

RATIONALE, DEVELOPMENT, AND PARAMETERS

This IO Watch archive seeks to provide, for the first time, a coherent, independent, comprehensive, and steadily expanding archive of quotes (and citations) from knowledgeable analyses of United Nations rule-of-law, management accountability, oversight and operational performance issues and problems as a spur to real UN reform.

Especially with its various "Useful sources" lists in most sections and subsections, IO Watch hopes to encourage visitors to this archive to consider alternative and independent views, often ignored or glossed over, of what the UN actually "does".

Hopefully, the archive will aid, inform, and heighten critical thinking about the UN, because only an informed, skeptical, and demanding public can demand that the UN Secretariat and its fractious Member State delegations finally deal firmly with UN operational weaknesses to achieve significant improvements in its operations.

Above all, this archive is A WORK IN PROGRESS. It is presently in its early stages, but its content will be gradually but steadily filled out in a multi-year developmental process, as rapidly as IO Watch's capacities permit. It focuses not on 'cheap shot' criticisms of UN performance and operations, but on all types of serious documentary materials that are evaluative and analytical in content.

The IO Watch archives development process has a set of major and interrelated aspects.

A. The archive already includes a considerable sample of significant quotes excerpted from newspapers, newsmagazines, and UN staff journals. IO Watch began with them because they are much more condensed and sharply-focused than books, reports, and even journal articles, and therefore much easier to excerpt. This element of the archive will continue to grow, both for older articles rediscovered or not yet included, and for new material,

since news analyses are available far in advance of scholarly and in-depth books and reports assessing current international affairs.

B. IO Watch has also collected some 700 relevant books, reports, and articles, and will continue to add to them. They are cited in a "Useful sources" listing at the end of the introductions to major sections, or at the end of subsections (and some relevant websites will be included as well). Key quotes from the relevant books have in most cases not yet been added into the various archive sections and subsections, because of their length. This inclusion will be a major task for the next stage of expanding the archive.

C. IO Watch will, of course, also steadily update the archive to reflect significant new developments, issues, scandals, and publications as they emerge, particularly in the Recent Developments section.

D. At the same time, and because the UN changes so painfully slowly that decades-old assessments remain just as relevant today as when they were written, IO Watch also has many more older materials to incorporate. In particular, UN staff journals over the years have provided some outstanding (and hard-earned) insights into the UN's performance problems and management weaknesses. IO Watch would be most grateful if UN staff, retired staff, and other researchers or interested outsiders can cite or provide additional relevant staff journal materials and other important assessment articles, books, and reports for inclusion in the archive (for more details, see the Contact IO Watch subsection of the website.)

Overall, IO Watch envisions that the initial 2,500 quote entries in this archive may well double or more in the next few years. Most of all, it will seek to broaden and enrich the archive with additional and still valid older accounts of experience, many of which have long been buried somewhere in the "dustbin of history."

The hard-earned lessons presented from these many sources need urgently to be rediscovered and made part of the formal record of more than half-a-century (and counting) of UN performance failings. They should be "on the record" now, as the UN continues through yet another period of grandly-announced "major reform" activity. They should also remain publicly available until their concerns are firmly addressed. In fact,

they should stay on the record in perpetuity, to serve as firm reminders of failed past UN reform efforts if the various current and future UN "reforms" should prove, as so often in the past, to be only the usual "smoke and mirrors."

The IO Watch archives contain excerpts from books, reports, journals, and newspaper and newsmagazine articles concerning UN performance and managerial accountability problems and issues and situations, ever since the early days of the UN in the late 1940s. They are chosen and presented using the following parameters.

1. Structure -- Following a brief overview, each IO Watch section or subsection covers a specific topic, with a set of quotes on the topic, listed, in general, in **chronological order** to allow the reader to more easily locate them and to track their evolution, ending in most subsections with a selected bibliography of "useful sources" for that area.

2. Sources -- Almost all the sources on UN Performance Problems and on Recent Developments come from outside the UN, since the UN has not been eager to identify and provide analyses, evaluations, and reports of its problems. However, at those periodic points where the Member States have called for management reform, and the Secretariat has been pressured to provide an occasional *mea culpa*, the UN documents are included. In addition, much important material is buried deep within lengthy Secretariat reports and other documents. Thus a certain amount of commentary or summary discussion is added to obtain a "story line."

