

# CAN A NON-PERFORMING JIU GO ON FOREVER? II

## 12. AN ANACHRONISTIC JIU

The eleven performance weaknesses already summarized only disguise this last, and basic JIU flaw: it is an anachronism. The original idea -- a few "management wise men" traveling around to help resolve management problems in a UN system within a very underdeveloped UN system management culture -- made sense in 1968 when the Unit was created on a temporary basis. But in the ensuing 35 years this tiny unit simply could not keep up with a world in which UN operations have grown from some \$600 million when JIU was founded to up to \$15 billion today; from quiet conferences, meetings and research tasks to urgent field programmes involving more than 50,000 people worldwide; and from small administrative units to highly professional internal and external management audit, evaluation, and investigation units working in every agency.

The JIU in fact is much like a cat with nine lives, and it seems to have already expended eight of them on narrow escapes from blunt outside assaults, as discussed in the preceding material:

1. The 1974 US GAO report urging that a single well-staffed oversight UN system body be created instead of the temporary little JIU, which the US Congress wanted but the US Department of State (and other Member States) ignored;

2. The permanent statute given to the JIU in 1976, despite serious agency doubts about the quality of the Inspectors' work and the weak cost/benefit and results obtained;

3. The Canadian (and a US proposal) in 1979 to subordinate the JIU to a new UN Auditor-General's office, which was supported by some Member States but rejected by others who feared such a powerful and independent unit;

4. The very detailed US GAO report in 1986 analyzing serious JIU operational and report quality problems, and

limited impact (which still continue almost 20 years later), which was also brushed aside by the US Department of State and others as JIU continued its downward path;

5. An attempt by the UN system agencies in 1988 to reduce or downgrade JIU professional staff during a financial crisis, to force Inspectors to do their own work, which was also eventually blocked by JIU diplomatic pressure in New York;

6. A critical Assembly-mandated study of JIU work by the ACABQ, in 1992, which was critical but merely recommended postponing JIU requests for extra staff;

7. Most drastically, the UN system agencies as a group (in ACC) from 1995-1997 who sought an outside experts' review of JIU operations and delaying the appointment of new Inspectors: the non-appointment of Inspectors was narrowly averted by JIU intervention at the last minute in 1997;

8. the outside independent review idea, vigorously debated in the General Assembly's Fifth Committee from 1997 through 1999, foundered on the question of who should review JIU, and finally settled for a weak resolution urging, once more, JIU "self-reform" and dutifully endorsing JIU again as "the only independent system-wide oversight body."

But the new pressures of 2003 and 2004 show that the JIU "cat" is now fighting for its ninth life, and the situation this time is so serious that the Unit itself even contemplates having less than 11 Inspectors, and opening up the overall JIU Statute to revision.

Yet, this ninth (and last?) time, five critical factors need to be considered, all of which suggest that the JIU should, slowly but steadily, be shut down in favor of truly professional oversight functions.

**FIRST**, while the JIU has stood still, there have been tremendous changes, particularly in the 1990s, in upgrading and professionalizing the work of the many other management and oversight organizations, units, and groups available inside, across, and outside the UN system.

Most importantly, the external auditors have added management audit work to their financial audit activities,

including -- ever since 1996 -- analysis and concern with fraud matters which was much welcomed by the General Assembly; expanding their own audit work and auditing work across the UN system; and new professional initiatives and joint efforts of the national audit organizations in 170 countries around the world through INTOSAI:

[Note: for further information on the excellent "fit" between the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) INTOSAI and the UN and UN system audit needs, only partially realized for so long, see For INTOSAI, [www.intosai.org/](http://www.intosai.org/)  
For the UN Board of Auditors, see [www.unsystem.org/auditors/#top](http://www.unsystem.org/auditors/#top)  
For the Panel of External Auditors, see [www.unsystem.org/auditors/external.htm](http://www.unsystem.org/auditors/external.htm)  
The Panel's current members are South Africa (Chairman), Canada, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France, the Phillipines, and India},  
And for important group efforts see "Fraud awareness", Audit Guide 204, United Nations, adopted by the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the IAEA, December 1996, and the INTOSAI working group on audits of international organizations, see [http://www.riksrevisjonen.no/Default.asp?Application=Riksrevisjonen\\_Engelsk](http://www.riksrevisjonen.no/Default.asp?Application=Riksrevisjonen_Engelsk) .]

