Nothing reflected the naivety and ignorance of several of the new breed of members more than their view of the small secretariat of the advisory committee. They thought it was a research institution, which it was not; it was too small for this function; all additional information and clarifications to assist the committee were supplied by the main United Nations Secretariat. They thought the staff should first read reports of the Secretary-General and make summaries and recommendations for members to use during meetings with representatives of the Secretary-General. This demand was misguided: members were expected to read reports submitted to them before these reports were considered in plenary meetings of the committee. This demand reflected either laziness or refusal by members to perform functions in fulfilment of the role expected of them. In scheduling meetings, the executive secretary and I always made sure, to the extent possible, that sufficient time was available to members to prepare, especially for long or complex reports.

One member referred to the secretariat as a mystery and a deep well of darkness, revealing appalling lack of knowledge of the work, scope, and role of the secretariat of his committee. When I joined the committee in 1971, even before becoming chair, it took me less than a month to understand the role of the committee

secretariat, which did not include spoon-feeding me with questions to ask secretariat witnesses. But far worse, members now demanded that they be involved in the appointment, performance evaluation, and discipline of the secretariat staff, demands which were actually transferring to the committee practices at missions and in committees of national legislatures. The relationship between the secretariat of the committee and members began to deteriorate after the entry of a particular group of members from 1985 onwards. These members completely misunderstood the nature and functions of the small secretariat that had served the committee so admirably for so long.