-07, UNA.
[24] How to relate to Spain, under the leadership of Franco, was a difficult and controversial question for the UN at this time. In December 1946 the General Assembly recommended that all member states withdraw their ambassadors or ministers plenipotentiaries from Madrid. Argentina did not. (Only three states withdrew their ambassadors, the large majority had no diplomatic presence or only representation at a lower level.) See UN Yearbook 1946-47, 126-130.
[25] South Africa faced opposition against its proposal to annex the mandated territory of South West Africa, and the General Assembly in December 1946 requested that it submit a trusteeship agreement for the territory, but South Africa never did. This became one of the many cases against South Africa in the following decades, and South West Africa only gained independence in 1990 as Namibia.
[26] Minutes of meeting in Mr. Lie's office, Lake Success, 4 March 1947, S-0194-0003-04, UNA.
[27] Minutes of meeting in Mr. Lie's office, Lake Success, 19 March 1947, S-0194-0003-04, UNA.

Secretariat started to work on the Palestine problem, determined to achieve success at last.

Following Britain's referral, the General Assembly met to deal with the problem in special session from 28 April to 15 May 1947, and appointed the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP).[28] The plan was for UNSCOP to examine the situation over the summer and make a recommendation to the regular session of the Assembly in the autumn. When UNSCOP held its first meeting in New York on 26 May, Lie reminded the committee that they represented "the hope and faith of millions of people. Their confidence in the ability of the United Nations to fulfill its momentous mission will be greatly influenced by the results of your work."[29] Already at this stage the UN secretary-general saw the coherence and survival of the United Nations as intricately linked to solving the Palestine problem.

By Lie's own account he did not interfere with the work of UNSCOP.[30] The secretary-general waited for the report to be finalised, but once it was public, he immediately started to lobby for the majority recommendation of partition,[31] which he felt duty-bound to promote:

> What had emerged was a *clear victory for the principle of partition*. The international community, through its chosen representatives, had decided that two states should be created. As Secretary-General, I took the cue and, when approached by delegations for advice, frankly recommended that they follow the majority plan. Behind-the-scenes discussions soon became hectic, and some Arab spokesmen attacked me openly; but I could not yield. The responsibility

[28] The eleven members of UNSCOP were Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia. See Elad Ben-Dror, "The Arab Struggle Against Partition: The International Arena of Summer 1947," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 2 (2007); Ben-Dror, "The success of the Zionist strategy vis-à-vis UNSCOP."; Morris, *1948*, 37-51; Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers*.

[29] Lie, "Opening Address to Special Committee on Palestine, New York," 26 May 1947, PA-1407/D/L0015, NAN.

[30] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 161. I have not found any evidence to suggest otherwise, and neither did James Barros in his thorough study of Lie as secretary-general. See Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 180-81.

[31] The majority of UNSCOP recommended partitioning Palestine into two independent states, one Arab and one Jewish, with an international regime for Jerusalem, and economic union among all three parts. The minority, consisting of India, Iran, and Yugoslavia, proposed a federal state with local autonomy. See UNSCOP, "Report to the General Assembly," 3 September 1947, A/364, available from the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), unispal.un.org.

> for solving the Palestine problem had been transferred to the United Nations, and the Organization had to act in conformity with its best judgment.[32]

The secretary-general's support for partition remained behind-the-scenes in this period. The United States and the Soviet Union, on the other hand, both publicly stated their support for partition of Palestine.[33] This show of concord across Cold War boundaries and the sight of the two great powers working together, "demonstrated with all clarity the potential unity of the great powers that had been dreamed of by the UN's founders."[34] It gave Lie and other observers hope that the Palestine problem could be solved, and that the great powers might overcome their differences through the United Nations. As one observer noted, however, it was also a bittersweet experience, because such cooperation was not yet the norm.[35] Eventually, after months of debate, on 29 November 1947 the General Assembly passed a resolution recommending partition, with the support of two-thirds of the UN's membership, including the United States and the Soviet Union.[36]

## 5.3 Implementing the partition of Palestine: Dec 1947 – Feb 1948

The General Assembly resolution established a new Palestine Commission and tasked it with implementing the partition plan.[37] Before the commission's first meeting, Lie began manoeuvring, first to ensure that the Security Council would back up the commission, and second to sound out states' willingness to set up the international military force required to accomplish the task. The secretary-general continued to work

[32] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 162. Italic in original.
[33] UN Press Release, GA/PAL/12, 11 October 1947, and Statement by Tsarapkin (USSR) in General Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestine Question, 12th meeting, 13 Oct 1947, A/AC.14/SR.12, UNISPAL.
[34] Gaiduk, *Divided Together*, 137.
[35] Anne O'Hare McCormick, "Glimpse of What Might Have Been, and What Might Be," *New York Times*, 12 Nov 1947.
[36] General Assembly resolution 181(II), 29 November 1947.
[37] The members of the Palestine Commission were Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama, and the Philippines.

for the coherence of the organisation, and sought to exploit any means at his disposal to reach his twin goals of implementing partition of Palestine and demonstrating the UN's abilities.

If the secretary-general had intended his manoeuvring to remain private, his plans were spoiled by a series of *New York Times* articles on his plans for a UN force in the new year.[38] Lie met informally with the permanent members of the Security Council on 5 January 1948 and expressed his concern that the members of the Palestine Commission could not travel to Palestine unless they were provided with adequate protection.[39] He had come to the meeting armed with a working paper prepared by the Secretariat, as early as October 1947, on precedents for the creation of international forces.[40] The secretary-general had also discussed the subject with the permanent five earlier in December,[41] and had already asked several smaller states whether they would provide troops for such a military force.[42] These consultations were part of the secretary-general's preparations for implementing partition of Palestine. He was determined to see the plan through, by the use of an armed force if necessary.

At the first meeting of the Palestine Commission on 9 January 1948, Lie continued his campaign to implement the partition plan, as he told the assembled

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[38] Thomas J. Hamilton, "Small-Nation View on Palestine Asked: Lie Inquires of Several Whether They Would Send Troops to Maintain Order," *New York Times*, 8 Jan 1948; Thomas J. Hamilton, "UN Palestine Unit Will Meet Today: Commission Gathering Amid Uncertainty on Force to Protect Partition," *New York Times*, 9 Jan 1948; Thomas J. Hamilton, "Palestine Board Reassured by Lie: U.N. Secretary General Tells Commission It Should Expect Security Council Backing: Absence of Force Feared: British and Zionists Accept, Arabs Reject Liaison Roles - Czech Named Chairman," *New York Times*, 10 Jan 1948.

[39] This meeting was mentioned in a "first rough draft" letter from the secretary-general to the Security Council, [early March 1948], PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN.

[40] See the two papers attached to the memo of conversation (Lie, Feller, Ross), 8 Jan 1948, RG 59, Rusk-McClintok Papers, box 1, NARA.

[41] Cadogan to FO, 19 Dec 1947, FO 371/61893, UKNA; Shertok report, 26 Dec 1947, in Gedalia Yogev et al., eds., *Political and diplomatic documents: December 1947 - May 1948*, Israel State Archives and Central Zionist Archives (Jerusalem: 1979), 110-12.

[42] Lie was supposed to have consulted with Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Brazil, Mexico, and one other Latin American country. Thomas J. Hamilton, "Small-Nation View on Palestine Asked: Lie Inquires of Several Whether They Would Send Troops to Maintain Order," *New York Times*, 8 Jan 1948; Memo of conversation (Lie, Feller, Ross), 8 Jan 1948, RG 59, Rusk-McClintok Papers, box 1, NARA.

members that they had a right to expect that the Security Council would "not fail to exercise, to the fullest and without exception, every necessary power entrusted to it by the Charter in order to assist you in fulfilling your mission."[43] The members of the Palestine Commission were similarly eager to secure the Security Council's help. The Filipino representative was apparently "frightened to death" of going to Palestine, and prepared a suggestion to hand the case over to the Council within a few days of taking his seat.[44] Likewise, the Czech chairman, Karel Lisicky, in his first statement to the Security Council, begged for help and emphasised the need "for assistance by non-Palestinian military forces available, not in symbolic form but in effective, adequate strength," for the Palestine Commission to complete its task.[45]

Behind the scenes, Lie mounted a campaign to get the Security Council to back the Palestine Commission. In his opinion, there was a real and urgent danger that, if the United Nations proved toothless in the face of opposition to its plans, states would come to believe that they could resist UN decisions by force and get away with it. The future of the organisation itself seemed to be at risk if it could not deal with this relatively minor regional problem.[46] Lie prepared several draft statements containing his arguments, but he never officially delivered any of them to the Security Council. In his memoirs, Lie explained that he did not want to make a statement just for the record,[47] and Bunche also counselled him to withhold his statement until they could see "which way the winds are blowing in the Security Council."[48] In particular Lie wanted the United States to take the initiative, as he realised that the opinions and initiatives of one

[43] Lie opening statement at the first meeting of the Palestine Commission, 9 Jan 1948, PA-1407/D/L0025, NAN.
[44] Bunche diary note, 12 Jan 1948, box 5, folder 6, UCB.
[45] SCOR, 3rd year, 253rd mtg., 24 Feb 1948.
[46] See different draft statements from the secretary-general to the Security Council in PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN.
[47] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 166.
[48] Bunche to Lie with "Draft Statement on the Palestine Question," 23 Feb 1948, PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN.

of the permanent members carried more weight than those of the secretary-general.[49] Not content to wait passively, however, Lie prodded and lobbied the US delegation to urge them on. Bunche told the American UN ambassador, Senator Warren Austin, that Lie "feels strongly that the Palestine issue is a basic one for UN." The continued support of the United States for partition was essential, and "abandonment of the Palestine plan under these conditions would be a death blow to UN prestige."[50]

## 5.4 Picking a fight with the United States: Feb-April 1948

Despite the secretary-general's attempts to push the United States to act forcefully in the implementation of partition, the US government decided to argue on legal grounds against the position preferred by the secretary-general and the Palestine Commission. The United States argued that the Security Council had no legal right to implement a political solution recommended by the General Assembly. Lie, naturally, disagreed, as it would undermine the coherence of the organisation if the Security Council disputed the decision of the General Assembly. On 24 February, Austin, the US ambassador, claimed that the Security Council was not empowered by the Charter to help implement a political solution; its only mandate was to deal with threats to international peace and security.[51] Lie was very disappointed; "This attitude, I feared, would prejudice fundamentally the powers of the Organization, in addition to damaging its prestige. I was opposed in principle, as well as on practical grounds, to the position taken."[52] In early March, therefore, he circulated a memorandum, prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the Palestine Commission, stating that the Security Council was within its rights, and even had a duty, to help implement partition. If necessary, it argued, the

[49] Minutes of 110th private meeting, 1 March 1948, box 112, folder 5, the Andrew W. Cordier Collection, Columbia University, New York, (hereafter CCC).
[50] Austin to Secretary of State, 10 Feb 1948, *FRUS*, *1948*, V, 614-616.
[51] SCOR, 3rd year, 253rd mtg., 24 Feb 1948.
[52] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 167-68.

Security Council could establish an international force to do so.[53] The memorandum was leaked to the *New York Times*,[54] a move that may have been intentional on Lie's part,[55] as part of his strategy to use the media to rally support for his views and put pressure on states to act decisively to implement UN policies on Palestine.

The United States reacted strongly to the secretary-general's circulating the memorandum because of the impression thus created that the Secretariat had prepared a counterargument to Austin's statement in the Council.[56] The Argentinean representative also raised the issue in a closed Security Council meeting on 9 March, claiming that the memorandum "was the 'bastard' product of 'unbalanced minds,' and, in principle, the Secretariat had no business producing such a document." In response, Lie replied that "as long as [he] was head of the Secretariat, it would have the right to give any opinion requested by organs of the United Nations."[57] The other members of the Council supported Lie's right to circulate memorandums whenever he wanted.[58] This did not, however, necessarily mean that they agreed with the content of this particular memorandum regarding the Council's duty to implement partition.

The American arguments questioning the legality of Security Council enforcement of partition won out, or perhaps the other states did not want to take action any more than the United States did. As a result the Council decided to ask the permanent members to consult with the Palestine Commission, the Jewish and Arab parties in Palestine, and the British mandate government as to what could be done to

[53] "Relations between the United Nations Commission and the Security Council," working paper prepared by the Secretariat, A/AC.21/13, 9 Feb 1948, UNISPAL. [The paper was first published on 3 Feb as A/AC.21/W.25].
[54] *New York Times*, "Partition Powers of U.N. Affirmed: Palestine Action by Security Council in Event of Arab Balk Declared Legal," 9 March 1948.
[55] Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 188.
[56] Memorandum by McClintock to Lovett, 9 March 1948, *FRUS* 1948, V, 700-701.
[57] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 168.
[58] SCOR, 3rd year, 265th mtg., 9 March 1948.

implement the partition plan peacefully.[59] Lie also took part in these consultations and even hosted some meetings in his office.[60] Simultaneously, the secretary-general continued his campaign to get the United States to act. As Austin reported:

> As Lie left, he told us privately that he was convinced of our sincerity in our efforts to find a way, if there is any way, of implementing the partition plan by peaceful means. He was therefore doing everything in his power to support this effort by us. He was afraid we would find, however, that it would be impossible to implement the plan by peaceful means. Therefore, it would have to be enforced. Otherwise the UN would go downhill rapidly to nothing.[61]

In the end, the group concluded that it would not be possible to modify the plan to please both Jews and Arabs, and that the situation on the ground was likely to continue to deteriorate. It therefore recommended that the Security Council should firmly declare that it would not "permit the existence of a threat to international peace in Palestine," and "take further action by all means available to it to bring about the immediate cessation of violence and the restoration of peace and order in Palestine."[62]

Coincidentally, the Security Council subcommittee presented its findings on how to implement partition on the very same day (19 March) the United States decided to abandon the partition plan altogether, and propose the establishment of a new trusteeship over Palestine.[63] Again Lie's concern for the prestige of the United Nations came to the fore, as he threatened to resign over what he saw as an American betrayal. "The American reversal was a blow to the United Nations, and it wounded me deeply. It showed a profoundly disheartening disregard for the organisation's effectiveness and standing."[64] Although Lie had used the threat of resignation before,[65] and would do so again, this episode demonstrates the extent of the secretary-general's investment in implementing the partition of Palestine. Furthermore, as if to confirm Lie's opinion as

[59] Security Council resolution 42 (1948), 5 March 1948.
[60] Lie to Gerhardsen, 5 April 1948, PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN; Lie, *Syv år for freden*, 137.
[61] Austin to the Secretary of State, 13 March 1948, *FRUS 1948*, V, 712-719.
[62] "Corrigendum," 19 March , PA-1407/D/L0024, NAN.
[63] SCOR, 3rd year, 270th and 271st mtgs., 19 March 1948.
[64] Lie, *Syv år for freden*, 138. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[65] See Cadogan to Jebb, 27 May 1948, FO371/72676, UKNA and Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 130.

to the importance of the Americans, once the United States abandoned partition the Security Council soon followed suit, and called a new special session of the General Assembly.[66] In a second resolution it called for a truce between Jews and Arabs.[67] "For a long time now the situation has seemed promising," Lie wrote to a friend in Norway, "but the Americans' right about-face has, in the meantime, darkened the prospects considerably."[68] Even so Lie did not compromise his opposition to trusteeship, and continued his campaign to implement the partition plan by trying to persuade member states, such as the Nordic countries, to vote in favour of partition at the upcoming General Assembly special session.[69]

Overall, across this period Lie publicly articulated his opinions more strongly than before, and tried to use the media to his advantage, though the results were disappointing. Despite Lie's insistence the partition plan was not implemented, but rather abandoned altogether. In Lie's own words:

> For me, the General Assembly's decision in November last year has been law. I have done everything within my power to help the Palestine Commission, and have given that body the best members of the Secretariat. I also tried, in my speech before the opening of the Palestine Commission's first meeting, as well as in later press conferences, to establish the greatest possible bloc of authority behind this work ... Neither threats nor flattery were able to force my departure from what I considered the decision of the United Nations.[70]

Furthermore, Lie's efforts to establish an international force to send to Palestine also came to naught. Despite these setbacks the secretary-general refused to be dissuaded. The second special session of the Assembly, meeting from 16 April to 14 May 1948, repeated the call for a truce and asked the Security Council to appoint a mediator.[71] On 14 May, however, before the mediator could be appointed, the Jewish Agency took

[66] Security Council resolution 44 (1948), 1 April 1948.
[67] Security Council resolution 43 (1948), 1 April 1948.
[68] Lie to Gerhardsen, 5 April 1948, PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN.
[69] The story is recounted in Waage, *Da staten Israel ble til*, 142-43.
[70] Lie to Stoneman, 22 June 1948, PA-1407-D-L0013, NAN.
[71] General Assembly resolution 186 (S-2), 14 May 1948.

matters into its own hands and declared the State of Israel independent. The next day Egypt informed the United Nations that it had sent forces into Palestine to prevent the establishment of the Jewish state. This marked the inception of the first Arab-Israeli war, and represented a new phase in the UN's involvement with Palestine.

## 5.5 Persuading the Security Council to take forceful action: May 1948

Faced with the Arab invasion of Palestine, Lie increased his efforts to persuade the Security Council to take forceful action. In Lie's opinion, the Palestine problem had become a full-blown international war, which clearly constituted a threat to international peace and security. It was the first time since the signing of the UN Charter that any state had openly declared its deployment of armed forces into another territory. The Arab states' explicit purpose, moreover, was to prevent the UN partition plan from being fulfilled. The secretary-general viewed the attack on Palestine as an attack on the credibility of the organisation itself, compelling the Security Council to either act, or risk enduring damage to the UN's reputation. "A failure of the Security Council to act under these circumstances can only result in the most serious injury to the prestige of the UN and the hopes for its future effectiveness in keeping the peace elsewhere in the world," wrote Lie in a letter to the permanent five.[72]

Even before the invasion Lie had ordered an examination of the option of invoking Article 99 to bring the issue to the attention of the Security Council himself, and the Secretariat had dutifully prepared a formal letter which the secretary-general could send to the Council.[73] Just as with his earlier draft statements, however, the secretary-general held back to see whether the Security Council, and in particular the

[72] Lie letter to the permanent members of Security Council, 16 May 1948, reprinted in Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 178-79.
[73] Feller to Lie with attached memorandum by Stavropoluos, "Powers of the Secretary-General under Article 99," 3 May 1948, and Stavropoulos to Lie with draft letter by Feller, 5 May 1948, both in PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN.

United States, would act on its own, as "it would be wiser to let [the United States] have the public initiative."[74] In its 15 May meeting, the Council had yet to reach conclusion, and Lie decided to redouble his efforts. He sent a private letter to the permanent five and also despatched his representatives, Commander Robert Jackson, assistant secretary-general, and Andrew Cordier, the secretary-general's executive assistant, to the British and US delegations to implore them to take urgent action to halt the Arab aggression and restore the UN's authority.[75] At the next Council meeting on 17 May the secretary-general's efforts came to fruition, as the US representative called the situation in Palestine "a threat to the peace and a breach of the peace within the meaning of Article 39 of the Charter," and introduced an American draft resolution.[76] The secretary-general's actions were so influential that US officials felt the need to (humorously) point out "that the Secretary-General should not take too much credit for what had happened that day." To this Cordier "facetiously retorted that in this kind of work it is rather dangerous for anyone to take credit less later events fly back into our faces," and pointed out that events had certainly moved faster than earlier suggested by the Americans.[77] It is thus fair to state that secretary-general Lie succeeded in persuading the Council to move towards taking forceful action on Palestine, and, correspondingly, addressing the twin tests to solve the conflict and create unity among the great powers. Lie's initiatives on the matter, however, did not end there.

During his consultations Lie noted sharp disagreements between the United States and Britain, and he decided to take it upon himself to mediate these tensions so that the two Western powers could act together to bring peace to Palestine. For this

[74] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 174-75.
[75] Jackson memo, "Notes on a conversation with Sir Alexander Cadogan at 6:45 p.m., 16th May 1948," PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN; Cadogan to FO, 17 May 1948, FO 371/68553, UKNA; Lie, *Syv år for freden*, 159-62.
[76] SCOR, 3rd year, 293rd mtg., 17 May 1948.
[77] "Contacts made by Mr. Cordier with State Department officials with regard to the Palestine issue 15-17 May 1948," PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN, and box 130, folder 7, CCC.

reason, Lie went to see the British ambassador, Sir Alexander Cadogan, on 18 May, "to pour out his heart to [him] about his discouragement at the prospects of the United Nations." Palestine was just the latest episode in what Lie considered "to be the progressive decline of the United Nations since its inception."[78] The secretary-general also sent Jackson to London to elicit the Foreign Office's views, and ask for guidance as to what the secretary-general could do to help. In a memorandum Jackson provided to the British while in London, he described the concerns of the secretary-general:

> If effective action cannot be taken quickly to deal with the situation in the Middle East, the Secretary-General fears (i) a spread of armed intervention in the Middle Eastern area; (ii) possible repercussions in Kashmir, Indonesia and the Balkans following clear proof of the ineffectiveness of the Security Council; (iii) grave reactions on U.K./U.S. relations; (iv) the beginning of the end of the United Nations.[79]

In London most officials dismissed Lie, although some admitted that he "is probably more acutely aware of the effect of a complete failure in Palestine on the prestige of the United Nations than anybody else."[80] Overall, the British diplomats felt Lie was "misguided as to his proper powers and functions ... but Lie has always dreamed of playing a dramatic individual part in international affairs."[81] Back in New York Lie also attempted to solidify his position with the Americans, dining with Secretary of State George Marshall and the American UN ambassador on 25 May.[82] At this stage, Lie's efforts to mediate between the United States and Britain did not lead to further cooperation between the two Western powers on Palestine.[83]

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[78] Cadogan to FO, 19 May 1948, FO371/72676, UKNA.
[79] [Jackson] memo, [21 May] 1948, FO 371/72676, UKNA.
[80] Jebb minute, 21 May 1948, FO371/72676, UKNA.
[81] Cadogan to Jebb, 27 May 1948, FO 371/72676, UKNA.
[82] See Marshall to Lie, 21 May 1948, and Henderson memo to Marshall, 25 May 1948, *FRUS 1948*, V, 1018, 1044-1045, and Urquhart, "Points from Commander Jackson," [25] May 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[83] Britain and the United States decided to work together later in the summer in response to the UN mediator's first proposal, and there were rumours at the time that Bernadotte's second plan had been drafted by, or at least heavily influenced by, the two Western powers, which later turned out to be unfounded. See Mordechai Gazit, "American and British Diplomacy and the Bernadotte Mission," *The Historical Journal* 29, no. 3 (1986).

Irrespective of Lie's attempts to bring about greater Anglo-American cooperation, the Security Council continued its Palestine discussions and on 29 May called for a truce and an arms embargo, and provided the mediator and the Truce Commission[84] with military observers to supervise compliance with the cease-fire. The Council also threatened further action "under Chapter VII of the Charter" if either party failed to accept the resolution or later violated it.[85] In terms of practically negotiating the truce and coordinating its supervision, the Security Council largely allowed the mediator to run the field. Count Folke Bernadotte, the president of the Swedish Red Cross, accepted appointment as the UN mediator on 21 May.[86] Together with Bunche, as the secretary-general's representative, Bernadotte quickly negotiated an agreement on a four-week truce to start on 11 June.

## 5.6 Recruiting a UN armed guard: Summer 1948

The second part of Lie's strategy for implementing partition of Palestine and thus meeting the UN's crucial tests was the establishment of an international armed force. In June, the secretary-general decided that the time had come to go public with his proposal for a designated UN force, and for its launch he chose the same venue where the Marshall Plan had been announced a year earlier.[87] On 10 June 1948, in a commencement speech at Harvard University, Lie began by speaking in general terms about the problems of the United Nations caused by the Cold War, and of the failure of the Military Staff Committee to reach an agreement on the forces to be made available under Article 43 of the Charter. He then observed that even a small force could have been useful, suggesting "a beginning could be made now through the establishment of a

[84] The members of the Truce Commission were the United States, France, and Belgium; the three states (apart from Britain) that had consulates in Jerusalem.
[85] Security Council resolution 50 (1948), 29 May 1948.
[86] Lie to Bernadotte, 21 May 1948, box 5, folder 4, UCB.
[87] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 98.

comparatively small guard force, as distinct from a striking force."[88] Lie and his advisors felt that the absence of UN forces had "hampered the work of the Security Council and diminished the prestige of the Organization."[89] Following the Harvard speech, the secretary-general and Secretariat finalised a proposal for an armed UN guard and informally circulated it amongst the member states. They suggested a force of 1,000-5,000 men, largely drawn from smaller member states, to be recruited by the secretary-general and placed at the disposal of the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Trusteeship Council. The proposal also emphasised that "even more important than the practical usefulness of such a Guard would be the fact that it would symbolize the authority of the United Nations in troubled areas of the world," and could help counteract the growing doubts of the international public regarding the abilities of the United Nations, as "the provision of even a very modest Guard force would give people the feeling that the United Nations was being given strength to fulfill its purposes."[90] Creating a UN force would thus have directly supported Lie's overlapping goals. Lie believed it could have helped implement partition in Palestine specifically, as well as provide the United Nations with a general means of enforcement. Both were important if the United Nations was to meet its tests, and prove that it could resolve regional conflicts and maintain international peace and security.

Over the summer of 1948, Lie's proposal for a UN guard, somewhat inevitably, became tangled up with developments on the ground in Palestine, leading the United States to repeatedly feel the need to remind Lie not to confuse the question of armed

[88] See text of speech in pamphlet "Call for a United Nations Force: by Trygve Lie, Secretary General: Text of the Secretary-General's address to the Harvard Alumni Association on June 10, 1948," available in PA-1407/D/L0018, NAN, and box 111, folder 5, CCC.
[89] Feller memo, "United Nations Guard," 3 June 1948, available in PA-1407/D/L0018, NAN, and box 111, folder 6, CCC.
[90] "Proposed United Nations Guard: Memorandum by the Secretary-General," 21 June 1948. Several copies of this memo (and its attachments) can be found in PA-1407/D/L0018, NAN, and in box 111, folder 6, CCC.

guards for Palestine with his "pet project" for a UN "palace guard."[91] The mediator had already recruited unarmed truce observers: soldiers on loan from the three members of the Truce Commission. This was unproblematic and covered by the Security Council resolution mandating the mediator to establish and supervise a truce.[92] These truce supervisors, soon to be organised as the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO) – a UN mission that remains in operation today – became the basis for the later development of UN peacekeeping.[93] UN plans for Palestine also included provisions for the internationalisation of Jerusalem, and the mediator's first step was to negotiate the demilitarisation of the city. To that end, on 19 June, Bernadotte asked the secretary-general to provide him with 1,000 armed guards to keep peace and order in Jerusalem following the conclusion of an agreement.[94] Jackson had already suggested to the secretary-general that Jerusalem would be an effective pretext to arrange for his UN guard:

> I do not under-estimate the difficulties of creating this force - but if you, as Secretary-General, could in fact become the saviour of Jerusalem I believe that the effect on the world as a whole would be electrifying, and the prestige of the United Nations would be vastly increased.[95]

But would the secretary-general have the authority to recruit such armed guards for Jerusalem? Surprisingly, Lie argued that he did not possess the requisite authority, and asked Bernadotte to take his request directly to the Security Council.[96] The United States, in contrast, argued that Lie had all the authority he needed, stating it would be

[91] McClintok memo to Rusk, 1 July 1948; Marshall to Jessup, 23 June 1948, *FRUS 1948*, V, 1171-1179, 1138-1139.
[92] Security Council resolution 50 (1948), 29 May 1948.
[93] See http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/untso/ (accessed 07.02.14). See also Pelcovits, *Long Armistice*.
[94] Bernadotte to Lie, 19 June 1948, PA-1407/D/L0024, NAN. The editors of FRUS claimed the request was made on 20 June. See Editorial note, *FRUS 1948*, V, 1138.
[95] Jackson to Lie, 10 June 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[96] Lie to Bernadotte, 22-24 June 1948, S-0615-0001-01, UNA; Marshall to Jessup, 23 June 1948, *FRUS 1948*, V, 1138-1139.

