

## UNLEASHED MANAGERS

The successful Secretariat initiative to "free the managers", which has already been discussed, was neither the first word on the subject nor the last. Even in the days of UN "red tape", UN managers could always pretty much do what they wanted -- the red tape processes just slowed them down, sometimes. But Secretary-General Annan has and is continuing to find increase managerial freedom in a whole range of areas. In the process, IO Watch finds far less emphasis on accountability actions to ensure that UN managers fulfill their management and programme responsibilities, and are firmly sanctioned when they fail.

For five decades the feeble UN personnel office (since 1986 grandly renamed the Office of Human Resources Management); the total absence of performance management systems; and the disorderly structure of UN funds, offices, and programmes inevitably led ambitious UN senior officials to build their own little kingdoms.

Development expert Hernando de Soto has observed that "The rich of the West were winners in a competitive system, the rich of the developing world won a competition for political favors." In the highly politicized UN with its built-in impunity -- see the last subsection on Piercing the cloak of UN impunity under Where is the Rule of Law? -- this competition for political favors and advantages has always been ubiquitous and rather obsessive.

The quote from Mr. de Soto was contained in "A survey of the new rich", The Economist, June 16, 2001, p. 4.

The UN "baronial system" was first analysed in detail by Theodor Meron in 1975, and it has been referred to frequently ever since. Although the UN Charter emphasizes an independent international civil service and merit principles, the combination of insistent Member States and a weak personnel office quickly led to recruitment by nationality, "national preserves", government selection of "their" candidates, and a reduction of staffing safeguards. Especially as the UN added many new units, the powers of senior officials over personnel and jurisdictions increased, while those of the Secretary-General declined. These powers also spread from Under- and Assistant-Secretary-Generals down into the senior director (D-2) level (considered to be the

most influential managers of daily operations), and then came to include D-1 directors as well.

Theodor Meron, The United Nations Secretariat: The rules and the practice, Lexington, D.C. Heath, Lexington, Mass., USA, and Toronto, 1977, pp. 83-101.

A veteran of the UN system provided an elegant, sharp, and succinct summary of this very damaging managerial climate (for the World Health Organization, but fully applicable to the UN) in a British newspaper article in 1993:

" ... all United Nations agencies specializ[e] in the production of pious verbiage, which skillfully combines highmindedness with the self-interest of its staff ... for the fact is that agencies ... are inherently corrupt and corrupting, regardless of who directs them.

... This is not to say that [they do] no good work at all, ... or that [they do] not have sincere and competent staff in ... lower echelons. But at ... higher levels politicking and jockeying for position overwhelm any lingering concern for [the agency's mission].

[The agency] hires not by competence but by allocation of jobs among member nations. This not only amounts to positive discrimination in favour of the incompetent but ensures that political skills matter more than technical capacity."

Anthony Daniels, the Sunday Telegraph (UK), **25 April 1993**.

[ Note: the last sentence of this 1993 assessment was largely repeated by the "Brahimi report" of 2001 on UN peacekeeping, and other recent sources, so little seems to have changed.]

UN leaders often refer piously to UN staff as the "most precious asset" for fulfilling the Organization's "noble aims". But in practice the barons -- usually very presentable and well-spoken (in several languages) men (rarely women) -- can build and aggressively defend their own little empires as they wish, and in practice may or may not advance the UN's actual interests and performance.

However, the worst among them are far more selfish, disruptive, and unchecked. They bring no management expertise, record of achievement, ideas and enthusiasm, or human resources skills to their leadership posts. Instead, they hide behind the achievements of their many excellent subordinates, and punish or ignore the vast majority of lower-level staff (particularly those in finance, personnel, and general administration) who just "keep their heads down" and do their best.

These disruptive barons do allow good subordinate UN managers to perform (so long as it does not infringe on their own interests). But they also ensure that "troublemakers" who object to their dysfunctional operations are disciplined or disposed of (the barons themselves are exempt). Meanwhile, the barons and their time-server cronies continue on, whether aggressively advancing their own personal agendas or merely and serenely enjoying their VIP comfort, (relative) prestige, and perquisites

as leading officials of "world government".

