

PUBLIC RELATIONS, NOT PERFORMANCE

In May 2001 the head of the UN's Department of Public Information gave a very positive and optimistic view of information at the UN in an interview:

"How do you ensure that DPI isn't seen as a propaganda tool, yet that it serves the UN's objectives?"

By telling the truth! Information isn't propaganda unless you doctor it to distort reality or hide inconvenient facts. We don't do that.

I think you'll admit that under Secretary General Kofi Annan we have the most transparent United Nations imaginable --- one that has officially authorized all staff to speak to the press within their areas of competence, one that has openly admitted its failures and mistakes (on issues as major as Srebren[ica] and Rwanda), one that has encouraged media access at all levels. That's the spirit that will animate everything that DPI does ..."

Pranay Gupte, "Q & A: Shashi Tharoor: 'Why information matters at the UN'," Earth Times, **May 2001**, p. 16.

[Note: the article began by citing Mr. Tharoor as "an established novelist, columnist and nonfiction author, a familiar byline in many of the world's top publications, ... also a highly sought-after figure on the lecture circuit. His new novel, 'Riot', is scheduled for publication ... and is already generating considerable buzz." One wonders how Mr. Tharoor ever finds time for his weighty responsibilities as a senior Department head and top publicist for the UN. A further article on Mr. Tharoor, who still serves as head of the DPI and appears regularly on "op-ed" pages and as a columnist in Newsweek International, is

Lynda Richardson, "Public lives: Polishing public profile of UN is a job for a novelist", New York Times, **March 9, 2001**.

Things were not always so at the UN. In fact, for decades the Organization had fearful attitudes about outside exposure, and relied on secrecy and very restricted information, as shown by the following seven quotes:

"Of all the regrettable legacies from the moral collapse of the United Nations in the early 1950s, the most insidious has been timorousness. ... A group of leading officials who stood by ... while scores of their subordinates were, with formal United Nations sanction, made victims of a national reign of terror ... could hardly have been expected to grow braver with the years; nor have they. And their attitudes have permanently affected the entire UN body -- gathering momentum, so to speak, as they merged with the not inconsiderable tributaries of native bureaucracy. Two expressions are constantly repeated in the United Nations these days, in response to any outside plea for more constructive approaches, past or present: *'It wouldn't have done any good'* and *'It's inevitable.'*"

Shirley Hazard, Defeat of an ideal: A study of the self-destruction of the United

Nations, Macmillan, London, 1973, pp. 121-122.

"[Recently, as President of the Staff Union], I met with senior UN officials, [who warned me] that the staff must be extremely careful about its actions because the UN was on the verge of collapse and the tiniest upset might bring the whole structure crumbling down. I asked 'Gentlemen, do you really believe that the UN is such a fragile flower?' A solemn yes was the reply I received. (This, I might say, is [a line] used rather consistently over the years to silence criticism and unrest. I recently saw an article from the 12 March 1947 edition of The New York Times where the first Secretary-General, Mr. Trygve Lie, was quoted as saying to a meeting of the staff, 'Everything you say will be used against this Organization by the enemies of the United Nations.')"

Lowell Flanders, "The future of the UN In whose hands?", address at a preparatory meeting of the United Nations Community Forum, Secretariat News (NY), **April 16, 1979**, pp. 10-11.

"Over-stretched and under-funded, bureaucratically and unimaginatively organized, the UN is perceived to straddle the globe like a dinosaur. ...

... Always an opaque organization, it is not easy to understand its workings, and almost impossible to follow the threads of its myriad activities. Sometimes it seems more like a church for the faithful, with its attendant mysteries, than a political institution run by rational individuals.

Only four groups of people [diplomats, journalists, academics, and members of the secretariat] are familiar with its arcane ceremonies, and all of them usually conspire to sing its praises.

.... [They] all have such a vested interest in the UN that they rarely question the organization's existence."

Richard Gott, "Nations divided by a lost vision", Guardian Weekly, London, **12 September 1993**, pp. 1-3.