"wise that this be a UN effort under the responsibility and powers of the SYG."[97] Lie's hesitation may well have stemmed from the costs involved in recruiting a large armed force, for as Jackson wrote later in the summer, (thereby inadvertently undermining Lie's entire idea of a UN armed force):

> It would obviously be much more economical for governments to lend detachments which could then be withdrawn when not needed rather than that the United Nations should organize such a force and its line of supply. The cost of mobilizing, training and the[n] demobilizing such a force would be much more expensive than the alternative of governments lending regular detachments.[98]

That said, Lie was comfortable with providing the mediator with a small force of 50 guards, which were sent as early as 20 June. These were volunteers from the guards normally employed at UN headquarters in New York,[99] and were thus already on Lie's payroll prior to their mission in Palestine. In the end, as the two sides failed to reach an agreement on the demilitarisation of the city, no guards for Jerusalem were ever provided.

In 1948 Lie put his UN guard proposal, as well as Bernadotte's last report, on the agenda of the General Assembly. Bernadotte himself was killed in Jerusalem on 17 September, and Bunche took over as acting mediator. The General Assembly reached no decision on Bernadotte's report, except to establish the Palestine Conciliation Commission to continue the work of negotiating a settlement between Israel and the Arab states.[100] On the issue of the UN guard, the General Assembly decided to refer the question to yet another committee due to report back to the 1949 session. In his memoirs, Lie called the UN guard proposal a "positive by-product of the Palestine

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[97] Marshall to Jessup, 23 June 1948; Marshall to Jessup, 28 June 1948, *FRUS 1948*, V, 1138-1139, 1155-1156.
[98] Jackson to Bernadotte, 22 July 1948, S-0615-0001-02, UNA, and box 130, folder 7, CCC.
[99] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 187-88.
[100] General Assembly resolution 194(III), 11 December 1948. The three members of this commission were France, Turkey, and the United States. See also Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy, Vol. 3*; Stian Johansen Tiller and Hilde Henriksen Waage, "Powerful State, Powerless Mediator: The United States and the Peace Efforts of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, 1949–51," *The International History Review* 33, no. 3 (2011).

experience." Although the end result, the United Nations Field Service, was "not at all what [he] had originally intended," it did conduct useful work in transportation, communication, and guarding UN premises.[101] Today, this branch of the Secretariat is called the Department of Field Support.[102]

During 1949 secretary-general Lie gradually stepped back from the Palestine problem. The acting UN mediator, Bunche, negotiated armistice agreements between Israel and Egypt (signed 24 February), Lebanon (23 March), Transjordan (3 April), and Syria (20 July), thus containing the Arab-Israeli conflict.[103] Following the conclusion of these armistice agreements, Israel was admitted to the United Nations on 11 May 1949,[104] a decision strongly supported by the UN secretary-general. In Lie's opinion Israel had to be admitted to the United Nations to ensure consistency in the UN's policies. The state had been established as the result of a UN resolution, and the UN could not now abandon it "on the doorstep."[105] With this granting of membership, the United Nations essentially legitimated the new status quo in the Middle East, despite the discrepancies between the new situation and the original plan of action. During the latter half of 1948, the Palestine problem was essentially redefined into the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine refugee problem, and three new UN organisations – the Palestine Conciliation Commission, UNTSO, and UNRWA – were established to manage the attendant day-to-day issues. This left the secretary-general and the Security Council free to move on to other, seemingly more pressing issues, including the Berlin blockade and the conflicts in Indonesia and on the Indian subcontinent.

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[101] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 192-93.
[102] See http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/about/dfs/ (accessed 07.02.14).
[103] See Caplan, "A Tale of Two Cities."; Waage, "The Winner Takes All."; Jensehaugen and Waage, "Coercive Diplomacy."; Elad Ben-Dror, "The Armistice Talks between Israel and Jordan, 1949: The View from Rhodes," *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 6 (2012).
[104] See Heian-Engdal, Jensehaugen, and Waage, "'Finishing the Enterprise'."
[105] "Address by Secretary-General Trygve Lie at the American Association for the United Nations Dinner in Honour of Dr. Ralph J. Bunche," 9 May 1949, PA-1407/D/L0017, NAN.

## 5.7 Conclusion

When preparing to publish his memoirs in 1953, Lie gave the following assessment of his own role in Palestine:

> My role in Palestine was impartial, but not detached. The issue was too passionate, the human tragedy too great, the challenge to the United Nations too grave, to admit detachment. I threw the weight of my office and my efforts behind the Organization's decision to partition Palestine. I did so with such ardor and constancy that my activity gave rise to charges of bias in the Israeli favor. I think I can reply that I acted consistently and honorably in favor of the ideals and integrity of the United Nations alone.[106]

Although leading scholars on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict have disputed this assessment and claimed that Lie's actions evidenced a pro-Zionist bias, this chapter has provided evidence to the contrary. Lie may well have been pro-Zionist, but there is insufficient documentation to substantiate this as the main motivation for his actions. Instead, following an examination of Lie's actions and statements on Palestine in relation to his long-term goals for the UN organisation and the office of the secretary-general, this chapter concludes that the secretary-general's actions were consistent with his own self-assessment that he had acted to defend the integrity of the United Nations.

From the moment the Palestine problem appeared on the UN agenda in 1947, secretary-general Lie viewed it as a crucial test of the UN's abilities. As argued in this chapter the Palestine problem presented three 'tests' for the United Nations. It was a test of its ability to solve regional conflicts, its ability to create unity among the great powers, and the secretary-general's ability to protect and promote the UN organisation. Palestine was a regional conflict that developed into an international war, thus presenting an obvious test of the UN's ability to perform its mandate to maintain international peace and security. In this sense, Palestine offered a test of the UN's capacity to implement its proposals for a solution to the primary conflict between Jews

[106] Lie draft, "Palestine challenge – and my response," PA-1407/D/L0020, NAN.

and Arabs, as well as challenging its ability to effectively contain the fighting (and punish the aggressors) after the outbreak of international war in May 1948. In Lie's opinion, the UN organisation passed this test. From 1949 onwards, the secretary-general would continue to view Palestine as an example of a UN success story,[107] a view shared by others at the time, as evidenced by the decision to award the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize to Ralph Bunche in recognition of his part in negotiating armistice agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbours.[108] In light of our knowledge of the more than six decades of fighting in the Middle East that were to follow the events of 1948, and the continued struggle of the Palestinian people for its own independent state, today the accuracy of this view is called into question.

In relation to the second test posed by the Palestine problem, that of the UN's ability to unite the great powers for the common good, Lie similarly assessed Palestine a success. As it was not yet a Cold War issue, Lie believed the conflict in Palestine to be an excellent choice for his purposes. Lie believed that if the United States and the Soviet Union could work together towards a solution to the Palestine problem within the UN framework, this might have a positive psychological effect on both sides. The emerging Cold War conflict between East and West was *the* major challenge of Lie's period as secretary-general, as the next chapter will go on to explore. Though the battles between the great powers, inside and outside the Security Council, made the secretary-general's job more difficult, Lie continued to hold out hope that a working relationship between the two sides could be maintained, and a Third World War prevented. The secretary-general stated his belief that his main task was "to keep the machinery

[107] See for example "Address by Secretary-General Trygve Lie at Annual Convention of Rotary International," 14 June 1949, and "Tale av Generalsekretær Trygve Lie, Bergen, Norway," 8 August 1949, PA-1407/D/L0017, NAN.
[108] See http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1950/ (accessed 26.10.14).

going,"[109] and to work toward stabilising the situation so that the two sides might come "to understand each other better and have more respect for each other than now."[110] In the short-term, with regard to Palestine, the secretary-general's goal was to ensure that the great powers would work in unity in the Security Council, and once the Council adopted resolutions to condemn the fighting in Palestine, this goal was reached. Yet as with Lie's assessment of the UN's success in relation to the first test, his assessment of a success in bringing the great power together must also be closely questioned. Although the United States and the Soviet Union did work together to pass a large number of Security Council resolutions on Palestine in 1948, this concord quickly ended. The 16 resolutions (of a total of 29) in 1948 would be followed by only 3 (of a total of 12) in 1949, with one of them the recommendation of Israeli UN membership. The number of Council resolutions would remain low throughout the balance of the Cold War.[111] The apparent understanding between East and West in Palestine did not transfer into a general agreement to end the Cold War, as the secretary-general had hoped. Indeed, only a year after Israel's admission to the United Nations, the organisation would be faced with an even more challenging test as the United States and the Soviet Union faced off in the Korean War, as the next chapter will show.

Lastly, in taking on the Palestine problem with such enthusiasm, Lie also implicitly set himself a test of the secretary-general's abilities to maintain the coherence and prestige of the organisation. Although, in our assessment, when considered from a long-term perspective, the United Nations failed the two tests Lie identified, the secretary-general himself actually succeeded in his task. Through his active stance on the Palestine problem, secretary-general Lie took important strides towards carving out

[109] Lie to Johan Falkberget, 30 Nov 1947, Brevs. 434, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[110] Lie to Johan Bech-Friis, 18 Feb 1947, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[111] All numbers on Security Council resolutions taken from http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions.html (accessed 19.06.12).

a space for an active secretary-general in both the UN organisation and international politics in general. This was one case where Lie clearly 'pushed' to expand the UN secretary-general's role and to inject his office into all areas of UN activity on Palestine. The secretary-general we met in this chapter was confident about the role the United Nations should play in the world, and his own place within the organisation. To reach his goals, Lie was not afraid to push and prod the great powers in the Security Council. He also openly advised member states on what policies to vote for and what to do to implement those policies. Even though some states disagreed with the course of action Lie advised, they accepted that he could have such opinions and advocate them, and that his concern for the organisation's performance on this issue was legitimate. The secretary-general's actions here were clearly those of an 'equal' to the Council and the great powers; he was one of the actors on the stage, and the others accepted him as one of them. The secretary-general's primary emphasis throughout the UN's involvement with the Palestine problem was the coherence of the organisation. He did his utmost to ensure the implementation of the UN's policies, and their continuity across the various UN organs involved in the process. Lie, as the first UN secretary-general, was an institution-builder, and his ultimate concern was to ensure the survival and, if possible, growth of the organisation he led.

Another matter this chapter touched on was the role of media and public opinion, as well as the secretary-general's use of public versus private initiatives. Lie tried to balance his private and public roles, and exploit them both to reach his ultimate goal. Recognising that the voice of the permanent members carried more weight in the Security Council than that of the secretary-general (they have a right of veto), he sought in private to urge them to take the public initiative. But when things moved too slowly, as happened to Lie's proposal for a UN guard, he sought to rally public support by

giving speeches and handing information to journalists. Just by talking to the media, much less trying to use the press and public opinion to his advantage, the UN secretary-general had moved a long way from the purely behind-the-scenes approach of the League of Nations secretary-general. The UN secretary-general's role as an 'advocate' and his use of the 'bully pulpit' is an issue we will return to in chapter 7.

Lastly, this chapter dealt with Lie's proposal for an armed UN force. The secretary-general's urging for such a force fits in as part of his overriding concern with the coherence of the organisation. In order to implement the UN's policies in the face of violent opposition, an armed force would be needed for enforcement and to protect the agents of the organisation in their work. This issue also raised interesting questions about the authority of the secretary-general vis-à-vis the Security Council and the General Assembly. Would he have the authority to recruit such armed guards himself? As suggested earlier in the chapter, this may well have been a question of budgets and finances, because the secretary-general has no independent source of income. The General Assembly must approve the organisation's budget, and it is up to states to foot their share of the bill (which they don't always do). This debate about a UN guard, as well as the provision of truce supervisors in UNTSO, point forward to the later establishment of UN peacekeeping after Suez in 1956.

Lie's own words from a press conference after Bunche had concluded the armistice negotiations between Israel and Egypt in February 1949 provide a fitting end to this chapter:

> This achievement is a good example of the kind of influence the United Nations is best fitted to exercise during the present severe tension in the world – that is, to act as a mediating and conciliating influence for peace ... Conciliation, mediation and compromise are slow work, but they are – in the long run – the only firm foundation of a peaceful world ... I think all who believe in the achievement of real peace throughout the world – and especially all who believe in working for a peaceful settlement of the conflict between the Great Powers –

> should take heart from what has been accomplished by mediation and conciliation on the Island of Rhodes.[112]

UN mediation between Israel and the Arab states had registered its first success with the conclusion of the armistice agreements, and proven that the United Nations could play an important role in regional conflict resolution. Could the United Nations also achieve the same success with mediation on the global level to overcome the Cold War? As the next chapter will show, secretary-general Lie was not afraid to try, and just as he had hoped to bring East and West together over Palestine, he sought to mediate tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union on a whole host of other issues.

[112] Transcript of secretary-general's press conference, 25 February 1949, UNDHL. Lie also quoted from this press conference in his memoirs, Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 192.

# 6 Mediating Member State Conflict: The UN Secretary-General and the Cold War, 1946-1950

"There is a dramatic and gigantic battle between East and West ongoing … My motto is still: Patience. My main task is to keep the machinery going. I should be content as long as I have Mr. Vyshinsky and Mr. Marshall sitting around the green table at Lake Success."[1]

Trygve Lie, November 1947

## 6.1 Introduction

Trygve Lie had barely held the office of UN secretary-general for a month, when Winston Churchill, Britain's wartime prime minister, declared the descent of the 'iron curtain' from Fulton, Missouri, on 5 March 1946. The conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies – commonly known as the 'Cold War' – was to become the defining feature of international politics for the next four decades. The Security Council held its first meeting on 17 January 1946 in London and come February it was already embroiled in heated debates over the slow withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran and the presence of British troops in Greece. In Lie's own words; "The hard realities of world politics intruded. Like gusts of wind warning of future storms to come, they blew in the door of the new-built house of peace before the workmen had finished."[2] But what was the newly elected UN secretary-general to do in such a situation? How did the emerging superpower conflict impede or facilitate the development of the secretary-general's political role?

Within scholarship on the UN secretary-general a common observation is that the end of the Cold War opened new opportunities, allowing Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan to play more active roles than their Cold War predecessors, particularly in

[1] Lie to Johan Falkberget, 30 Nov 1947, Brevs. 434, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[2] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 28.

the area of norm entrepreneurship.[3] Yet despite the constraints imposed by the Cold War, some UN scholars have also highlighted the way the Cold War paradoxically provided opportunities for the secretary-general, because it made Security Council agreement more elusive and allowed the secretary-general to balance the superpowers against each other.[4] Although this literature recognises that the Cold War could be both constraining and empowering, few have undertaken in-depth studies of the mechanism behind this development.

There is a large and growing (English-language) literature on the history of the Cold War. The first books and articles published from the 1950s tended to put the blame for the Cold War squarely on the Soviet Union. In the traditionalist view, the Soviet Union pursued expansionist policies, and the United States had had no choice but to try to defend itself and its allies from the Communist threat. During the 1970s the first revisionist accounts appeared. Some of them were inspired by Marxist thinking, and all were affected by the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement in the United States. Their version of the story did therefore, unsurprisingly, put the largest share of the blame on the United States and its expansionist and aggressive policies. Both traditionalists and revisionists focused on the actions and reactions of the two superpowers and put primary emphasis on the political, military, ideological, and economic competition between the two. Today the majority of Cold War historians can best be described as post-revisionists. This approach started in the 1980s and gained momentum with the opening of archival sources from both Western and Eastern states. Post-revisionists are more attentive to cultural and cognitive factors, and the

[3] Johnstone, "Secretary-General as norm entrepreneur."; Rushton, "UN Secretary-General and Norm Entrepreneurship."
[4] Newman, "Secretary-General."; Chesterman, "Introduction."; James Cockayne and David M. Malone, "Relations with the Security Council," ibid.

independent influence of small and middle-sized states.[5] Among post-revisionist works we therefore find several emphasising the role of Britain, China, or other states.[6] Within the post-revisionist school there is also room to explore the role of international institutions and non-state actors,[7] and Gaiduk has written just such a book on the United Nations.[8] But apart from Gaiduk's book, few Cold War historians have focused on the independent role of the United Nations, let alone the UN secretary-general.

The specific events being discussed in this chapter have of course been examined by scholars writing about Lie or the early history of the United Nations.[9] There is also a vast literature on the Berlin blockade[10] and the Korean War,[11] two important events in this chapter. Philip Jessup, an American diplomat who played a central role in the negotiations at the United Nations during the Berlin blockade, has

[5] For more on Cold War historiography see Odd Arne Westad, "The Cold War and the international history of the twentieth century," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume 1: Origins*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); John Lamberton Harper, *The Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 83-89.
[6] Anne Deighton, ed. *Britain and the First Cold War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); Sean Greenwood, *Britain and the Cold War, 1945-1991* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Jian Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Odd Arne Westad, ed. *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998); Geir Lundestad, *America, Scandinavia, and the Cold War, 1945-1949* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).
[7] Matthew Evangelista, "Transnational Organizations and the Cold War," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume 3: Endings*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[8] Gaiduk, *Divided Together*.
[9] Luard, *History of the United Nations*; Barros, *Trygve Lie*; Gaglione, *United Nations under Trygve Lie*.
[10] Daniel F. Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink: The Blockade, the Airlift, and the Early Cold War* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2012); Wolfgang J. Huschke, *Candy Bombers : The Berlin Airlift 1948/49, The Technical Conditions and Their Successful Transformation* (Berlin, DEU: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag GmbH, 2011); Avi Shlaim, *The United States and the Berlin Blockade, 1948-1949: A Study in Crisis Decision-Making* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
[11] William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Callum MacDonald, *Britain and the Korean War* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Peter Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies Towards Japan, China and Korea, 1948-1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War, and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

published two articles with his account,[12] and likewise some scholars have examined the negotiations at the United Nations during the Korean War,[13] but otherwise the actions of the United Nations and its secretary-general are largely unexplored.[14] This chapter will therefore be making a contribution to the literature by emphasising the actions and initiatives of UN secretary-general Lie in relation to Berlin, Korea, and the Cold War in general.

This chapter explores how Lie as UN secretary-general sought to deal with conflicts between the member states, and how his role's scope and autonomy expanded as a result of it. It argues that Lie's actions were largely shaped by the institutional position of the UN secretary-general. The secretary-general, more than any other actor within the UN, 'represents' the UN overall. He can be described as a 'guardian' of the UN Charter and its principles and values. Therefore the secretary-general has a duty to protect and defend the organisation and its Charter. Lie clearly adopted this view from the moment he was elected, and based on this he would take action when he perceived a threat against the organisation. The Cold War posed an existential threat to the United Nations. Not only was there a dire chance that the two sides might end up going to war against each other, but there was also an ever-present risk that one side (usually the USSR) might decide to leave the organisation altogether, thus condemning it to irrelevance. The secretary-general therefore sought as best he could to counter these dangers.

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[12] Philip C. Jessup, "The Berlin Blockade and the Use of the United Nations," *Foreign Affairs* 50, no. 1 (1971); Philip C. Jessup, "Park Avenue Diplomacy--Ending the Berlin Blockade," *Political Science Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (1972).

[13] Robert Barnes, *The US, the UN and the Korean War: Communism in the Far East and the American Struggle for Hegemony in the Cold War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014); Denis Stairs, "The United Nations and the Politics of the Korean War," *International Journal* 25, no. 2 (1969-1970).

[14] One exception is a conference paper by Robert Barnes, "The UN Secretary-General and the Korean War" (paper presented at the "UN and the Post-War Global Order: Dumbarton Oaks in Perspective after 70 years", Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 17 May 2014).

Three distinct strategies can be derived from the secretary-general's duty to protect the United Nations. The first can be called a 'bridge-building' policy: when the secretary-general mediates and negotiates between the two sides, seeking to ease tensions and differences between them, and overall to preserve the unity of the United Nations. A side-effect of the bridge-building strategy is that it tends to expand the scope and autonomy of the secretary-general, both as the secretary-general himself 'pushes' to take the initiative or have his opinion heard, and because he will be 'pulled' into situations because 'someone' needs to do 'something.' During the Cold War, because the member states were unable to agree on common policies, this 'vacuum effect' operated to expand the scope and autonomy of the UN secretary-general's role. In this way, the context of the Cold War facilitated the expansion of the secretary-general's role. A second strategy in extension of the secretary-general's concern to 'keep the machinery going,' is his emphasis on seeking co-operation on 'non-political' or 'smaller' issues, in the hope that agreement on something might inspire agreement on bigger and more difficult questions. This strategy could also be discerned in Lie's activities in relation to Palestine, as discussed in the previous chapter. Lastly, because of the secretary-general's duty to protect the UN Charter, he will often have to take a stand on principle, even if this means siding with or against parties to a dispute. This balance is very difficult to thread, and the secretary-general must be careful how he does this, or the member states will no longer perceive him as impartial and legitimate.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first examines secretary-general Lie's initial conception of the Cold War in 1946, and his views on the role of the secretary-general in relation to it. As chapter 2 explained, the post-holder possesses considerable autonomy in the act of interpreting what his/her role dictates, and Lie's views on the Cold War are therefore relevant to understand the effects of this conflict on

the development of the secretary-general's role. The second part looks at Lie's reactions to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan in 1947, and explores his attempts to reconcile these developments with the UN's purpose and framework. The third section examines the secretary-general's actions and initiatives on the Berlin Blockade of 1948-1949, an instance where Lie took the initiative to mediate conflicts between the member states. Lastly, the fourth section examines the secretary-general's enthusiastic support for the US-led UN-intervention in Korea in the summer of 1950, which he saw as taking a stand on principle in defence of the UN Charter.

## 6.2 Lie's 'Cold War' strategy

The United Nations was founded on the assumption that the great powers – the three (later five) victors of WW2 – would continue to cooperate to maintain international peace and security. Unfortunately for the UN and its new secretary-general, even during the UN's first months of operation, "conflicts between the great powers [were] increasing rather than diminishing."[15] Lie was conscious from the start of the dangers posed to the United Nations from the growing conflict between East and West, and already in his first annual report on the work of the organisation took the opportunity to urge great power unity;

> I should be failing in my duty, in presenting this report, if I did not emphasize the absolute necessity that the Powers should seek agreement among themselves, in a spirit of mutual understanding and a will to compromise, and not abandon their effort until such agreement has been reached.[16]

As foreign minister of Norway during the war Lie had been a strong advocate for great power cooperation, and corresponding great powers responsibilities and special rights. In a November 1941 article in *the Times*, he set out his views on the need for post-war

[15] Lie to Rolf Andvord, 7 June 1946, PA-1407-D-L0006, NAN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[16] Lie, Introduction, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization," UN doc. A/65, 30 June 1946.

cooperation in the economic and political realm, and argued that "the most important basis for extended international cooperation in the future is an amicable relationship between the British Empire, the United States, Soviet Russia, and China."[17] During the San Francisco Conference and the first General Assembly session he continued to defend giving the right of veto to the permanent members of the Council because of their special responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and security.[18] Lie's views on these problems matter, because they influenced the way he interpreted his role as UN secretary-general.

The growing Cold War conflict made the position of the secretary-general even more exposed than it would have been otherwise. "I'm in the middle of a hell of a job," he wrote during the winter of 1946-47. "What is happening is a massive tug o' war between the two large victors … over markets and political and economical spheres of interest."[19] He reported that "I have had a damned difficult time ... I have seen much evil and have, of course, made many enemies both here in the US and in Britain."[20] Lie was convinced that his duty as secretary-general demanded that he should voice his opinions on matters before the organisation. Often the great powers would disagree among themselves on those issues. In Lie's opinion, "all three are making mistakes," and he would often tell them so. But because "all three assume that those who are not with them, are against them ... when I, as you'll easily understand, often disagree with one or more of the great powers in nearly every case, my work becomes of little significance."[21] Lie would sometimes get the impression that "they would prefer to do

[17] Trygve Lie, "A Community of Nations - Plans for a Lasting Peace after Victory - The Bancruptcy of Neutrality," *The Times* (London), 14 Nov 1941.
[18] *UNCIO*, verbatim minutes, 8th plenary session, 2 May 1945. Reprinted in Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 25-28.; GAOR, 1st session, 9th plenary mtg, 16 Jan 1946.
[19] Lie to Johan Bech-Friis, 18 Feb 1947, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[20] Lie to Hans Amundsen, 23 Nov 1946, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[21] Lie to Rolf Andvord, 7 June 1946, PA-1407-D-L0006, NAN. Author's translation from Norwegian.

the job alone,"[22] but his vision for the United Nations and opinions about the duties of the secretary-general would not allow him to play such a passive role. "I have not allowed myself to be diverted, nor to be persuaded or pressured to do something I don't think is right. Many have attempted, but I'll rather fight than give in."[23]

The specific task he saw for himself as secretary-general was to work as a negotiator and mediator who would seek to build bridges between the two sides. In his first annual report he admonished both sides to failing to cooperate, explaining that it was his duty to tell them.

> As the Preparatory Commission foresaw, the Secretary-General in certain circumstances must speak for the Organization as a whole. It is with a deep sense of responsibility that I appeal to the Members of the United Nations, and more especially to those Powers which have special rights and obligations under the Charter, to ponder the dangers to which I have called attention and to exert every effort to overcome them.[24]

Despite the growing dangers, Lie still believed that "this balance of power can be stabilised," and that" both sides will get so nervous about going to war, that we'll have peace for many, many years ahead ... This is what I'm working for," he concluded. [25]

The task of being a 'bridge-builder' bears striking similarities to the role he argued for the small powers before he took office as secretary-general. As Norwegian foreign minister at the General Assembly in London he set out the duty of small states, because they "are disinterested in many political disputes," to "aim at making a sincere contribution to the mutual understanding and confidence of the Great Powers. The good neighbour policy should be the basis of their relations with great and small Powers alike."[26] This indicates that the secretary-general's natural allies in his battle to create unity among the great powers would be the small and medium sized states. Another

[22] Lie to Arthur Guinness, 7 June 1946, Brevs. 410, NLN.
[23] Lie to Thormod Knutsen, 20 June 1946, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[24] Lie, Introduction, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization," UN doc. A/65, 30 June 1946.
[25] Lie to Johan Bech-Friis, 18 Feb 1947, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[26] GAOR, 1st session, 9th plenary mtg, 16 Jan 1946.

natural ally was the world's peoples, whose natural interests were for peace and cooperation.[27]

Although the situation was difficult, Lie did not give up hope that the conflicts could be solved and better working conditions for the United Nations secured. In public and in private he continued to argue that an actual war between the two sides was unlikely: "All concerned are, I think, too war-weary for that to happen, so we must go on living in the hope that reason will win through."[28] Hope itself was an important tool for the secretary-general. He lectured to Norwegian students in Oslo in February on the need to be optimistic, because "the work of the United Nations cannot be advanced without idealism, trust and faith," and quoted from Fridtjof Nansen to the effect that nothing is impossible if everyone wants to achieve it.[29] Lie also tried to argue that the 'airing of different views' in itself was good, and what was to be expected in a parliamentary system.[30] Overall, he decided he would have to try as best he could to keep the machinery of the United Nations going. "The important thing is to keep going."[31] "I should be content as long as I have Mr Vyshinsky and Mr Marshall sitting around the green table out at Lake Success."[32] For, after all, "as long as we sit and talk together, at least there'll be no war."[33]

## 6.3 The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, 1947

By early 1947 the Cold War was clearly under way, and the secretary-general had been caught in the middle of it. The United States' Cold War policy would get its expression

[27] Lie speech to American Association of the United Nations, 25 Oct 1946, PA-1407/D/L0024, NAN.
[28] Lie to Arthur Guinness, 7 June 1946, Brevs. 410, NLN.
[29] Lie address to the Norwegian Students' Association in Oslo, 27 Feb 1946, PA-1407/D/L0024, NAN.
[30] Lie address on Norwegian radio, 22 Oct 1946, http://www.nrk.no/skole/klippdetalj?topic=nrk:klipp/796134 (accessed 08.05.13); Lie to Johan Falkberget, 17 Sept 1946, Brevs. 434, NLN.
[31] Lie to Rolf Andvord, 7 June 1946, PA-1407-D-L0006, NAN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[32] Lie to Johan Falkberget, 30 Nov 1947, Brevs. 434, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[33] Lie to Johan Falkberget, 8 Dec 1948, Brevs. 434, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.

through two policy initiatives, known simply by the names of the men who introduced them; the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Although neither of these policies were articulated or executed through the United Nations, they were the major topic of conversation in 1947, and Lie's reaction to them, and his efforts to bring them under UN control, aptly illustrates the secretary-general's views on the East-West conflict at the time and his goals for the world organisation. Lie's actions on these issues conform to what we would expect of the UN secretary-general given the duties and responsibilities of his role.