-- as shown in JIU and other survey reports, all the organizations of the UN system have made significant advances in strengthening and professionalizing their internal oversight functions, that is, management audit, evaluation (except for the UN itself) and especially the newer investigation units, including regular system-wide joint meetings and ongoing activities;

[see *inter alia* Joint Inspection Unit, "Accountability, management improvement, and oversight in the United Nations System", JIU/REP/95/2, UN document A/50/503, 1995, Part I, Chapter II, "Internal oversight units", and Part II, Tables 2, 3, and 4, (JIU/REP/95/2) and Joint Inspection Unit, "Strengthening the investigations function in the United Nations system organizations", JIU/REP/2000/9: both can be viewed and downloaded at [www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm](http://www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm) .]

-- the UN system interagency committees in human resource, financial, and technical areas are also very important. They are not "independent", but they are in effect "professional associations" of agency experts who have made major contributions to UN system accountability and management systems quality and harmonization through their joint efforts over the last 20 years. They provide both a practical and action-oriented focus, and deep and pragmatic knowledge of agency operations and coordination needs, especially under the new Chief Executives Board of agency heads and its High-Level Committee on Management, that the JIU could never provide:

Joint Inspection Unit, "Accountability, management improvement, and oversight in the United Nations System", JIU/REP/95/2, UN document A/50/503, 1995,

Part I, Chapter VI, "Inter-agency activities", and Part II, esp. Table 10, but also Tables 5-9, under JIU/REP/95/2 at [www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm](http://www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm) , and "Proposed programme budget 2004-2005", UN document A/58/6 of **25 March 2003**, Section 31C., "Chief Executives Board for Coordination", pp. 12-18, and Proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007: Part two: biennial programme plan, Programme 26: C. United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination", UN document A/59/6 (Prog. 26), **30 April 2004**, pp.4-6.

-- new or improved legislative oversight activities and bodies have been and are emerging throughout the UN system (but most definitely not in the UN itself), particularly in specific subcommittees and reduced-membership Executive Boards over the past decade in response to increasing needs for focused attention to accountability, audit, operational, and performance policies and results;

[Note: IO Watch is not aware of any recent system-wide summaries, but a full picture of progress was already provided in the mid-1990s, in Joint Inspection Unit, "Accountability, management improvement, and oversight in the United Nations System", JIU/REP/95/2, UN document A/50/503, **1995**, Part I, Chapter VIII, "Oversight governing bodies," and Part II, esp. Tables 12-14, at [www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm](http://www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm) , and see also Nordic UN Project, The, The United Nations in development: Reform issues in the economic and social fields: A Nordic perspective: Final report, Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm, **1991**, and Nordic UN Project 1996 in the Economic and Social Fields, The, The United Nations in development: Strengthening the UN through change: Fulfilling its economic and social mandate, GCSM AS, Oslo, **December 1996**.

-- and finally, although the JIU tries to ignore it, global management consulting firms , with field offices worldwide and employing management experts from many countries, who are increasingly used for special management studies by UN system agencies.

**SECOND**, the UN is presently under growing pressure to improve its oversight, performance, and anti-corruption activities and overcome various management scandals in many areas, as discussed in this archive, which the JIU can do little to correct or even address. The most relevant archive subsections on these current UN problems, scandals, and needs are:

- Corruption in the UN
- Investigation efforts: Is the OIOS a fig leaf?
- Legislative and Other Oversight
- OHR (Mis-)management

- Management culture deterioration
- Corruption characteristics
- Is the UN another Enron?
- Manager/investigators?
- Suppressed whistle-blowers
- Top corruption fighter corrupted
- Iraq oil-for-food programme
- Baghdad headquarters bombing
- A real UN fraud prevention programme
- External experts oversight review and
- General Assembly audit subcommittee

**THIRD**, the only UN oversight body performing effectively and enjoying full respect is the UN Board of Auditors. CNMA believes that there are very major benefits to phasing the JIU down and out, and turning its resources over to the Board (and system-wide Panel) of Auditors:

1. There is presently much discussion about revising the JIU Inspectors' job descriptions, but Member States have always resolutely ignored this guidance. The JIU Statute (Article 2, para. 1) clearly specifies, first and foremost, people "chosen from among members of national supervision or inspection bodies". Clearly, national audit staff fit this requirement perfectly, but only France has ever figured this out in selecting Inspectors. Why not give all the JIU work directly to these professionals?

