

ANECDOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Accountability "Conventionally 'internationalist' administrations... are too inclined to see the IMF and the World Bank as ends in themselves, as signs of enlightenment and virtue, however much a mess they make of things. It is quite right to ask ... whether these bodies need to exist at all, exactly what purpose they are intended to serve, and just how well they are discharging their duties, whatever these may be."

"Reforming the Sisters", The Economist, **February 17th, 2001**, pp. 20-21.

[Note: these are certainly continuous, core questions for the UN as well]

Accountability? "Ideally the UN, foreshadowing a future world government, ought to be run by a global meritocracy -- rule by the best. In practice, it is the opposite. Any state that can be legally defined as one can join the UN -- it is a club having no rules of probity or morals. ... The result is failure and graft. UN officials are not answerable to bodies like Congress or the U.K.'s Parliament, which would be sure to track down, expose and punish gross abuses and manifest failures. No senior UN official has ever gone to jail. It's rare for anyone to be sacked or removed. The top brass resist any kind of investigation, on principle. The oil-for-food inquiry is unique in that it has taken place at all and seems to be garnering results. But will any punishment be meted out? Will any serious reforms be pushed through? Of course not. ..."

Paul Johnson, "The UN is for talk, not actions," Forbes (US), **March 14, 2005**.

Accountability's importance, then and now "[A free people has] an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean, of the character and conduct of its rulers."

John Adams, second American president, 1797-1801

"Adams had in mind the ministers of the British crown in the reign of King George III, and presumably he knew that the knowledge in question was interactive, moving mostly in the direction of the man being discovered as a thief but also toward the man afraid of finding out that he's been robbed."

Lewis Lapham, "Uncle Sam", Harpers' Magazine (US), **January 2007**, pp. 7-9.

Acronyms "An anarchy of abounding acronyms."

Title of an article by Anne Applebaum on the jumbled mass of UN system agencies, commissions, programmes, offices, and other units located in Geneva, in The Spectator (UK), **12 November 1994**, pp. 9-11.

Alphabet soup "The home of Alphabet Soup:

CGPRT Regional Coordination Center for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific

UNGEGN United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names"

A tiny sampling of extremely ponderous and lengthy UN unit and group names, as quoted in Newsweek, "United Nations: Prizes and parking tickets", **October 30, 1995**, p.

Ancient wisdom "Facta non verba"
 Latin, literally means "Deeds, not words", from Eugene Erlich, *Amo, amas, amat and more*, Harper & Row, New York, **1985**.

Appearances, I "The great majority of mankind are satisfied with appearances, as though they were realities ... They are often more influenced by things that seem than by things that are."
 Niccolo Machiavelli

Appearances, II "With the commission's move, a classic European compromise is taking shape, analysts said, in which appearances and stated intentions count for more than the exact letter of the law.

'Everyone will feel they've won something out of this', said an observer.

Eric Pfanner, "France wins extra year to fit its budget into EU guidelines", *International Herald Tribune*, **October 22, 2003**.

[Note: this nicely-phrased comment on the handling of very serious issues concerning violations of the EU's stability pact also nicely summarizes much of the UN's decision-making. Both processes beg the question of whether 'something for everyone' really serves the public's and the situation's needs.]

As time goes by "[Secretary-General Kurt] Waldheim's tenure was to be dense with irreproachable statements on global peril, and punctuated by referrals of critical questions to governmental bodies whose inaction was assured In 1972, the first year of his incumbency, Waldheim called on the General Assembly to discuss the question of terrorism. (In December, 1985, having considered the matter for thirteen years, the Assembly agreed -- as the *New York Times* reported -- to the adoption of 'a landmark resolution ... that condemns all acts of terrorism as 'criminal.')

In 1973, the *Times* noted that a U.N. body 'has been trying to find a definition for the word 'aggression' for 23 years.' The *Times* article concluded, however, by endorsing a favored U.N. view: 'In the words of Charles Yost ... a former representative here, 'just existing is perhaps the most important quality of the United Nations.'

Shirley Hazzard, "Breaking faith -- Part II", *The New Yorker*, October 2, 1989, 74-96 (74).

As time goes by (30 years later) "The Famine Early Warning Systems Network ... monitors the threat of mass hunger in some of the poorest parts of the world. FEWS Net has published an inquiry into the world's failure to respond to food shortages in Niger and the rest of the Sahel. The report is entitled simply: 'What went wrong?' That is the right question to ask. But what is surprising, and disconcerting, is that the report was written in 1997, not 2005. This illustrates two things: Niger's present nightmare is a recurring one; and whatever went wrong in 1997 was not put right by 2005.