"Many studies on the UN are produced in academia, and governments conduct their own enquiries, but from a journalist's point of view the UN is one of the world's most under-reported organisations. So much is taken at face value and so little is known. A fog of misinformation envelopes the Secretariat, a situation which ideally suits its member governments. It is not always possible to keep some matters secret for ever and the evidence gathered here will go some way to explain what happened to the world's last, best hope.

The world of international diplomacy is a closed shop and curious outsiders are often dismissed. The covert behaviour practised in this twilight zone helps to ensure that information is reserved for those with an inside track. There is an ever-present inclination toward cover-up."

Melvorn, Linda, The ultimate crime: Who betrayed the UN and why, Allison & Busby, London, **1995**, p. 434.

"Introduction: A good idea fallen among thieves

The UN has the media relations of a 1950s state bureaucracy. It doesn't like reporters looking into its inner workings, and it threatens dire penalties to staff found leaking information to the media.

Time and time again, when journalists have exposed scandals in the UN, senior officials set up an enquiry -- into who leaked!"

Ian Williams, The UN for beginners, Writers and Readers Publishing, New York, 1995, p. 1.

" ... the [OIOS] report is a guide to a variety of UN scandals, most of them unknown beyond the walls of the Secretariat because of entrenched traditions of secrecy. *Senior UN officials do not seem to understand -- or perhaps they understand only too well -- the role of transparency in avoiding waste and fraud. As we have noted before, the bidding process for the award of multimillion dollar UN contracts is entirely secret. Even the opening of bids from contractors, which UN regulations require to be 'public' takes place behind closed doors, and information is released neither to the Press nor to any intergovernmental body.*"

"Reviewing 3+ years of work, [OIOS] sees continuing problems - but reforms are afoot," International Documents Review, 2 November 1998, pp. 1-4.

"How Not to

Although 'reform' has been with us for ages now ...it cannot exactly be considered a success. Which comes as no surprise to the average U.N. staff member who, from the 'vantage' point of the inside view, has seen a succession of bad answers being administered to the wrong questions.

EU Commissioner Neil Kinnock seems to be one of the outsiders done in by the deceptive legwork of our 'reformers.' [Seeking] working models for reform of [EU] institutions, Mr. Kinnock finds his inspiration ... in the 'successful internal overhauls of the U.N.' This snake oil is deemed to be effective in eliminating the 'problems of poor morale, slow promotion and mismanagement.' Wish it were true. The only amazing accomplishment [his] illusions illustrate is the remarkable success of the U.N. policy of muzzling the staff to the point where, almost fifty-five years later, high officials of non-U.N. organizations can still be led to believe that sound management is the rule here."

Eric Blair, "Miscellany: From our man in Absurdistan", UN Special (Geneva), March 2000, p. 31. [emphasis added]

In more recent times, however, the UN has worked much more aggressively to refine and invigorate its public information, or public relations (or propaganda) activities. It began with a detailed 1987 analysis on "making the UN a winner" and assessing how it could best "sell itself". Since then, there has been much internal activity on such things as "enhancing the public image of the UN system", "Communication as a reform tool", and training workshops to improve senior officials' media presentation skills.

Pace-UK International Affairs, Making the United Nations a winner, London, 1987.

The new efforts led as well to some major media extravaganzas, though not without some awkward moments, as shown by the following three quotes.

"The United Nations is getting ready to celebrate. Up to 160 heads of state and government are expected [at] a special three-day commemoration of the UN's 50th anniversary in New York.

And there will be educational and celebratory events sponsored ... in more than 100 nations. United Nations Associations are the driving force in many countries.