2. The national audit people are fully qualified, independent, practicing, certified, educated, and experienced auditors. They come into UN system agencies each year on a contracted basis, do their work (all around the world, not sitting in Geneva), and then return to their national services. They also know each organization well, since they are already auditing its financial and other operations.

3. As noted above, JIU adds perhaps \$1 million a year to its own \$4 million annual cost through detailed

information requests made to the agencies, requiring many headquarters meetings and consultations, and most of all demanding that the agencies process, comment and, most onerously, follow up on JIU reports, which wind up having little impact anyway. The external auditors, however, already report regularly to the governing bodies of each agency with reports that are given respect and attention. They could easily expand and incorporate added work into their ongoing audit services and reporting, and reduce the many JIU "interface" requirements and demands considerably.

4. No new funding would be required. JIU is supported by apportioned costs paid by all the UN system agencies who participate. They, and the UN, should simply switch the funds that they each presently provide for JIU to their external auditors.

**Most important of all, however, the external auditors would be much more cost-effective than the JIU.** The 1995 JIU system-wide report on accountability and oversight matters included a table on external system-wide oversight bodies. It revealed that the JIU provided 19 Inspectors and professional-and-above staff (11 + 8) at an annual total cost of about \$4 million. The external auditors provided about 71 staff years (i.e., total annualized contractual work-months provided, on assignment from their national audit services) per year, at a total estimated cost of about \$7 million annually.

Joint Inspection Unit, "Accountability, management improvement, and oversight in the United Nations System", JIU/REP/95/2, UN document A/50/503, 1995, Part II, Table 11, p. 23, at [www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm](http://www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm) .]

Thus, the auditors provide 10 professional auditors per each \$1 million spent for oversight each year, while the JIU provides less than 5 diplo/auditors per \$1 million. (The cost difference, of course, is due to the very high salaries of the 11 Inspectors (and their Executive Secretary, and all the perquisites and emoluments that they, and the JIU staff, receive, versus the contractual assignments of the external auditors.)

Twice as many (highly-qualified) professionals substituted for amateurs, at the same price, is a very wise use of resources which the General Assembly should finally insist upon. For the UN system as a whole, **shifting JIU's \$4 million to the external auditors would provide 40 or more staff years of additional PROFESSIONAL audit work per year at no new cost, at a time when the UN and the UN system very much need all the professional oversight expertise they can obtain for their performance credibility.**

Phasing out the JIU, therefore, would, above all, provide the UN and the UN system with much more value-for-money, not least because the external auditors have been concerned with the critical new area of UN fraud-fighting for more than a decade, while JIU has never even started this important work.

"Fraud awareness", Audit Guide 204, United Nations, adopted by the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the IAEA, **December 1996.**

A JIU phase-out is also not difficult to do. The JIU Statute (Article 4, para. 4) says that an Inspector can be "terminated" for noncompliance with the JIU Statute only if all other Inspectors so decide, and the General Assembly "confirms" that conclusion.

That process would be almost impossible, but there is another route. In the late 1980s a UN interagency committee, whose members pay and are consulted on JIU's budget, first proposed cutting JIU staff to pressure Inspectors to do their own work. Similarly, the 1993 Thornburgh report (and Beigbeder in 1997) noted that the Secretary-General could simply forego appointing or reappointing new Inspectors, since the Statute specifies only "not more than eleven Inspectors" (Article 2, para. 1).

Both efforts to reduce JIU operations failed at the time, but they could be employed now to swiftly redeploy JIU staff, except for a few people to answer phones and do administrative paperwork. More gradually over the next several years, the current Inspectors could be allowed to finish their terms (but at least be forced to prepare, or find someone on their own to prepare) their reports, with no new Inspectors appointed.

**FOURTH**, IO Watch believes that one particularly troubling item must be noted. During 1994 discussions on "strengthening external oversight mechanisms", which as always led nowhere (except for the creation of the OIOS), the JIU emphasized that:

"Owing to the increased complexity and cost of the United Nations, particular attention should be paid to ensuring that those who are appointed to oversight functions possess the necessary high professional qualifications and experience. This applies equally to elected or appointed members, as well as to supporting staff."