The American president Harry S. Truman first articulated his doctrine in March 1947 in a speech to Congress where he asked for support for a programme of aid to Greece and Turkey. The US government had sought to adopt a more confrontational policy towards the Soviet Union for most of 1946, but the America public demanded demobilisation and renewed focus on domestic American issues, and was unwilling to accept more sacrifices for foreign policy. The speech was therefore an effort by the US administration to use dramatic rhetoric "to shock Congress and the public into providing the support necessary to implement a tough policy."[34] Truman used the speech not only to argue for military aid to Turkey and Greece, but to present the East-West conflict as a choice between two "alternative ways of life," and stating that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."[35] This sentence has become known as the Truman Doctrine.

Secretary-general Lie was not persuaded by Truman's rhetoric. He felt the United States' programme of aid to Greece and Turkey should have been presented in

[34] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 317-18.
[35] President Harry S. Truman's address before a Joint Session of Congress, 12 March 1947, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp (accessed 04.06.14).

the Security Council, because Greece was at that time on the Council agenda. Whenever member states went outside the UN framework this was a setback to Lie, who sought to have the UN occupy a central position in international politics as envisioned by the UN's founders. He later wrote in his memoirs that the Truman Doctrine had "burst like a bombshell upon the world with no advance notice whatever," and that to his knowledge even the US ambassador to the UN, Warren Austin, let alone a number of "friendly Member governments" and the secretary-general himself, had been unaware of the planned change of policy.[36] Lie visited Washington shortly after Truman's announcement, and reported back to a meeting of his staff that "the general opinion was that for the moment the United Nations should not interfere in the new turn of events inaugurated by President Truman's statement."[37] In his speech Truman had claimed the US policy "will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations." However, he also claimed that the United Nations itself was unequal to the task at hand, because "the situation is an urgent one requiring immediate action and the United Nations and its related organizations are not in a position to extend help of the kind that is required."[38] Lie disagreed with this negative assessment of the UN's capabilities, and expressed his "surprise[...] at the President's statement that the United Nations was not ready to organise relief when the [Food and Agriculture Organisation] had in fact had a plan ready since the General Assembly designed to provide relief."[39] The American programme of aid to Greece and Turkey announced in March 1947 was the first time the United States deliberately chose to sidestep the United Nations, but it would not be the last.

[36] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 104-05.
[37] Minutes of meeting, 19 March 1947, S-0194-0003-04, UNA.
[38] President Harry S. Truman's address before a Joint Session of Congress, 12 March 1947, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp (accessed 04.06.14).
[39] Minutes of meeting, 19 March 1947, S-0194-0003-04, UNA.

Just three months later the United States continued its policy change with an ambitious economic aid programme which has come to be seen as an extension of the Truman Doctrine from military to economic policy. In a commencement address at Harvard University on 5 June 1947 Secretary of State George C. Marshall promised American aid for European economic reconstruction. He argued that "the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace." Marshall claimed that the proposed policy was not directed against any other states, only "against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist."[40] This marked the start of the European Recovery Programme (ERP), or what has since become known simply as the Marshall Plan.

As with the Truman Doctrine, Lie's instinctive reaction was that the proposed aid programme should be executed inside the UN framework, in this case through the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) which had been set up by ECOSOC in March 1947 precisely to coordinate and facilitate the economic reconstruction of Europe.[41] Whereas Lie after Truman's speech in March had refrained from giving any comments to the press, in the weeks following Marshall's speech Lie continuously told the press that he supported the plan and wished to see it executed as quickly as possible through the United Nations. At a press conference on 13 June he told the assembled journalists that he thought "it was a very helpful step that was taken by President Truman and

[40] "The Marshall Plan Speech," 5 June 1947, http://marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/marshall-plan-speech/ (accessed 13.10.14).
[41] *UN Yearbook 1946-1947*, 483-484. The members of ECE in May 1947 were Belgium, Byelorussian S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, Ukrainian S.S.R., U.S.S.R., United Kingdom, United States and Yugoslavia.

Secretary Marshall."[42] On 19 June he went on to discuss the possible role the ECE could play in the process, and his belief that the European states would use the existing UN machinery for the purpose.[43] Behind the scenes Lie also contacted the British Foreign Office to encourage them to guide the process in the direction of the ECE. In Barros' book, which, as discussed before, largely reflects the Western view, Lie's belief that the ECE should play a role is described as "wishful thinking at its worst," because of possible Soviet "obstruction" in the ECE.[44] But in fact the United States did consider using the United Nations for its proposed aid programme. In May George Kennan had pointed out that the programme "will also have important connotations for the UN, and we should bear constantly in mind the need for maximum utilization of UN machinery."[45] A week later Dean Rusk warned that "unless we can demonstrate conclusively that [the ECE] cannot be used for this, the purpose of its creation, the ground swell of public opinion against again by-passing the U.N. might wreck and would certainly jeopardize any program."[46] Ultimately, however, the United States from the start was determined that the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites should not be allowed to influence the process – ideally they would choose not to take part at all – and that the best course of action would be to encourage key Western European states to decide on organisational questions.[47]

Britain and France therefore took the lead in crafting a European response to Marshall's speech. The French foreign minister, Georges Bidault, and his British counterpart, Ernest Bevin, invited all interested European states to a conference in Paris

[42] Transcript of SG press conference, 13 June 1947, UNDHL.
[43] Transcript of SG press conference, 19 June 1947, UNDHL.
[44] Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 124.
[45] Kennan to Acheson, with recommendation of the policy planning staff, 23 May 1947, *FRUS 1947*, III, 227-228.
[46] "Summary of discussion on problems of reflief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Europe," 29 May 1947, *FRUS 1947*, III, 234-236.
[47] Kennan to Acheson, with recommendation of the policy planning staff, 23 May 1947, and "Summary of discussion on problems of reflief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Europe," 29 May 1947, *FRUS 1947*, III, 227-228, 234-236.

in late June 1947.[48] The Soviet Union and the Eastern European states were present from the start. Molotov even brought along 100 technical experts, thus signalling his intent to stay and play an active part in the conference.[49] Within a few days, however, Stalin and Molotov changed their minds and on 2 July the Soviet Union withdrew from the conference.[50] The Eastern European states were at first allowed to stay, before the Kremlin changed its instructions to order its allies to leave the conference immediately.[51]

As secretary-general of the United Nations, Lie did not participate at the meeting in Paris, and neither did he send any representative, but this did not stop him from continuing to urge the participation of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states and the use of UN machinery for the execution of the recovery programme.[52] Once the Soviet Union had left the meeting and declared it would take no further part in discussions for the ERP, however, Lie had to recognise that the battle was lost. It would be impossible to use the ECE to execute the plan because of Soviet membership in the commission. Sir Alexander Cadogan, the UK permanent representative to the UN, reported back to the Foreign Office that Lie "quite understands the situation. He observed that the essential was to get relief quickly to Europe: all other considerations are subordinate."[53] In a conversation with the British ambassador to Norway in mid-

[48] William I. Hitchcock, "The Marshall Plan and the creation of the West," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume 1: Origins*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 157.
[49] Carolyn Woods Eisenberg, *Drawing the line: The American decision to divide Germany, 1944-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 323.
[50] Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 65-66; Ted Hopf, *Reconstructing the Cold War: The Early Years, 1945-1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.
[51] Norman Naimark, "The Sovietization of Eastern Europe, 1944-1953," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume 1: Origins*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 189.
[52] Transcript of SG press conference, 25 June 1947, UNDHL.
[53] Cadogan to FO, 3 July 1947, FO 371/62405, UKNA.

July, Lie argued that the Marshall Plan was necessary for Europe, and if the Soviet Union chose to remain outside, it would be to their own detriment.[54]

Although the ERP, despite the secretary-general's urging to the contrary, was executed outside the UN framework, the importance of European reconstruction was such that Lie could not long oppose the American aid. In the annual report for 1947-1948 he praised the ERP for its "great promise for the restoration of Western Europe to economic and political stability,"[55] while in an article in the *New York Times* in May 1948 he included the Marshall Plan as part of the work for "building a basis for peace that does not get into the usual headlines."[56] However, there can be no doubt that Lie was disappointed that the plan had to be executed without formal UN participation or control. This went against his goal of having the United Nations play a central role in all aspects of international politics. Furthermore, Lie's wish to have the Soviet Union participate speaks to his concern that nothing must be allowed to widen the tensions between East and West. As late as November 1947 he still expressed hope that the Soviet Union might join the programme, and wrote to his son-in-law: "all in all I cannot understand that the Russian Communists could dare stand between Europe's millions in need of housing, food, clothes and work, and the aid which the powerful United States can give."[57] In the annual report in July 1948 he warned that the Marshall plan "can have lasting results only if present political divisions are not permitted to block co-ordinated action within Europe as a whole and an increase of trade between Eastern and Western Europe."[58] The Truman Doctrine, on the other hand, could only serve to

[54] Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 128; Dølvik, "The Soviet Union and UNSG Lie," [in Norwegian] 78-79.
[55] Lie, Introduction, "Annual report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization," UN doc. A/565, 5 July 1948.
[56] Lie, "Trygve Lie Appraises the Future of the U.N. - It is strained by the East-West conflict but it remains the essential agency for peace," *New York Times*, 9 May 1948.
[57] Lie to Jens Halvard Bratz, [30 Nov] 1947. Letter in the Bratz family's possession. Copy provided by Guri Hjeltnes. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[58] Lie, Introduction, "Annual report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization," UN doc. A/565, 5 July 1948.

solidify the bloc formation, and Lie therefore claimed to have been opposed to it from the start. In his view, the Truman Doctrine was yet another example of how American policies were getting more extreme, and of how Washington had trouble distinguishing between socialism, communism, and the Soviet Union.[59] Lie's opposition to the Truman Doctrine would later continue in his hostility toward the formation of NATO.[60]

## 6.4 The Berlin Blockade, 1948-1949

The Berlin Blockade was one instance where secretary-general Lie sought to mediate a high-stakes conflict between East and West. When the Soviet Union in June 1948 – ostensibly in response to the introduction of a new currency in the three western occupation zones of Germany – closed off all access to West Berlin, the most dangerous and tense Cold War crisis to date started. Gradually, the United States, Britain, and France built up an airlift in response to the blockade, but the situation remained tense and unresolved. Secretary-general Lie followed the situation closely from the start, and offered his services in negotiation to the four occupying powers, asking them if he should use article 99 to refer the matter to the Security Council.[61] The Soviet representative referred to article 107 of the UN Charter[62] and claimed that the question of Germany's future, and with it Berlin, was outside the UN's mandate. By the Western states, Lie was told bluntly that "any action by the Secretary-General would not be appreciated at the present stage." Lie nevertheless concluded that "by merely drawing the attention of the representatives on the Council to the situation a certain amount had

[59] Lie to Jens Halvard Bratz, [30 Nov] 1947. Letter in the Bratz family's possession. Copy provided by Guri Hjeltnes. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[60] For more on Lie's opposition to the formation of NATO, see Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 156-65.
[61] Minutes of meeting, 28 June 1948, S-0194-0003-06, UNA.
[62] UN Charter, Article 107: "Nothing in the present Charter shall invalidate or preclude action, in relation to any state which during the Second World War has been an enemy of any signatory to the present Charter, taken or authorized as a result of that war by the Governments having responsibility for such action."

been achieved."[63] The British Foreign Office "appreciate[d] Mr. Lie's anxiety not to seem to be failing in his duty," but believed that this was "not (repeat not) a matter for the application of Article 99 of the Charter."[64] Over the summer, although he feigned ignorance to the press, and said that he thought the governments involved would find a solution on their own,[65] Lie kept in touch with the four states involved in the conflict, and in August even considered going to Berlin for a visit, if doing so might help find a solution.[66] Despite Lie's interest in the question, Berlin would not formally become a UN concern until October 1948. Once it was on the agenda, at various stages over the next few months, not only the secretary-general, but also the president of the General Assembly, the president of the Security Council, and the non-permanent members of the Council (the 'neutrals') would seek to negotiate an end to the Berlin blockade.

The four-power negotiations having brought no results, on 29 September the United States, Britain and France, claiming that the Berlin blockade constituted a threat to peace and security, asked that the matter be put on the Security Council's agenda.[67] From the start there were doubts both in the American delegation and among other delegations in Paris[68] as to whether the United States was really interested in a negotiated settlement, or if the United States was merely looking for moral cover.[69] Nevertheless, regardless of the 'true' American motives, the United States decided to forego its right to take the presidency of the Security Council for October, allowing the Argentine foreign minister, Juan Atilio Bramuglia, to take the presidency instead.[70]

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[63] Minutes of meeting, 29 June 1948, S-0194-0003-06, UNA.
[64] FO to Cadogan, 30 June 1948, FO 371/70497, UKNA.
[65] Transcript of UNSG press conference, 15 July 1948, UNDHL.
[66] Sargent note on conversation with Lie, 4 Aug 1948, FO 371/72677, UKNA.
[67] "Identical notification from the governments of the French Republic, the United States of America and the United Kingdom to the Secretary-General," UN doc. S/1020, 29 Sept 1948.
[68] The first half of the 3rd session of the General Assembly met in Paris from September to December 1948.
[69] Jessup, "Berlin Blockade," 168. See also Jessup memo of conversation with Marshall, Douglas and Rusk, 27 Sept 1948, *FRUS 1948*, II, 1193-1194.
[70] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 202.

Over Soviet protests, the Council voted to take up the Berlin question on 5 October.[71] After a brief debate on 6 October, the process continued behind the scenes as Bramuglia and the group of six 'neutrals' started negotiations between the two sides.[72] The group addressed questionnaires to the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, and drafted a resolution which was introduced in the Council on 22 Oct.[73] Throughout, the three Western states were kept well-informed of the progress of the neutrals by the Canadians, who also at one point stalled the resolution for a few days to allow the United States and Britain to reach a common position with France.[74] Before the resolution was introduced in the Council, the three Western states were also given the chance to suggest changes, although Bramuglia became annoyed when they came back the next day to demand even more.[75] It was therefore no great surprise that the United States, Britain and France, along with the six neutrals, voted in favour of the resolution on 25 October while the Soviet Union vetoed it, only supported by the Ukraine.[76]

When the Security Council rejected Bramuglia's suggested solution, Lie decided the time had come for him to take on a more active role in negotiating a solution to the Berlin blockade. As secretary-general he felt a duty to do everything he could to build bridges between the two sides in the Cold War, and in Berlin there was an obvious need for someone to take an initiative. "The result was as expected with the Berlin situation," Lie wrote to his daughter, but he remained hopeful for a solution; "Sooner or later it will have to be solved, and as I have said many times before, I don't think it will lead to a war ... At the moment I'm in the middle of conversations ... to see if I can do something

[71] SCOR, 3rd year, 362nd mtg., 5 Oct 1948.
[72] The six 'neutrals' were the states on the Council that were not directly involved in Berlin: Argentina, Belgium, Canada, China, Colombia, and Syria.
[73] SCOR, 3rd year, 370th mtg., 22 Oct 1948.
[74] Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink*, 197-98.
[75] Jessup, "Berlin Blockade," 170; Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink*, 198-99.
[76] SCOR, 3rd year, 372nd mtg., 25 Oct 1948.

useful."[77] In an early example of the secretary-general's use of special representatives, Lie suggested using Abraham Feller, his American legal adviser, and Arkady Sobolev, the Soviet assistant secretary-general in charge of Security Council affairs, to work out a suggestion on the currency issue with American and Soviet economic experts. The goal was to find an agreement which would allow the blockade to be lifted simultaneously with the introduction of the Soviet-supported mark in all sectors of Berlin.[78]

The P4 received Lie's engagement with caution, before ultimately rejecting the suggestion. Coincidentally, the United States had already considered the option of asking a third party, like the United Nations, to work out a solution of the currency issue,[79] and Philip Jessup of the US delegation at first expressed cautious supported for Lie's plan on 26 October.[80] On the other hand, Andrey Vyshinsky, Soviet deputy foreign minister, at first greeted Lie's suggestion negatively,[81] but a few days later he had obviously received different instructions from Moscow, and informed Lie that the Soviet Union now welcomed the secretary-general's efforts to mediate.[82] By this point, however, the United States had decided against Lie's involvement, and the western states started to create obstacles for the secretary-general. Jessup insisted that Britain and France be brought into the conversations,[83] and Lie duly informed Cadogan and Alexandre Parodi. The French ambassador greeted Lie's suggestion positively, while Cadogan, "as I had feared," wrote Lie, "reflected the Foreign Office's traditional coolness toward any independent United Nations initiative."[84] Britain and the United

[77] Lie to Sissel Bratz, 27 Oct 1948. Letter in the Bratz family's possession. Copy provided by Guri Hjeltnes. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[78] Lie, Berlin note #1, 29 Oct 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[79] Jessup, "Berlin Blockade," 172.
[80] Lie, Berlin note #1, 29 Oct 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[81] Lie, Berlin note #3, 29 Oct 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[82] Lie, Berlin note #4, 31 Oct 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[83] Lie, Berlin note #5, 2 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[84] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 211.

States feared that Lie's involvement could not be kept secret,[85] and were furthermore "anxious not to give the impression that they were running around looking for a settlement."[86] Overall, the two Western allies were concerned not to be seen as consenting to 'negotiation under duress,'[87] and wanted to leave all mediation to the Security Council and Bramuglia.[88] They therefore rejected Lie's offer of help.[89] Thus the secretary-general's proposal came to nothing, and when the *New York Times* learned of Lie's search for a currency plan on 9 November,[90] Lie was forced to issue a press release denying that he was participating in negotiations on Berlin. The secretary-general claimed that, "as part of his duty to keep himself informed of all matters before the United Nations," he had merely asked the Secretariat for a study of the currency issue.[91] Although Lie's offer to negotiate was rejected, the P4 never challenged his right to make such an offer. This episode therefore provide one more step in the process of expanding the secretary-general's scope and autonomy to allow him an independent right to act as a 'diplomat' in international politics.

With the failure of his currency study proposal, secretary-general Lie adopted a new tactic – to issue a public appeal with the President of the General Assembly, Herbert Evatt of Australia. Evatt first learned of Lie's activity in Berlin when the British Foreign Office, against Lie's explicit request to keep the matter secret, informed all the Commonwealth countries of the secretary-general's proposals.[92] At first Evatt was quite upset with Lie because he had been kept in the dark, but the secretary-general responded

[85] Lie, Berlin note #5, 2 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN; FO telegram to Cadogan, 4 Nov 1948, FO 371/70520, UKNA.
[86] Cadogan to FO, 3 Nov 1948, FO 371/70520, UKNA.
[87] FO telegram to Cadogan, 4 Nov 1948, FO 371/70520, UKNA. See also Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink*; Jessup, "Berlin Blockade."
[88] Lie, Berlin note #7, 10 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[89] Lie, Berlin note #8, 11 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[90] Thomas J. Hamilton, "New Compromises Drafted to Settle the Berlin Crisis – Lie and Bramuglia Preparing Proposals as Time Grows Short for Getting the Issue Before the U.N. Assembly," *New York Times*, 9 Nov 1948.
[91] UN press release P/PM/142, 9 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[92] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 212.

that he had every right to do this without telling anyone, and furthermore Berlin was a Security Council matter, not a General Assembly concern.[93] However, neither Lie nor Evatt held a grudge for long, and within a few days they were talking of sending a joint appeal to the four states involved. Lie felt Evatt's reasoning in support of the appeal was "quite good," and told his wife that "as far as Evatt and I are concerned, that matter is now settled up most satisfactorily."[94] On 13 November 1948 the two UN officials sent a letter to the chairmen of the delegations of the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, requesting that the letter be forwarded to their chiefs of government, thus sidestepping the foreign offices and foreign ministers.[95] The letter reminded the four states that they had all spoken out in favour of and voted for the General Assembly's 3 November resolution which had asked them to "redouble their efforts ... to secure in the briefest possible time the final settlement of the war."[96] Evatt and Lie went on to observe that in their opinion the first priority was to solve the Berlin problem. They therefore urged the four governments to start "immediate conversations and [take] all other necessary steps toward the solution of the Berlin question, thus opening the way to a prompt resumption of negotiations for the conclusion of the remaining peace settlements." They also encouraged the four states to "lend their full and active support" to Bramuglia's mediation efforts, and declared themselves ready to offer further assistance as and when needed, specifically mentioning the example of Lie's currency study.[97]

With their statement the two UN officials unleashed a storm of criticism which neither of them had expected, yet several smaller states agreed with the sentiment

[93] Lie, Berlin note #7, 10 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[94] Lie to Hjørdis and Mette, 10 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[95] Simultaneousy Evatt also sent the appeal directly to the four heads of government. See Evatt identical telegrams to Truman, Attlee, Queueille, and Stalin, 13 Nov 1948, box 129, folder 7, CCC.
[96] General Assembly resolution 190 (III), 3 Nov 1948.
[97] Lie and Evatt to Marshall, 13 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.

behind the appeal. Lie and Evatt had taken care to distinguish between 'immediate conversations' and 'resumption of negotiations' to forestall expected criticism from the three Western states, however, these carefully chosen words were not enough for Britain and the United States. The American secretary of state and his aides saw the Lie-Evatt initiative as "ill-advised and disturbing" because it seemed to apportion blame equally to the West and the Soviet Union,[98] and attributed the appeal to "self-seeking"; Evatt had been eager for headlines and had "duped" Lie into signing the letter with him.[99] The British reacted in similar ways. Lie wrote home to his wife and daughter that, "needless to say, the English were little pleased with this initiative and the British press has been rather sour – naturally at the bidding of the British Government."[100] The Norwegian delegation to the General Assembly reported back to Oslo that many delegations, especially the Western states, were "of the opinion that both the president and the secretary-general should have stuck to their tasks as respectively an elected representative and an official of the United Nations and avoid interfering in the delegations' politics."[101] Indeed, the secretary-general had been in doubt about the wisdom and propriety in signing the appeal alongside the president of the Assembly. But Bramuglia, the Council president, had persuaded Lie to sign the letter, saying that in his opinion the secretary-general "stood beside the President of the General Assembly," and furthermore the letter would be "a big help in his work in getting the Berlin crisis settled."[102] Bramuglia continued to support Lie and Evatt after the publication of the letter and defended them against criticism. The *New York Times* reported that the appeal "reflected the general feeling of many nations not directly involved in the Berlin dispute," and that it had been "heartily endorsed" by Bramuglia "because it interprets

[98] Shlaim, *The United States and the Berlin Blockade*, 371.
[99] Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink*, 200-01.
[100] Lie to Hjørdis and Mette, 15 Nov 1949, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[101] Dons to MFA, 15 Nov 1948, RA/S-2259/Dye/L10917, NAN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[102] Lie, Berlin note #9, 16 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.

the peaceful aspirations of the peoples of the world."[103] The Soviet Union likewise welcomed the suggestion of Lie and Evatt for renewed conversations about a postwar settlement, and said it shared the belief that "the solution of the Berlin question will have a positive effect on the settlement of other questions such as those of peace settlement for Germany, Austria and Japan."[104] Summing up the whole affair, Lie wrote to his wife and daughter:

> On the surface the whole thing can look like a defeat for Evatt and me, but in reality our initiative means another step forward in that all parties have declared themselves willing to seek a solution to the Berlin crisis in the Security Council ... My purpose in signing together with Evatt was that we had to hoard as many glowing coals as possible on the heads of these statesmen in order to get them to understand that the world does not want war.[105]

Although nothing much came of the Evatt-Lie appeal, it represents one example of the emerging alliance between the secretary-general and the peoples of the world, as evidenced in the widespread public support for the secretary-general's letter. In this instance he served as 'a spokesman for world interest,' seeking to put pressure on states to negotiate an end to their conflicts in the interest of world peace.

Lie's direct involvement with the Berlin negotiations ended in mid-November 1948, yet he was invited to send a representative to a currency committee formed by Bramuglia in late November. Bramuglia's idea essentially combined his group of 'neutrals' with the secretary-general's currency study, and established a committee of 'technical experts' to negotiate with the two sides and suggest a solution to the currency problems. The committee met in Geneva during the winter of 1948-49, but was unable to find a solution acceptable to both sides in the conflict. It ended its work on 11

[103] Camille M. Cianfarra, "Parlay Soon Asked – Letter Asserts Failure to Reach Agreement Will Endanger Peace – Marshall Plans Reply – British Cool to Proposal – French are Noncommittal – Bramuglia Hails Move," *New York Times*, 14 Nov 1948.
[104] Vyshinsky to Evatt and Lie, 16 Nov 1948, box 129, folder 7, CCC.
[105] Lie to Hjørdis and Mette, 19 Nov 1948, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.

February and sent a report to the Security Council.[106] Despite the fact that the failure of the committee was largely due to an American change of heart in January, when the report was finally published "a carefully orchestrated Western public relations campaign" blamed the Soviet Union for the committee's failure.[107] Thus ended the UN's attempt to negotiate an end to the Berlin blockade. By this stage, however, the United States and the Soviet Union had started direct negotiations. Jessup and Yakov Malik held a number of secret informal meetings which eventually led to the lifting of the blockade in May 1949.[108]

The deal ending the Berlin blockade was negotiated at the United Nations, but without the formal use of UN machinery or the involvement of UN representatives. Nevertheless, the Berlin blockade demonstrated the usefulness of the United Nations. First of all, the United Nations provided the forum where representatives of the two sides could meet and work out their differences. This was an early example of the value of the Security Council as a 'concert' between the great powers.[109] The Berlin blockade demonstrated "the value of proximity" of diplomatic staff being present in New York and regularly interacting with each other.[110] Secondly, the earlier attempts by Lie, Bramuglia, Evatt, and the currency committee, all served to buy time and defuse tension, which allowed for a solution to be worked out. These UN efforts can be seen as "a necessary failure" which prepared the way for direct negotiations on a more realistic basis.[111] In this case, therefore, the UN secretary-general, and others within the UN system, had helped in solving a dangerous Cold War problem.

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[106] Paus to MFA, 14 Feb 1949, RA/S-2259/Dye/L10917, NAN.
[107] Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink*, 209.
[108] See Jessup's own account in Jessup, "Park Avenue Diplomacy."
[109] The value of the UN as a 'concert' is explored in detail by Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All*.
[110] David L. Bosco, "Assessing the UN Security Council: A Concert Perspective," *Global Governance* 20, no. 4 (2014): 554.
[111] Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink*, 185.

This episode furthermore serves to illustrate one aspect of the conceptual framework outlined in chapter 2. In this early period of UN history the respective roles of the secretary-general, the Security Council, the Council president, the elected members of the Council, the General Assembly, and the Assembly President were all in some flux and the boundaries between them were not perfectly delineated. What authority did the secretary-general and the President of the Assembly enjoy in relation to items being discussed by the Security Council? This was a question both of scope and autonomy. Some of the reactions to the joint Evatt-Lie appeal furthermore raise interesting questions about the relationship between representation and autonomy. The secretary-general and the Assembly President were told they had overstepped the bounds of their roles by making an independent appeal, because they were supposed to represent the organisation. Thus, the three dimensions of a role can sometimes work against one another, and high scores on one dimension may restrain (as well as empower) the actor in another dimension.

## 6.5 The outbreak of the Korean War, 1950

So far during the Cold War secretary-general Lie had sought to play the role of impartial mediator between East and West, however, his stance would change when the Korean War broke out and the secretary-general saw his duty to protect and defend the UN Charter and organisation dictate that he strongly oppose the North Korean aggression and urge UN support for South Korea. The Korean issue had been a concern of the UN since 1947, and in early 1948 a UN commission supervised elections in the southern part of the country (the Soviet Union would not let them operate in the north) which led to the establishment of the government of the Republic of Korea. South Korea had thus been established as a result of UN involvement, and this was important

when the Korean War broke out in June 1950. Secretary-general Lie was first informed of the North Korean attack shortly before midnight (New York time) on 24 June 1950, when he received a phone call to his home from John D. Hickerson of the US delegation. According to Hickerson, Lie's immediate response was; "My God, Jack, that's against the Charter of the United Nations!"[112] The secretary-general forthwith requested a report from the UN commission in Korea (UNCOK), and asked the Secretariat to prepare for an emergency Security Council meeting. Later at night he had further telephone conversations with the American delegation, which formally requested that he convene the Security Council.[113] When the Council met in the afternoon on 25 June, the secretary-general spoke first, recounting the history of the UN's activities in Korea, and stating that the reported military actions were

> a direct violation of the resolution of the General Assembly … as well as a violation of the principles of the Charter. The present situation is a serious one and is a threat to international peace … I consider it the clear duty of the Security Council to take steps necessary to re-establish peace in that area.[114]

It was highly unusual for the secretary-general to speak first, and it was neither "necessary [n]or expected" in this situation.[115] Although Lie later claimed to have decided during the night to invoke article 99, legal historians argue that article 99 was not invoked because the United States had asked for a Council meeting to be called.[116] This should not detract from the important role secretary-general Lie would play over the coming weeks to legitimate and coordinate the UN response in Korea.