As urgent UN field operations, and jobs and funds, have expanded so tremendously over the past two decades, the disruptive barons and their cronies have strengthened their presence in far-flung UN offices and operations worldwide. Hence, and in clear conflict with the recent choice and performance of some very good UN managers, the abusive baronial behavior with impunity has moved down the hierarchy to lower levels and thus is now available to hundreds of senior officials.

Two decades ago, a staff member added a very important insight on the basic flaws of the UN internal justice system, which are still in effect, and have regularly been a favorite tactic of the Administration to evade accountability and serious treatment of appeals by staff against the prevailing managerial impunity.

"A complaining staff member is immediately classified as a 'personnel case', presumably because he or she has had the temerity to intervene. If the complaint has to do with management direction, all hands in OPS [Personnel] and its affiliates close ranks to gather material to fashion as strong a personnel case as possible, and no recognition whatsoever is made of the key management issue. ....OPS has scant choice but to bypass the administrative implications of the case and propel it rapidly to the quasi-legal restraints of the Joint Appeals Board where it can be confined. **The upshot is that a staff member must sue to force a management director to do his administrative duty.**

The guilty persons can get away with this kind of irresponsible performance more readily in the bureaucratic system of the UN than in any foreign office, however small. There is no really effective vertical responsibility upwards within the UN table of organization, nor effective direction downward ..."

Donald Dunham, "Management by personnel action", Secretariat News (New York), **November 30, 1984**, p. 11. [emphasis added]

UN staff (and expert outsiders and even some parts of the media) have long specifically objected to this abusive and dysfunctional management system. In the 1980s staff representatives urged top UN officials to reform the defective UN managerial culture, to no avail. A decade later, in 1992, an outside survey concluded that people chosen as UN managers were "the most unprepared" that the experts had ever seen.

Shirley Hazzard, "Breaking Faith: II", The New Yorker, **October 2, 1989**, pp. 85-86, and

Joint Inspection Unit, "Management in the United Nations: Work in progress", UN document A/50/507 of **16 August 1996**, Chapter III, "Who are the managers?", paras. 103-124.

UN staff queried in a worldwide survey in 1995 identified bad managers and systems as the Achilles heel of UN operations. The Secretariat itself was forced to admit the grave management culture deficiencies during the 1993-1995 period, as already

discussed in the preceding subsection on 1993 Management Accountability Attempt . Continuing staff efforts to encourage the Secretariat to actually implement the General Assembly's 1993 management accountability reforms, as in the past, have fallen on deaf ears.

"Picture of UN staff: A worldwide survey", organized by UN staff for UN staff, Geneva, **25 September 1995**, pp. 3, 5, 10, 13-14.

Most pointedly, the fundamental problem was highlighted in a 1995 article:

"In considering [a major UN staff-management dispute] ... a critical question has been avoided: what is the rationale for increasing the vulnerability of staff to unfair and/or arbitrary judgements by administrators ? The pat answer to that -- it will allow "managers to manage" -- is unconvincing because the most serious problem affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN Secretariat has been bad management. ...

The Secretariat reforms proposed by the Secretary-General would ... remove a range of checks and balances built into the international civil service for the very obvious reason that in in a multicultural, multinational context, justice must not only be done but be seen to be done. While the integrity of the [staff performance] rebuttal process might seem an arcane matter to outsiders, it is the only recourse for a staff member victimized by a bad manager. To weaken it would be to reduce the integrity of the entire structure

...

The United Nations will clearly [face] ... wrenching changes in the period ahead, and it would be both unfair and counterproductive to do away now with the only means staff have to hold managers accountable."

"Staff-management spat with possible serious impact reflects a joyless 50th anniversary," International Documents Review, **16 October 1995**, p. 2. [emphasis added]

In 2001, when Secretary-General Annan was re-elected for a second term, one editorial emphasized that he "must continu[e] to curb patronage and wasteful spending elsewhere in the UN bureaucracy." A former senior official praising Mr. Annan nevertheless warned that "Decisive action should not continue to be postponed in regaining the motivation and professional quality of the United Nations in its earlier years." And another admirer stated bluntly that "The personnel system is still a disaster, which he must now tackle resolutely."