Events include a world tour by Britain's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra ...an international conference on counseling for tolerance in Valetta, Malta, and a science and culture symposium in Tokyo. ...a model United Nations assembly [in Tampere, Finland] at the 80th World Esperanto Congress [in India] a seminar on the UN in the 21st century, and the UN plans to look at itself in Vienna with a forum on administrative coordination for the next 50 years. San Francisco will be the center for many observances, from think-tank meetings to dance festivals.[and] the Gorbachev Foundation is organizing a forum on the state of the world

A \$15-million trust fund has been pledged by the international business community, governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals ... [mostly] for communications and educational materials in schools and universities around the world"

Elvi Ruottinen, "Plans for a serious party", Gemini News Service (Third-World oriented), London, **December 16, 1994**, as presented in *World Press Review*, June 1995.

"It is supposed to be the feel-good event of the fall, a melding of music, technology and anti-poverty action. On Saturday, millions around the world will watch pop stars perform in London, Geneva and New Jersey for NetAid, a United Nations-sponsored effort to engage wealthy Westerners in the hardships of the developing world. The concerts will be carried live on television in 60 countries and radio broadcasts will reach 120 nations. The shows will promote NetAid's website.

But even before the first chords are struck, the charitable alliance is caught up in controversy, deflecting charges of self-interest. Harry Belafonte, the actor and musician who helped organize the event, said he and the actor Danny Glover were quitting in disgust. The event, he said, had 'been reduced to a trade show', promoting the UN bureaucracy and a corporate sponsor, Cisco Systems. UN sources said that in his letter of resignation, Belafonte also complained that proceeds would be funneled back into the UN Development Program and Cisco before money reached the world's poor."

"People", International Herald Tribune, **October 9, 1999**.

"In retrospect, it is difficult to understand why United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his senior advisers ... were so determined to organize a summit conference of world leaders ... on the occasion of the first General Assembly of the new millenium. In many ways, the 1990s was a decade of peacekeeping failures and conferences for the world organization. The failures are all too obvious; and most of the conferences, if they are remembered at all, exist only in the institutional memories of the organizations that participated in them. ...

This [Millenium Summit] is of course a public relations ploy, not a serious idea. The problems of the world organization cannot be solved by summits, millennial or otherwise. ...

Yes, almost every major head of state dutifully trooped to New York to address the summit -- for an allotted time of five minutes each! That alone should have been enough to demonstrate what an inconsequential event the entire summit really was. ... Tellingly, almost no one at the United Nations today talks about the summit, although the event took almost two years to plan and occupied the attention of some of the institution's

best minds. It is almost as if it never happened. And, in a sense, it never did."

David Rieff, "The Millenium Assembly", Global Governance, 7 (2001), pp. 127-130 [127, 130].

Of course, the UN has had, or created, its own media "star" in Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who is continuously visible at events and on visits worldwide: very much a jet-setter, compared to his quieter predecessors as Secretary-General. As a 2002 story noted:

"New Yorkers, competing to lure Kofi Annan to their dinners and benefits, are making him the most sociable, plugged-in United Nations secretary general this city has ever known. Sometimes that translates into as many as five nights out a week, he says. That is on top of all those official lunches, diplomatic receptions and traveling: 20 countries so far this year.

He is not complaining. 'You have everybody here, lots of interesting people' he said in an interview ...

'He's not bought in completely to the fact that he's the current social star of New York parties', says [one friend].

Sir Brian Urquhart, ... who has known all the secretaries general, except the first ... says Mr. Annan mixes more in New York society than any of his predecessors. ...

'Dag Hammarskjold did not go out very much' he says of the contemplative Swede. 'He didn't like routine social life. U Thant just went home and read. Kurt Waldheim? I'm not sure he got asked very much.' (Others said he certainly tried.) Javier Perez de Cuellar frequented ... [museum] galleries. And everyone agrees that Boutros Boutros-Ghali, from Egypt, was an uncompromising intellectual and workaholic who never relaxed."

Barbara Crossette, "Outside UN, a secretary so social", New York Times, **May 30, 2002**.

Mr. Annan has indeed apparently created a formidable persona (at least until late 2004). He has even been described by some diplomatic admirers as "a rock star of international relations" and as having "a saint-like sense about him." This role clearly helped him win a Nobel Peace Prize, which the enthusiastic Norwegian jury awarded half to Mr. Annan himself, and the other half to the 35,000-50,000 UN or UN system staff.