One of the duties Lie saw for himself in the situation was to coordinate the UN response and serve as an "executive" of the Security Council's decisions.[117] To this end,

[112] Oral history interview with John D. Hickerson, 1972-1973, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence Missouri, (hereafter TPL).
[113] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 327-28.
[114] SCOR, 5th year, 473rd mtg., 25 June 1950.
[115] Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 20.
[116] Chesterman, "Article 99," 2016.
[117] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 333.

already before the first Council meeting on 25 June, Lie met with Ernest Gross of the US delegation to formulate a plan for the meeting and discuss the statements they were each going to make.[118] In the interest of unity, Lie also claimed to have helped persuade the Egyptian and Indian delegations, which both lacked instructions from their home governments, to vote in favour of the US draft resolution.[119] Over the next few days Lie continued to urge member states to come to the aid of South Korea, and he took it upon himself to send out telegrams asking member states to inform him of what help they could give. Referring to the Council's second resolution of 27 June[120] Lie's telegram asked all governments, "in the event that your government is in a position to provide assistance ... if you were to be so good as to provide me with an early reply as to type of assistance." The secretary-general would then submit the states' replies to the Council and to the Korean government.[121]

Lie sent the telegram in the interest of coordinating the UN's response and to facilitate the process of providing aid to South Korea. He may also have thought it more likely that states would respond in the positive when the request came from the secretary-general rather than one of the member states. Indeed some states later complained that Lie had overstepped his authority and that they were embarrassed when they had to say no to the secretary-general's requests.[122] The United States government was happy to have the secretary-general send out the telegram because it thought "it was a good idea to use the United Nations umbrella as much as possible," but the State Department also "felt however that Lie should function as no more than a post

[118] Reminiscences of Ernest A. Gross (13 January 1965), 569-572, The Columbia Center for Oral History Collection (hereafter CCOHC).
[119] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 329.
[120] Security Council resolution 83, 27 June 1950.
[121] Text reprinted in *FRUS 1950*, VII, 221n.
[122] Memorandum of conversation (Holmes, Ordonneau, Ross, Hyde), 18 July 1950, *FRUS 1950*, VII, 416.

office."[123] Not content to serve merely as a 'post office,' Lie continued to urge greater coordination of the Korean operation, and increased use of UN machinery. He set about drafting a new Council resolution to give the United States formal responsibility for directing the UN response; give the American commanded the right to use the UN flag; and to establish of a coordination committee (consisting of Australia, France, India, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) which could receive all offers of aid, review them, and transmit the offers to the US government.[124] No state challenged the secretary-general's right to draft Security Council resolutions, and the episode therefore served to further expand the scope of the secretary-general to assign him a role of near-equal status with the members of the Council. In the end, however, on 7 July the Council chose to adopt a similar resolution proposed by the United States, which designated the United States as UN command, but without establishing a coordination committee.[125]

In addition to the interest in coordinating the UN response because of his executive responsibilities in the continuation of his role as a 'manager' or the Secretariat and his task of servicing the other organs of the United Nations,[126] Lie's actions were motivated by his concern to protect and defend the UN Charter and for greater unity of the UN's member states. As the above quote of Lie's statement on 25 June revealed, the secretary-general saw the North Korean invasion as a clear breach of the UN Charter. He therefore chose to speak first at the Council meeting "because the response of the Security Council would be more certain and more in the spirit of the Organization as a whole were the Secretary-General to take the lead."[127] Lie's understanding of his role in the proceedings would therefore fit well with the reason the United States sought the

[123] Memorandum of conversation (Ross, Hickerson), 28 June 1950, *FRUS 1950*, VII, 221-222.
[124] Cordier to Gross, Sunde, Jebb, and Chauvel, 3 July 1950, PA-1407/D/L0030, NAN.
[125] Security Council resolution 84, 7 July 1950.
[126] UN Charter, article 98.
[127] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 329.

support of the United Nations – "to rally the world community's support" and give "international sanction to what the United States would have done anyway."[128] In this particular instance, therefore, the interests of the United States and the UN secretary-general overlapped, and in this period Lie worked closely with the US delegation to coordinate the UN response.[129] There was in itself nothing unusual in this, because the United States and the secretary-general had a close working relationship, and would share information and exchange views on most issues on the UN agenda.[130]

The secretary-general's active support for the American policies in Korea helped give legitimacy to the US-led intervention and ensure that it truly was a 'UN' response. In doing so, Lie would become the focal point of UN policies in Korea, and a symbol of the organisation's unity in the face of North Korean aggression. This strengthened his position as 'representing' the United Nations, and provided the main motivation behind the General Assembly's decision to extend Lie's term in office in November 1950, as will be discussed in chapter 7. Simultaneously, however, Lie's actions completely destroyed his relationship with the Soviet Union, and even though he would serve as secretary-general until April 1953, he could not really function effectively in his job because of the Soviet boycott. The Soviet government also recognised that the secretary-general 'represented' the policies of the majority of the UN, yet because it disagreed with those polices, the logical conclusion was to also oppose the secretary-general. This illustrates how narrow a space the secretary-general had in which to operate as the Cold War hardened. Whatever he did, one or more of the superpowers were bound to disagree and resent him for trying to meddle in their affairs. Nevertheless, because of the importance of stopping North Korean aggression in

[128] Gaiduk, *Divided Together*, 166.
[129] The secretary-general would later help shape the UN response to the Chinese intervention in the war, and to set up the armistice negotiations as well. See Barnes, "UN Secretary-General and the Korean War."
[130] Reminiscences of Ernest A. Gross (13 January 1965), 569, CCOHC.

contravention of the UN Charter, Lie would "consider [his] stand on Korea the best justified act of seven years in the service of peace."[131]

## 6.6 Conclusion

Because the secretary-general more than anyone else 'represents' the United Nations and is a 'guardian' of the UN Charter, he has a duty to protect and defend the organisation. As the Cold War hardened, secretary-general Lie would therefore seek to mediate and negotiate between the two sides in the interest of UN unity. If the organisation, and in particular it's most high-profile organ: the Security Council, were unable to operate, this would be damaging to the UN's prestige, and therefore to the very survival of the United Nations, because the organisation relied on public support. This provided Lie's motivation for his actions in trying to mediate between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Berlin blockade, between the United States and Britain over Palestine (as discussed in chapter 5), and for his efforts to solve the question of Chinese representation and to propose an ambitious peace plan (as will be discussed in chapter 7). Another way in which the United Nations might stop functioning would be if one party decided to leave the organisation altogether. The United Nations was built on the principle of universality of membership, and could only succeed if all states were members.

A side-effect of the secretary-general's attempts to mediate and negotiate in the interest of UN unity, was that his actions expanded both the scope and the autonomy of his role. Although the majority of his proposals failed to bring about his desired objective – the Marshall plan aid remained outside the UN framework, Lie's currency proposal in Berlin was rejected, his joint appeal with Evatt ignored, no coordination

[131] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 323.

committee for Korea established – because the member states did not significantly protest against Lie's attempts to influence them in these matters, the secretary-general's right to do so was recognised. In several instances Lie sought to 'push' his own suggestions for a mediated solution, but in other instances the institution would 'pull' him into this expanded role. Examples of the latter from the present chapter include the inclusion of a representative of the secretary-general in the technical currency committee on Berlin in the winter of 1948-49, and the obvious need for someone to coordinate the UN response in Korea in the first few weeks. Although the UN Security Council on 7 July handed responsibility for the operation in Korea to the United States, in the weeks before, Lie had performed an important function in coordinating and serving as a channel of communications between the member states.

A second way in which Lie sought to fulfil his duty to protect and defend the United Nations, was to "keep the [UN] machinery going."[132] Even if for the moment the P5 were unable to agree on most political issues, at least the United Nations could remain the centre of negotiations between them. Furthermore, if it could be possible to reach agreement on other 'non-political' issues, such as the Marshall plan aid for the reconstruction of Europe, or indeed on smaller political problems like Palestine as discussed in the previous chapter, this might have an important psychological effect and inspire agreement on other issues as well. In continuation of this line of thinking, Lie proposed a peace plan in 1950, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Lastly, in protecting and defending the United Nations and its Charter, the secretary-general would sometimes come to take a stand with one group of member states against another. When, in his opinion, North Korea, supported by the Soviet Union, attacked South Korea in a clear breach of the UN Charter, Lie would happily

[132] Lie to Johan Falkberget, 30 Nov 1947, Brevs. 434, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.

work with the United States to mobilise the rest of the UN membership in aid of South Korea. In standing on principle, the secretary-general became a symbol of the UN's policies and unity in Korea – he strengthened his role as 'representing' the UN overall – while also earning himself the hostility of one of its most powerful member states. Lie's strong principled defence of the United Nations, as well as the adverse consequences this had for his ability to function effectively in his role, will be explored further in the next chapter.

# 7 Pushing the Role Too Far, Or Not Far Enough? 1950-1953

"By illegally occupying the post of Secretary-General ... Mr. Trygve Lie showed that he flouted the major obligations of the Secretary-General of the United Nations under the United Nations Charter, the most important being to respect the Charter itself. This alone is enough to enable us to appraise Mr. Trygve Lie's moral and political character ... Mr. Lie's conduct had demonstrated his unfitness to discharge the great responsibilities attached to the office of Secretary-General of the United Nations."[1]

Andrey Vyshinsky, Soviet permanent representative to the UN, April 1953

## 7.1 Introduction

1950 represents the high-point of Trygve Lie's activities as secretary-general. During this year Lie undertook several high-profile political initiatives in his role as an advocate and guardian of UN principles. The secretary-general campaigned to have the Beijing government take over the Chinese seat in the Security Council, and submitted a legal memorandum to the member states outlining his view on the issue. He developed and proposed an elaborate peace plan, and travelled to the capitals of four permanent Security Council members (except China) during April and May, seeking to enlist public and governmental support for his proposals. In June 1950, in response to the North Korean invasion of South Korea, Lie strongly supported the Security Council in authorising a UN intervention to aid the South Koreans. Lastly, in November 1950, in the face of Soviet opposition over the Korean War, Lie accepted re-appointment as secretary-general for a further three years from the General Assembly, because he felt this was necessary to confirm the UN's policies in Korea and to defend the independent position of the secretary-general.

From this peak in 1950, support for Lie as secretary-general steadily declined. The Soviet Union and its allies refused to recognise Lie as the legitimate secretary-

[1] Vyshinsky (USSR), GAOR, 7th session, 423rd plenary mtg., 7 April 1953.

general because of his support for the UN intervention in Korea and the circumstances of his re-election. The pressures of American McCarthyism caused tensions in Lie's relationship with the United States, while the secretary-general's timid response to these pressures earned criticism from many quarters and lost him the support of the Secretariat staff. In January 1953 he allowed the FBI to enter UN headquarters to interview and fingerprint US nationals, thus surrendering the independence of the Secretariat to the US government. Ultimately, amid criticism and pressure from states in East and West, as well as Secretariat staff, Lie resigned from office in November 1952. He is the only UN secretary-general ever to resign from office, though not the only one to have faced pressure from member states to do so.

This chapter argues that even in 1950, behind the facade of public and government support, signs of decline in Lie's position can be detected. The peace plan met with no success, and Lie's initiative on Chinese representation annoyed certain key states. Although he was re-elected by a large majority in the General Assembly in November 1950, a closer examination reveals the shaky foundations upon which this apparent unity lay as most governments' support for Lie was lukewarm at most. On top of this, his actions in Korea and subsequent re-election earned Lie the implacable hostility of the Soviet Union, which thenceforth refused to recognise him as a legitimate holder of the secretary-general's office. For the next two years, therefore, Lie was unable to perform the full role of the secretary-general. Even the seeming victory of being re-elected as secretary-general, in reality heralded Lie's most difficult period in office, as he gradually lost the support of member states and Secretariat staff.

This chapter explores what happens when a secretary-general tries to do too much, and pushes his role too far. In Lie's case the member states withdrew their support from him, driving him to resign from office a full year before the end of his

term. In parallel to this story of decline, the chapter also explores the importance of the secretary-general to the United Nations as 'representing' the organisation overall. When presenting his 1950 peace plan Lie acted as a 'spokesman for world interests.' During the second half of 1950 he served as the focal point of the UN response in Korea, and this provided one of the main motivations behind the extension of his term in office. Yet despite the apparent vote of support for Lie in his re-election in November 1950, the last two years of his tenure show how the secretary-general was unable to function properly in his role because he no longer enjoyed the recognition of all the UN member states. A central part to the story of how the secretary-general 'represents' the UN, is his support not only among member governments, but also from the world's public. The UN Charter was written in the name of "we the peoples," and the secretary-general – in representing the UN – is a representative not only of the member states, but also of the world's peoples. Indeed, Lie's 1950 peace plan succeeded in mobilising public support for the organisation and its secretary-general. Nonetheless, public support cannot compensate for weak support or outright hostility from member states. The chapter therefore also serves to underline that the United Nations was – and remains – an organisation made by and for states, and the states' governments are therefore the primary constituency of the secretary-general.

Simultaneously the chapter explores an instance where Lie failed to push where he could have. When he allowed the US government access to the UN Secretariat to screen American nationals, Lie surrendered a part of the independence of the international civil service, and accepted less autonomy in administrative matters. This represents an instance of role *contraction* where the role of the secretary-general became less than what was enshrined in the UN Charter. There are two ways in which a role can develop from 'administrative' to 'political' – by becoming *more* political, or

*less* administrative. Both processes can be observed under Lie, as this chapter demonstrates.

The topics being considered in this chapter have attracted little academic attention in the past. All of these events are, of course, discussed in Barros' thorough book on Lie as secretary-general,[2] but as argued earlier, Barros often paints an unnecessarily negative picture of Lie's actions and largely dismisses the possibility that the UN secretary-general can have any 'real world' influence. Gaiduk's recent book on the United Nations and the Cold War makes an important contribution in bringing in archival material from the Soviet archives to discuss the Chinese representation issue and Lie's peace plan and visit to Moscow in 1950.[3] Of the events examined here, McCarthyism by far has attracted the lion's share of attention, and there is a large and growing literature on the process of McCarthyism, or 'the red scare,' in different sectors of the United States.[4] However, to my knowledge, the only study specifically focusing on McCarthyism's spill-over into the United Nations and the secretary-general's attempts to handle this issue, is a Norwegian article published by Hjeltnes in 2004.[5] Due to the scarcity of published sources, this chapter is largely based on primary documents in combination with Lie's own account of these events in his published memoirs.[6]

The chapter is organised in five sections. The first examines Lie's attempts to have the Chinese Communist government in Beijing recognised as the legitimate

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[2] Barros, *Trygve Lie*.
[3] Gaiduk, *Divided Together*, chapter 5.
[4] See for example Albert Fried, *McCarthyism: The Great American Red Scare: A Documentary History* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ellen Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998); Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium : Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Ted Morgan, *Reds: McCarthyism in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Random House, 2003); Edward Alwood, *Dark Days in the Newsroom: McCarthyism Aimed at the Press* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007); Phillip Deery, *Red Apple: Communism and McCarthyism in Cold War New York* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).
[5] Guri Hjeltnes, "McCarthyismens inntog i FN," [The Entry of McCarthyism into the UN.] *Arbeiderhistorie* (2004).
[6] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*.

Chinese representative to the UN. The second discusses Lie's peace plan and his elaborate programme to garner support from member governments and the world's peoples. The third examines the process of re-appointment during the General Assembly in autumn 1950. These three sections, combined with the discussion of Lie's strong stance on Korea in the previous chapter, establish the high point of Lie's career as secretary-general and his strong principled defence of the United Nations. Yet, these sections also reveal that Lie's actions met with opposition from certain key states. The last two sections then turn to the decline of Lie's position in 1952-53. The fourth section discusses the US process of McCarthyism and how this affected the United Nations, as well as Lie's actions in regard to it, while the fifth section analyses Lie's motivation for resigning from office in November 1952. Lastly the chapter concludes by returning to the overarching questions of how the secretary-general 'represents' the United Nations and seeks to build alliances with the world's peoples, but how ultimately he remains dependent on member state support to be able to perform his role.

## 7.2 The question of Chinese representation, January 1950

The question of Chinese representation in the UN was yet another instance when Lie pushed his own opinion on a political matter. This was also an occasion when Lie went too far. In openly going against the wishes of one of the P5 – even if it only was Nationalist China, the weakest of them – Lie caused irreparable damage to his relationship with the Security Council, as this section will demonstrate.

From January 1950 until the outbreak of the Korean War the question of Chinese representation dominated proceedings at the United Nations. After Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on 1 October 1949, it was only a matter of time before the question of which Chinese

government should hold the permanent seat in the Security Council would come to a head. The Nationalist Chinese government led by Chiang Kai-shek, now in exile on the island of Taiwan, had the support of the United States, while the Communist government in Beijing was supported by the Soviet Union. The question was first raised in the Security Council[7] on 29 December 1949 by Yacov Malik of the Soviet delegation. Malik argued that the government of the PRC was the only legal representative of the Chinese people, and that the Soviet Union therefore would not recognise Tsiang Ting-fu, the current Chinese representative in the Council, as a legitimate representative of China. When the Council president, after short statements by the Ukraine and China, declared the matter closed, Malik accepted the decision without further protest.[8] But this was only a dress rehearsal for what was to follow. When the Council reconvened on 10 January 1950 – with Tsiang in the president's chair – Malik raised the issue of Chinese representation once more, and introduced a proposal to remove Tsiang from the Council. The proposal received support from India and Yugoslavia, but was defeated by 6 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.[9] During the debate Malik had frequently threatened that he would leave the Council unless his proposal was adopted, and this was exactly what he did after his defeat on 13 January.

The Soviet walkout created a new crisis for the UN secretary-general to deal with. At the time no one knew if this was the first step to the Soviet Union leaving the organisation altogether, as over the next few weeks the Soviets walked out of more than twenty other UN committees and commissions, and secretary-general Lie felt he had to do something. He talked to his staff and had them prepare a legal memorandum. This

[7] On 15 November 1949 the Peking government sent a letter to the president of the General Assembly to protest that the Nationalist Chinese delegation at the Assembly did not legally represent the Chinese people. The Soviet Union gave its support to the Peking government's letter in the plenary debate on 23 November. See GAOR, 4th session, 253rd plenary meeting, 23 November 1949.
[8] SCOR, 4th year, 458th mtg., 29 Dec 1949.
[9] SCOR, 5th year, 461st mtg., 13 Jan 1950.

was not the first time Lie sought to depoliticise an issue be presenting his opinion in legal terms rather than openly admitting to the political nature of the question. The memorandum argued that question of Chinese representation was essentially one of credentials, and therefore a procedural matter. This meant that the veto would not apply in the Security Council, and all that was needed to solve it would be an affirmative vote of seven members. Five Council members had already recognised the new Chinese government, and would presumably vote in favour of seating them in the Council.[10] The memorandum argued that it was incorrect to put any criteria on membership or representation in the United Nations beyond those listed in the Charter. Specifically, it was incorrect to use recognition of a government (an individual act) as a criterion for membership (a collective act). States could vote in favour of admitting a state to membership without this automatically translating to recognition of that state, as the admission of Burma in 1948 had demonstrated. The only valid legal basis was to determine which state was *able* to fulfil the obligations of UN membership, and this was purely a question of observing which government had effective control over the territory of the state in question.[11] As Lie later wrote in his memoirs; "Without being happy that the Communists had won the Civil War in China, I did not feel that approval or disapproval of a regime was in question: it was a matter of recognizing the facts of international life."[12]

Armed with his legal memorandum Lie set out to talk to the states on the Council to see if he could convince an additional two to vote in favour of seating the

[10] The five states which had recognised the PRC were Britain, India, Norway, the USSR, and Yugoslavia. The fact that Britain and Norway had recognised the PRC indicates that this was not a straightforward East-West conflict.
[11] "Legal aspects of problems of representation in the United Nations," Feb 1950, S/1466, 9 March 1950.
[12] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 253-54.

representative of the Communist Chinese government.[13] These discussions did not bring about any solution. Although France and other states confessed to agree with Lie's analysis, they could not vote in favour of the Chinese communists for political reasons. France was particularly upset that the Chinese Communist government supported Ho Chi Minh in his struggle against the French colonial government in Vietnam. The Soviet tactics moreover alienated many states, and the British delegation believed the Soviet end-goal might actually be to isolate the Beijing government further to make them easier to dominate.[14] Inspired by the Chinese representation debacle, Lie decided to develop and promote his ten-point twenty-year programme for peace, to try and rally the organisation around positive goals, as the next section of this chapter will discuss. Ultimately, the Chinese representation issue receded into the background after the Soviet Union returned to the Council in August 1950, thus accepting the status quo. Once China intervened in the Korea War, Lie also shelved his efforts. "In short, troops of the People's Republic of China had gone to war against the United Nations," Lie wrote, and "for the duration of the fighting, that ended my interest in seating the Peking government in the United Nations."[15] The Beijing government would not take its seat in the United Nations until 1971 after the US-China rapprochement.

The issue nonetheless had lasting consequences for Lie's position as UN secretary-general. In this case, Lie essentially disputed the right of one of the P5 – Nationalist China – to sit in the Security Council. No other secretary-general has ever done the same so brazenly, and indeed it would be inconceivable that the secretary-general would do so today.[16] For the remainder of Lie's tenure, he did not enjoy Chinese support. Furthermore, Lie's campaign against the United States' close ally, also

[13] Lie focused his efforts on France, and also hoped to be able to persuade Egypt or one of the Latin American states to vote in favour of seating the Communist Chinese.
[14] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 258.
[15] Ibid., 272.
[16] I am indebted to Sam Daws for this point.

caused damage to the secretary-general's relationship with Washington DC, and provided new material to conservative newspapers and Congressmen who already believed Lie to be 'Moscow's man.'

## 7.3 'A Twenty-Year Program to Win Peace through the United Nations,' March-June 1950

The question of Chinese representation and the Soviet walk-out from the United Nations inspired Lie to think deeply about the UN's purposes and the organisation's future, and prompted him to propose an ambitious peace plan in the spring of 1950. On 21 March in a speech to the B'nai B'rith, a Jewish community organisation, in Washington DC, the secretary-general called for the development of a "twenty-year program to win peace through the United Nations"[17] Lie and his advisers then proceeded to prepare a memorandum with the following ten suggestions for developing such a twenty-year peace programme:[18]

1) "Inauguration of periodic meetings of the Security Council, attended by foreign ministers, or heads or other members of Governments, as provided by the United Nations Charter and the rules of procedure; together with further development and use of other United Nations machinery for negotiation, mediation, and conciliation of international disputes ...
2) "A new attempt to make progress toward establishing an international control system for atomic energy that will be effective in preventing its use for war and promoting its use for peaceful purposes ...
3) "A new approach to the problem of bringing the armaments race under control, not only in the field of atomic weapons, but in other weapons of mass destruction and in conventional armaments ...
4) "A renewal of serious efforts to reach agreement on the armed forces to be made available under the Charter [article 43] to the Security Council for the enforcement of its decisions ...
5) "Acceptance and application of the principle that it is wise and right to proceed as rapidly as possible towards universality of membership ...

[17] Address by Secretary-General Trygve Lie at the National Convention of B'nai B'rith, Hotel Statler, Washington DC, 21 March 1950, PA-1407/D/L0025, NAN.
[18] "Memorandum of Points for Consideration in the Development of a Twenty-Year Program for Achieving Peace Through the United Nations," available in Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 296-303.

6) "A sound and active program of technical assistance for economic development and encouragement of broad-scale capital investment, using all appropriate private, governmental, and intergovernmental resources ...
7) "More vigorous use by all Member Governments of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations to promote, in the words of the Charter, 'higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress' ...
8) "Vigorous and continued development of the work of the United Nations for wider observance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world ...
9) "Use of the United Nations to promote, by peaceful means instead of by force, the advancement of dependent, colonial, or semicolonial peoples, towards a place of equality in the world ...
10) "Active and systematic use of all the powers of the Charter and all the machinery of the United Nations to speed up the development of international law towards an eventual enforceable world law for a universal world society."

The majority of the ten proposals merely called for renewed attention to a problem, or increased use of programmes already in place. The most specific suggestion was the call for the Security Council to inaugurate 'periodic meetings.' Article 28(2) of the Charter provided for such meetings, but none had ever been held. Lie suggested calling a meeting in 1950 attended by foreign minister or heads of government, to be held away from UN headquarters, and devoted to a general review of "outstanding issues in the United Nations, particularly those that divide the Great Powers."[19] In a separate memorandum drafted in March 1950, the secretary-general proposed including on the agenda for such a meeting discussion of Chinese representation, atomic energy, armed forces under Article 43, conventional armaments, and admission of new members. He admitted that it would be difficult to reach agreement on any one of these issues, and that it would probably be impossible to hold any such meeting until the question of Chinese representation was settled. Nevertheless, Lie's hope was that progress could be made through intense negotiations in private in the months leading up to the meeting. The meeting itself would thus become an opportunity to implement new agreements and

[19] Ibid.

to announce progress to the world.[20] Holding a periodic meeting was therefore primarily a means to spur on private negotiations between the P5, in the hope that some progress could be made in the long run.

According to Andrew Cordier and Wilder Foote, who were both part of the small group of Lie's advisors who drafted the memorandum in late March 1950,[21] the immediate goal of the memorandum was to "restore the United Nations as a center for negotiations between the West and the Communist countries." Its long-range goal was to remind the member states that their long-term interests lay in "devoting a higher proportion of their available resources of brains, leadership, and power toward increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations as a universal institution for ameliorating conflicts and extending areas of cooperation."[22] The short-term goal thus related directly to easing the Cold War tensions, while the long-term goal was a clear attempt to appeal to the states as 'founders' of the United Nations, and to remind them of their long-term interest in the continued functioning of the organisation.