"Kofi Annan's record", The New York Times, **27 March 2001**, Enrique ter Horst, "A Re-elected Secretary-General can give the world the facts", International Herald Tribune, **6 July 2001**, and William Shawcross, "Another five years at the UN helm for Annan, of course", International Herald Tribune, **27 June 2001**.

Thus the baronial "international civil servants" continue to find their unexamined life very comfortable, thank you. With ritual but regular backing from their diplomatic missions and colleagues, they continue to delay and block the General Assembly's attempted management accountability systems and mechanisms that would take away their impunity.

Before going on to discuss a set of recent Secretariat changes which have encouraged and facilitated still further management impunity, however, at least some attention must be given to an assessment of the UN's bad managers as a group.

In its 1995 report on UN management reform progress, the JIU analyzed three categories of the UN's vaguely-defined "programme managers," responsible for the UN's 24 programmes, 246 subprogrammes, and many additional, varied UN field programmes and extra-budgetary activities.

A first group of good managers were those who entered the UN with good experience and training, or are just "natural managers." A second group, the largest, was unprepared managers. A 1993 independent analysis of the UN managerial situation cited the very high frequency with which untrained people were placed in managerial positions in the secretariat. A number of those interviewed were "entirely unfamiliar" with modern management experience. The study found widespread support for changing this situation. But it observed that UN management training must be accompanied by changes in incentives, systems and procedures [such as the management accountability system] to be effective.

Chapter VI, "Who are the managers?", in Joint Inspection Unit, "Management in the United Nations: Work in progress", UN document A/50/507, 1995, paras. 103-109.

In addition to the dynamic, accountable UN modern managers and the unprepared ones was a third group -- bad managers. The 1993 UN consultant study which surveyed the UN management culture had noted the serious problems in the Secretariat (confirmed by other analyses), arising from:

"(a) a United Nations 'board of directors with 185 members and sensitive, competing and even conflicting views ...

(b) an organizational culture that increasingly values control over facilitation, "process" over outcomes, hierarchy over collaboration, and personal power over collective purpose, all in a highly sensitive multicultural context;

(c) complex and cumbersome managerial systems [that] ... nevertheless permit abuses of authority;

(d) the perception that management and administration are of lesser worth than "substantive" work;

(e) the very broad span of control ... [at top levels] and the often poor communication ... throughout the Organization;

(f) a general confusion about the [UN's] goals and objectives;

(g) a lack of the clearly understood standards and measurements required to establish accountability for ... performance;

(h) valuing staff rights over the needs of the Organization, leading to ... [cumbersome] rules and processes that subvert managers' ability to lead;

- (i) bending hiring and promotion rules to allow personal and political objectives to supercede those of the [UN];
- (j) [complex and cumbersome] financial and budgetary procedures that ... [often lead to] untimely and almost-useless work; and
- (k) controlling offices [concentrating on preventing failure rather than] encouraging success or improving systems ..."

Joint Inspection Unit, "Management in the United Nations: Work in progress", UN document A/50/507, 1995, para. 113.

The JIU report of 1995 concluded that these factors illustrated the climate of disorder and indiscipline that led to too many bad UN managers. Far from leading effectively, such managers had exploited the poor managerial climate. They operated in a dictatorial and sovereign style, insisting on their right to delegate all assignments with no personal involvement; interpreted the rules as they saw fit; often treated staff distantly, capriciously and abusively; and relied on backstage maneuvering to circumvent the cumbersome controls. All this activity was undertaken with little interest in results or the fulfillment of UN objectives.

The JIU concluded that perhaps the situation was now beginning to change, but also cited two telling examples that suggested not:

" ... the Inspector does know of a comparatively relatively recent situation in which a professional staff member complained to a senior administrative assistant about their new Director's almost total lack of involvement in 'his' unit's work, and she responded, with earnest disbelief, 'But Directors are not supposed to do any work.'"