"Report of the Joint Inspection Unit", UN document A/49/34, **1994**, para. 79.

This statement was mere hypocrisy from the Inspectors, but

two years later they went "over the line" by making this claim for themselves in official documents. The Unit had been pressured by the General Assembly, not for the first time, to specify the standards and guidelines for its work. It presented them in the 1996 JIU annual report to the Assembly and all other system governing bodies. In addition to asserting the deep involvement of Inspectors in all aspects of planning, data-gathering and analysis, drafting, and review of JIU reports, with scarcely a mention of any JIU staff roles, it made the following three specific comments:

"The Unit has considered it useful to attach these standards and guidelines to [this report] in order to allow the Member States, other expert bodies, and the secretariats of [the agencies] to gain a better understanding of how the Unit fulfills its mandate." ...

"Competence. The Inspectors, Executive Secretary, and concerned staff must possess the required and relevant qualifications and competencies ...

"At the conclusion of each inspection, evaluation, or investigation, a written report ... will be prepared by the Inspector(s) ..."

"Report of the Joint Inspection Unit", UN document A/49/34, 1996, para 27 and Annex, paras 33(b) and 40. [emphasis added.]

The Inspectors thus made it very clear that the guidelines were to allow everyone to understand how the JIU fulfills its mandate. The second phrase, however, is clearly untrue, as anyone can easily determine by viewing the lack of relevant credentials, education, training, certification, and management analysis experience revealed by the current JIU Inspectors' backgrounds presented on their website. The third quote is belied by both the JIU budget presentations on the report-writing duties of JIU professional and even clerical staff, and by confirmation by the many past and present JIU staff.

[Note: see [www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm](http://www.unsystem.org/jiu/new/home.htm) ]

The Inspectors, of course, were only copying standards from the professional literature. But in claiming them as their own, they consciously misrepresented their operations. In most national governments, such acts are considered very serious matters, often leading to resignations. Among other things, they violate yet another standard which the JIU presented in its 1996 annual report:

"Integrity. The Inspectors, Executive Secretary, and concerned staff must possess the highest standard of integrity for performing their duties."

"Report of the Joint Inspection Unit", UN document A/49/34, 1996, para 27 and Annex, paras 33(c).

In February 2002 a General Assembly resolution again raised

the issue of the JIU standards, stating in its resolution on the JIU that it:

"Requests the Chairman of the Unit ... to ensure compliance by the Unit with the provisions of its statute as well as the internal standards, guidelines, and procedures as approved by the Unit ..."

"Joint Inspection Unit", General Assembly resolution 56/245 of **5 February 2002**, para. 10.

In response, the Unit's first of three "reform" reports of September 2003 stated that, in order to address concerns of report quality and better selection of its reviews, it had revised its internal standards and guidelines and added internal working procedures to complement them, all aimed, *inter alia*, at ensuring that:

" ... All provisions of the statute and the internal standards and guidelines are complied with, and the Chairman is empowered to ensure such compliance as he/she is requested to provide in General Assembly resolution 56/245, paragraph 10."

"Report of the [JIU] on the preliminary review of its statute and working methods: Note by the Secretary-General", UN document A/58/343 of **5 September 2003**, para. 3.

Once again, a comparison of the JIU with the external auditors is most instructive. The UN Panel of External Auditors website, under a section on "Additional Guidance on Standards: Ethics", states that:

"Integrity, objectivity, and independence

The External Auditor should be straightforward and honest in performing professional work. ... The External Auditor should be independent in fact and appearance. ...

Professional Competence and Due Care

The External Auditor in agreeing to provide professional services implies that there is a level of competence necessary to perform professional services and that the knowledge, skill, and experience of the External Auditor will be applied with reasonable care and diligence. Auditors should therefore refrain from performing any services, which they are not competent to carry out unless advice and assistance is obtained to ensure that the services are performed satisfactorily."