Lie, by this time highly experienced in the role of secretary-general, decided to employ all the tools at his disposal to promote his idea of a peace plan. He had two audiences in mind, both the governments of the member states, and public opinion. Armed with his memorandum of ten suggestions, Lie decided he would have to seek out the presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers of the permanent Council members (minus China) directly, rather than merely relaying his information through their UN delegations. To this end he set off on a widely publicised 'peace tour' at the end of April, spending nearly a month on the road. A trip to Europe to visit UN offices and attend UN meetings in Paris, Geneva, and The Hague was on the books already, but

[20] "The Resumption of East-West Negotiations in the United Nations," 7 March 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN.
[21] Gjesdal to Lie, 29 March 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN.
[22] Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 296.

now widely publicised stops in Washington DC, London, Prague, and Moscow were added to the itinerary. During April and May Lie discussed his plan with President Harry Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson of the United States, Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin of the United Kingdom, President Vincent Auriol, Prime Minister Georges Bidault, and Foreign Minister Robert Schuman of France, and Prime Minister Josef Stalin, Vice-Premier Vyacheslav Molotov, and Foreign Minister Andrei Vyshinsky of the Soviet Union, as well as other government representatives from those four countries plus Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Czechoslovakia.[23]

Seeking to increase the legitimacy of his proposal, Lie further decided to enlist the support of the executive heads of the specialised agencies of the United Nations, scheduled to meet in Paris in early May as the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).[24] Bringing onboard the leaders of the specialised agencies would "create the widest possible front on a purely international basis," argued Tor Gjesdal, one of Lie's closest advisors, and "the moral value of such a joint action will be indisputable, and ... will awaken sympathy all over the world."[25] Although the ACC had never before issued any political statements, normally limiting itself to administrative matters, because it brought together the executive heads of the various organisations in the UN system, many of them well-known and respected in their own right, Gjesdal argued the ACC could be likened to "an 'international cabinet meeting' on a very high

[23] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 283-316.
[24] The ACC was set up by ECOSOC in 1946. The Committee is chaired by the secretary-general and brings together the directors of the UN's funds, programmes, and specialised agencies. Its first task was to supervise the implementation of relationship agreements with the specialised agencies, some of which like the ILO and ITU had been in operation for decades before the UN was founded, and then to coordinate the policies and programmes of the various UN organisations. In 2001 the ACC was renamed the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). See http://www.unsceb.org/ (accessed 14.04.15).
[25] Gjesdal to Lie, 29 March 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN.

level."[26] On 2-3 May, the twelve executive heads[27] came together in Paris and endorsed the following statement, drafted by Lie's staff:

> The present division of the world and the increasingly serious conflicts of policy among the Great Powers have gravely impaired the prospects for world peace and for raising the standards of living of the peoples of the world. It is of particular concern to the administrative heads of the organizations that these conditions threaten the very basis of their work ... We also believe that it is necessary for all Governments to renew their efforts to conciliate and negotiate the political differences that divide them and obstruct economic and social advancement. Specifically, we believe that it is essential to the future of both the United Nations and the specialized agencies that the present political deadlock in the United Nations be resolved at the earliest possible moment. The peace and wellbeing of all peoples demand from their Governments a great and sustained new effort by the nations of the world to achieve a constructive and durable peace.[28]

Lie recorded his elation with the ACC meeting's support in a letter to his family, noting that "it has never happened before that the administrative chiefs of the specialised agencies of the UN have dared to take a political step," and concluding that it was "the most eventful ACC meeting [he had] ever attended."[29]

Returning from Europe, Lie finally submitted his memorandum to all the UN's member states on 6 June and later placed it on the agenda for the upcoming General Assembly. The secretary-general's suggestions met with mixed responses. The smaller states warmly endorsed Lie's plan, as evidenced in the widespread support for the Assembly resolution asking the various organs of the UN to make note of Lie's proposals and report back on what they were doing to meet those goals.[30] Nine countries

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[26] Ibid.
[27] The meeting, chaired by Lie, was attended by Jaime Torres-Bodet, director-general of UNESCO, David A. Morse, director-general of ILO, Norris E. Dodd, director-general of FAO, Brock Chisholm, director-general of WHO, Edward Warner, president of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation, Eugene R. Black, president of the IBRD, A. N. Overby, representing the managing director of the IMF, F. Blanchard, representing the director-general of the International Refugee Organisation, G. C. Gross, representing the secretary-general of the ITU, Fulke Radice, representing the director of the UPU, and E. Wyndham White, executive secretary of the interim committee of the International Trade Organisation. Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 281-82.
[28] UN press release ORG/135, 4 May 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN.
[29] Lie letter to Hjørdis, Guri, and Mette Lie, and Sissel, Jens-Halvard, and Ragnvald Bratz, 6 May 1950. Letter in the Bratz family's possession. Copy provided by Guri Hjeltnes. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[30] General Assembly resolution 494 (V), 20 Nov 1950.

jointly proposed this resolution, which was adopted by 51 votes in favour, 5 against, and 1 abstention.[31]

The permanent Council members – Lie's primary target – nevertheless expressed some reservations. By this point Lie had no relationship with Nationalist China, and he never attempted to win them over to his ideas. The British Government questioned the usefulness and wisdom of Lie's suggested agenda for a periodic meeting of the Security Council, but realised that "from purely tactical and propaganda considerations we would not wish to be accused of pouring cold water on Mr. Lie's suggestion, thus appearing to share with the Russians the blame for the present deadlock."[32] During Lie's meetings in London, therefore, British representatives were careful to appear positive, so much so that Lie's impression was that Britain actually supported his proposals, and he recorded satisfaction with the meetings in his letters.[33]

Lie's impressions from his first meetings with the French government, on the contrary, were much more negative, as he reported home that France seemed to be "for sale."[34] In Lie's opinion, what French leaders wanted above all else were American weapons, and they would sacrifice UN interests to get them.[35] Lie's impression contrasts sharply with the report from the American embassy in Paris that the French president had given the secretary-general "a very warm welcome and strongly

[31] Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 362. The nine sponsoring countries were Canada, Chile, Colombia, Haiti, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sweden, and Yugoslavia. Individual votes were not recorded, but the five opposing votes are likely to have been the Soviet bloc (the USSR, Ukraine, Belarus, Czechoslovakia, and Poland), while the abstaining state was likely Nationalist China in protest against Lie's position on the Chinese representation issue.
[32] "Brief on Mr. Trygve Lie's proposal for a special meeting of the Security Council," 24 April 1950, FO 371/88391, UKNA.
[33] Lie letter to Hjørdis, Guri, and Mette Lie, and Sissel, Jens-Halvard, and Ragnvald Bratz, 6 May 1950. Letter in the Bratz family's possession. Copy provided by Guri Hjeltnes; Lie letter to Halvard Lange, 3 May 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN.
[34] Lie to Halvard Lange, 3 May 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN.
[35] Lie letter to Hjørdis, Guri, and Mette Lie, and Sissel, Jens-Halvard, and Ragnvald Bratz, 6 May 1950. Letter in the Bratz family's possession. Copy provided by Guri Hjeltnes.

encouraged him to do everything in his power to avert the danger of another war."[36] Likewise, at the end of his second visit to Paris in the latter half of May, foreign minister Schuman expressed general support for the majority of Lie's proposals and told him that "France saw in the UN the only organization that could lead the world to a lasting and stable peace," and would therefore "do whatever it could to end the present unmaintainable conditions."[37]

Like its British ally, the American government was careful not to give Lie either 'yes' or 'no' during their two meetings in Washington DC in April and May.[38] After Lie's publication of the memorandum in early June, however, Secretary of State Acheson stated the United States' reservations against Lie's suggestions, and argued that the real problem was not the question of Chinese representation, as Lie claimed, but the general Soviet attitude towards the United Nations and cooperation with the West. Slipping into Cold War rhetoric, Acheson cautioned "the free nations of the world" to be patient and "carry forward in our own determination to create situations of strength in the free world," as this would be the only way to achieve a lasting settlement with the Soviet Union.[39] Still, Acheson took care to note his support for the secretary-general, saying that it was "proper for Mr. Lie in his capacity as Secretary General of the United Nations to take whatever steps he thinks desirable in his effort to reduce the existing tensions in the world. The Secretary General of the United Nations occupies a unique position and deserves our encouragement and support."[40]

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[36] Neal to Hickerson, 14 June 1950, with attached memo on Lie's visit Paris, 10 May 1950, folder 11, box 1, RG 59 Bureau of UN Affairs, NARA.
[37] Lie note on meeting with Schuman, 20 May 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN.
[38] Acheson memo conversation Truman and Lie, 20 April 1950, *FRUS 1950*, II, 371-373; Price note on Lie's meeting with Truman and Acheson, 20 April 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN; Price note on Lie's meeting with Truman, Acheson, and Hickerson, 29 May 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN; Hickerson memo conversation Acheson, Lie and Price, 29 May 1950, *FRUS 1950*, II, 379-383.
[39] Acheson statement on Lie's report, US State Dept press release no. 599, 7 June 1950, FO 371/88939, UKNA.
[40] Ibid.

Lastly, the Soviet Union, although it criticised Lie's memorandum as "one-sided" and biased in "Anglo-American" favour, agreed to Lie's proposal to hold periodic meetings of the Security Council, and indicated that Lie's ten suggestions could serve as a working paper for deciding on the agenda for such a meeting.[41] Likewise, during the General Assembly's discussions in November 1950, despite introducing an alternative plan with a number of changes, Vyshinsky still expressed his support for "the views expressed in the memorandum to the effect that it is possible to take steps, through the United Nations, to end the so-called 'Cold War,' and promote the strengthening of peace."[42] This is significant because this partial support for Lie's plan came *after* the extension of his term as secretary-general, which the Soviet Union strongly opposed, a topic we will return to in the next section.

Lie officially submitted his proposal to the member states on 6 June, less than three weeks before the outbreak of the Korean War, discussed in the previous chapter. Although this latest instalment in the Cold War condemned the prospects for finding an immediate solution to the question of Chinese representation, and made the holding of a periodic meeting of the Security Council increasingly unlikely, Lie did not abandon the idea of a peace programme. If anything, the Korean War made solving the Cold War even more urgent, as he told reporters at a press conference on 26 June; "The Korean crisis, in my opinion, does not detract from my programme. It only points it up more sharply. It is a symptom, an effect of the deadlock that divides the world … it only serves to support my conviction that a start must be made towards settling the differences between the major Powers."[43]

[41] Lie note on meeting with Stalin, Molotov, and Vyshinsky, 15 May 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN; Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 297-303.
[42] GAOR, 5th session, 309th plenary meeting, 18 Nov 1950.
[43] "'United or Not?' Transcript of Radio-Press Conference on the Korean Crisis and Twenty-Year Peace Program," 26 June 1950, Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 315-22.

Furthermore, although the outbreak of the Korean War, meant that many of Lie's suggestions would have to be postponed, one immediate effect could be observed even in 1950: "My mission received a degree of publicity surpassing anything I had expected or desired," wrote Lie, "Millions of men and women who had previously heard little or nothing of the United Nations now became aware of its vital significance in the struggle for peace, and immediately responded with demonstrations of support."[44] At every stop during the tour, Lie was inundated with flowers, notes, and letters, so that he "had flowers all the time, so many that [he] had to give them away as the journey progressed."[45] Among the many well-wishers were the famous scientist Albert Einstein, who sent Lie a handwritten letter in April 1950 to wish him "luck and success in [his] great task," and to commend Lie as "one of the very few who are able to see clearly in the confusion of our days, and who is not to be daunted by any hinderances or bounds in your desire to help."[46] In London, the secretary-general received a delegation of women and children, bearing flowers, letters, and small notes and drawings.[47]

Such public support was an important goal of Lie's peace plan in and of itself. As the secretary-general wrote in an open letter in reply to the numerous letters he had received in the past few months; "Public understanding, public knowledge, is one of the strongest foundations upon which the United Nations rests ... The United Nations is the only real road to peace. It is a road which you and I – all of us – can build together."[48] Lie's 1950 peace plan thus represents an early example of the secretary-general's important role in promoting the principles and purposes of the United Nations, and educating and mobilising the peoples of the world in the organisation's defence. Lie

[44] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 319.
[45] Lie letter to Hjørdis, Guri, and Mette Lie, and Sissel, Jens-Halvard, and Ragnvald Bratz, 6 May 1950. Letter in the Bratz family's possession. Copy provided by Guri Hjeltnes. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[46] Einstein to Lie, 18 April 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN.
[47] Lie letter to Hjørdis, Guri, and Mette Lie, and Sissel, Jens-Halvard, and Ragnvald Bratz, 6 May 1950. Letter in the Bratz family's possession. Copy provided by Guri Hjeltnes.
[48] UN press release SG/102, 23 June 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN.

therefore set important precedents for the right, and duty, of the secretary-general to serve as an advocate for the UN. This role is linked to that of a 'norm entrepreneur.'[49] It is also an example of how the secretary-general 'represents' the United Nations and serves as a "spokesman for the world interest"[50] or "a living symbol and embodiment of the United Nations."[51] In contrast to the League of Nations secretary-general, the UN secretary-general has come to play a much more public role, a development which started under Lie. At the same time, the secretary-general may have sought to mobilise public support as a way to expand his role's explicit autonomy by trying to build an independent power base with the world's peoples and to use public opinion as a constituency of support of legitimacy separate from the member states.

## 7.4 Trygve Lie's re-election as secretary-general, November 1950

1950 was an eventful year for secretary-general Lie. The two previous sections have discussed his attempts to solve the question of Chinese representation and to promote an ambitious twenty-year peace plan to end the Cold War. The previous chapter discussed Lie's strongly principled defence of the UN Charter in relation to the Korean War in June 1950. Lie's seeming crowning moment came in November 1950 when the General Assembly re-appointed him to the office of UN secretary-general for a new three-year period. Yet if we look closer at the re-election process we discover that most states were merely lukewarm supporters of Lie, and that the re-election widened the rift between the secretary-general and the Soviet Union which had appeared in June 1950. From this point onwards, the Soviet Union and its allies refused to recognise Lie as a legitimate secretary-general, and he was therefore unable to function effectively in his post.

[49] Johnstone, "Secretary-General as norm entrepreneur."
[50] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 88.
[51] Kille, "Moral Authority," 11.

It was not immediately obvious that Lie would get a second term as secretary-general. Although over time this has become something of a norm, for the first secretary-general there were no precedents or expectations surrounding reappointment for a second term. Both the UN's Preparatory Commission and the first General Assembly session in 1946 had left the question open, the General Assembly merely deciding that the first secretary-general should be appointed for a five-year term, "the appointment being open at the end of that period for a further five-year term."[52]

The most obvious obstacle in Lie's way in 1950 was the opposition of the Soviet Union. Because of his strong principled stand on the Korean War, in diametrical opposition to the Soviet Union's views of that particular conflict, the Soviet Union, by the start of the General Assembly in September 1950, was strongly opposed to renewing Lie's term as secretary-general. The Soviet Politburo on 10 September instructed its UN delegation to "raise objections and vote against the reelection of Trygve Lie to the [position] of the UN Secretary-General." [53] Likewise, the Chinese Nationalist government were deeply unhappy with Lie's attempts to unseat them from the Security Council, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and would likely oppose his re-election. Since both the Soviet Union and China possessed a veto over the Security Council's recommendation of a secretary-general, their opposition made Lie's reappointment highly unlikely.[54] Nevertheless, at the start of the Assembly Lie thought the Soviet Union might still be open to voting in his favour, or at least to abstain, because the delegation gave him no indications of hostility upon their arrival in New York.[55] As late as May 1950, Lie had still been the Soviet Union's preferred candidate, because its officials believed it would be impossible to come to agreement with the Western states

[52] General Assembly resolution 11 (I), 24 Jan 1946. See also Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, PC/20, 23 Dec 1945, 81.
[53] Quoted in Gaiduk, *Divided Together*, 178.
[54] See discussion on election procedure in section 3.5.
[55] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 370-71.

on anyone better than Lie, and Lie, despite his flaws, had been 'friendly' towards the Soviet Union on a number of occasions.[56] This indicates that Lie's actions on the Korean War were the decisive factor in swaying Moscow against reappointing him for a new term as secretary-general.

In addition to Soviet and Chinese opposition during the Assembly session in 1950, earlier British and American policies, as well as Lie's own opinions on the matter, would seem to make his re-election appear unlikely. As discussed throughout the earlier chapters, the British government had been unhappy with Lie's performance as secretary-general since 1946, and Foreign Office files are riddled with snide and derogatory remarks about Lie's personality and abilities. During the fourth Assembly in the latter half of 1949, rumours about possible replacements for Lie circulated freely among the assembled delegates, and prompted an outflow of negative remarks about Lie in the British Foreign Office. The UK's permanent representative to the UN, Sir Alexander Cadogan hoped Lie would not be re-elected "for I really think Lie is rather a disaster."[57] Hector McNeill, a junior minister in the Foreign Office, agreed; "like everyone else I have no use for [Lie]. He is cowardly, inept and vain, and has brought no ability or morality to his job. One would not want to see him again Secretary General."[58] The Americans too, had discussed the possibility of replacing Lie, and thought it might be desirable to establish the precedent that the secretary-general should serve only one term, at least in the initial years.[59]At one point some circles in the State Department even dreamt about the possibility that Ralph Bunche – then a director in the

[56] As indicated by two memorandums written by Arkadij Sobolev and Aleksej Rostsjin in April 1950 referred to by Dølvik, "The Soviet Union and UNSG Lie," [in Norwegian] 194-96; and Gaiduk, *Divided Together*, 177. Lie also reports that Vyshinksy confirmed to him during their meeting in May 1950 that the Soviet Union would support his re-election. See Mrs Berntzen's note of lunch between Lie and Vyshinsky, 15 May 1950, PA-1407/D/L0029, NAN; Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 368.
[57] Cadogan to Jebb, 11 Aug 1949, FO 371/78794, UKNA.
[58] McNeill minute, 1 Sept 1949, FO 371/78794, UKNA.
[59] Hall comment on memorandum of conversation with Aghnides, 23 May 1949, folder 7, box 16, USUN 1030E, NARA.

UN Trusteeship Division, formerly of the US State Department, celebrated mediator of armistice agreements between Israel and Palestine, and a prominent African-American – might be acceptable to the Soviet Union because of his race (!).[60] Thus by early 1950, the support of the United States and the United Kingdom for Lie's re-election was far from guaranteed.

Even more importantly, Lie himself had emphatically declared that he would not be a candidate for re-election, and that he desired nothing more than to retire and return to Norway upon completing his five-year term in February 1951. At a press conference in December 1949 he stated as much; "When I have completed my term of service as Secretary-General, I shall be very happy to have been able to serve the United Nations for five years, and I am not a candidate for re-appointment."[61] Lie even bought a new house for himself and his family by the Oslo Fjord, and told people how much he was looking forward to returning "to his beloved Oslo."[62] Note that Lie by this point had lived outside Norway for ten years, apart from the short eight-month period between the end of WW2 and his election as secretary-general, and his desire to return home may well have been genuine. Nevertheless, many state representatives continued to believe that Lie ultimately desired a second term, and indeed saw his 'peace tour' in May 1950 as proof of an election campaign.[63]

All these things considered – Lie's declaration that he wanted to retire, Britain being eager to replace him with someone else, China's opposition because of Lie's initiative to seat the Communist government in the UN, and the Soviet Union's opposition because of the Korean War – we would expect Lie's term to have ended in February 1951, and the Security Council and the General Assembly to have elected

[60] Salt to Jebb, 1 Oct 1949, FO 371/78794, UKNA.
[61] UN Press Release SG/29, 16 Dec 1949, UNDHL.
[62] Jebb to Dixon, 10 July 1950, FO 371/88448, UKNA.
[63] Parrott minute, 2 June 1950, FO 371/88391, UKNA.

some other compromise candidate. Perhaps we might have seen an earlier entry for Dag Hammarskjöld or some other Swede? (Gunnary Myrdal was too controversial, and would have been vetoed by the United States and Britain). However, this was not to happen, and instead the General Assembly on 1 November 1950 re-appointed Lie for another three years.[64] What had happened?

The answer in short is Korea. Just as the Korean War had changed the Soviet Union's opinion of Lie as secretary-general, so the Korean War too strengthened the United States' desire to see Lie re-elected. Despite earlier hesitation about re-electing Lie, in April 1950 the US State Department reached the same conclusion independently being reached by the Soviet Foreign Office at the same time – Lie was the only candidate likely to be acceptable to both sides, and it would probably not be possible to replace him with someone better.[65] The United States also informed Lie in June 1950 that he was their candidate for re-election.[66] Lie's strong and principled defence of the UN Charter and his active support for the US-led UN-intervention to aid South Korea, demonstrated Lie's usefulness to the United States, and confirmed them in their decision to see him re-appointed.

Moreover, the United States decided on principle to support Lie because the Soviet Union wanted to get rid of him. As Secretary of State Acheson explained on 24 October; "We were taking a position on principle; we could not permit the Soviet Union to use its veto to punish Mr. Lie for his position on Korea."[67] Lie also decided to accept re-appointment because no one state (the Soviet Union) should be allowed to determine UN policies, and because he didn't want to leave the United Nations in the middle of its challenges in Korea. As he later wrote in his memoirs:

[64] General Assembly resolution 492 (V), 1 Nov 1950.
[65] Draft position paper, 18 April 1950, *FRUS 1950*, II, 87-89.
[66] Lie note, "The appointment as Secretary-General," November 1950, PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN.
[67] "Minutes of meeting on President Truman's Train, New York," 24 Oct 1950, *FRUS 1950*, III, 158-159.

> With the Assembly's vote returning me to office, the immediate political objectives had been won: United Nations action in Korea had been reaffirmed, the continuity of United Nations administration had been assured, and the independent position of the Secretary-General had been preserved against the threats and pressures of a great power.[68]

After some discussion back and forth, Britain and France acquiesced to the American desire to prolong Lie's period, while China agreed to abstain in the interest of isolating the Soviet Union in its opposition against Lie and the Korean intervention.

This left a deadlock in the Security Council, however, as the Soviet Union declared it would veto Lie[69] while the United States would veto anyone not Lie. President Truman informed the UN delegation that the US Government "were prepared to make a real fight on this matter and that we would insist on the election of Mr. Lie. We were prepared to *threaten* to use the veto and to go further and *use* the veto itself if that became necessary."[70] The Council held a number of private meetings during October, but in the end was unable to agree on any one candidate. The question was therefore transferred to the General Assembly without the recommendation called for by article 97 of the UN Charter. Nonetheless, the majority of the General Assembly decided "that the present Secretary-General shall be continued in office for a period of three years."[71] The resolution passed by 46 votes in favour, 5 against (the Soviet bloc), and 8 abstentions (China because of Lie's position on the question of Chinese representation, the Arab states over Lie's support for Israel, and Australia for legal reasons).[72]

Lie's re-election therefore came about mainly at the behest of the United States, who at this time still commanded a majority in the General Assembly. The high number

[68] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 375, 85.
[69] Summary record of 510th meeting of the Security Council, 12 Oct 1950, PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN.
[70] "Minutes of meeting on President Truman's Train, New York," 24 Oct 1950, *FRUS 1950*, III, 158-159. Italic in original.
[71] General Assembly resolution 492 (V), 1 Nov 1950.
[72] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 385.

of abstentions, however, indicates the internal struggle in the anti-Soviet bloc over whether or not to go along with the American wish to re-elect Lie. For some states Lie was unacceptable politically, while others objected to the procedure of the United States pushing its will through over the objection of the Security Council. As British and French hesitation about following the American plan revels, several members of the majority still held objections against Lie, yet in the interest of unity they agreed to vote in his favour.

The re-appointment of Lie to a second term as secretary-general by the General Assembly without a recommendation from the Security Council thus aligns with the general trend at the time of the General Assembly assuming powers previously reserved for the Security Council, and the Western states' attempt to bypass the deadlock in the Council. This was another example of how a vacuum effect operates; when one actor is unable to perform its tasks, someone else will take over either voluntarily or by force. The fifth Assembly session also passed the 'uniting for peace' resolution on 3 November,[73] and the American UN ambassador, Senator Warren Austin, explicitly recognised the continuity of the various resolutions on Korea, the extension of Lie's term, and the 'uniting for peace' resolution in a letter he sent to Lie on 7 November. Austin called Lie's re-election "an integral part of the gains made by the United Nations beginning with June 25, 1950 ... which gives promise for the future ... to consolidate the unity of the non-communist members of the United Nations."[74] Indeed, the United States would increasingly in this period view the United Nations as a means to isolate the Soviet Union, something even its closest allies protested against,[75] arguing that "primary emphasis should be placed upon the UN as a world forum for discussion and

[73] General Assembly resolution 377 (V), 3 Nov 1950.
[74] Austin letter to Lie, 7 Nov 1950, PA-1407/D/L0013, NAN.
[75] Gaiduk, *Divided Together*, 197.

for east-west rapprochement."[76] This was precisely what Lie had sought to do throughout his first four years in office, culminating in the twenty-year peace plan in early 1950. Ironically, his re-election served as a step in the opposite direction towards turning the United Nations into an arena for the Cold War struggle.

Despite the symbolic importance of Lie's re-election as standing on the principles of the UN Charter, in the long term this was no victory for the secretary-general. The Soviet Union declared the re-election illegal, and henceforth refused to recognise Lie as secretary-general or to work with his office. Already during the General Assembly discussions, the Soviet representative warned that if Lie were reappointed, "the Government of the Soviet Union ... will have no dealings with him and will refuse to regard him as the Secretary-General."[77] Once Lie's original term expired on 1 February 1951, the Soviet government followed up on its threat, and thereafter addressed all communications to 'the Secretariat' rather than Lie, and also refused to invite him to their social events, or to reply to Lie's invitations to them.[78] Therefore, as Lie later admitted, the benefits of the principled victory in his re-election would have to be

> weighed against the serious impairment in the usefulness of my office that followed. The Soviet boycott limited my activities to a small part of the political role intended for the Secretary-General by the Charter. It was not a happy state of affairs, and I sincerely hope that future Secretaries-General of the United Nations will be spared such tribulations.[79]

The Soviet boycott thus directly contributed to Lie's decision to resign from office a mere two years later, as will be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

[76] Memcon (Meade, Hickerson, Allen), 26 Feb 1952, *FRUS 1952-54*, III, 1.
[77] GAOR, 5th session, 296th meeting, 31 Oct 1950.
[78] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 408.
[79] Ibid., 385.

## 7.5 The independent civil service under threat from McCarthyism, 1950-1953

From an apparent highpoint of Lie's career as secretary-general when the General Assembly extended his term for a further three years in November 1950, merely two years later in November 1952, he announced his resignation from the office and asked the members states to find a replacement. At the time, Lie was under pressure from many quarters. The American process of McCarthyism caused tension in the secretary-general's relations with the UN's host state, and also lost Lie the support of the Secretariat staff as they resented him for not defending their interests. This section examines the process of McCarthyism and Lie's response to it, while the next section looks at his resignation from office.

Forever connected with the name of US Senator Joseph McCarthy, the American hunt for communist spies hit the UN Secretariat with full force in 1952. Secretary-general Lie had already in 1946 asked the American government for help in screening American applicants for the Secretariat,[80] but Washington said no despite repeated pleas for help from the United Nations over the next few years. Assistant secretary-general Byron Price outlined Lie's thinking to the US government in June 1949: 1) There should not be spies of any nationality in the Secretariat as that would be contrary to article 100; 2) No American communists should be allowed to work in the Secretariat, only communists from communists countries was appropriate; 3) The United Nations did not have the ability to investigate the background of applicants, could the FBI kindly help screen all American applicants, "or at least to indicate informally whether the [FBI] knows anything of a derogatory nature regarding such

[80] In 1946 when the UN had to hire thousands of staff from scratch it asked for help with recruitment from all member governments, and many were willing to help, but the US did not, and the majority of lower level staff were hired from the US simply because of the location of the UN headquarters.

applicants"?[81] Once again the US government turned down Lie's request for help, before agreeing to an informal procedure for sharing information in September 1949.[82]

Over the next few years, as US Senate hearings created the impression that the United Nations had been overrun by Communist spies, and morale in the Secretariat plummeted, Lie reluctantly initiated harsh policies, including terminating staff contracts, because he wanted to retain the United States' support for the United Nations. During 1950 and 1951 the secretary-general ended some contracts because he claimed the employees had engaged in undermining activities. The fired employees complained to the Administrative Tribunal, but the tribunal supported the secretary-general, and the Assembly agreed that the secretary-general should be allowed to end contracts without any other reason than this 'being in the UN's interest.'[83] During the autumn of 1952 two competing US hearings made matters worse for the United Nations. Accusations of communist spies in the United Nations resurfaced, and some American Secretariat staff called to testify pleaded their Fifth Amendment rights. The subpoenaed witnesses only represented 1% of the staff in the Secretariat, but in the public imaginary the impression that the United Nations was full of communist spies continued to spread, and the morale of the Secretariat suffered.[84] Lie decided once more to rely on legal help, and asked an independent jurist committee to advise him on whether he was allowed to end the contracts of those who had refused to testify. In November the jurists supported Lie in this; refusing to testify was a breach of the staff regulations, and Lie would be within his rights to dismiss them. The secretary-general immediately sent a letter to the nine employees in question, giving them four hours to accept to testify again. One of them resigned, and the other eight refused to give up their constitutional rights, and were

[81] Price memorandum for the files, 28 June 1949, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.
[82] Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 315; Gaiduk, *Divided Together*, n. 28, 230; Hjeltnes, "McCarthyism and the UN," 37-38.
[83] Hjeltnes, "McCarthyism and the UN," 39-40.
[84] Ibid., 38-39.

immediately fired by Lie.[85] Eventually, in January 1953, after a US presidential executive decree, secretary-general Lie opened up the UN headquarters to the FBI to interview and fingerprint all US nationals employed at the United Nations.

Critics argued that Lie thereby surrendered to the US government, and that he should not have allowed the FBI to enter UN premises. As one of the dismissed Secretariat staff later said: "by his conduct in this affair, Trygve Lie compromised the integrity and independence of the international civil service."[86] Through his actions, Lie accepted a reduction in the secretary-general's autonomy in the administration of the Secretariat – a contraction of his role from that envisioned in articles 100 and 101 of the UN Charter. Others argue that the secretary-general did not have much choice in the matter.[87] He could probably have gained support in the General Assembly if he had opposed the FBI's entry into the Secretariat and had defended his staff's judicial rights, but this would have lost him the support of the United States, and he had already lost support of the Soviet Union over the Korean War and his re-election in 1950.