The current [top UN manager] recently observed that he could not forget the 'tremendous burst of applause' at a 1995 meeting he had with staff in Geneva when a staff member denounced the low quality of management. He cited this incident as a 'defining moment' in his relationship with the [UN], and recognized the right of staff to good leadership and his obligation to give it to them."

Joint Inspection Unit, "Management in the United Nations: Work in progress", UN document A/50/507, 1995, paras. 114-117.

As many assessments have noted over the years, smooth human relations and teamwork are difficult enough in the UN, where both managers and staff come from very many, and often very different, cultures and behaviour patterns, and must learn how to work together. In addition, as UN staff become scattered in smaller and smaller units in difficult and distant field locations around the world, an abusive manager has even fewer checks and balances on the way he treats his staff.

The "bad manager" problem is an even greater problem, as many of these people arrive (and eventually leave) the UN Secretariat with little or no management skills. In particular,

many of them have an extremely autocratic set of habits from their diplomatic or national administrative service, which are very "off-putting" and demoralizing to UN staff, especially the younger ones who have grown up with ideas and aspirations of dynamism, creativity, "empowerment," and participative, teamwork relationships.

The management literature increasingly recognizes "toxic managers", who can be found in three types:

- "enforcers" who are usually subservient "number twos" but insist aggressively on hierarchy and certainty in service of their leaders;
- "street fighters," who dominate through rewards and punishments for loyalty to their "gang" and seek to win at any cost; and
- "bullies," who are angry at the world and jealous of those who outperform them, and who control by denigrating others and with angry outbursts. The consequences of these behaviour patterns can be grave:

"Toxic ... leaders can drive an organization into decline, and more and more time is spent infighting and dealing with aberrations ... rather than ... work. Organizations spiral downward through several stages ... Employees silently notice the detrimental changes ... Left unabated, [their] ... feelings harden ... Factions begin to develop within the organization around those who support the toxic leaders and those who oppose them.

... The factions engage in covert game playing, but eventually ties emerge into open warfare. Attacks become overt ... as toxic leaders become vindictive ... as deterioration continues, parties develop a siege mentality ... All employees are battle worn and scarred ... Those that can leave. Those with no options to exit reduce their commitment to work ... productivity, already suffering from the infighting and mismanagement, plummet[s].

How do you cope? Strategies individuals use ... [and] ... Restorative strategies ... [vary for the organization.] As with physical health, the more advanced the organizational decline, the more extreme the strategy required to combat it successfully. The good news is that with effort, both employee and organizational health and morale can be restored."

Marcia Lynn Whicker, "Minimizing the damage of a toxic leader: Toxic leaders can make a work place worse," PA Times J(USA), **January 1997**, p. 10-11, from the author's book

Toxic leaders: When organizations go bad, Quorum, Westport CN (USA), **1996**.

A very recent reflection on all the sordid things going on among "leaders" in the economic and political realms reflects on the pathologies involved:

"Whenever gang members mow each other down during shootouts, we [hear] ... endless speculation about the root causes of their behavior ... Watching disgraced corporate executives ... I [now] find myself asking ... "What led these men ... to do the despicable things they did?"

How could they show such wanton disregard for the well-being of so many?

In *Without Conscience*, renowned criminologist Dr. Robert Hare identified the key emotional traits of psychopaths, including ...: the inability to feel remorse, a grossly inflated view of oneself, a pronounced indifference to the suffering of others, and a pattern of deceitful behaviour.

In fact, the CEO's lust for excess ... exposed a brutal disregard in the boardroom for the fate of those in the office cubicles or on the factory floor.

The mad stampede of greed ... [required] an unholy alliance ... Both political parties have ... [through campaign contributions] a richly vested interest in corporate corruption.

The defenders of the system of excess and fraud ... blithely sidestep the inconvenient fact that the democratic social contract depends upon the vast majority of citizens trusting that the ... game is not rigged like some shady ring-toss booth on a carnival midway."

Arianna Huffington, Pigs at the trough: How corporate greed and political corruption are undermining America, Crown, New York, **2003**, pp. 6-10.

In fact, after many books and articles praising organizational leaders worldwide during the go-go 1990s, attention to bad managers and what to do about them is now becoming a serious new management topic, as shown by three recent books.