[Note: see [www.unsystem.org/auditors/external.htm](http://www.unsystem.org/auditors/external.htm) ]

In the preceding pages IO Watch has presented the major elements of JIU performance problems and the reform "showdown" that was to occur in 2004: the General Assembly's renewed calls in 2002 and 2003 for serious JIU performance, not rhetoric; the Unit's extensive self-examination in three special reports of 2003 and 2004; twelve major aspects which summarize the many criticisms of JIU as an oversight body over the years, which continue on; and five critical factors that underscore why the bumbling old JIU should be shut down in favour of expended, very

professional and focused oversight work by the Board of Auditors.

So how did this decisive battle to -- for the ninth time -- really reform the JIU go during 2004? As one might well expect from a UN organization bound in a web of inertia and increasingly unable to establish serious management accountability and professional oversight leadership, not well.

The JIU annual report on its work for 2003, issued in 2004, had less empty space than its predecessors, but still was cryptic. One page was devoted to the JIU's internal "in-depth review" efforts as already described above. A welcome change was actual information, although very brief, on the content of the seven JIU reports issued during 2003. JIU also noted that, after a decade of ponderous effort, some agencies were actually beginning to take some actions on some of its reports, and expressed hope that others would eventually follow (the UN however, continued to beg for cessation of its annual reporting on some actions taken on some past JIU reports).

The JIU provided as well modest information on actual followup on its past recommendations, citing some actions taken, others to be considered, and what it called the "unmistakable impact" of some JIU work to be discerned in the discussions at some governing body meetings. The usual "boiler plate" information on JIU did include the interesting information that the UN and its major programmes (particularly the UNDP, WFP, and UNICEF, pay a dominant 69 percent share of the total \$4 million JIU budget every year.

"Report of the Joint Inspection Unit", UN document A/59/34, **2004**. [available on the JIU website], and

The UN report referred to is "Implementation of the recommendations of the JIU: Report of the Secretary-General", UN document A/59/349 of **10 September 2004**.

In its 2004 work programme, the JIU emphasized as so often in the past that it would strive to meet the General Assembly's repeated urgings that it report on high-priority topics with action-oriented reports that improve programmes and savings system wide, but it then had little new to offer.

-- On system-wide issues, the JIU proposed yet another review on patching up the defective administrative justice system, one more of many studies on system coordination mechanisms (three by JIU alone since 1996), collaboration of UN agencies in Africa, developing a common payroll system, management of the UN "laissez-passer" travel documents, and -- amazingly for a group of aging diplomats

-- a review of the highly-technical topic of open-source software potential in the UN system.

-- JIU management and administration reviews for 2004 would examine management in a WHO regional office, a UN convention to combat desertification, another review of the UN Office in Geneva (the JIU's home base), and a note on "knowledge management", no less, for the ILO.

-- The JIU explained, as a main criteria for selection of its work topics, that it would seek to avoid duplication of effort. Perhaps the above list of uninspired and low-priority JIU topics underscores indeed that the serious oversight work of ensuring effective programme implementation in the UN system is being done by the external auditors, the enhanced internal oversight bodies, the Chief Executives Board system of committees, and true expert outside management consultants (as already discussed), and not by the JIU.

-- In actual fact, none of these "high-priority" topic reviews which the JIU programmed for 2004 (except the one on the administration of justice) was issued in 2004.

"Joint Inspection Unit: Note by the Secretary-General", UN document A/59/75 of **22 April 2004**. [available on the JIU website].

As part of the new UN "strategic framework" process, the JIU also provided its biennial programme plan for 2006-2007. the JIU stressed its "unique position ... as a catalyst" for preparing and disseminating best managerial practices in the organizations, accompanied by "harmonized and concrete solutions." Its accomplishments would be improving governing body oversight (evidence by recommendations presented and approved), improving managerial practices and compliance (by adopted resolutions implemented), and (quite bizarre) increased coordination and information sharing among the organizations (measured by "the number of best practices shared with participating organizations."

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007: Part two: biennial programme plan, Programme 26: B. Joint Inspection Unit", UN document A/59/6 (Prog. 26), **30 April 2004**, pp. 3-4.

In the key measure of performance, however, the JIU fell well short of these grand aims in 2004. It produced nine more reports, slightly more than average but all issued in the last four months of the year and during (rather than in advance of) the General Assembly session. Half were the old carryover 2003 topics noted above: a follow-up on multilingualism and on

administration of justice, headquarters agreements, management at UNHCR, and system procurement practices.