3. Scope -- The IO Watch archive, as already mentioned, is open-ended and will be steadily expanded.

The archive also, as already discussed, concentrates on the UN organization proper (see www.un.org) rather than the overall UN system (see www.unsystem.org) or other major international organizations, whose mass of organizations, units, programmes, boards, commissions, etc. quickly becomes a very confusing "alphabet soup" of acronyms and muddle of varying details and processes. Much of the literature already concentrates on the UN Organization *per se*, because it is the largest, most complex, disorganized, and highly-politicized international institution of all.

With only a few exceptions the entries are all in English, in part because most of the relevant literature is in English. A multi-lingual archive is beyond IO Watch's capacities, and would also be rather difficult and counter-productive to browse. However, several foreign-language entries are included as a reminder that there are no doubt many excellent critiques in other languages.

IO Watch believes that it would be a wonderful, and very worthwhile, thing if someday some group would prepare a similar archive, particularly in French, Spanish, or German, or a similar archive in English for other major international organizations (on this issue, see also the archive subsection on Top Related Sources and Websites .)

4. Content -- IO Watch decided to present each source through one or several brief quotes excerpted from it, rather than provide just a dry bibliographical annotation or cursory summary listing. The quotes are all limited to less than 200 words, except for a few citations from published UN reports, or where permission has been obtained from the author or publishers.

These brief excerpts allow the reader to read at least some salient points or excerpts in the author's own words, and they are followed by a full bibliographic citation. The idea is both to give these knowledgeable critics (some stretching back almost a half a century) a chance to be heard "in concert", and to highlight a literature which the UN has consistently sought to wash away in a sea of public relations and "diplo-speak" reporting of its own.

The entries all provide full bibliographic and publishing data, to permit and encourage users of this website to go "see for themselves" what the full book, document, or article has to say. This is much easier than it ever was, since Internet booksellers can greatly help to locate both new and old books, and the online archives of most of the journals, newspapers, and organizations cited herein, and the top Internet search engines, can help to track down much of this material as well.

5. Quality control -- IO Watch has tried to avoid glib or uninformed quotes, and to concentrate instead on well-written and well-argued factual documents that present interesting insights and information, with indications that the author has direct experience of UN operations, is well-informed on UN performance issues, or -- in the case of newspaper articles -- that the

reporting at least comes from major news sources that regularly cover the UN.

6. Limitations -- Obviously, good books or detailed reports written about the UN can provide dozens of incisive quotes about UN performance problems. This archive tries to limit each source to no more than a few specific and brief quotes.

7. A lighter side -- Although UN performance failings are very serious and in some instances shameful, certain elements of the UN culture are both ironic, absurd, and very telling as well. A subsection on Anecdotes and Observations deals with rather unusual UN events and valuable insights. It is organized alphabetically by topic, and included as the next-to-last subsection of UN Performance Problems .

8. Focus -- Once again, this archive exists to present informative, alternative, and incisive critical analyses of UN management performance, accountability and oversight, and rule-of-law problems as an indication of operating problems that affect and trouble all major international organizations. For those global citizens who may somehow not have been exposed to the mass of UN "good news" portrayals of its performance, the UN Performance Problems section provides a listing of major UN websites, and publications (see The UN's Official Versions .)

9. Bibliographies, Related Sources and Websites -- As already noted, various useful sources are listed in the introductions to most sections, or at the end of many of the subsections.

In addition, the Recent Developments section includes a subsection entitled UN Management Accountability Bibliographic Lists of the most relevant sources divided into books, reports, articles, and a set of materials on UN field operations, preceded by a "Top 50" list of the best overall sources. IO Watch would very much appreciate suggestions for important documents to add to these lists and to the archives quotes (please see Contact IO Watch .)

This Recent Developments section also contains an overall list of valuable websites and other sources related to UN performance, managerial accountability, and oversight issues, entitled Top Related Sources and Websites . All these lists will

be periodically updated as new materials come to light.