In addition to his desire to retain the support of the United States in difficult circumstances, Lie truly believed he was doing the right thing by cooperating with the FBI. As noted previously, Lie believed it was contrary to article 100 for any Secretariat staff to spy for another government, whether their own or not.[88] Furthermore, by cooperating with the FBI the secretary-general hoped to speed up the process and allow conditions in the Secretariat to return to normal as soon as possible. Lie welcomed the presidential decree and the FBI investigation as it offered the accused staff members of a procedure by which they could clear their name, and also give Lie the help he had

[85] Ibid., 41.
[86] Quoted in Shirley Hazzard, *Countenance of Truth: The United Nations and the Waldheim Case* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990), 26. See also Luard, *History of the United Nations*, 356; Gaiduk, *Divided Together*, 202.
[87] Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 320.
[88] Price memorandum for the files, 28 June 1949, PA-1407/D/L0014, NAN.

asked for all along, by providing him the information he needed "to make the right decisions in the building of a strong and independent Secretariat of the highest competence and integrity."[89] In Lie's opinion, therefore, he sought information from the United States regarding American staff members in the interest of building up a strong and independent Secretariat.

The British UN delegation supported Lie's decision,[90] as did a number of other states as expressed in the Assembly's resolution of 1 April 1953 which "*expresse[d] its confidence* that the Secretary-General will conduct personnel policy with these considerations [outlined in the report the secretary-general had submitted to the Assembly] in mind," and asked the member states "to assist the Secretary-General in the discharge of his responsibilities as chief administrative officer of the United Nations."[91] The General Assembly thus supported the actions Lie had taken in seeking information about the staff from the national governments in the interest of the integrity of the Secretariat.

Despite widespread support for Lie's activities in the General Assembly after the fact, the episode still left a lingering stain on Lie's legacy. It also poisoned the secretary-general's relationship with his staff in the Secretariat, and provided the immediate context for his decision to resign from office in November 1952. In a longer term perspective, Lie's attempts to cooperate with the United States illustrates the difficulties of the secretary-general in managing the UN Secretariat, ostensibly the one task where the UN Charter gave him firm control by designating him "chief administrative officer" in article 97 and because of the independence of the Secretariat laid down in articles 100 and 101. Ironically, the secretary-general has come to enjoy

[89] Lie, "Statement on Personnel Policy before the General Assembly," 10 March 1953, reprinted in Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 488-504.
[90] Barros, *Trygve Lie*, 319.
[91] General Assembly resolution 708 (VII), 1 April 1953. Italic in original.

less autonomy in administrative matters than he does in many political areas. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, secretary-general in the 1980s, lamented that it was "ironic and unfortunate that, while there has been a dramatic rise in the Secretary-General's political responsibilities, his powers in the administrative field have been steadily eroded over the years."[92] Already in 1946, the P5 had limited the secretary-general's autonomy by deciding that they would each appoint one assistant secretary-general each.[93] Lie's acquiescence to American screening of all US applicants to the Secretariat – later continued by Hammarskjöld and all following secretaries-general until 1986[94] – contributed to the position where member governments exercise considerable influence over the appointments in the Secretariat. Combined with the control exercised over the organisation's budget and finances through the General Assembly, this means that the secretary-general enjoys less autonomy in administration than his title would suggest.

## 7.6 Trygve Lie's resignation, November 1952

Eventually the steady loss of support from member states on both sides of the Cold War divide and from UN staff became too much for Lie to bear. On 10 November 1952, more than a year before the end of his term on 1 Feb 1954, Lie announced that he wished to resign from the office of secretary-general, and asked the General Assembly to start the search for his replacement.[95] Lie's announcement came as a surprise to most people, because although he had decided to resign as early as the summer of 1952, and had informed Lester Pearson of Canada, serving as President of the General Assembly, and a few others at the beginning of the Assembly session, those in the know had kept

[92] Pérez de Cuéllar, "The Role of the UN Secretary-General," 137.
[93] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 45-49; Gordenker, *UN Secretary-General and Secretariat*, 14.
[94] Hazzard, *Countenance of Truth*, 28.
[95] Pearson to Lie, 10 Nov 1952. Letter quoted in full in GAOR, 7th session, 392nd plenary meeting, 10 Nov 1952.

Lie's secret well.[96] Coming at the height of the Cold War, with UN forces still fighting in the Korean War, and with the UN Secretariat under tremendous pressure from the American search for Communist spies, it would appear that Lie had decided to abandon his post and give up. In the opinion of the US State Department Lie's "resignation could not have come at a worse time in the history of the United Nations."[97] As one friend wrote to Lie in a letter of 12 November, in the interest of maintaining a firm stand on Korea, it was "of the utmost importance that you continue in your position as secretary-general. This issue, in my opinion, is so vital that you're not allowed to take personal circumstances into account."[98]

In Lie's opinion, by submitting his resignation at this time, he was doing exactly the opposite. He wasn't abandoning the United Nations, but giving it the best chance of survival and growth in a difficult situation; "This is no desertion of the colors, and it doesn't mean that I'm leaving a sinking ship. I believe in the United Nations," he wrote to his daughter. "But the Organization doesn't need me in order to continue its work for peace and security."[99] The main reason behind his decision, Lie argued, was his earnest hope that it "may help the United Nations to save the peace and to serve better the cause of freedom and progress for all mankind."[100] A new secretary-general, with the support of all the P5, "may be more helpful than I can be,"[101] and might be in a position "to achieve more than me in the political field ... Even if his chances in this tense situation are slim, in my opinion even the smallest chance must be taken."[102] Overall, Lie argued, the secretary-general of the United Nations "was dispensable, and should be replaced by a new Secretary-General who could enter the work fresh and with fewer fixed ideas

[96] Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 483; Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 406-07, 12.
[97] Memocon (Hickerson, Malik, Ludlow), 17 Nov 1952, *FRUS 1952-54*, III, 430.
[98] Terje Wold to Lie, 12 Nov 1952, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[99] Lie to Sissel Bratz, Nov 1952. Letter quoted in Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 414.
[100] GAOR, 7th session, 392nd plenary meeting, 10 Nov 1952.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Lie to Sverre Iversen, 16 Dec 1952, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.

about persons and issues."[103] Furthermore, Lie hoped his resignation might provide the "shock treatment" necessary for the organisation, "to bring the member states to reflect on the situation"[104] and "understand my difficult position."[105] He argued that he had wanted to leave already in 1950, and although he had then accepted re-appointment in the interest of continuity in the UN's policies with regard to the Korean War, now that there was the prospect of a negotiated armistice in Korea, it would do no harm if the secretary-general resigned.[106] Likewise, 1952 was a better time to replace the secretary-general than 1950, because the new permanent headquarters were nearly completed, and the Secretariat was better organised and more experienced.[107]

In private Lie explained some of the more personal reasons why he wanted to resign and leave his exposed post at the head of the UN Secretariat. Ever since the start of his extended term in February 1951, the Soviet Union had insisted that he was occupying the office illegally, and refused to have anything to do with him. Had these insults and rule-breaking from the Soviet Union and its allies been everything, Lie claimed, he might have gone on until the end of his term in 1954: "I should have been quite willing to stay until the end of my term had it been simply a question of continuing to bear with the many attacks upon me by the Soviet Union and its supporters."[108] But the worse part was that "for more than two years I've asked for solidarity from the member states, but they have always urged me not to make an issue out of the Russians' sidestepping of all rules and regulations for the various organs. My patience had to end one day."[109] Furthermore, the secretary-general and Secretariat were under attack not only from the Communist states, but also from "conservative and

[103] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 411.
[104] Lie to Johan Falkberget, 12 Dec 1952, Brevs. 434, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[105] Lie to Sverre Iversen, 16 Dec 1952, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[106] GAOR, 7th session, 392nd plenary meeting, 10 Nov 1952.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Lie, "Statement on Personnel Policy before the General Assembly," 10 March 1953, reprinted in Cordier and Foote, *Public papers, vol. 1: Trygve Lie*, 488-504.
[109] Lie to Gunnar Jahn, 19 Nov 1952, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.

reactionary isolationists in America."[110] In a letter to the Norwegian prime minister in December 1952, Lie summed up the situation and his reasons for resigning:

> I felt it my duty to tell that I could no longer go on. The burdens and the responsibilities became too heavy to bear. I was as alone as I have ever been before. Never did anyone come to my defence or aid. On the one hand I had to keep a straight and constructive course to save what could be saved of the UN and trust in the UN. But when for the past two years I have had to fight against the Communist member states on the one hand and American conservatism bordering on fascism on the other, then you can comprehend the irreconcilable situation. In between these two opposing poles I've also seen some permanent delegations which seemingly always are on the lookout to see if any mistakes are made. Of course mistakes will be made when decisions are taken in critical and difficult times, and this always brings out the belligerent critics. Furthermore, it's no fun when people start discussing your replacement two years before the end of your contract. Perhaps I shouldn't let this get to me, because here in America I have gotten used to the election campaign for the next president stating the day after the election of the new one. But I am still only human.[111]

Immediately following Lie's statement that he wanted to resign and return to Norway, rumours spread that Lie's actual motive was to obtain a fresh mandate and to be asked by the permanent five to stay on.[112] Even so, this would have been a 'fresh start' for the United Nations, and would only have been possible if P5 had come together and agreed to prolong Lie's period – thus evidencing exactly the renewed East-West co-operation Lie was hoping to facilitate. Even in resigning, we can therefore see a consistency with Lie's earlier opinions on the role of the secretary-general as playing an important role in building bridges between the great powers, and in trying to overcome the Cold War.[113]

Some contemporary observers did note the selfless aspects of Lie's resignation. During the General Assembly meeting where Dag Hammarskjöld was elected secretary-general, many delegates offered their thanks and tribute to Lie's seven years of service to the United Nations. The Iranian delegate praised his decision to resign from office as "a gesture of self-denial" which showed Lie's "courage, honesty and devotion to the

[110] Lie to Sverre Iversen, 16 Dec 1952, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[111] Lie to Oscar Torp, 16 Dec 1952, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author's translation from Norwegian.
[112] Hjeltnes, "McCarthyism and the UN," 49.
[113] See section 6.1 for discussion on Lie's views on the Cold War and the role of the secretary-general.

cause of peace and the United Nations."[114] The Peruvian delegate further pointed out that Lie had "crowned his career in an eminently honourable way" with his decision, because "resignation from such a high, advantageous and influential position is in itself a mark of nobility of character, since power is a thing with men are most reluctant to give up."[115] Despite such professions of thanks and goodwill, however, the fact remained that Lie had resigned from office because he had lost the support of the member states. This put a further stain on Lie's legacy as the only secretary-general ever to resign from office. Yet the circumstances also illustrate the impossibility of a secretary-general functioning properly in his role when he no longer enjoyed the trust or support of the UN's member states – when they no longer recognised him as legitimately 'representing' the UN.

## 7.7 Conclusion

Throughout his seven years at the United Nations, as this thesis' chapters have shown, Lie would frequently be accused over overstepping the bounds of his role. Unperturbed, the secretary-general continued the course of action which he saw as fulfilling the duties of his role – strong and principled defence of the UN Charter, urging unity between the member states, and ensuring the survival of the organisation. But in November 1952 the pressure became too strong to bear, and Lie resigned from office. The events in this chapter ranged from the high-point of Lie's career in 1950 to the low-point of his resignation amid mounting criticism.

Did Lie actually overstep his role? Did he push too far? The Soviet Union and China definitely thought so. From January 1950, Lie campaigned to have the PRC seated in the Security Council in place of the Nationalist Chinese incumbent. The

[114] Entezam (Iran), GAOR, 7th session, 423rd plenary mtg., 7 April 1953.
[115] Belaunde (Peru), ibid.

Nationalist government quite naturally took offence, and thereafter maintained the bare minimum of relations with Lie. The secretary-general was lucky that the Chinese government remained reliant on the United States, and therefore acquiesced to the American desire to see Lie re-elected by agreeing to abstain rather than veto. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, felt no such pressure to conform. Because of Lie's stand in favour of the US-led UN-intervention in Korea in June 1950, discussed in chapter 6, Moscow strongly opposed Lie's re-election for a second term. Yet the United States was able to circumvent the Security Council, and the Soviet veto, by inducing the General Assembly to extend Lie's original term by three years. The circumstance of his re-election sealed Lie's fate with the Soviet government. From that point on the Soviet Union and its allies outright refused to recognise Lie as a legitimate secretary-general, and cut off all official and private contact.

Britain and France had all along been uneasy about Lie, and would have been happy to see him replaced by someone else in 1950. France had never taken to Lie because of his lack of French, but like China, was reliant on its Western allies for aid, and was mostly happy to go along with Anglo-American policies. British Foreign Office files are riddled with derogatory remarks about Lie's personality and ability, yet Britain too agreed to go along with the American plan to give Lie a second term in November 1950. As the case of these two Western states illustrate, the seeming support expressed by the majority behind Lie's re-election was lukewarm at best, yet they were happy to go along with the United States' wish. This did not bode well for the remainder of Lie's tenure.

The United States' support for Lie also stood on shaky foundations. The Western superpower was annoyed with Lie for his support for the Communist Chinese government against its ally in Taiwan. And although the American government strongly

supported Lie's re-election, this was mainly done in the interest of scoring a propaganda victory against the Soviet Union. When the process of McCarthyism reached the UN Secretariat with full force, the US government did little to alleviate Lie's situation. Both President Truman and secretary-general Lie were victims of this unrestrained witch-hunt of the conservative right.[116] Although Lie had angered member states earlier, in this instance he did push too far and alienated too many of his constituencies at the same time. By November 1952, Lie found himself abandoned by all the P5, as well as the staff of the UN Secretariat, and he took the logical conclusion of that in his decision to resign.

Lastly, Lie's ambitious 1950 peace plan also revealed the limitations of the secretary-general's role and weakening member state support for Lie. The peace plan did arouse public support for the plan itself and for the United Nations, yet no actual results came from Lie's proposal. No periodic meeting of the Security Council was called, and although the General Assembly passed a resolution endorsing Lie's ideas, all this led to was a few more reports over the next couple of years. Overall, the peace plan failed to bring about any sort of lessening of Cold War tensions, which had been Lie's goal. No state disputed the secretary-general's right to make such a proposal and travel the world to sell his ideas, and in this he strengthened his role as an 'advocate' for global issues, but this did not mean that they would heed the secretary-general's advice.

Where Lie's attempts to push his political role reached its limit in this period, the secretary-general's administrative role actually contracted. Lie's acquiescence to US government pressure to screen all US nationals in the Secretariat represented one step back from the autonomous administrative role envisioned in the UN Charter. Thus the chapter has explored both ways the UN secretary-general's role may be transformed

[116] As argued by Hjeltnes, "McCarthyism and the UN."

from ‘administrative’ to ‘political’ – by broadening its scope and autonomy in political matters, and by limiting that scope and autonomy in administrative matters.

This chapter has explored how the UN secretary-general ‘represents’ the United Nations. With his peace plan in 1950, an important goal for the secretary-general was to mobilise public opinion and the world’s governments in support of the United Nations. In this instance, he served as a ‘spokesman for world interest,’ embodying and channelling the will of the people for peace, against the UN member states. Lie’s goal was to enlist the support of the UN’s peoples for his attempt to remind the states of their responsibilities and interests as ‘founders’ of the United Nations. The role of the UN secretary-general as ‘representing’ the United Nations was further visible through Lie’s function as a focal point for the UN response in Korea. This provided an important reason behind his re-election. Secretary-general Lie ‘represented’ the UN’s policy in Korea, and the majority of the UN’s member states which supported that policy, felt compelled to re-elect him as secretary-general to preserve their unity in the face of Soviet opposition.

Yet the chapter also served to highlight the limitations of the secretary-general’s role and showed what happens when he is no longer seen to ‘represent’ the UN. When Lie lost the support of the member states – when they no longer saw him as ‘representing’ the UN – he was unable to continue to function in his role. Lie succeeded in mobilising public support with his 1950 peace plan, but public support cannot compensate for lack of support or outright hostility from the member states, particularly not among the P5. Despite the opening phrase of the Charter, the United Nations was founded as an organisation of member states, and the member states remain the secretary-general’s ultimate constituency.

# 8 Exploring the Development of the UN Secretary-General's Role's Beyond Lie, 1953-2015

"The man does not count; the institution does."[1]

Dag Hammarskjöld, 1960

Since Lie left the UN in April 1953, seven other men have served as secretary-general. These men varied in personality and approach to the office, but an examination of their tenures reveals a number of continuities that serve to highlight the importance of understanding the UN secretary-general as performing a 'role' within the 'institution' of the UN.

In concluding the thesis, this chapter opens up its temporal scope by briefly discussing how the role of the UN secretary-general developed under Lie's successors. The next chapter then synthesises the main empirical and theoretical findings, and indicate ways of applying them to study the role of executive heads in international organisations more broadly.

## 8.1 Dag Hammarskjöld, 1953-1961

Hammarskjöld is widely praised as the model of a UN secretary-general. "Hammarskjöld did most to shape and define the institution, by his own intellectual appreciation of its possibilities and by his conduct in office," Tharoor stated matter-of-factly.[2] Urquhart called Hammarskjöld "undeniably the most remarkable of the Secretaries-General so far appointed,"[3] while Stahn and Melber praised his unique

[1] GAOR, 15th session, 883rd plenary mtg., 3 Oct 1960.
[2] Shashi Tharoor, "The Role of the Secretary-General," in *The Adventure of Peace: Dag Hammarskjöld and the Future of the UN*, ed. Sten Ask and Anna Mark-Jungkvist (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 147.
[3] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 19.

combination of vision and realism.[4] An examination of Hammarskjöld's time in office reveals that, indeed, a number of precedents were set during this period, but also that some of the expansion of the role happened as a result of institutional 'pull' and not solely because of 'push' by Hammarskjöld.

The first instance where Hammarskjöld has been credited with playing an important political role was his negotiations to seek the release of a group of American airmen who were held captured by the People's Republic of China (PRC) after their plane went down on Chinese territory during the Korean War. In December 1954 the General Assembly asked Hammarskjöld to negotiate the release of the airmen.[5] Hammarskjöld's involvement with this question was thus not at his own initiative, but rather at the request of the member states through the General Assembly. Nevertheless, Hammarskjöld defined his own approach to the negotiations, and this episode established the so-called 'Peking formula' "allowing the Secretary-General a free hand in the implementation of a peace and security mandate, once called in by a political organ."[6] The 'Peking formula' has later come to represent the secretary-general's independent right to engage in negotiations with the member states, and it is seen as the foremost example of Hammarskjöld's 'quiet diplomacy.'[7] At Hammarskjöld's request, the Assembly resolution asked the secretary-general to act 'in the name of the United Nations' and to use 'the means most appropriate in his judgment' for persuading the Chinese government to release the airmen. These two phrases enhanced the independence of the secretary-general in the negotiations, and Hammarskjöld further highlighted the independent nature of his negotiations when he went on to request a

[4] Carsten Stahn and Henning Melber, "Human security and ethics in the spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld: An introduction," in *Peace Diplomacy, Global Justice and International Agency: Rethinking Human Security and Ethics in the Spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld*, ed. Carsten Stahn and Henning Melber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 2-3.
[5] General Assembly resolution 906 (IX), 10 Dec 1954.
[6] Cockayne and Malone, "Relations with the Security Council," 72. See also Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 100-05.
[7] Fröhlich, *Political Ethics*, 132.

meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Chou En-lai without any explicit reference to the Assembly resolutions.[8] China decided to release the American airmen in August 1955, and US President Dwight Eisenhower publicly thanked the secretary-general for the part he had played in seeking the release of the airmen.[9] "This achievement revealed Hammarskjöld as a world resource in resolving critical international problems during the Cold War," Urquhart later concluded.[10] The episode reinforced and refined the secretary-general's role as a mediator and negotiator, building further on the work Lie had done to stake a claim for the secretary-general for an independent right to negotiate.

Hammarskjöld established a second important precedent which expanded the role of the secretary-general in relations to peace and security with his central part in the formation of the 'first' UN peacekeeping mission in 1956. Although the UN had sent observer forces to Palestine in 1948 and Kashmir in 1949, the principles underlying peacekeeping missions were first elaborated by Hammarskjöld in relation to the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) for Suez in November 1956. At Hammarskjöld's insistence, the mission would be under the command of the UN directly, and would not include troops from any of the permanent five or from states closely connected to the conflict. Furthermore, the troops would be impartial, would not interfere in the internal affairs of the countries, and would use force only in self-defence.[11] These principles remain the benchmark for UN peacekeeping missions to this day. UNEF also established the important role of the UN secretary-general in negotiating and organising UN peacekeeping missions.[12]

[8] Meisler, *United Nations*, 87-88.
[9] Ibid., 92.
[10] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 20.
[11] Jean-Marie Guéhenno, "The Peacekeeper," in *The Adventure of Peace: Dag Hammarskjöld and the Future of the UN*, ed. Sten Ask and Anna Mark-Jungkvist (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 187.
[12] Fröhlich, "The 'Suez Story'," 335. See also Skjelsbæk and Fermann, "UN Secretary-General," 97-98.

Hammarskjöld's role in resolving the Suez Crisis and establishing the UNEF mission further contributed to raising the profile of the UN secretary-general. "Thank God we have Dag Hammarskjöld as Secretary-General," said Lester Pearson, the Canadian foreign minister who also served as president of the General Assembly at the time. "He has really done magnificent work under conditions of almost unbelievable pressure."[13] US President Eisenhower likewise praised Hammarskjöld's role as he told a press conference:

> The last thing we must do is to disturb any of the delicate negotiations now going on under the leadership of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld ... The man's abilities have not only been proven, but a physical stamina that is almost remarkable, almost unique in the world, has also been demonstrated by a man who night after night has gone with one or two hours sleep, working all day and, I must say, working intelligently and devotedly.[14]

Thus, the popularity and myth of Hammarskjöld was fuelled even while he was in office.

Although Hammarskjöld played a crucial role in establishing the UNEF mission, he did not do so at his own initiative. As with his journey to China two years earlier, the General Assembly asked the secretary-general to establish a peacekeeping force for Suez. Thus, both the negotiations to seek the release of the American airmen in China and the establishment of the UN peacekeeping mission for Suez, illustrate the 'vacuum effect' which operate when other UN organs find themselves unable to act and ask the secretary-general to solve the problem. These cases therefore show institutional 'pull' operating to expand the role of the secretary-general.

Another reason why Hammarskjöld is often seen as the founding father of the secretary-general's role, is that he clearly explicated his thinking about the UN and its secretary-general. Hammarskjöld was a more intellectual secretary-general than Lie. In a speech at the University of Oxford in May 1961, Hammarskjöld discussed the topic at

[13] Quoted in Meisler, *United Nations*, 113-14.
[14] Quoted in ibid.

length. He defended the concept of an international civil service, claiming that the Secretariat and the secretary-general could – and should – be both 'neutral' and 'political' at the same time. In Hammarskjöld's opinion, the conception of 'neutrality' incorporated in the UN Charter "means that the international civil servant, also in executing tasks with political implications, must remain wholly uninfluenced by national or group interests or ideologies," *not* that he "should not be permitted to take a stand on political issues." Furthermore, in the same speech Hammarskjöld argued that article 99 carries with it "broad discretion to conduct inquiries and engage in informal diplomatic activity in regard to matters which may threaten international peace and security."[15] He was thus the first one to explicitly assert the legal basis for the secretary-general's 'good offices' role.[16]

Over the years Hammarskjöld became more explicit and assertive about the autonomous position of the secretary-general. Although his work, as we have seen above, earned him the praise of government representatives from Western states, Hammarskjöld's actions in the Congo crisis ultimately caused an irreparable breach between the secretary-general and the Soviet Union. During the General Assembly in September 1960, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev launched an attack on Hammarskjöld, and proposed replacing the office with a 'troika' of representatives from the West, the East, and the non-aligned states. Khrushchev urged the Assembly to "call Mr. Hammarskjöld to order and ensure that he does not misuse the position of the Secretary-General," and argued for the abolition of the office of UN secretary-general.[17] In defence of himself and his office, Hammarskjöld retorted on 3 October:

[15] Dag Hammarskjöld, "The International Civil Servant in Law and in Fact," Lecture delivered to Congregation at Oxford University, 30 May 1961.
[16] Ian Johnstone, "The Role of the UN Secretary-General: The Power of Persuasion Based on Law," *Global Governance* 9, no. 4 (2003): 443.
[17] GAOR, 15th session, 869th plenary mtg., 23 Sept 1960.

> The man does not count; the institution does. A weak or non-existent executive would mean that the United Nations would no longer be able to serve as an effective instrument for active protection of the interests of those many Members who need such protection. The man holding the responsibility as Chief Executive should leave if he weakens the executive. He should stay if this is necessary for its maintenance. This, and only this, seems to me to be the substantive criterion that has to be applied ... By resigning, I would, therefore, at the present difficult and dangerous juncture throw the Organization to the winds. I have no right to do so because I have a responsibility to all those Member States for which the Organization is of decisive importance – a responsibility which over-rides all other considerations.[18]

During Hammarskjöld's speech, the General Assembly interrupted him twice for applause, and "when he had finished, the Assembly rose to its feet with a roar of approval and applause that lasted for several minutes."[19] These considerations about the importance of office over man were similar to those Lie had employed in first accepting an extension of his term in 1950, and then resigning from office with one year left in 1952.[20] Thus both Lie and Hammarskjöld reasoned in similar ways about their role as UN secretary-general, indicating that they held the same view about its overarching purpose and responsibilities.

## 8.2 U Thant, 1961-1971

U Thant, like Lie before him, has been largely forgotten since he left the office of UN secretary-general. But with Thant, those who knew him emphatically argue that "of all the Secretaries-General he least deserves to have been written out of history and public memory."[21] Scholars and contemporary observers alike describe Thant as "mild-mannered and soft-spoken."[22] He was a man of integrity and honesty,[23] who "despite a generally mild and diplomatically correct style ... on several occasions [spoke] out quite

[18] GAOR, 15th session, 883rd plenary mtg., 3 Oct 1960.
[19] Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, 464-65.
[20] See sections 7.4 and 7.6.
[21] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 23.
[22] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 343.
[23] Bingham, *U Thant*, 27.

frankly on important issues."[24] As Urquhart, one of Thant's staunch defenders, wrote, "Thant's quiet personal style concealed great courage and determination in taking on serious problems."[25]

Thant was the first secretary-general from the developing world, and more than his two predecessors he would "make the Organization an instrument for the articulation of 'third world' interests and ... himself serve as a leading spokesman for those interests."[26] During Thant's period in office the United Nations became a truly global organisation, as newly independent states in Africa and Asia swelled the ranks of the organisation's membership. With the shift in the balance of the organisation's membership, came a shift in its policy focus. The UN declared the 1960s the 'Development Decade,'[27] and Thant was an eager supporter of this new UN agenda. In this way he continued the work of the secretary-general as an advocate, and strengthened the secretary-general's position as 'representing' the UN overall.

Simultaneously, the Cold War remained the defining feature of international politics in this period, and influenced all major conflicts at the time. Thant is best remembered for his part in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, when he acceded to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's request that he withdraw UNEF forces from the Sinai. Politicians and journalists at the time "excoriated" Thant for his actions, calling them "disastrous" and "a dreadful mistake." When the war broke out, one newspaper headlined its editorial "U Thant's War."[28] Urquhart, on the other hand, has defended his former boss, saying that Thant had no choice but to withdraw the forces when Nasser revoked their permission to be on Egyptian soil because of the agreements negotiated in 1956. Urquhart furthermore points out that Thant was the only one willing to travel to

[24] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 343.
[25] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 23.
[26] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 341.
[27] General Assembly resolution 1710 (XVI), 19 Dec 1961.
[28] See quotes in Meisler, *United Nations*, 170.

Egypt to seek to dissuade Nasser from his course of action, and claims Thant "proved a useful scapegoat for the inability of the permanent members of the Security Council to agree on any useful action."[29]

This was not the only time Thant, like Lie and Hammarskjöld before him, sought to mediate between the member states. Thant served a useful purpose in acting as a channel of communications between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962,[30] and he also sought to negotiate an end to the Vietnam War in 1964-65, even though he had no Security Council mandate to do so.[31] Thant made a "determined effort to play the role of mediator," and the US government resented him for it.[32] Nonetheless, in this instance, "U Thant felt a duty to try to end the war," because he "believed in aggressively pushing 'the good offices' of the secretary-general into crises so that the antagonists could have a neutral force for mediation or a neutral conduit for negotiation."[33] In this way, Thant continued the path set by Lie and Hammarskjöld of an activist and interfering secretary-general whose duty was to work for the principles of the UN Charter.

