

2. Host Country

Geneva is the second largest "UN city" in terms of UN staff (~~35,500~~) and the most active UN conference centre (about 7000 half-day meetings/year).

"Spirit of Geneva": a long tradition of international law-making and arbitration in this city preceded the establishment of the League of Nations: 1864 first Geneva Conference, adoption of the Red Cross Convention, 1872 judgement in the "Alabama" case opens new dimensions in international arbitration. Geneva was one important centre of the European peace movement around 1900.

Geneva and the Palais des Nations have become more than just an "European" centre. UN activities in the fields of human rights, humanitarian assistance, disarmament, economic development and environment protection reach out from Geneva to all parts of the world.

Since several years, the name of Geneva is once more directly linked to peace negotiations, which, difficult and protracted as they may be, finally reached just settlements of embittered and dangerous conflicts: Afghanistan, Irak/Iran, and, hopefully soon, in the former Yugoslavia and other areas.

highly
of philosophy
of international
practical
actions
in multilateral
multilateral
diplomacy
in cold-war
survival
as a model
of democracy
in the world
of democracy

U.S. blocking bid to transfer UNDP to old German capital of Bonn

FRANKFURT—Germany's aspiration to move the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) from New York to Bonn is probably not going to be satisfied.

The United States, especially, stoutly opposes the idea. Even though the final decision on UNDP's location has yet to be made—probably early next summer—it is already obvious that Germany's chances of becoming the UNDP's host country are slight.

In May 1992 Germany formally asked that the agency's headquarters, including its 2,000 employees, be moved to Bonn. The rationale is twofold: Germany hopes to utilize some of the buildings in the former capital after Parliament and the government have moved to Berlin. And a branch of the United Nations is expected to increase the German population's interest in the organization's work.

The German offer is considered favorably in New York. In 1996 UNDP could move into the so-called "Schürmann-Bau" in Bonn, a triple building in the present parliamentary section. The rent would be free of charge. Another advantage of Bonn in comparison to New York lies in its relative proximity to Africa, where UNDP carries out the bulk of its field work.

An inspection group of UNDP closely checked the German offer and concluded the agency could save between US\$10.1 million and \$14.4 million annually—money that could be invested in developing projects.

UNDP's employees have mixed feelings about the notion of moving to Bonn. Some, especially general service and other lower-ranking staff, fear the loss of their jobs. Others have accommodated themselves to life in New York. However, a large number is said to prefer living in a tranquil town like Bonn to hectic New York.

It is less UNDP itself opposing the idea of moving to Bonn than New York City's administrators and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. Both reject the plan out of hand. New York's Mayor David Dinkins recently said he would do everything possible to keep U.N. institutions in town. The U.N. is among New York's largest employers.

Apparently UNDP and its present host town are negotiating for better conditions in New York. As a result, it is said, UNDP's rent could be significantly reduced.

The U.S. Mission is not only fiercely opposing the plan, it is also angry about Germany's "undiplomatic attitude" in the matter. An American diplomat said the offer "was suddenly on the table" without notifying other countries.

The United States seems to have two reasons for its rejection: It has no interest in breaking up the U.N. in the middle of a restructuring process that is supposed to centralize the organization to make it work more effectively. Also, the U.S. fears that Bonn could set an example for other cities throughout the world eager

to get a branch of the U.N.

"If we start this," the diplomat said, "other cities might justly demand similar privileges."

The Americans are determined to stick to their position on this issue. At the same time, they want to avoid an open dispute over a "minor thing like this" with an allied country. The diplomat said, adding:

"We have to find a way out of this without one country losing face."

Regardless of the frictions, Germany keeps on praising the advantages of Bonn. Recently it started a campaign in New York to rally support for its plan. UNDP itself seems to use the difficult situation for its own sake.

"As long as the decision hasn't been made, UNDP can bargain with either side," a U.N. official said.

— Special to the *UNO*

Noisy New York loses a round to tranquil Geneva for negotiations

GENEVA—The U.N. has come home—to Geneva. After several months of tortuous and protracted negotiations in New York (one party always threatening to leave and the other not to come) the two mediators on the problem of the former Yugoslavia decided to set up shop in Geneva, away from the interference of the busybodies of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the Secretariat.

The two European diplomats—Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg—may well have set a precedent for the future: keeping the real negotiations away from the pressure of New York with its intrusive media, its lobbies, its screaming sirens and shouting demonstrators across the street from U.N. Headquarters.

In Geneva diplomacy has returned to its natural habitat. That's not a guarantee of success, as history is there to prove. But at least Geneva offers a conducive environment.

Who has ever seen a New York cop, or for that matter a New York U.N. guard, salute an ambassador? A DPL license plate is a magnet for traffic tickets, not a call for courtesy.

New York has never been a diplomatic town. The relationship between the U.N. and the city is strictly business. The U.N. brings in about a billion dollars every

year to the city coffers. Its brisk, matter-of-fact pace of life, its traditional lack of security, its ever-present racial tension may contribute to the electric, exciting atmosphere of the city but not to the serenity required for diplomacy.

A walk in the park along the shore of Geneva's Lake Lemman will certainly soothe nerves better than an evening in New York's crime-plagued Central Park.

When Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen were trying in New York to divide Bosnia into 10 separate provinces, they were under the constant watch of the Security Council and especially of its nonaligned members who were spurred by the Muslims and kept interfering at every twist and turn of the negotiations.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali also insisted on being kept in the loop. So did the five permanent members of the Security Council especially Russia, a historic ally of the Serbs. All this "meddling" gave Serbs, Croats and Muslims every opportunity to stall and delay in the hope of getting a better deal.

When the long-touted Vance-Owen peace plan (as the "only" solution) finally collapsed and Cyrus Vance resigned, Lord Owen and the former Norwegian Foreign Minister Stoltenberg, who

continued page 11

Geneva

from page 8

replaced Vance, decided to pick up the negotiations and move them away from the strained atmosphere of New York.

This did not detract the Security Council from passing resolutions and making futile appeals for peace, while the Secretary-General kept expressing his "deep concern" at the worsening situation. All were largely ignored.

New York is 3,500 miles west of Geneva, and while the Security Council met on an average three to four times a week and the Secretary-General whines, Owen and Stoltenberg put together a new plan dividing Bosnia in three separate states that a few months before in the New York madhouse would have seemed

utterly utopian.

Geneva alone did not make peace in Bosnia possible, but it eased the process by removing it from the pressures of the U.N. Headquarters.

Pressures which are not likely to decrease in the coming years with a demoralized Secretariat rife with intrigue and scandals, an autocratic Secretary-General, the fear of terrorism, a bloated General Assembly with 184 members, including such "sovereign states" as Monaco and Andorra and a growing clamor for a revision of the U.N. Charter, including a reform of the Security Council as the 50th anniversary (1995) of the Organization is getting close.

— L. F.