Colum Lynch, "Honor awarded to Annan and UN", International Herald Tribune, **October 13, 2001**,

Edith M. Lederer, "UN's Annan elected to second term", **June 30 2001**,

"Text from Nobel Peace Prize citation", Associated Press, **October 12, 2001**,

Alister Doyle and Evelyn Leopold, "Nobel Prize recognizes UN as a global force", Reuters, **October 12, 2001**.

One has to wonder, however, how far this media stardom of Secretary-General Annan can or should go, and what the impact his persona will have on future UN operations, especially after all of his very personalized quests to expand the Organization's contacts and commitments in grand global partnerships. For instance, as discussed under Global Compact hypocrisy in the next subsection on Other Major Problems , the UN Global Compact seems

now apparently to be referred to, perhaps carelessly or not, as "Annan's Global Compact." In this respect, it should be noted that Mr. Annan himself once stated that:

" ... I have sought to speak out in favor of universal human rights and in defense of the victims of aggression or abuse, wherever they may be. ... I have sought to make the office of secretary-general a pulpit ... for promoting the values of tolerance, democracy, human rights and good governance that I believe are universal." ...

To apply those lessons ... wherever and whenever possible is a secretary-general's highest calling and foremost duty -- to himself, to his office, and to the United Nations. My great predecessor, Dag Hammarskjold, once said that it 'is a question not of a man, but of an institution.'

It is, therefore, for the United Nations itself, and the hopes and aspirations that it has embodied for more than half a century, that we must succeed."

Kofi A. Annan, "About the United Nations and its Secretary-General", International Herald Tribune, **January 21, 1999** . [emphasis added.]

For some enthusiastic strong praise, see Joshua Cooper Ramo, "The five virtues of Kofi Annan," [subtitle: "Drawing on his days in the classrooms of M.I.T. and the playing fields of Ghana, the U.N. leader pursues a moral vision for enforcing world peace"], Time, **September 4, 2000**, pp. 40-47.

Despite all these recent UN public relations activities and media strategies reality inevitably intrudes, particularly in the harsh world of UN peacekeeping and humanitarian programmes in the field. Four quotes can serve to indicate the many alternative "mud on the boots" views of UN actual performance as opposed to the PR messages released; the sometimes far too-smug commentary of the UN's spokespersons; and the discrepancy between dramatic "photo ops" and cruel refugee realities.

"[Two years after the United Nations launched a drive .. to raise funds for clearing land mines inside Afghanistan, a UN official has charged that money, including about \$10 million donated by the U.S. government, is being wasted.

Rae McGrath, a land mines specialist who spent 18 years in the British army before joining the UN ... program as its field supervisor, said that the United Nations had grossly exaggerated the impact of its program, in part to raise money ...

He added that large sums had been wasted on poorly planned and badly monitored educational programs for refugees. "We're not running a mine eradication program, which is what the donors are giving the money for and what needs to be done" Mr. McGrath said.

After a dispute with his superiors ... [he] is leaving the United Nations. Others associated with the program ... said they agreed with the thrust of Mr. McGrath's criticisms. In its solicitations for funds, the United Nations says it has trained 20,000 Afghans in mine awareness and mine clearance. But it has sent only one team of 27 into Afghanistan to clear mines."

Steve Coll, "Afghan funds wasted, UN official says", Washington Post Service, International Herald Tribune, **22 March 1990**.

"The United Nations is losing an estimated £270 m. each year because of corruption, waste and mismanagement, an investigation by the *Sunday Times* Insight team has discovered.

The new evidence of widespread financial abuse ... comes [from] ... 'Operation Irma', the trouble-ridden evacuation of wounded refugees from Bosnia.

The disclosures will fuel growing international criticism of the U.N. ...