An early observer noted that Thant did not further expand the role of the secretary-general beyond what he had inherited. But at the same time Thant fiercely resisted any attempt to limit the powers of the office.[34] Like Lie, Thant did not explicitly theorise on the role of the secretary-general the way Hammarskjöld had done. This may help explain why later scholars have overlooked them both. Nonetheless, both Lie and Thant acted in ways which they saw as being consistent with their duty as secretary-general, and were not afraid to speak their mind against the interests of powerful

[29] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 24. See also Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War*, 209-16.
[30] Meisler, *United Nations*, 151.
[31] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 24.
[32] Bernard J. Firestone, "Failed Mediation: U Thant, the Johnson Administration, and the Vietnam War," *Diplomatic history* 37, no. 5 (2013): 1061.
[33] Meisler, *United Nations*, 158.
[34] Rovine, *The first fifty years*, 343-44.

member states. Thus despite their strikingly different personalities – Lie being blunt and direct while Thant was more quiet and diplomatic – they both acted in similar ways when holding the office of secretary-general.

## 8.3 Kurt Waldheim, 1972-1981

Of all the UN secretaries-general, Kurt Waldheim by far has the worst reputation. Today his name is tarnished because of the knowledge that he lied about his service in the German army during the Second World War, and may or may not have been involved with the execution of war crimes in the Balkans. These details only surfaced when Waldheim was running for president in his native Austria in 1986.[35] In her book, *Countenance of Truth*, Shirley Hazzard speculates that Waldheim's Nazi past was known to the United States and the Soviet Union at the time of his appointment, and that this explains his pliant and accommodating behaviour towards them during his time in office.[36] However, later scholars have found no evidence to support the claim that these states used such knowledge – if they even had it – to blackmail Waldheim. Rather, Kille argues that Waldheim's behaviour can accurately be explained by his personality, which conforms to that of a "high profile manager." Kille explains Waldheim's actions as reflecting a drive for the status inherent to holding the position of UN secretary-general (later president of Austria) in and of itself, and argues that Waldheim was willing to execute whichever policy the UN's member states dictated as long as he was permitted to remain in his elevated position.[37]

Leaving aside accusations about Nazism and his war-time record, Waldheim's performance as secretary-general has also been heavily criticised. "Pliancy was surely

[35] Meisler, *United Nations*, 185-94; Michael T. Kuchinsky, "An Ethical Enigma: Another Look at Kurt Waldheim," in *The UN Secretary-General and Moral Authority: Ethics and Religion in International Leadership*, ed. Kent J. Kille (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 192-95.
[36] Hazzard, *Countenance of Truth*, 62-65.
[37] Kille, *From Manager to Visionary*, 124-30.

his hallmark," Meisler notes. The press used to call him "the headwaiter," because "he always stood there as if he were wringing his hands on a towel, asking what he could do for the powerful countries."[38] The title of another book on Waldheim, *Bending with the Winds* by Finger and Saltzman, recalls a similar image of a compliant and yielding character.[39]

Nonetheless, looking at the record we find that even Waldheim acted in similar ways to Lie, Hammarskjöld, and Thant before him, suggesting that the incumbent of the office becomes socialised into the role of the secretary-general regardless of his or her personality traits. In relation to the 1973 Middle East War, the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, and the 1978 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Waldheim used new or existing peacekeeping missions "to play a decisive role in containing the conflict."[40] In fact, Waldheim was behind one of the two formal invocations of article 99, as he called the Security Council's attention to the occupation of the US embassy in Teheran after the Iranian revolution in 1979.[41] The 1970s in general represented a low point in the UN's history, particularly as viewed from the United States, yet "despite the U.N.'s impotence, Waldheim was an active secretary-general; he worked hard, travelled a good deal, communicated with leaders, strove for attention, and blathered to reporters even when he had nothing to say."[42] In this way he sought to fulfil the role of the secretary-general as he saw it.

As the conceptual framework in chapter 2 of this thesis acknowledged, there is considerable room for interpretation for the incumbent of a role in determining the best application of his or her tasks given the circumstances. Waldheim, perhaps more than

[38] Quoted in Meisler, *United Nations*, 195.
[39] Finger and Saltzman, *Bending with the Winds*.
[40] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 25.
[41] Chesterman, "Article 99," 2015.
[42] Meisler, *United Nations*, 199.

his predecessors, saw the limitations of the office and felt himself bound by them. As he noted in his memoirs:

> Carrying the burden of an enormous political and moral responsibility, the Secretary General of the United Nations is faced with one simple truth: he has no executive power. His influence depends on his diplomatic skills and persuasiveness, when he can bring them to bear; but all his efforts, all the chapters or the UN Charter and the principles of international law are of little help if member governments disregard them.[43]

This view of the role of the secretary-general can account for why he sought to appease the member states to such a high degree.

Given the international situation at the time, we might even argue that this was the optimal way for the secretary-general to act at this juncture. In a general study of leadership in international organisations, Schechter argued that "an effective, pragmatic, manager, less incautious in deviating from the wishes of the hegemon, seems necessary for effective leadership" in periods of limited resources and increasing state conflict.[44] A more recent theory of executive leadership by Schroeder finds that "a constrained IO head should develop a vision that effectively positions the organization within its environment rather than one preoccupied with changing that environment."[45] Urquhart, too, has noted that Waldheim "was very much the limited and cautious, but reasonably effective, civil servant that the permanent members of the Security Council probably preferred."[46] Indeed, Waldheim came close to achieving an unprecedented third term in office, but this was not to be as China insisted it was time for a secretary-general from the developing world.

[43] Waldheim, *In the Eye of the Storm*, 11.
[44] Michael G. Schechter, "Leadership in international organizations: systemic, organizational and personality factors," *Review of International Studies* 13, no. 3 (1987): 198.
[45] Schroeder, "Executive Leadership," 351.
[46] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 26.

## 8.4 Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, 1982-1991

In office during the 1980s, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, like Waldheim, served at the UN during a period of low activity and much propaganda and posturing. And like Waldheim, he is largely seen as a pliant manager more than an activist. Where UN staff and journalists joked that Waldheim was a 'headwaiter,' the joke about Pérez de Cuéllar was that he "wouldn't make waves if he fell out of a boat."[47] But with Pérez de Cuéllar these remarks were not meant to indicate that he possessed no opinions of his own, rather that he acted quietly and diplomatically correct. Meisler writes that Pérez de Cuéllar "is probably the most underestimated secretary-general of all."[48] Urquhart concurs that he "was a good, very low-key diplomat who knew how to use able representatives … He made no attempt to become a celebrity figure and has already, and quite wrongly, been almost completely forgotten."[49] During Pérez de Cuéllar's tenure the Cold War came to an end, and he ably "'presided over the transition'. He had just the right reputation and skills to fulfill the opportunities presented by the easing of superpower tension towards the end of the 1980s."[50]

Like his predecessors, Pérez de Cuéllar quickly adopted the role of the UN secretary-general, and with it certain views on the role's rights and responsibilities. In his very first annual report in the summer of 1982, Pérez de Cuéllar chastised the member states for having strayed from the UN Charter and warned that the world was "perilously near to a new international anarchy."[51] Thus, for those with an interest to read what the secretary-general wrote, Pérez de Cuéllar recalled the direct and principled statements of Lie and Hammarskjöld. In a lecture at the University of Oxford

[47] Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 37.
[48] Ibid., 38.
[49] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 26.
[50] Newman, *UN Secretary-General*, 62.
[51] Pérez de Cuéllar, Introduction to Annual Report on the Work of the Organization, UN doc. A/37/1, 7 Sept 1982.

in 1986, Pérez de Cuéllar described the secretary-general as a "guardian of the principles of the Charter."[52] As argued throughout this thesis, the secretary-general as a 'custodian' of the UN Charter has a duty to speak up and take action whenever he perceives the principles of the Charter to be under threat. Pérez de Cuéllar's words and deeds conform to this view of the secretary-general's role. In January 1991, he travelled to Iraq in a last-minute attempt to avoid an escalation of the Gulf War, saying that "it is my moral duty as SG of the UN to do everything I can in order to avoid war."[53] He continued the tradition of secretaries-general before him of using 'quiet diplomacy' and seeking to mediate conflicts between member states. During the Falklands War between Britain and Argentina, as well as the Iran-Iraq War, Pérez de Cuéllar played a "useful role" as mediator. He also helped negotiate the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the transition at the UN as the Soviet Union itself dissolved.[54]

Pérez de Cuéllar also proposed a change in the procedure of the Security Council which since proved valuable to the Council's work. Seeking an end to the Iran-Iraq war, he invited the ambassadors from the P5 to his office, and suggested that they should meet periodically, informally, to work out a proposal for a Council resolution. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the Council continued to meet regularly to discuss the issues of the day. In the 1980s this was a new invention.[55] Although Council members had met informally to work out their differences during Lie's tenure, in the intervening decades the Council had become primarily an avenue for propaganda where little of substance was accomplished. The end of the Cold War thus facilitated a return to more sensible working methods in the Security Council, and Pérez de Cuéllar played a part in this transformation by suggesting the first step.

[52] Pérez de Cuéllar, "The Role of the UN Secretary-General."
[53] Quoted in Johnstone, "Power of Persuasion Based on Law," 443.
[54] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 26.
[55] Meisler, *United Nations*, 249-50.

Pérez de Cuéllar moreover attempted to institutionalise and strengthen the secretary-general's role in respects of information-gathering. As this thesis has discussed earlier, for the secretary-general to be in a position to bring matters to the attention of the Security Council, in accordance with article 99, he must be informed of what is going on in the world. Pérez de Cuéllar sought to improve the secretary-general's capacity to perform his 'early warning' duties by creating the Office for Research and the Collection of Information (ORCI) in March 1987. But the member states chose to regard this latest invention of the Secretariat as undue interference and "an intrusive intelligence gathering operation which was not befitting of the international bureaucracy," and the office was relegated to a less visual role.[56] Despite the easing of Cold War tensions, the member states were still wary of any initiative of the secretary-general which allowed him too much of an autonomous role in international politics.

## 8.5 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1992-1996

Boutros-Ghali was the first secretary-general to take office after the end of the Cold War, and as such his tenure held great promise of increased UN activity. Instead, the high hopes for the United Nations ended in the disasters in Bosnia, Somalia, and Rwanda, and Boutros-Ghali left the UN after only one term, having been denied re-election by a United States veto.

Boutros-Ghali's reputation as secretary-general is mixed. Observers frequently note that he was "high-handed, distant, aristocratic and arrogant towards his staff."[57] Kofi Annan, who worked as an under-secretary-general at this time, wrote that "Boutros-Ghali's autocratic and secretive style ... caused difficulties within the UN,

[56] Newman, *UN Secretary-General*, 104.
[57] Ibid., 111.

alienating large numbers of staff and diplomats."[58] For this reason UN staff would frequently refer to their Egyptian boss as "the Pharaoh."[59] Boutros-Ghali's style furthermore caused problems in his relations with the Security Council, whose members also considered him arrogant. The secretary-general appointed a personal representative to meet in his place in the Council, declining to attend himself, and also refusing to let his under-secretaries-general appear before Council meetings. This caused a bottleneck in communications between the Secretariat and the Council, which was resented by Secretariat staff,[60] and also angered the member states on the Council who felt the secretary-general was treating them with contempt by refusing to attend meetings in person.[61]

On the other hand, observers note with admiration Boutros-Ghali's brilliance as an analyst of international situations.[62] During his first year he wrote and published *An Agenda for Peace*, a wide-ranging review of UN peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding practices which "remains an indispensable guide to the tools and techniques employed by the United Nations."[63] He is also recognised for his bravery and independence. Like Lie five decades earlier, Boutros-Ghali was not afraid to speak his mind to the member states. Berdal notes that "he was particularly concerned, not unreasonably, about their readiness to use the UN as a scapegoat for their own lack of a policy, and to entrust UN peacekeepers with near-impossible tasks."[64] Comparing Boutros-Ghali to Hammarskjöld, Meisler called him "the most stubbornly independent

[58] Annan and Mousavizadeh, *Interventions*, 138.
[59] Adekeye Adebajo, "Pope, pharaoh, or prophet? The Secretary-General after the Cold War," in *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, ed. Simon Chesterman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 141.
[60] Annan and Mousavizadeh, *Interventions*, 38.
[61] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 27.
[62] Meisler, *United Nations*, 285.
[63] Adebajo, "Pope, pharaoh, or prophet," 156.
[64] Mats Berdal, "Boutros-Ghali's Ambiguous Legacy," *Survival* 41, no. 3 (1999): 175-76.

secretary-general in the half-century history of the United Nations."[65] Boutros-Ghali himself wrote that

> if one word above all is to characterize the role of the secretary-general, it is independence. The holder of this office must never be seen as acting out of fear of, or in an attempt to curry favor with, one state or group of states ... Article 100 of the charter is Psalm 100 to the secretary-general.[66]

Throughout, Boutros-Ghali sought to confirm and strengthen the autonomy of the UN secretary-general.

Yet his autonomous actions also provoked protests and push-back from the member states. US government officials "insisted that the work of a secretary-general should be purely administrative; he should not be initiating diplomatic moves, setting policy, or implementing Security Council resolutions like a prime minister," and complained that "the Secretary-General often oversteps his role, and some of the things he does are counterproductive."[67] From the point of view of this thesis, it is interesting to note that this complaint is nearly identical to those made against Lie in the late 1940s. Thus the battle between the states as 'founders' and as 'members' continued throughout the UN's history and remained unsettled in the 1990s.

## 8.6 Kofi Annan, 1997-2006

As of 2015, Kofi Annan is the most celebrated UN secretary-general, and if anything, his star shines even brighter today than when he left the office nearly ten years ago. Whenever Annan gives a lecture at a college campus, thousands line up to get a seat. The European media and public still remember that Annan received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001 and that he stood up to the United States and called the 2003 invasion of Iraq 'illegal.' He is regarded as a wise and kind grandfather-like figure in the vein of

[65] Meisler, "A New Hammarskjöld," 181.
[66] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Global Leadership after the Cold War," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 2 (1996): 98.
[67] Meisler, *United Nations*, 291.

Nelson Mandela, and indeed he succeeded Mandela as chairman of The Elders, a group of independent statesmen that lend their support to various global causes.[68]

As secretary-general, Annan was the first to be elected to the post from the ranks of the UN Secretariat, having started in the UN system at the lowest rank as an administrative and budget officer in the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1962.[69] Knowing the organisation from the inside, Annan claimed he assumed the office of secretary-general "with a hard-won appreciation for the limits of our powers, but equally determined that we would not simply give up in the face of setbacks – that we could do better, and would do so in the name of the peoples for whom the Charter of the United Nations was written."[70]

Annan exploited to the full the secretary-general's role as a norm entrepreneur. Determined that the organisation should work for the peoples of the world and not just the governments, he was instrumental in promoting the new norm of "responsibility to protect" (R2P) and humanitarian intervention.[71] One observer noted that Annan was "perhaps the most moralistic and proselytizing" of all the UN secretaries-general.[72] Having worked in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) under Boutros-Ghali, Annan had first-hand knowledge of the shortcomings and failures of the United Nations which led to the disasters in Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda. He claimed that this experience inspired what he saw as his "greatest challenge as secretary-general: creating a new understanding of the legitimacy, and necessity, of intervention in the face of gross violations of human rights."[73]

[68] www.theelders.org (accessed 23.06.15).
[69] Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 27.
[70] Annan and Mousavizadeh, *Interventions*, x.
[71] Johnstone, "Secretary-General as norm entrepreneur," 131-37.
[72] Adekeye Adebajo, "Pope, pharaoh, or prophet? The Secretary-General after the Cold War," ibid., 143.
[73] Annan and Mousavizadeh, *Interventions*, 79.

The first test of Annan's support for humanitarian intervention came with the NATO bombing of Serbia over human rights abuses in Kosovo in 1999. The intervention did not have the support of the Security Council, where Russia fiercely resisted any resolution which would allow sanctions against their Serbian allies. When the bombing began, Annan issued a carefully worded statement saying NATO should not have acted without the Security Council, but the statement was nonetheless taken as approval of the intervention.[74] In his memoirs Annan wrote about the dilemma he had faced: "No secretary-general of the United Nations had ever before endorsed a military action that did not enjoy the blessing of the Security Council. I struggled greatly with this decision, but I believed that our experience in Rwanda, as well as Bosnia, had left us without easy answers." He went on to note that "at the same time, I warned of the danger of a world without rules for intervention ... Four years later, Iraq provided the tragic answer to this part of my question."[75] For the next four years, however, Annan enjoyed widespread support for his ideas both among governments and in public opinion, as reflected in the decision to award the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize to Annan and the United Nations jointly.[76]

During his time in office, Annan was careful to avoid the same mistake Boutros-Ghali had made of annoying the member states, in particular the United States and the other P5. The United States strongly supported Annan's initial election as secretary-general in 1996, and until 2002 the secretary-general and the world's only superpower maintained close and friendly relations. This would change during Annan's second term when he strongly opposed the US campaign to seek the Security Council's blessing for an invasion of Iraq and argued for giving more time for the weapons inspectors to work. A few months later, Annan called the invasion "illegal," thus angering the United States

[74] Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 177-78.
[75] Annan and Mousavizadeh, *Interventions*, 11-12.
[76] http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en_GB/laureates/laureates-2001/ (accessed 23.06.15).

further.[77] In retaliation, Republican politicians in the United States launched a smear campaign against Annan for his alleged role, and that of his son, in the "Oil-for-Food" scandal, which would dominate the remainder of Annan's period in office.[78] In this sense, Annan shared one experience with secretary-general Lie, in both being victims of vicious attacks by the American right. In the rest of the world, however, Annan's strong stand against the Iraq War strengthened his position. "In many ways, he personified the world's confusion and distress over American bullying," as he tried "within the confines of UN diplomacy, to slow the march toward war in hopes that time would galvanize worldwide public opinion against it."[79] In this way he confirmed the role of the UN secretary-general as 'representing' the UN and acting as a spokesman for world interest.

As observed with Boutros-Ghali, when US politicians disagreed with the UN secretary-general, they would argue that he overstepped the bounds of his office. One Republican told the BBC that it was "outrageous for the secretary-general, who ultimately works for the member states, to try to supplant his judgment for the judgment of the member states."[80] John R. Bolton, later US ambassador to the UN, criticised Annan for commissioning reports on Bosnia and Rwanda which put blame on the member states:

> This is a growing and serious issue, the illegitimacy of the secretary-general's commenting on the performance of the UN member governments ... The issue is whether an international civil servant has or can be given authority to criticize the performance of member governments ... All international civil servants in the UN system are employees of member governments ... They have no authority to act outside a very limited scope of responsibility. He's well beyond pushing the envelope on that score.[81]

Annan's tenure too, reveal that the struggle between states as 'members' and as 'founders' continued. In the post-Cold War period the United States, the world's only

[77] Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 235-52, 74-75; Traub, *Best Intentions*, 182-85.
[78] Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 288-90; Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 29.
[79] Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 4.
[80] Quoted in ibid., 275.
[81] Quoted in ibid., 205-06.

superpower, seemed to be forgetting its role as a 'founder' of the UN and focused instead on its own agenda. From an American perspective, the UN seemed to work best under United States leadership, while every time the majority of the organisation's member states, or its secretary-general, disagreed with American policies, the UN became an annoying irrelevance to be set aside. Among the smaller states, however, Annan remained popular, reflecting the alliance between the secretary-general and the world's peoples which had emerged as early as Lie's tenure. Annan is also popular among UN scholars, and they have therefore frequently compared him to the 'model' secretary-general – Hammarskjöld – the highest praise they know.[82]

## 8.7 Ban Ki-moon, 2007-2016

Given the popularity of the charismatic Annan, Ban Ki-moon faced no easy task when he took over as secretary-general in 2007. Ban is a more quiet and reserved person, and where Annan and his wife eagerly joined the social scene in New York, the new secretary-general preferred to stay home in the evenings.[83] Despite these differences in personalities, however, Ban, like his predecessors, nonetheless became socialised into the role of secretary-general, and now acts as the public and visible international figure the role dictates.

Ban has chosen to focus on the issues of climate change and natural disasters. He makes frequent speeches and statements on this issue, using his bully pulpit to put pressure on states to reach a universal agreement by the end of 2015. Seeking to facilitate agreement, he invited world leaders to a summit in New York in September 2014.[84] To mobilise the support of public opinion, the secretary-general joined a

[82] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 29; Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 4.
[83] Tom Plate, *Conversations with Ban Ki-moon: What the United Nations is Really Like: The View from the Top* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2012), 16.
[84] http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/ (accessed 24.06.15).

"climate change march" on the eve of the summit.[85] Continuing the campaign, in January 2015 Ban argued that "our generation [is] the last that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change."[86] Thus Ban has assumed the role of an advocate or a norm entrepreneur, which is a crucial part of the political role of the UN secretary-general.

Related to his activity to raise awareness and facilitate agreement to deal with climate change, Ban has also focused on natural disasters and disaster relief to a higher degree than his predecessors. In a speech at the University of Oxford in 2011, Ban argued that the effects of natural disasters can be likened to the effects of the man-made disasters of war and conflict, and that the United Nations therefore should include disaster relief in its strategy for human protection: "The UN recognizes that human protection stands at the centre of both its purposes and principles ... Whenever I see all these great challenges, global and local, I cannot but be humbled by how I can address these challenges as the Secretary-General."[87] Like his predecessors, Ban recognises the role of the UN secretary-general as a guardian of the UN Charter, and he will use arguments about the duty and responsibility of the secretary-general to defend his actions and statements.

During the first few years in office, Ban was the object of frequent criticism. In one particularly stark example, the Norwegian UN ambassador wrote a memorandum which ended up in the hands of a journalist and made headline news across the globe. Calling Ban a "powerless observer" whose "moral voice and authority have been

[85] Fiona Harvey, "Ban Ki-moon to join climate change march," *The Guardian*, 17 September 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/17/ban-ki-moon-climate-change-march (accessed 24.06.15).
[86] Ban Ki-moon, " We are the last generation that can fight climate change. We have a duty to act," *The Guardian*, 12 January 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/12/last-generation-tackle-climate-change-un-international-community (accessed 24.06.15).
[87] Ban Ki-moon, "Human Protection and the 21st Century United Nations," Cyril Foster Lecture, University of Oxford, 2 February 2011, http://www.un.org/sg/selected-speeches/statement_full.asp?statID=1064.

absent," she criticised his futile visit to Sri Lanka and argued that his engagement in the climate change debate had no effect.[88] Recalling that Ban's nickname while foreign minister of South Korea was "the bureaucrat," a columnist in *Foreign Policy* concurred, arguing that

> at a time when global leadership is urgently needed, when climate change and international terrorism and the biggest financial crisis in 60 years might seem to require some—any!—response, the former South Korean foreign minister has instead been trotting the globe collecting honorary degrees, issuing utterly forgettable statements, and generally frittering away any influence he might command. He has become a kind of accidental tourist, a dilettante on the international stage.[89]

Yet Gowan, an observer who has followed Ban's activity as secretary-general closely, in 2014 argued that although Ban started out modestly, his performance had improved over time: "He has been a consistent champion of long-term causes, including the battles against global poverty and climate change, while tackling more-immediate crises such as the Ebola outbreak with growing determination."[90]

At time of writing, Ban Ki-moon still has another year-and-a-half left as secretary-general. During that time he will oversee another major climate summit in Paris, and the concluding conference on the new sustainable development goals (SDGs). Gowan argues that "Ban is still unlikely to go down in history as one of the U.N.'s great leaders, but if he can score at least some of these final successes, he may be counted as a qualified success."[91] What is certain is that Ban has tried to act as a norm entrepreneur or advocate for global issues, as the role of the UN secretary-general dictates. Whether or not he succeeds in mobilising public support or urging the governments to action should not detract from the fact that he is trying. As the previous seven secretaries-

[88] Mona Juul, quoted in Kristoffer Rønneberg, "Sviende norsk refs av FN-sjefen," *Aftenposten*, 19 August 2009, http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/SviendenorskrefsavFNsjefen5583189.html (accessed 20.05.15). Author's translation from Norwegian.
[89] Jacob Heilbrunn, "Nowhere Man: Why Ban Ki-moon is the world's most dangerous Korean," *Foreign Policy*, 21 June 2009.
[90] Richard Gowan, "Bold or Not, Next U.N. Secretary-General Faces World of Pain," *World Politics Review*, 24 November 2014.
[91] Ibid.

general would surely agree, often that is all a secretary-general is allowed and expected to do.

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As the preceding discussion of Lie's seven successors has demonstrated, despite differences in personality and approach, they all ended up acting in similar ways. This suggests that they became socialised into the 'role' of the UN secretary-general and sought to enact that role as they understood it. It highlights the importance of examining institutional factors to fully understand what kind of an actor the UN secretary-general is and how his role has developed to allow him to occupy a position in international politics where he enjoys broad political scope and autonomy. The last concluding chapter returns to these questions, and also indicates ways of applying this conceptual framework to study the roles of executive heads in other international organisations.

# 9 Conclusion

"Trygve Lie ... was a very activist Secretary-General. The fact that Hammarskjold was even more activist has tended to obscure this fact but he took an extremely assertive view of his role. First of all, he was the first Secretary-General, and therefore would set the tone ... both he and Hammarskjöld showed a predilection for taking positions ... and usually on very sensitive issues which, of course, stirred up the enmity of those opposed to it and the admiration of those who agreed. We frankly admired Trygve Lie, he was our ally."[1]

Abba Eban, Israeli diplomat and politician, 1990

## 9.1 Trygve Lie's legacy

Despite the many precedents set during his tenure and his strong principled activism on behalf of the United Nations and its Charter values, Trygve Lie's contribution to the United Nations and the office of UN secretary-general remains largely overlooked and forgotten. Urquhart's blunt statement that "Lie did not achieve any particularly notable political or diplomatic feats at the United Nations, nor at that time was he expected to do so,"[2] represents the orthodox view on Lie's contribution. From this perspective, Lie's only notable contribution lay in ensuring the location of UN headquarters on Manhattan in New York, and in bringing onboard some of the world's top architects to design the new building.[3]

Ever since he left office, Lie has been overshadowed by his more celebrated immediate successor Dag Hammarskjöld. For the next fifteen years until Lie's death in December 1968, we can detect his resentment at being outshone by Hammarskjöld. This resentment might help explain Lie's behaviour in relation to the UN's ten-year anniversary. Although Lie was invited to attend the celebrations in San Francisco in

[1] Eban was the Jewish Agency/Israel's representative to the United Nations from 1947 until 1959. Transcript of interview with Abba Eban, conducted by James S. Sutterlin, 16 April 1990, UN Oral History Collection.
[2] Urquhart, "Evolution of the Secretary-General," 18.
[3] Ibid.

June 1955, when he learned that he would not be allowed to give a speech during the official ceremony, he decided to stay at home. In a letter to Hammarskjöld he explained that he was ”afraid” that he would “once again be attacked by certain delegations,” and that he would “rather not travel to San Francisco just to be publicly ‘insulted’ or completely neglected ... I hope that you and the Secretariat will do your utmost to ensure that I will not be ignored.”[4] Furthermore, upon Hammarskjöld’s death in 1961, Lie registered his annoyance that newspapers were portraying Hammarskjöld as the founder of the office of UN secretary-general, writing in a letter: ”Since Hammarskjöld’s death, I have almost had the feeling that everything that’s been done in the UN has been done by him, and that my 7 years and 3 months in the UN have been forgotten.”[5] Clearly Lie himself considered that he had made a contribution to the development of the United Nations, and he wished that this contribution should be recognised.

If we merely look at the results of the specific initiatives undertaken by Lie, it becomes obvious why his tenure might be considered a failure. Nearly every time Lie tried to take an initiative or push his opinion on a political issue he would be ignored or opposed by the member states. In April 1946, the Security Council ignored his opinion that it was committing an ‘error’ in keeping the Iranian question on the agenda. In 1947 Lie failed to ensure that Marshall Plan aid would be given through a UN framework which included both Western and Easter Europe. The Security Council did not heed his advice to enforce the partition of Palestine, while the General Assembly declined his proposal to establish a UN armed guard. The United States and Britain rejected Lie’s suggestion of a currency study to seek a solution to the Berlin blockade in 1948, and

[4] Lie to Hammarskjöld, 24 May 1955, L179:1, the National Library of Sweden, Stockholm, (hereafter KB). Author’s translation from Norwegian. See also letters to Lie from Hammarskjöld and Cordier in May/June 1955 in Brevs. 410, NLN.
[5] Lie to Leif Kr. Tobiassen, 12 Oct 1961, Brevs. 410, NLN. Author’s translation from Norwegian. See also the same sentiment expressed in letter to Hans Olav, 13 Oct 1961, ibid.

likewise resented his attempt to urge a solution of the blockade by issuing a public appeal with the president of the General Assembly. In 1950, the Chinese representation issue remained unresolved, and Lie would not live to see the Beijing government finally take its seat in the United Nations in 1971. Most importantly, despite Lie's continued attempts to mediate between East and West – by opposing the Truman Doctrine and the formation of NATO, by seeking to resolve problems in Berlin, by urging unity at every turn, and ultimately by proposing an ambitious twenty-year peace plan in March 1950 – he was unable to prevent the Cold War from becoming the all-encompassing conflict that dominated international politics for the next four decades.