Most importantly, however, four 2004 reports, on managing for results in the UN system, showed the new JIU direction and strategy for the future. Having continued to demonstrate its inability to assess concrete programme performance results and performance and combat waste, fraud and abuse (because of its amateurish staffing), the JIU has decided, as stated in its overview report on the topic, that it would establish the pillars of a grand results-based management system (RBM), with a list of "critical success factors" to provide UN system agencies with a "benchmarking framework" or "scorecard" which they can use to measure progress toward RBM.

"Overview of the series of reports on managing for results in the United Nations System", JIU/REP/2004/5, 2004, "Introduction." [all four reports are available on the JIU website]

IO Watch concludes that the JIU has thus reinvented itself in a most comfortable way. At a time when the UN confronts admitted management crises, as discussed at length in the section on Late 2004: A "tipping point"?, the JIU is positioning itself as an observer, who will "keep score" on how the UN agencies are doing, without engaging itself in the complex, challenging, day-to-day, in-depth process of analysing and helping solve UN performance problems through professional evaluations, audits, and investigations.

Once again, the JIU diplomat/Inspectors are concentrating on sweeping concepts rather than the "proper use of funds", by disseminating a grand package of "received wisdom" from the management literature and discussions with agencies. This conceptual package of good management practice cost the UN and Member States some \$2 million -- at least half the total cost of JIU operations for 2004 (six Inspectors and more staff involved, and amounting to four of the nine total JIU reports) and something a top-notch consultant could have prepared for much less.

How did the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly respond to this latest JIU gambit to preserve its cozy situation, in light of its firmly-expressed (and not new) concerns for JIU reports that would be timely, high-priority, concrete and action-oriented? It capitulated, and rather quickly.

In late December 2004, as it raced to adjourn, and before it had time to seriously consider the new JIU reports, and in

marked contrast to drawn-out "JIU preservation" battles of the past, the Fifth Committee's usual "informal consultations" produced a rambling but soft three pages of exhortations for the JIU. As so often in the past, it duly noted the JIU's latest reform efforts, and then urged it to "fully implement" and be in "strictly in accordance with" the terms of its Statute, most importantly:

"Urges Member States ... to propose candidates for [Inspector] ... to strictly adhere to the qualifications and experience outlined in ... the Statute";

Stresses the importance of ensuring that candidates [for Inspector] have experience in at least one of [thirteen fields, including "management" and "monitoring] ... as well as knowledge of the United Nations system and its role in international relations;

....

Decides that the Unit shall mainly focus on identifying means to improve management and to ensure that optimum use is made of available resources, as stipulated in ... the Statute ...;

... as part of its focus on management issues, [the JIU] should assess the development and application in participating organizations of the principle of accountability in its relevant reports;

... decides that the Unit shall undertake inspections with a sharp focus ...;

Decides to consider the implementation of the ... present resolution ... at its sixty-first session [i.e., in late 2006]."

"Joint Inspection Unit: Report of the Fifth Committee", UN Document A/59/646 of **23 December 2004**, and

"Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit," General Assembly resolution 59/267 of **23 December 2004**, paras. 5-7, 12, 18, 20, and 29.

The General Assembly thus spares the Inspectors once again. Like the Inspectors, it shows much solemn concern for full application of the JIU Statute and a more effective JIU. But this time it even eases the already weak qualifications for an Inspector: not any "highest standards" of a distinguished career as a professional oversight expert, but a rephrasing so that any eager diplomat can claim "experience" in "management" or "monitoring" as a participant, among hundreds of others, in the Fifth Committee itself.

IO Watch also finds it particularly troubling that the General Assembly has also now positioned the JIU -- a dreadful example of an unaccountable unit -- to lecture all the organizations of the UN system on accountability matters. And after all this, the Assembly stated in its resolution that it would not consider JIU performance again for another two years.

IO Watch concludes that this rapid decision and posturing reflects poorly on the Fifth Committee, the body that sets the tone for the entire UN through its central "accountability for accountability" responsibilities. As discussed elsewhere in this archive, in the midst of the "annus horribilis" and management

crises which the UN encountered in 2004 and faces in 2005, not only in the oil-for-food programme but in other scandals and major problems as well, the Fifth Committee and the Assembly (and of course the JIU) seem amazingly oblivious to what is going on, and thereby ensure that these messes will continue.