-- The first explores the complex issues of why we accept toxic leaders -- those who harm us and our organizations -- and how followers can understand the "ties that bind" and more easily unseat them.

Jean Lipman-Blumen, The allure of toxic leaders: Why we follow destructive bosses and corrupt politicians--and how we can survive them, Oxford University, New York, **2004**.

-- The second book explores how good leaders go wrong -- mostly because they become reckless, identify so completely with the organization that they treat it like a personal fiefdom, are obsessed with image, punish critical feedback, and refuse to face reality when making decisions.

Sydney Finkelstein, Why smart executives fail: and what you can learn from their mistakes, Portfolio (Penguin Putnam), New York, **2003**.

-- The third book finds that management writers have stressed the attributes of good leaders, while excluding the "bad apples", and presents seven categories of human weakness into which most bad leaders can be placed: incompetent, rigid, intemperate, callous, corrupt, insular, and evil.

Barbara Kellerman, Bad Leadership: What It Is, How It Happens, Why It Matters, Harvard Business School, Boston, **2004**.

But do all these ugly matters of bad managers, their "toxic" impact, and their greed and evasions have anything to do with the dignity, virtue, and performance of "the world organization"? Absolutely. As discussed above, there are indeed

nasty and disruptive managers scattered around the UN Secretariat and field programmes worldwide. Perhaps there are fewer of them now, but because the UN only pays lip service to management accountability and does not enforce it, those who are still "on the loose" are free to mismanage their programmes and demoralize and ruin the careers of many UN staff, as unchecked members of "the old boys club" (even though they may be relatively young or, now, women.)

Many of these abuses have been detailed for the record in the dossiers and experience of struggling appellants in the UN's so-called 'administration of justice system.' They provide hope for an eventual cleansing of the mess if and when that "system" is reformed in the future, as discussed in detail in the section on Where is the Rule of Law? . In addition, this archive presents a set of the tactics that UN bad-manager "games" actually employ against their subordinates, in the subsequent subsection on Staff Self-defense . Hopefully, this information can help UN staff who are or may be subject to the whims of such managers.

In fact, the concluding major section of this archive, on Recent Developments , contains a list of a dozen Other Major Problems , not least the multi-billion dollar scandals in the UN-administered Iraq oil-for-food programme of 2004, and -- under The UN, Alone and UNaccountable --an uncomfortable but valid comparison of the UN as perhaps the international-organization version of Enron. This material then serves as a prologue to ways out of the sorry situation, as presented in Answers: A Starting Point .

To begin with, however, SEVEN areas must be cited in which the UN has only continued to aggressively expand the powers and impunity of its managers in recent years. The most incredible of these is the one listed last and discussed in the most detail. It is the efforts of the Secretariat and the supposedly-independent OIOS to turn UN managers, already justly criticized because of the abusive and poorly-performing members of their group, into self-evaluators of their own collective performance, but, equally damaging, into amateur and abusive investigators of (even) criminal and other misconduct on the part of their helpless subordinates.

**FIRST**, in earlier years the UN staff Panels on Discrimination and Other Grievances, established in 1977, had carried out important conciliation functions. A 1985 report stated with pride that they managed to resolve disputes informally and at an early stage in some 80 percent of the cases.

They also -- quite unusually for the UN internal justice system -  
- attempted to provide regular, published annual reports at various duty stations on their activities, patterns of cases, and solutions achieved. Another Secretary-General's report in 1995 emphasized their importance to move swiftly to provide early reconciliation and resolution of disputes and thereby preserve staff morale.

"Establishment of panels on discrimination and other grievances," UN document ST/AI/308/ Rev. 1 of **25 November 1983**,

[Reports, for example] "Report on the work of the Panels on Discrimination and Other Grievances (Geneva)," UN document ST/IC/88/64 of **7 December 1988**, and

"Reform of the internal system of justice in the UN Secretariat: Report of the Secretary-General", A/C.5/50/2 of **27 September 1995**.

But the panels clearly fell apart during the late 1990s. The Secretary-General's 2000 report bluntly stated that they had become under-utilized, because of their volunteer members' inexperience, and because "their findings are often not substantiated by evidence and managers thus resist cooperating with them."