Arguably, the only instance where Lie's proposals and initiatives met with any success was in the Korean War, where the majority of the UN's membership, led by the United States, launched a military operation in aid of South Korea, just as Lie advised. Lie himself considered his "stand on Korea the best justified act of seven years in the service of peace."[6] When Lie left the office in 1953, several delegates to the General Assembly praised his work for the UN and particularly emphasised the role he had played in the Korean War. As the Peruvian representative said; "we have also undergone our ordeal by fire, the Korean problem … It is proper to say that, at that trying time, the Secretary-General fulfilled his duty under the Charter with moderation, but with firmness, by bringing to the Security Council's attention events which endangered the peace of the world."[7] But although his stand on Korea earned him praise from many member states, it also led to a whole new set of problems in his relationship with the Soviet Union, which ultimately ended in his resignation from office in 1952.

Yet despite the failure of the majority of Lie's specific proposals, he succeeded in carving out space for an active political role for the secretary-general, and established

[6] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 323.
[7] Belaunde (Peru), *GAOR*, 7th session, 423rd plenary mtg., 7 April 1953.

a number of precedents for the relationship of the secretary-general with the organs of the UN and with the member states. The story of the development of the secretary-general's role in this period is therefore *not* merely a story about one person and what he wanted to achieve. Rather this is a story of how institutional forces allowed for an expansion of the role, and how the individual was able to take advantage of those forces to establish precedents for the future. What matters to this story is not the person Trygve Lie – in his early 50s, from Oslo, Norway, married to Hjørdis, three daughters, trained as a lawyer, fond of fine foods and drink, a keen tennis player, loyal to family and friends, short-tempered yet quick to forgive, speaking heavily accented English, no knowledge of French to speak of – what matters is UN secretary-general Trygve Lie. What matters is less the individual as him-/herself, and more the individual in the role of secretary-general. Lie took on the identity and interests of the secretary-general, and sought to do what he saw as his duty in that role.

As others have also observed in relation to studies of leaders of international organisations: "One has to make a distinction: the fact that the Secretary-General took initiatives and steps which enhanced his status and that of his office should be divorced from the success or failure of those initiatives."[8] Thus the failure of the majority of Lie's specific initiatives does not automatically mean that he was a poor secretary-general, or that he did not make a contribution to the development of the secretary-general's role. The preceding chapters of this thesis has shown that despite the disappointing success of Lie's various proposals and initiatives, he did succeed in establishing a number of precedents for the role of the secretary-general.

[8] O. Akinrade, "The Commonwealth and its Secretariat: An essay on leadership and influence in an international organization," *Quarterly Journal of Administration* 26, (1992): 65. Quote reprinted in Kent J. Kille and Roger M. Scully, "Executive Heads and the Role of Intergovernmental Organizations: Expansionist Leadership in the United Nations and the European Union," *Political Psychology* 24, no. 1 (2003).

The remainder of this concluding chapter is organised in three sections. The first summarises the main empirical findings of the thesis and argues that Lie made an important contribution to establishing precedents for the role of the UN secretary-general which served to expand the role in a political direction. The next section returns to the theoretical contribution of the thesis and argues that we cannot understand the development of the role of the secretary-general without considering institutional factors. Lastly, the chapter concludes by expanding the theoretical scope to indicate ways of applying this conceptual framework to study the roles of executive heads in international organisations more broadly.

## 9.2 Empirical contribution: Precedents set under Trygve Lie, 1946-1953

The main empirical contribution of this thesis lies in describing how important strides in the direction of a more political role were taken while Trygve Lie was secretary-general of the UN from 1946 to 1953. The thesis thus challenges the dominant Hammarskjöld narrative which credits the UN's second secretary-general with building the foundations for the office.

Under Lie, important precedents were established for the relationship between the secretary-general and the Security Council, as Lie explored his powers under article 99. As chapter 4 discussed, Lie gained recognition from the Council that article 99 afforded the secretary-general the right to present his opinions on any matter under consideration by the Council. He would later avail himself of this right on numerous occasions, such as on questions of membership (chapters 4 and 7), Palestine (chapter 5), and the Berlin blockade and Korea (chapter 6). Lie furthermore interpreted his responsibilities under article 99 in broad terms, and would frequently urge the Council

to discuss questions and to reach decisions on them, without formally invoking the article. This was seen most clearly in relation to Palestine and Berlin. Indeed, over time, applying pressure on states to take action has become the most common way of 'using' article 99, as the article itself has only formally been invoked twice; by Hammarskjöld on the Congo in 1960, and by Kurt Waldheim on the question of hostages in Iran in 1979.[9]

Lie also secured recognition from the Security Council that article 99 implies that the secretary-general has as an independent right to appoint investigative committees or send his personal representatives to investigate situations of conflict. Lie stated this right during discussions of the Greek Civil War (chapter 4), and although he himself never appointed a formal investigative committee, he did send his representatives to talk to member states, or offered to send such representatives, during the UN's consideration of Palestine (chapter 5) and Berlin (chapter 6). Later secretaries-general would frequently avail themselves of this independent right of investigation and information-seeking.

The right to appoint special representatives (SRSGs), as separate from a general right of fact-finding, deserves further mention. Today the secretary-general's use of SRSGs is one of the main tools at his disposal both for conflict resolution or conflict prevention and to highlight particular issues. Lie appointed the first SRSGs mainly as a matter of expediency or necessity to perform a task he was unable to do himself. This was the case with the first SRSG, Wlodzimierz Moderow of Poland, director of the UN office in Geneva, whom Lie appointed 'Representative of the Secretary-General in Geneva' in 1946 to negotiate the transfer of assets from the League of Nations to the UN.[10] Lie's appointment of Ralph Bunche as 'Representative of the Secretary-General

[9] Chesterman, "Article 99," 2014-15.
[10] Fröhlich, "Representing the United Nations," 171-72.

in Palestine' (chapter 5), foreshadow the later development of SRSGs with more substantial political mandates, as Bunche became 'Acting Mediator for Palestine' and resumed responsibility for negotiating armistice agreements between the conflicting parties.[11] Although some legal scholars argue the first 'real' SRSG was appointed by U Thant in 1966 to negotiate between Cambodia and Thailand,[12] this development was instigated by Lie.

The last implied power under article 99 first explored by Lie and later expanded by other secretaries-general, was the right to present draft resolutions to the Security Council. As discussed in chapter 6, Lie drafted a resolution proposing the establishment of a coordination committee for Korea. Although the Council in this instance chose to proceed with another resolution drafted by the United States, none of the states on the Council ever objected to Lie's drafting of a resolution. Thus by 1950 the majority of states on the Council recognised the position of the secretary-general as an equal in the work of the organisation for peace and security, and accepted that he had broad rights to take part in the Council's work. Of course, this did not mean that they would not resent the secretary-general for 'interfering' if his opinions on a case should happen to diverge from their own.

Other important paths were forged for the role of the secretary-general as an advocate or spokesman for world interest, as Lie boldly presented his ideas for a UN armed guard (chapter 5) or suggestions for a peace plan to solve the Cold War (chapter 7). Lie started the tradition of using the introduction to the secretary-general's annual report to the General Assembly as a means of highlighting global issues and suggesting areas of future work. He built the first foundations for the formation of an alliance between the secretary-general and the world's peoples and smaller member states, in

[11] Ibid., 172-74.
[12] Chesterman, "Article 99," 2012.

opposition to the great powers. In this role as an advocate the secretary-general seeks to enlist the support of world public opinion for the United Nations' mission, and he also strengthens his role as 'representing' the UN. Through his actions Lie confirmed that the secretary-general was to be a 'guardian' or 'custodian' of the UN Charter, and that he had a duty to protect and defend the organisation. In this way, Lie set precedents for the overall goals and purposes of the role of UN secretary-general.

Building on the earlier work of the League of Nations secretary-general, still other precedents were established for the role of the UN secretary-general as a mediator or negotiator between the member states, including among the great powers. Lie worked tirelessly to forge cooperation and unity among the great powers and to ensure consistent policies across UN organs. Lie's concern for the coherence of the United Nations was evident in his activities in relation to the Palestine problem, as discussed in chapter 5, while his attempts to seek unity among the great powers on the Security Council provided the main driver behind his actions in relation to the Cold War, as discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

Also building on the work of the League secretary-general, Lie confirmed the central position of the UN secretary-general as a channel of communications between different member states and between the member states and the organs of the UN. Yet Lie went further than the League secretary-general in also seeking to actively coordinate policies and policy responses of the UN and its member states. This was evident in his activities upon the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 (chapter 6), when Lie took the initiative to send telegrams to all member states to ask for assistance to South Korea, and when he proposed establishing a coordination committee to deal with incoming offers. In this sense he saw himself performing the task of an "executive" of the United

Nations, because the Security Council and other organs of the UN did not possess executive powers or the ability to implement their decisions themselves.[13]

Lastly, important precedents were established for the international status of the UN secretary-general and in his relationship with the member states. Through his active and direct diplomacy, as evidenced in the cases of Palestine, Berlin, the 1950 peace plan, and Korea, Lie gained recognition that the secretary-general can contact heads of government directly, rather than having to go through the member states' delegations in New York. This reflects a higher position for the secretary-general than being a mere administrator of the UN Secretariat, and signifies that he enjoys a status equal to politically appointed heads of government.

In this way important precedents amounting to an expansion of the political role of the secretary-general were establishes under Lie. In many cases Lie himself actively 'pushed' for this development, determined that the secretary-general should be a "force for peace."[14] In other cases the institution seemingly 'pulled' the secretary-general into assuming broader scope and more autonomy. This was evident during the discussion of a new rule of procedure to recognise the right of the secretary-general to address the Security Council in 1946. As chapter 4 showed, Lie would have been content to accept inclusion of the phrase 'upon the invitation of the president' in the new rule, while Australia and Britain were responsible for removing this phrase and giving the secretary-general an unlimited and principled right to address the Council. Other cases where the secretary-general experienced 'pull' to do something could be seen in relation to the Cold War as discussed in chapters 6 and 7. As conflicts between the member states increased and the Security Council became unable to reach agreement, the secretary-general had to step up and take action in the interest of preserving the

[13] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, 333.
[14] Ibid., 42.

organisation. The mechanism of a 'vacuum effect' helps explain why the role of the secretary-general expanded during the first few decades of UN history.

This thesis thus charts the expansion of the political role of the UN secretary-general under Lie. Yet there is a second way to explain how a role can be transformed from being 'administrative' to becoming 'political' – in addition to becoming *more* political, the role can also become *less* administrative. Both processes can be observed during Lie's tenure. As the discussion of McCarthyism in section 7.5 illustrated, the secretary-general actually lost autonomy in administrative matters as the member states assigned to themselves more control over the Secretariat than what the UN Charter had intended. Thus the UN secretary-general today, somewhat ironically given the Charter's designation of him as "the chief administrative officer of the Organization,"[15] actually enjoys less autonomy in many administrative matters than he does in political questions. In administrative matters, the secretary-general's role *contracted* under Lie, a development that continued under the following seven secretaries-general. This process, too, helps explain why the UN secretary-general today is seen as primarily political.

## 9.3 Theoretical argument: The importance of institutional factors

The thesis' main theoretical contribution lies in emphasising the importance not just of the person holding the role of secretary-general and his 'heroic' struggle against the member states to expand his own role, but in the crucial importance of institutional factors. This is the second way in which the thesis challenges the dominant Hammarskjöld narrative which tends to emphasise the personality of the post-holder(s).

The secretary-general performs a 'role' within the 'institution' of the United Nations. As described in chapter 2, an institution defines a number of roles and ascribes

[15] UN Charter, article 97.

them a set of tasks, rights, and responsibilities. An actor occupying a role will feel these expectations for what she is supposed to do as external pressure from other actors, but will also be socialised into the role and internalise these expectations. When faced with a given situation, the actor must interpret what the role specifies as appropriate action. In this act of interpretation lies a degree of autonomy – which this thesis has termed 'implicit' autonomy – which means that two different incumbents of the same role faced with the same situation may still act in different ways. The actor will also be empowered or constrained by their access to resources, and just because they know what the institution demands of them, does not mean that they will be able to do it. Borrowing the insights from structuration theory, the thesis further argues that institutions are social constructions. Through the process of institutionalisation, over time institutions – as patterns of interaction – become entrenched in social life. Institutions only exist as expressed through human activity, and may also change as a result of that activity. Because of the degree of autonomy present in the act of interpretation, as well as the unpredictability of outcomes because of the different distribution of resources, an institution is never perfectly reproduced.

The conceptual framework further specified three relevant dimensions to analyse a role: scope, autonomy, and 'representation.' A role's scope is a measure of how many fields of activity that role is authorised to engage in, and what kinds of activity it can undertake in those fields. The thesis argued that the role of the secretary-general today has a broad scope and is authorised to engage in practically every field of activity within the UN. From the start in 1946 the secretary-general had also been given some scope, although the role in this respect was not fully defined, because the UN was a brand new institution and its founders had not attempted to predict every possible future activity.

The following table compares the scope of the UN secretary-general's role as described in the UN Charter, at the end of Lie's term in office in 1953, and today:

| **Function** | **UN Charter** | **1953** | **2015** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Manager | x | (x) | (x) |
| Investigator | (x) | x | x |
| Diplomat | (x) | x | x |
| General | | | x |
| Advocate | | x | x |

**Table 9.1: The UN secretary-general's scope in 1945, 1953, and 2015.**

The UN Charter established the secretary-general as a manager of the organisation and assigned him administrative tasks. Articles 98 and 99 also implied certain tasks for the secretary-general as an investigator and diplomat, but these were not fully spelled out. During his tenure in office, Lie confirmed and explored the secretary-general's functions as an investigator and diplomat. He also asserted the secretary-general's right to work as an advocate for various political issues. The only area of the secretary-general's activity which had not been established by the time Lie left the office, was that of a general, as peacekeeping only entered the portfolio in 1956 under Hammarskjöld. Ironically, as chapter 7 explored, the member states have actually restricted the secretary-general's rights as a manager beyond that envisioned by the UN Charter. This is the only area where we can see a clear contraction of the secretary-general's role. Table 9.1 gives a rough indication of the development of the secretary-general's role. It does not consider that each area can also be divided into many

subfields, some of which have been added over time. Nonetheless, it gives an indication that a number of important developments happened during Lie's tenure in office, and that the role by 1953 had a vastly broader scope, in more political areas of activity, than in 1945.

It is interesting to note that this expansion of the secretary-general's scope of activity had not been anticipated in 1945. One indication of this is the fact that the secretary-general did not have a separate code for press releases when the UN started operations in January 1946. Whenever the secretary-general gave a speech, attended an event, or hired staff for high-level positions in the Secretariat, information about this would be sent out to the press under various codes depending on the activity. In this period we can find information about the secretary-general's activities under the codes SC, GA, or ES if his activity related to the Security Council, the General Assembly, or ECOSOC respectively, or simply under M for miscellaneous when the information did not fit under any other category. Not until May 1949 did the UN's Department of Public Information institute a separate symbol – SG – for the secretary-general's press releases.[16] This is a clear demonstration that the scope of the secretary-general's role had expanded in these first few years, beyond what had originally been expected.

A role can be endowed with two kinds of autonomy. 'Implicit autonomy' is present in the act of interpreting what a role prescribes for a given situation. This may be because the institution is faced with a new situation never encountered before, or because it gives overlapping or otherwise confusing instructions for the kind of situation at hand. 'Explicit autonomy,' on the other hand, is seen through specific instructions telling the incumbent of a role to exercise discretion, initiative, or independence in a given situation. Article 99 gave the secretary-general such explicit autonomy to exercise

[16] See collections of UN press releases from 1946, 1947, 1948, and 1949, UNDHL. Press release SG/1 contains the text of Lie's speech at the opening of the Economic Commission for Latin America, and was issued on 27 May 1949.

independent judgment in deciding which situations to bring to the attention of the Security Council. As discussed in chapter 4 and reiterated later in the thesis, this article also entailed a number of implied powers for the secretary-general which gave him explicit autonomy. We would expect that more 'implicit autonomy' is present during early stages of an institution's life, because the majority of the situations it encounters are novel. Unless early incumbents of a role are able to capture some of this 'implicit' autonomy and transform it into 'explicit' autonomy recognised in the institution's rules, it might be lost to later incumbents of the role who will face fewer unique situations.

The last dimension of a role – 'representation' – is important to understand to fully capture the position of the secretary-general within the United Nations. All roles within an institution represent the institution because the institution, as a social construction, only exists through the performance of those roles. Yet some roles more than any other represent the institution overall. The common example of this kind of 'special' role is that of a monarch who symbolically represents the totality of society and legitimates the overall institutional set-up.[17] The secretary-general performs such a role within the United Nations. The secretary-general, more than anyone else within the UN system, symbolically represent the UN overall. He is a 'custodian' or 'guardian' of the UN Charter, and personifies or embodies its principles and values. The close link between the secretary-general and the UN's normative content and overall institutional legitimacy, means that the actions of the secretary-general has greater potential to change those principles and values, or other parts of the UN institution, than any other single actor. Other actors performing defined roles within the United Nations include the staff in the Secretariat, the Security Council and the General Assembly (as collective actors), the delegations of the member states, and even the member states in and of

[17] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 92-94.

themselves. This means that the actions of the secretary-general – an individual – have the potential to impact the rules of international politics and the position of states within it.

A second important consequence of the position of the secretary-general as 'representing' the United Nations and as a 'guardian' of its Charter is that it contributes to the expansion of the role of the secretary-general in terms of giving the role broader scope and more autonomy. Because the secretary-general is a custodian of the UN, he has responsibilities for protecting and defending the organisation and its principles and values. This provided an important motivation for Lie and other incumbents to 'push' to expand their role whenever they felt a duty to act in the interest of the organisation, and also provided them with a ready-made legitimation for doing so. The secretary-general's responsibilities for the overall wellbeing of the organisation also meant that he was often 'pulled' into situations where other UN organs were unable or unwilling to act.

This thesis argued that the UN from the start had been set up in a way which both allowed for and facilitated an expansion of the role of the secretary-general. Partly this was due to the special position of the secretary-general as 'representing' the UN overall, and partly it was due to the undefined and unfinished nature of the institution at its foundation. Chapter 3 further described how the role of the secretary-general was political by design, as there was an expectation among government representatives and the general public that he would play a political role. Yet the details of such a political role were never fully spelled out. This left wide areas of 'implicit autonomy' for the secretary-general to explore, and also meant that he had allies in his quest to expand the scope and explicit autonomy of his office.

That the institutional set-up would allow for and facilitate an expansion of the secretary-general's role, however, only meant that such an expansion was possible. It

does not account for *why* the role of the secretary-general expanded under Lie, or why it took on the particular form it did. The last two elements of the story which explains why an expansion in a political direction was the most likely outcome are the importance of the individual office-holder and the historical geopolitical context.

The implicit autonomy present in the act of interpretation means that an individual post-holder enjoys considerable room to leave his or her mark on the organisation. Two incumbents of the same role facing the same situation may still decide to act differently. An activist secretary-general may decide to 'push' to expand his role where a more modest secretary-general perceives his duty to be to hold the line or resist pressures for an expansion. Lie was a highly activist secretary-general, as the preceding chapters have shown, and sought every opportunity to consolidate and strengthen the scope and explicit autonomy of his office. Hammarskjöld and Boutros-Ghali, too, were activist secretaries-general who sought to enhance the independence of their role. Yet other secretaries-general have held more modest views, choosing to focus on the limitations of their role rather than its potential for expansion. If Waldheim or Drummond, the first League of Nations secretary-general, had been the first UN secretary-general instead of Lie, the story might have turned out differently.

The second factor explaining why an expansion of the secretary-general's role was the most likely outcome during Lie's tenure, is the historical geopolitical context of the time. The United Nations had been founded on the assumption that the great powers – as the P5 – would continue to cooperate. Instead the next four decades was dominated by the Cold War. As the Security Council and the General Assembly became unable or unwilling to act as the Charter had intended, the secretary-general was 'pulled' in to fill the vacuum. The position of the secretary-general as 'representing' the UN overall, and therefore sharing responsibility for the UN's purposes and principles, meant that

whenever there was conflict between the member states, the scope and autonomy of the secretary-general would expand to compensate for member state inaction. Kofi Annan used to joke that the secretary-general was the UN's favourite 'scapegoat' who was drafted in to act when no one else wanted to.[18] During Lie's tenure we saw the 'vacuum effect' at work as he sought to mediate conflicts between member states. Another clear example was Hammarskjöld's establishment of the peacekeeping mission in Suez in 1956, when the secretary-general was given a broad new mandate and significant explicit and implicit autonomy in executing it, because neither the Security Council nor the General Assembly was able to end the conflict on their own. This observation dovetails with the observation within principle-agent literature that agents will experience more autonomy when there are multiple principals who have trouble agreeing to a common policy.[19] Thus somewhat ironically, although the Cold War made life difficult for Lie and his immediate successors, and the end of the Cold War opened up new areas of activity for the secretary-general, the end of the Cold War also meant that the Security Council and the General Assembly "became more active, meaning that the SG's role tended to be more clearly defined by the political organs."[20] That is, although the end of the Cold War meant an increase in the activities of the UN overall and the secretary-general with it, the secretary-general experienced less explicit and implicit autonomy in this period, as the member states kept a closer eye on what he was doing.

Adding all these factors together – the secretary-general's 'push' to expand his role's scope and autonomy, the position of the secretary-general as 'representing' the UN and the consequences this had for expanding his role, the intention that the role was

[18] Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 149; Annan and Mousavizadeh, *Interventions*, 139.
[19] Daniel L. Nielson and Michael J. Tierney, "Delegation to International Organizations: Agency Theory and World Bank Environmental Reform," *International Organization* 57, no. 2 (2003). See also Hawkins and Jacoby, "How agents matter," 205.
[20] Chesterman, "Article 99," 2013.

to be political which was never spelled out in detail, wide areas of 'implicit autonomy' in the early years of the organisation's life, Cold War conflict between the member states which helped to 'pull' the secretary-general into taking on new tasks – the story would appear to be overdetermined. Certainly this is not the standard 'heroic' account of UN scholars of how a lonely secretary-general struggled uphill to carve out space for his own initiatives. From this perspective, rather, the puzzling thing would be to explain the absence of expansion, not expansion itself. However, one additional important element needs to be included in the story to capture the full dynamism of the development of the secretary-general's role: the member states.

The member states frequently protested against the expansion of the secretary-general's role and sought to limit his influence. For example, as this thesis has shown, Lie faced considerable protest from member states against his involvement in political conflicts, and was frequently told that he had overstepped the bounds of his authority. Annan, too, was told bluntly by American officials that he was merely "an employee of [the] member governments" who had "no authority to act outside a very limited scope of responsibility."[21] The states occupy two simultaneous and contradictory roles within the UN institution. In their incarnation as 'members' they are primarily concerned with protecting their sovereignty and national interests. As 'founders' they established the organisation for a reason and have an interest in the continued functioning and health of their creation. Throughout the UN's seventy-year history, the secretary-general had to push against the interests of the states as 'members,' whilst seeking to build alliances with the states as 'founders.' The story of the development of the secretary-general's role therefore becomes a story of an individual 'pushing' to expand his role in terms of scope and autonomy, working against the interests of state sovereignty, while being

[21] Meisler, *Kofi Annan*, 205-06.

aided by the initial set-up of the institution and his special position within it, and supported by the states when they remember their long-term interests in the UN project.

## 9.4 Broader implications and future research

The main empirical contribution of this thesis lies in its study of Lie's input to the development of the role of the UN secretary-general. Based on a study of hitherto unused documents, the thesis argued that several important precedents for the political role of the UN secretary-general were established under Lie. This challenges the dominant Hammarskjöld narrative which places the emphasis on the UN's second secretary-general. The thesis thus throws new light on this early period of UN history and offers new knowledge of relevance to the literature on the role of the UN secretary-general as well as that on the history of the United Nations. The thesis' empirical chapters also provide new insights on the role of the United Nations and its secretary-general in the conflicts in Palestine, Berlin, Korea, and the Cold War in general, which should be of interest to scholars of those events.

In addition to the thesis' empirical contribution, it develops a theoretical argument emphasising the importance of including institutional factors in our analysis of the development of the UN secretary-general's role. The previous chapter briefly discussed the tenures of the remaining seven secretaries-general, but there is still room for further study of how the conceptual framework developed in the context of Lie's tenure applies to the tenures of other secretaries-general. Furthermore, the conceptual framework might be applied to the study of secretaries-general in other organisations besides the UN. In this sense the thesis makes a contribution to the budding literature on the role of individuals in or executive heads of international organisations.

In the past few years several scholars have started to analyse the role of executive heads or other individuals within international organisations. Schroeder recently published an article with a framework for analysing executive heads. He argues that executive heads perform two important tasks for the organisation in formulating a vision and mobilising support to have that vision implemented, and suggests that executive heads' performance can usefully be compared on that basis.[22] Kille and Reinalda are collecting biographies on secretaries-general across a number of international organisations as a basis for later analysis of the performance of these individuals based on personal characteristics.[23] Fröhlich is undertaking a study of the special representatives of the UN secretary-general (SRSGs), and seeks to analyse what makes some of them more effective than others.[24] Bode recently published a book on the potential for individual agency within international organisations based on analysis of three high-ranking UN officials in the 1990s.[25]

Despite the importance and promise of these publications and ongoing research agendas, the conceptual framework developed in this thesis covers an area they do not explore. This thesis explicitly sought to explain the *expansion* of the secretary-general's role as it assumed more autonomy and a broader scope, while some of the other projects are more interested in comparing the performance of individual office holders. The thesis argued that the role of the secretary-general expanded in this period as a result of both 'push' and 'pull' factors. Individual secretaries-general have 'pushed' to expand their role, and their actions in this regard have been effective because of the position of the secretary-general as 'representing' the UN overall. The historical geopolitical context of increasing member state conflict also contributed to an expansion of the

[22] Schroeder, "Executive Leadership."
[23] See the website of the IO BIO project, http://www.ru.nl/fm/iobio (accessed 18.06.15).
[24] Fröhlich, "Representing the United Nations."
[25] Ingvild Bode, *Individual Agency and Policy Change at the United Nations: The People of the United Nations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015).

secretary-general's role, as he was 'pulled' in to fill the vacuum left by member state inaction. These two factors may be present in other international organisations to varying degrees, and could thus help explain the histories of the development of other international organisations.

The thesis furthermore engages with one of the perennial questions in social science – structure and agency. This thesis adopted the understanding of structuration theorists that structures are socially constructed, and established a conceptual framework based on sociological/normative and historical institutionalism. Based on this framework, as well as the empirical analysis, the thesis argued that the secretary-general's role expanded to include a broader scope and more autonomy because of the position the secretary-general enjoyed within the UN institution. The thesis presents one story of how an individual may be empowered, or gain agency, because of institutional structures. That is, this is a story of how structures create agency and how agency in turn changes structure. It is only because of the position of the secretary-general within the institution of the UN that he (or, in the future, she) is able to influence international politics and the role of states.

# Appendix: UN Charter, Chapter XV: The Secretariat

*Article 97*

The Secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General and such staff as the Organization may require. The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council. He shall be the chief administrative officer of the Organization.

*Article 98*

The Secretary-General shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the General Assembly, of the Security Council, of the Economic and Social Council, and of the Trusteeship Council, and shall perform such other functions as are entrusted to him by these organs. The Secretary-General shall make an annual report to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization.

*Article 99*

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.

*Article 100*

1. In the performance of their duties the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization.
2. Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities.

*Article 101*

1. The staff shall be appointed by the Secretary-General under regulations established by the General Assembly.
2. Appropriate staffs shall be permanently assigned to the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and, as required, to other organs of the United Nations. These staffs shall form a part of the Secretariat.
3. The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

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