An estimated £1 m. has been raised in one week in public donations, but aid agencies are bitter and angry that hundreds of times that amount of cash has been squandered by the U.N. so far this year.

Jeffrey Clark, deputy director of the Refugee Policy Group, an international agency helping refugees in Bosnia, said: 'At the very moment when the U.N. needs to persuade people and governments to spend more on expanded operations its credibility is undermined by waste, mismanagement, ineptitude, and pure stupidity.'

Nick Rufford, Ian Burrell and David Leppard, "Scandal of U.N. 'lost' millions", The Sunday Times, **15 August 1993**, p. 1.

[Note: as excerpted in the UN Special (Geneva), October, 1993, pp. 20, 22, 27.]

"The ... responses to allegations of black-market dealing and drug smuggling among peace-keeping troops in Yugoslavia are already looking unpromising. Sylvana Foa, the spokeswoman for the U.H. High Commissioner for Refugees, found it odd that anybody should be surprised that 'out of 14,000 pimply 18-year olds a bunch of them should get up to naughty tricks'".

The Spectator, **September 4, 1993**, p. 5, as quoted in Houshang Ameri, Politics of staffing the United Nations Secretariat, Major Concepts in Politics and Political Theory, Vol. 8, Peter Lang, New York, **1996**, p. 399

[Note: For more information on UN refugee and peacekeeping drug and sex scandals that involve not merely "pimply 18-year olds" who are, after all, risking their lives in a war zone and perhaps engaging in "naughty tricks", see the subsection entitled Refugee sexual abuses .]

"[In Somalia] squadrons of hacks flew in on day-trip charters ... then ... obediently [reported] that the UN and overseas charities had magically put a stop to the famine overnight. Next in the parade came the ... movie actors and the rock and roll stars.

[We] flew to a refugee camp ,, with UN 'goodwill ambassador' Sophia Loren ... A semicircle of cameras whirred and clicked as she 'fed' a skeletal infant by holding a spoon to its lips.

... The actress swept off between sprawled bodies, with photographers treading at her heels. ...

[Afterward] I found Somali nurses fussing over a naked, starving child whose leg had been stamped on by one of the marauding photographers because it had been too weak to crawl out of the way.

The UN officer ... pleaded with me not to tell the story of the [injured] kid because it would stop people contributing toward the famine ... [so reluctantly I wrote my piece.]

I asked my UN friend what his agency was doing with an actress who was, in my opinion, a has-been.

'I know' he shrugged. 'We discussed Madonna, but she's just too sexy for a famine. Pity really ...'

Aidan Hartley, The Zanzibar chest: A memoir of love and war, Harper Collins, London, **2003**, pp. 228-229..

[Note: Mr. Hartley's excellent book covers in part his work as a wartime journalist in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia and elsewhere in the 1990s]

Two other UN "public relations" matters should also be

noted. In the introductory quote to this subsection the UN "chief communicator", Mr. Tharoor, praised UN openness in the form of a new policy officially authorizing all staff to speak to the press within their areas of competence. There had been rumors that the policy would be a very harsh one, but in fact the UN Administration got to have it both ways. The policy sounds nice:

"For the first time in its history, the UN has issued written guidelines on how its officials will deal with the news media. And to the surprise of many, the new rules allow almost anyone to speak on the record.

How this will work in practice is something else, of course. The organization, many of whose member countries are not known for condoning a free press, has often been extremely secretive about even the most mundane information.

'The United Nations is committed to being open and transparent in dealings with the press', say the new guidelines now being circulated

Under [Secretary-General Kofi] Annan's predecessor, Butros Butros-Ghali, most officials in the Secretariat ... were forbidden to give interviews, or were afraid to talk.

[However, under the new guidance], 'Every employee in effect becomes responsible for judging what a 'sensitive issue' is and when to [defer to more senior officials.]"

Barbara Crossette, "UN's guidelines give media open access to its officials", International Herald Tribune, August 10, 1999.