"Human resources management reform: Report of the Secretary-General", A/55/253, **1 August 2000**, Annex V, para. 3. [emphasis added]

[As in other areas, UN managers, who have no more legal expertise than the panels or other staff, were thus given an official invitation to simply reject the cases out of hand, and no one, the Secretary-General included, seemed to object to such cavalier treatment. Instead, the managers can now even create their own "findings", with no one to seriously assess their validity. ]

**SECOND**, as highlighted under OHR (Mis)-management in the Inadequate UN Oversight section, "rebuttal panels" had traditionally provided UN staff with a chance to contest performance ratings that they disagreed with, and to actually reverse negative decisions. Managers complained that the rebuttal process tied up much of their time, but in fact a detailed JIU report analysis in 1994 showed that it was not abused and often worked in favor of the staff.

Joint Inspection Unit, "Toward a new system of performance appraisal in the United Nations Secretariat: Requirements for successful implementation", UN document A/49/219, **1994**.

It appears, however, and the Secretariat provides no information or examination to disprove the case, that in the "happy-talk" of a new Performance Appraisal System and after many years of failure with previous performance ratings systems, staff cannot, or are at least strongly discouraged from, contesting their performance ratings. This of course would be another major victory for UN managers but another devastating loss for UN staff, whose careers would be left at the mercy of their managers in the essential career element of their personal performance

ratings. This very serious matter is discussed further in the subsection on Staff performance ratings .

**THIRD**, Mr. Paschke, as head of the OIOS, had early on proclaimed his faith that managers could develop and apply their own performance and monitoring systems. But this was naïve. Just as in the pre-OIOS days, the Office belatedly discovered in 1998 that:

"The quality of departmental submissions received by OIOS for the 1996-1997 programme performance period clearly indicates that, in many departments and offices, there is still inadequate commitment to oversight, and, consequently no coordination or managerial mechanism that collects and analyses on a routine basis information on the progress made and results achieved under the various activities and programmes. Many departments still do not have either a senior planning and coordination function ... or a unit to provide coordinated feedback on the success and shortfalls in programme implementation. [Progress requires that programme managers recognize] ... such systems as basic management tools for improving efficiency and effectiveness of implementation."

"Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the OIOS", UN document A/53/428, **23 September 1998**, Preface, para. 184 . [emphasis added.]

This attitude was confirmed by the US General Accounting Office in 2004, when it reported that:

"In 2002, the ... [OIOS] found that program managers and department and office heads were not complying with U.N. regulations. ... nearly half of program managers were not regularly monitoring and evaluating program performance. In addition, program managers were not held accountable for meeting program objectives because U.N. regulations prevent linking program effectiveness and impact with program managers' performance. U.N. officials told us that a more mature program monitoring and evaluation system is needed before program managers can be held responsible for program performance.

We found that there were a variety of problems ... Most programs do not have comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plans ... overall, evaluation findings were not used ...

The Secretary-General tasked the ... OIOS to develop a strategy to systematically evaluate and monitor programme results and to introduce information systems needed ... and expects to have a complete system **by 2006.**"

U. S. General Accounting Office, United Nations: Reforms progressing, but comprehensive assessments needed to measure impact, GAO 04-339, **February 2004**, pp. 19-23 [22-23]. [emphasis added.]

**FOURTH**, the internal administration of justice system has been found to have many fundamental judicial weaknesses (as discussed in detail in several subsections under Where is the Rule of Law? . Although the need for decisive major changes is now finally being recognized by the General Assembly and others, it may take years to haggle over such reforms and then (perhaps) implement them.

Regarding managerial impunity, however, one of the Secretary-General's reform reports in 1998 observed casually and with no explanation that:

"... the current appeals process requires that the [OHRM] defend the decisions of managers before the appellate bodies. Changing the existing process to one where managers are required to defend their own decisions with the support of the [OHRM] will serve as a strong mechanism for accountability."

"Human resources management reform: Report of the Secretary-General", A/53/414 of **13 October 1998**, para. 30.