"Famine relief: Starving for the cameras", *The Economist*, **August 20th, 2005**, pp. 10-11.

Babel "In those days the world teemed, the people multiplied, the world bellowed like a wild bull, and the great god was aroused by the clamor. Enlil heard the clamour and he said to the gods in council,

'The uproar of mankind is intolerable and sleep is no longer possible by reason of the babel.' So the gods agreed to exterminate mankind."

--The Epic of Gilgamesh, the earliest version of the Great Flood myth, introductory quote in Garrett Keizer, "Sound and fury: The politics of noise in a loud society", Harper's Magazine, March 2001.

Blah blah "They all said they would help us. But all they did was blah, blah, blah."

[A 58-year year old Burmese man, speaking on condition of anonymity, on statements by the United Nations and other countries that condemned the ruling junta's violent crackdown. Newsweek International, Perspectives, **November 5, 2007**.]

Brain dead? "[The] endless cycle of resolutions 'recalling,' 'reiterating,' and often in large part simply repeating previous resolutions -- which makes up a high proportion of the business with which delegates occupy themselves in the General Assembly and other UN 'governing' bodies -- prompted one experienced Asian diplomat flatly to assert, at a closed seminar in England in 1988, that 'the UN is brain-dead.'"

Rosemary Righter, Utopia lost: The United Nations and world order, Twentieth Century Fund, New York, **1995**, p.378.

Breath of life "...Western politicians should not continue to speak of 'breathing life' into the UN. For the UN is not a 'dead' organization; we only thought it was dead because we were not interested in its fate. In fact, it has been alive and even growing for a long time -- living and breathing according to the fashions of another age."

Anne Applebaum, "Is the UN really necessary?", The Spectator (UK), **31 July 1993**.

Bureaucracy "The UN bureaucracy is completely indestructible, and reigns supreme. Always the first target of any reform, it manages to override each and every assault on it with a consistency and strength which perplexes the best and the brightest. No matter how diligently and thoroughly the UN is trimmed, reshaped, or redirected, the bureaucracy in the end rules all, and defeats all."

Steven Roswick, "UN-Believable, UN Dictionary", Secretariat News (New York), **May 1992**, p. 19.

Caesar's wife "Failing seismic amendments to the [UN] Charter, there is still a lot that can be done to improve today's rather sorry state of affairs: the further reduction of overlapping agencies; a greater insistence on the quality of incoming UN officials; less rigid emphasis on rotation; and greater consistency regarding standards when applying ... UN policies. The same recommendations also apply to the Secretary General's office itself; like Caesar's wife, it has to be above suspicion, a house of rectitude, efficiency, and fairness."

Paul Kennedy, The parliament of man: The past, present, and future of the United Nations, Random House, New York, **2006**, pp. 271-272.

Candidates for cutting The key to reform ... is not adding posts, but getting rid of them. The U.N. needs a sunset law to eliminate units that have outlived their usefulness.

-- The Trusteeship Council, a holdover from the post-World War I League of Nations, was set up to supervise the administration of trust territories. Its function has shriveled to almost nothing, yet it continues to employ 13 professionals.

-- The moribund Military Staff Committee, with delegates from 39 nations, meets regularly for splendid lunches, but has never played a meaningful role, not even during last year's Gulf War."

Excerpted from Bonnie Angelo, "The U.N. today: New responsibilities", Time, **February 3, 1992**, in *UN Special* (Geneva), March 1992, pp. 9-10.

Career anthem for the many UN diplomats who dream of becoming UN-ocrats?

"The Lord above gave man an arm of iron
So he could do his job and never shirk.
The Lord gave man an arm of iron - but
With a little bit of luck, With a little bit of luck,
Someone else'll do the blinkin' work!
With a little bit...with a little bit...
With a little bit of luck you'll never work!"

"With a little bit of luck," from the musical comedy

"My Fair Lady"

Career suicide "Any staff member who criticizes his boss on the record has destroyed his UN career prospects."

A senior UN official in the late 1980s, informally advising a diplomat at a UN mission in New York who sought an organizational transfer for a countryman who had been punished for objecting to his boss's actions

Caterpillar, lipstick "[A year ago, then-US Ambassador John Bolton explained the US rejection of plans for a] ... supposedly more credible [UN] Human Rights Council. ... 'We want a butterfly,' he said. 'We don't intend to put lipstick on a caterpillar and call it a success.' Mr. Bolton, now in enforced retirement ... may feel vindicated as the ludicrously painted creature creeps along, seemingly doomed never to metamorphose and take wing. ... [As its latest session ended] ... on March 30th, the 47-member group again failed to address many egregious human-rights abuses around the world."