In practice, however, this process is a mine field. Veteran staff who have from time to time been firmly warned to be discreet to the point of total silence because media people are "asking around" know that almost any issue can be "sensitive" and "when to defer to more senior officials" [the answer is, almost always, if you know what's good for you], and know that nothing has changed -- for them.

The only time UN staff can speak on the record to the media is -- as it always was -- when they submit their resignation and are walking out the door, as in the first "field" example of public relations problems cited above. The new "speak on the record" policy, however, does make a big change for senior UN officials. They now appear quite frequently on the "op-ed" pages of major newspapers along with Mr. Annan and Mr. Tharoor.

In addition, the UN's DPI has long been an object of discussion and debate, both because of its sprawling size and the perpetual question of how much information and how much - and often whose -- information or propaganda it is disseminating. Over the years, it has undergone several and various reorganization attempts. In his 2002 report on an agenda for further change, Secretary-General Annan continued this effort, stating that:

"The Department of Public Information has suffered from a fragmentation of its efforts as a result of too many mandates and missions. It will be restructured so as to be

better able to develop coherent communications strategies and take advantage of new media and communications technologies. A comprehensive evaluation of the impact and cost-effectiveness of all the Department's activities will be carried out over the next three years. ..."

"Strengthening of the United Nations: An agenda for further change: Report of the Secretary-General", UN document A/57/387 of **9 September 2002**, p. 2.

In 2004 the US GAO report on UN reform progress provided a rather detailed update. The GAO found that the DPI reforms were still in the early phases. It identified three interesting areas of changes made or getting underway:

-- First, the DPI now has three divisions -- an Outreach Division to interact with civil society and educational institutions, a News and Media Division to expand UN access to global media organizations, and a Strategic Communications Division to develop communications strategies in key programme areas.

-- Second, the Secretariat was moving, slowly, to finally assess DPI impact as requested for decades: in 2003, DPI and OIOS began a three-year effort to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of DPI through an annual review process.

-- Third, the Secretary-General had sought to identify outdated or duplicative publications from more than 1,200 which are produced annually. Some, like a *UN Chronicle* publication for students and teachers costs \$1 million annually. More publications may go online, and in December 2003, the General Assembly did approve the discontinuation of 192 publications and reports.

U.S. General Accounting Office, United Nations: Reforms progressing, but comprehensive assessments needed to measure impact, GAO 04-339, **February 2004**, pp. "Highlights" page.

[Note: even in transition, the UN does now have a formidable arsenal of information (or public relations or propaganda) to feed to the media, as outlined in The UN's Official Versions under UN Performance Problems .

Meanwhile, the UN public information and public relations machinery has indeed proceeded with its latest of its many reorganizations, and gearing itself up to release an ever-expanding flood of material on the UN's activities and leadership ambitions throughout the world. As described in late 2004:

" ... the Department of Public Information has undergone a major reorganization of its priorities, structures and processes ... based on the premise that its role is to manage and coordinate the content of United Nations communications and to strategically convey this content to achieve the greatest public impact. ...

A [recent] ...feature was ... the establishment of small expert groups to deal with the public information consequences of emerging crises ... [including a group] ... of

information officers from the Middle East and the Arab world ... to bolster the flagging image of the Organization in that region. ...

[DPI] ... has set in place new strategies aimed at generating support for new and expanding [peacekeeping] operations among Member States, the general public and the local populations [involved] ...

The use of external public venues for United Nations observances and commemorations has proved to be a most successful innovation ...

The use of multi-site videoconferences and Internet exchanges, linking students and civil society partners around the world, has boosted our capacity to encourage public dialogue ...

United Nations Radio continues to provide daily and weekly news reports and features in the six official languages ... to hundreds of radio stations around the globe ...

United Nations Television estimates that an audience of 2 billion people sees its programming, including hundreds of hours of coverage supplied to the world's broadcasters [of] ... meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council, and other events and conferences. ..."

"Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization", UN document A/59/1, **20 August 2004**, paras. 263, 266-267, 269-270, 279-280.