Actually, in 1984 a staff member had explained just how this "managerial protection" system originated, in a minor decision that has negatively affected the very core of the internal justice process ever since:

"An agonizing reappraisal [of manipulations by the Personnel office to help managers evade their responsibilities] might go back to the beginning of the UN operation before the default of management responsibility began in earnest. Whenever staff members complained against a director the latter would have to appear with them (or send a representative) before the Joint Appeals Board. Then along the line an ingenious administrative officer manoeuvred the procedure so that all managers [in all] units would be represented by OPS [Personnel] itself. OPS then became both prosecutor -- it assumes an adversary position automatically and no longer seeks an even-handed solution -- as well as judge. It holds the power of veto over JAB decisions. The restitution of the original procedure would help but not solve the problem entirely."

Tools of its trade should be revamped for OPS and it should return to its legitimate function of dealing solely with personnel problems on a forthright even-handed basis."

Donald Dunham, "Management by personnel action", Secretariat News (New York), **November 30, 1984**, pp. 11-12.

[In addition and not least, of course, this new procedure also freed meddling managers from any annoying accountability for, or involvement in, the troubles they had caused, and from any fear of being sanctioned. They could go right back to their usual managerial behaviour against new staff targets undisturbed.]  
[emphasis added]

In one of his 2000 reform reports, Mr. Annan acknowledged that the UN was legally obligated "to have just and effective internal processes to deal with grievances and appeals by staff, and with disciplinary cases" and this was indispensable to "maintaining staff morale, as well as enforcing accountability." However, in another report he acknowledged many flaws in those processes, stating that:

"... the highly formalized nature [of the system in place] leads to protracted and lengthy proceedings that are in the interest of neither justice nor of the staff or management. At present, the decision makers whose administrative decisions are being questioned are very rarely directly involved in defending the cases. This has resulted in the perception that the system "shields managers from being held accountable for their decisions."

"Accountability and responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General, UN document A/55/270 of **3 August 2000**, para. 39,

"Human resources management reform: Report of the Secretary-General," UN document A/55/253 of **1 August 2000**, para. 51, and Annex V.

[emphasis added.]

[Note: the report did not bother to attempt to rebut this perception.]

The Secretary-General also stated that henceforth managers would be "required to present the factual basis of their decisions with the support of the Administrative Law Office of [OHRM] on points of law." This reform would indeed be helpful, although the above language still indicates that important and expert legal help will be extended to managers but not to staff. Meanwhile, it seems that UN managers in general carry on blissfully and largely uninvolved, unnamed, and invisible as they hide somewhere behind "the Secretary-General" and the behemoth known as "the Administration."

"Human resources management reform: Report of the Secretary-General", A/55/253 of 1 August 2000, Annex V, para. 9.

The most important element of managerial impunity, of course, is that even if a staff appellant is ultimately awarded damages (even sometimes in six figure amounts) by the UNAT, the manager who caused this decision is never sanctioned or made to repay the monetary loss to the organization. As discussed in the subsequent subsections on the UN administration of justice system, some faint attention is now finally being given to -- perhaps someday -- making managers pay in such cases, and thus to truly be held accountable.

**FIFTH**, as discussed in the subsection on OHR (Mis-)management, the preceding "free the managers" campaign left the General Assembly with only the OHRM to rely on to ensure that UN staff rules and regulations, and relevant Assembly resolutions, are enforced. In a bizarre testimonial to general mistrust of the OHRM's ability to enforce the rules, in 1997 the Assembly had had to state that it

"Deplores the high number of exceptions to the established procedures for the recruitment, placement, and promotion of staff, in particular in the Office of Human Resources Management."

"Human resources management", General Assembly resolution 51/226 of 25 April 1997, Part I, paras. 2-4, Part II, para. 4. [emphasis added.]

Recently, OHRM's mandated "enforcer" role seems to be being crimped even more as Secretary-General Annan continues to expand managers' roles. In 2002, pressured by the General Assembly, Mr. Annan presented his plan for "a comprehensive and integrated monitoring capacity" in OHRM. However, the plan was very tentative and still "under construction," as part of the "phased approach" to the combined new reforms, and included a statement that OHRM's role and responsibilities "need to be reviewed ... and

redefined" (see the quote of 9 September 2002 following.)