"Human rights: Bad counsel: The UN adrift on human rights", The Economist, **April 7th, 2007**, pp. 56-57.

Climate change obstacles "[In the climate change negotiations,] ... we must confront the fact that the world is far from a single country. This creates three huge problems: collective (in)action, perceived injustice; and indifference. ... If they are to tolerate radical change in energy use, people must first be frightened and then they must be offered a good way out ... or the cause, in all probability, will be lost. Our children and grandchildren will then find out whether it was a real wolf or not."

Martin Wolf, "Why the climate change wolf is so hard to kill off", Financial Times (UK), **December 4, 2007**.

Conceal/reveal " UN documents can usually be rated on a scale somewhere between uninspiring and awesomely tedious, so he has to winnow stacks of paper to get the grains of information concealed inside. 'Diplomats measure success by how much information they conceal -- journalists by how much they reveal,' he aphorises."

"Weekly digest finds a niche", article on the *International Documents Review*, a weekly newsletter on the UN, and its publisher, Bhaskar Menon, a 20-year veteran of the organization, in the Secretariat News (New York), **July 1991**, p. 16.

Cookies and sex "No senior UN official will ever be punished unless he is caught with his hand flagrantly in the financial cookie jar, or in an abusive sexual act, and even then only if those actions have appeared in, or might appear in, the press"

A veteran UN administrative insider at headquarters in New York in the **mid-1990s**

Core issues concisely stated "There is a culture of secrecy that characterizes not only the World Bank, but most of the vital international organizations -- including the United Nations. Unless these public entities establish independent oversight, external auditing of managerial and financial controls and safe channels for reporting wrongdoing, scandalous harm will continue to weaken them and only compound the grief suffered by the billions of needy people they are mandated to serve."

Melanie Beth Oliviero, "More transparency", International Herald Tribune, **February 26-27, 2005**.

Corrupted by comfort and cash "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**.

Corruption at the UN "There was corruption within the United Nations at a critical management point. There was exposure of important administrative and control weaknesses ... The Committee believes: *first*, 'professional disciplines' at the United Nations are weak and eroded ...; *second*, there appears to be a pervasive culture of responsibility avoidance and resistance to accountability; *third*, there was ... an absence of suitable administrative infrastructure; and *fourth*, there was an absence of adequate and independent control and auditing capacity."

The "Volcker Panel"), "The Management of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme", **September 7, 2005**, Volume I, pages 9, 13.

Corruption is insidious "Corruption is a cancer that steals from the poor, eats away at governance and moral fiber and destroys trust."

Robert Zoellick, new president of the World Bank, in Steven Weisman, as quoted in "New world bank head will continue fight on corruption", International Herald Tribune, **June 26, 2007**.

Credibility lost "We must make sure that [the United Nations'] work is fruitful, that it is a reality and not a sham, that it is a force for action, and not merely a frothing of words, that it is a true temple of peace in which the shields of many nations can some day be hung up, and not merely a cockpit in a Tower of Babel."

Winston Churchill, **1946**, as cited in Dore Gold, Tower of Babbble, 2004.

Cronyism "Life in the UN Secretariat is really all about 'jobs for the boys.'"

A long time diplomatic observer and participant in UN affairs, in the **late 1990s**.

[Note: This central point has several corollaries:

The boys are predominantly old, since it takes a lengthy diplomatic career to reach the lofty levels from which one can grab a senior UN job;

When the boys are established in their posts, they bring in, insofar as possible,

their assistants, secretaries, companions, relatives, and friends;
In the most extreme cases, jobs are even tailor-made for powerful national diplomatic or political figures;
The process indeed involves 'the boys', since women still do not fare well in seeking senior UN jobs;
Some of the most vociferous diplomatic critics of UN personnel policy are those who failed to get the high-level Secretariat jobs they thought they deserved.]

Cowboys "The rules and inspiration for UN reporting on its performance may well have come from the old American cowboy ballad 'Home on the range' -- 'where seldom is heard a discouraging word, and the skies are not cloudy all day.'"

A longtime observer of 'transparent' UN reporting in the **early 2000's**

Culture, dysfunctional "If you don't have a culture of integrity and responsibility in an organization, one can audit day and night and all you do is uncover a modest percentage of abuses,' ... [accountability expert Ted Galen Carpenter] said. 'What's lacking in the United Nations is that culture of integrity and responsibility.'"