To retain any "due diligence" credibility and perhaps to even save the UN from management collapse, IO Watch concludes that the General Assembly must begin by finally addressing the most prominent public symbol of UN fecklessness --- the amateurism and weak performance of its very own amateur, diplomatic "good old boys" in the JIU. This should start with investigating the unsustainable public assertions of the JIU Inspectors since 1996 that they are highly professional and do in fact write JIU reports.

As part of this larger problem of UN unaccountability, IO Watch believes that the General Assembly must also revive the 1996-1997 proposal from the ACC executive heads of the UN system for an External experts oversight review by auditors-general or former auditors-general (the INTOSAI factor again). Such a review should consider decisive moves to:

-- "de-diplomatise" UN oversight and instead move the \$4 million a year spent on the JIU to the external auditors to achieve professional, action-oriented oversight work;

-- insist as well on the highest standards of professionalism in the OIOS leadership;

-- and also -- centrally -- to establish a General Assembly audit subcommittee with some professional oversight staff. These initiatives, which are not new, are discussed in the concluding section of this archive on Recent Developments .

This archive has spent so much time on the small JIU because of what it symbolizes -- a very public example of the still-entrenched political manipulation of UN staffing for important posts, rather than insisting on the "highest standards" required by the UN Charter.

Five final quotes underscore the JIU as the symbol of the entire "good old boy" games of UN personnel policy. The first concerns the JIU in 1992, and the second an observer's succinct behavioural analysis of UN "time-servers" in 1995:

"[The JIU] was one of those American ideas that went bad,' said a U.N. delegate who monitors the group. It was originally intended to be like the U.S. General Accounting

Office, he said, but ended up as a body of mostly elderly retired diplomats or political appointees with 'no special skills for the job.'

The Inspectors, nominated by their governments ...[are very highly paid] and serve in a personal capacity, which means that 'they can do anything they want.' the delegate said. "It's the job that everyone in the U.N. aspires to."

Branigan, William, "North and South stand worlds apart on reform: U.N. record on change fuels skepticism," Washington Post, **September 23, 1992**.  
[emphasis added.]

"Senior U.N. officials have been corrupted: not by power and ambition but by their tax-free salaries and their comfortable lives. Servants and secretaries help them get through the day and perform their non-existent jobs. All they want is for this to continue until they retire ..."

Tom Bethell, National Review (US), **August 28, 1995**.

The more fundamental and debilitating significance of the JIU situation is precisely expressed by Péricles Alves, who assessed the JIU situation in 1991; then by the overall reflections of Richard Thornburgh in 1993; and finally by the Brahimi report in 2001:

"The paradox of the JIU is that while it was originally created to improve ... financial matters ... a number of additional problems were engendered by it. ...

from a political standpoint, it can be said that the Unit has exposed problems which are quite difficult to solve and which are inherent in the machinery of the United Nations. How could one change the Statute and the functional mode of United Nations bodies? How could one improve the efficiency of these bodies, once they or a particular conjuncture have proven the need for change? Ultimately, how to de-politicize, to avert the diplomatization, or to reverse these two tendencies in the United Nations system?"

Péricles Gasparini Alves, "United Nations Joint Inspection Unit: A critical analysis," Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, **6 May 1991**.  
[emphasis added]

"the aggregate cost of keeping unqualified, incompetent or non-productive staff members in place far exceeds, in my view, whatever termination expenditures might be necessary to 'clean up' the Organization. ...

... Steps, [to terminate inadequately performing staff], would have a positive effect on the morale of that vast majority of dedicated staff members remaining on the job as well as on the productivity of the Organization as a whole."

Dick Thornburgh, Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, "Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations" ["The Thornburgh report"], **1 March 1993**, pp. 9-10. [emphasis added.]

"Unless the United Nations takes steps to become a true meritocracy, it will not be able to reverse the alarming trend of qualified personnel, the young among them in particular, leaving the Organization. Moreover, qualified people will have no incentive to join it. Unless managers at all levels, beginning with the Secretary-General and his senior staff, seriously address this problem on a priority basis, reward excellence and remove incompetence, additional resources will be wasted and lasting reform will become impossible."

Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations [the "Brahimi report"],  
UN document A/55/305 -- S/2000/809 of **August 21 2000**, p. xiv.  
[emphasis added.]