The General Assembly dutifully endorsed this "more robust" capacity, and urged its further development. Yet OHRM still seems mostly interested, like OIOS, in "consultation" activities with the Secretariat managers that it is expected to oversee. The report did state, although rather weakly, that the "enforcer" OHRM will eventually use the new processes to make "recommendations" to managers to help ensure compliance and to identify remedial action where "lapses have occurred."

"Monitoring capacity in the [OHRM]: Report of the Secretary-General," UN document A/57/276 of **17 September 2002**, pp. 8-11.

**SIXTH**, and as the above indicates, Secretary-General Annan launched another wave of reforms in 2002, to expand managers' freedoms even further. The new measures seek to enable the UN:

"to attract, develop, and retain staff of the highest quality [but also to] continue to improve accountability and responsibility in ... human resource management, as well as monitoring mechanisms."

"Human resources management reform: Report of the Secretary-General," UN document A/57/293 of **8 August 2002**, paras. 2-12.

In his accompanying "agenda for further change," Mr. Annan stated that:

"Improving the quality of management was a priority of my first term. I have put great emphasis on establishing clear lines of responsibility and ensuring that managers are held accountable ... I am confident that [our] new system of recruitment, by giving managers primary responsibility for staff selection, will lead to a new level of accountability and empowerment. ...

I intend to adopt additional measures to cut unnecessary layers of bureaucracy. At present, the Organization recruits highly qualified individuals, for management functions -- yet its procedures do not allow them to manage a budget, procure what they need for everyday activities or authorize travel for their staff.

As decision-making authority is devolved to programme managers, the roles and responsibilities of the central service provider, the Department of Management [which contains OHRM] ... will need to be reviewed.

Action 32. In order to continue efforts to improve management:

(a) a thorough review will be conducted of delegated authority in order to increase the capacity and flexibility of managers to manage ...

(b) The roles and responsibilities of [DAM] ... will be redefined in order to support the increased delegation of authority;

(c) Training of managers will be strengthened across the Organization ..."

"Strengthening of the United Nations: An agenda for further change: Report of the Secretary-General," UN document A/57/387 of **9 September 2002**, paras. 188-190.[emphasis added.]

As discussed in the subsection on OHR (Mis-)Management , the General Assembly in 2003 once again placed a strong emphasis

on highlighting results and accountability in the follow-up process for Mr. Annan's new initiatives. It began by requesting that he ensure that UN staff members "adhere fully" to the approved UN code of conduct, concerning the integrity and independence of the international civil service, and then requested the Secretary-General to:

"4. ... report to the General Assembly [in 2004] in a comprehensive manner on the achievements of the human resources management reform, when sufficient information will be available on the experiences of the Secretariat with ... implementation ...;

5. ... conduct a study [by the OIOS] on the impact of ... [the reforms], in particular on the improvement of recruitment, placement, promotion and training, including an assessment of the role of the central review bodies and mobility ...;

6. ... ensure that all future reports on the implementation of [these] ... reforms focus on the results of such measures;

10. ... ensure the accountability of programme managers in the staff selection process, in close collaboration with the [OHRM], and to report thereon [in 2004];"

"Human resources management," General Assembly resolution 57/305 of **1 May 2003**, Sections I and II. [emphasis added.]

The Assembly, Secretariat staff representatives, an OIOS report, and a US General Accounting Office report of 2004, have all expressed concerns about the new managerial freedoms to make staffing decisions. They are also concerned about a grand, new, global staff mobility scheme which is very complex and presents obvious possibilities for managerial abuses, also as discussed under Mobility in the subsection on OHR (Mis-)Management .

IO Watch finds that Mr. Annan's human resource initiatives have thus moved rapidly forward, without a careful assessment of results and indeed without having firmly established and ensured the results of his earlier 1997 reforms (or the now-forgotten 1993 management accountability reforms).

Note: Discussion of this topic continues in the subsection on Unleashed Managers II.