All these reorganization, celebrity, and public relations activities at the UN indeed raise "big questions" about the use and misuse of modern media, propaganda, and the advertising of public goods. Two very useful recent books by Mark Alleyne and Paul Rutherford address these questions. They will be added into the IO Watch archive "mix" at a later date.

Mark D. Alleyne, Global lies?: Propaganda, the UN and world order, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, **2003**, and

Paul Rutherford, Endless propaganda: The advertising of public goods, University of Toronto, Toronto, Buffalo NY (USA), London, **2000**.]

For the moment, a provocative article on the misuse of "global brands" by Clifford Bob in *Foreign Policy* is helpful, not least because it includes an excellent resource guide. The article summary states:

"Which global injustices gain your sympathy, attention, and money? Rarely the most deserving. For every Tibetan monk or Central American indigenous activist you see on the evening news, countless other worthy causes languish in obscurity. The groups that reach the global limelight often do so at dear cost -- by distorting their principles and alienating their constituencies for the sake of appealing to self-interested donors in rich nations."

Clifford Bob, "Merchants of morality: Brand name bullies: how good marketing beats good deeds", *Foreign Policy*, **March/April 2002**, pp. 36-45.

Further, in a summary perspective on the uses and impact of public information activities and use of the media by modern public and private organizations, an Amnesty International report in March 2000 warned corporations that they risk their reputations (and jeopardize their self-interest) if they do not adhere to international human rights standards in their operations and accept outside scrutiny of their performance. As

the UN steps proudly to center stage to lead the march to a newly accountable and transparent global society and system, it too must willingly subject itself to the same public scrutiny that it advocates for everyone else.

Alan Cowell, "Human rights issues present new kind of corporate risk", International Herald Tribune, April 7, 2000, and Human rights: Is it any of your business?, Amnesty International, London, 2000.

Meanwhile, the UN can convey all the enthusiasms, stories, policies, and promised changes that it wants and can afford. The 1987 PACE study that marked the Organization's entry into the wild world of global media, however, offered very wise advice about DPI work, still largely ignored almost two decades later: make UN publications much less boring and more attractive, assess their worth by selling them (and obtaining sales figures) where possible, and concentrate on internal communication within the Secretariat as well to build an informed and motivated UN staff.

However, the PACE study's most powerful observations came in its conclusions:

"... the image of the United Nations must stand up to the increased scrutiny that greater public awareness will place it under. Image-making is about communicating the positive truth and being honest and open about fundamental problems in a positive way. It is not about hiding failings or scandals because they have an unfortunate habit of surfacing in the media ... Neither is it a facelift which masks the unchanged reality. All these types of image solutions are remarkable for their short-lived effectiveness and offer no way forward for the respectable, well-established institution under constant public scrutiny.

That is why, ultimately, **the image of the United Nations can only benefit from a thorough reform of its management system, which should help make its operations more effective and simpler to understand. This reform would also create a marvelous opportunity for the United Nations to be seen as implementing the changes necessary to spruce up its image.** Reform of the system is, therefore, the ideal opportunity for the United Nations to look again at the elements that compose its collective being in order to create a more focused identity. ..."

Pace-UK International Affairs, Making the United Nations a winner, London, 1987, p. 77. [emphasis added.]

Much of the content of this archive indicates that the UN is, unfortunately, still not implementing needed changes, not reporting problems (except for unavoidable statements on a few very serious ones), but is trying to paper over failings or scandals in the media, and is very much engaged in "face-lifting" efforts.

Further, the UN is still not taking the "marvelous opportunity" to demonstrate that it is implementing necessary management changes. This latter key step, however, is not the

fault of the DPI (although it too continues to be stubbornly resistant to evaluation and assessments of its work even after decades of urging), but of the entire UN, which still obstructs real management accountability reform, and therefore cannot and will not report clearly on its impact, effectiveness, and problems. This grave void and seemingly perpetual reality is discussed under the following topic.