Fred Lucas, "UN still a management mess, government reports say", Cybercast News Service, **January 28, 2008**.

Dangerous " I learned as an adult what I had learned as a child, which is that the world is a dangerous place -- and learned also that not everyone knows this."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan with Susanne Warner, A dangerous place, Atlantic Monthly, Little, Brown, Boston, Toronto, **1978**.

[Note: The quote is from the opening chapter of the book, which covers his service as U.S. Ambassador to the UN in 1975-1976.]

Déjà vu "Neglected implementation: It is seldom possible to use the word 'new' about proposals for reorganization or better coordination in the UN system. They are almost always repetitions from an earlier round."

Erskine Childers, with Brian Urquhart, "Renewing the United Nations System", Development Dialogue, 1994:1, Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, Uppsala, Sweden, **1994**, p. 34.

Democracy's merits "Democracy is reasonably good at some things: pushing scoundrels out of office; checking their worst excesses by requiring openness; and simply giving large numbers of people the feeling of having a voice."

Tyler Cowen, International Herald Tribune, **February 2008**. [Note: The UN always exhorts countries toward such democratic goals, but in its own global operations has had very little success in these three key areas.]

Dialogue "stating the obvious to the oblivious"
"no platitude is left unsaid"
"disguise and survive"
"it makes you feel like a mushroom -- kept in the dark and fed a diet of manure."
Some wry general commentaries on General Assembly speeches and the associated

Secretariat reports.

Dinosaurs "We were like a dinosaur: they'd whack us on the tail, and three weeks later we'd feel it in our brain."

[comment by an executive of a once-dominant multinational corporation, whose 'smug, massive' bureaucracy was forced into a major restructuring and downsizing after being overtaken by its more dynamic competitors, as quoted in Joint Inspection Unit, Chapter II.D., "Accountability for accountability," in "Management in the United Nations: Work in progress", UN document A/50/507, **1995**, p. 22.

Diplomacy "Diplomacy means the art of nearly deceiving all your friends, but not quite deceiving all your enemies. -- Kofi Busia

Diplomats are useful only in fair weather. As soon as it rains they drown in every drop. -- Charles de Gaulle.

All diplomacy is the continuation of war by other means. -- Zhou Enlai

A diplomat's life is made up of three ingredients: protocol, Geritol and alcohol. -- Adlai Stevenson

Apart from a good mind, the two most important assets for a United Nations diplomat are a good tailor and a strong liver. -- Richard Woolcott

An ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country. -- Henry Wotton

Diplomats were invented simply to waste time. -- David Lloyd George

Diplomacy is to do and say, The nastiest things in the nicest way. -- Isaac Goldberg"

"Thoughts on the business of life", Forbes Magazine, **January 3, 2003**.

Diplomatic delicacy "Conduct which is wily and subtle, without being directly false or fraudulent, is styled 'diplomatic.'

The basic delicacies of the diplomatic circuit also have a subtle influence on the process [of leadership selection]. An incumbent is often seen as 'one of us' who must not be 'insulted.' The camaraderie of diplomatic life can soften the edges of critical judgment"

The initial quote is from the Oxford English Dictionary for **1877**, and it and the remaining excerpt are from Brian Urquhart and Erskine Childers, A world in need of leadership: Tomorrow's United Nations: A fresh appraisal, revised second edition, Dag Hammarskjold Foundation and Ford Foundation, Uppsala, Sweden, **1996**, p. 58.

[Note: These issues of diplomatic delicacy, the reluctance to criticise, and "the diplomatic club" behaviour are not limited to leadership choices. In fact, they permeate UN dealings and decision-making in many personnel and operational matters, including not least the issues of firmly applying and assessing management accountability.]

Do no harm "A wise restraint is central to Berlin's thinking, an acceptance of the fact that tragedy inheres in all choice, because there is no choice that leads to the solution of all problems. An anti-utopian point of view, in other words, required a certain resignation to social imperfection and the conviction that the first task of government is similar to the first task of physicians, to do no harm."

Phrasing of the thoughts of Isaiah Berlin, from a book review by Richard Bernstein, "Books, IB, a Life," International Herald Tribune, November 25, 1998.

Note: the book, by Michael Ignatieff, is Isaiah Berlin, A life, Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt, New York.

Dream Jobs "[The UN Joint Inspection Unit] 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**.

Ecomog "Every Conceivable Moving Object Gone [The informal name given to the UN regional peacekeeping forces [Ecomog] in Liberia in the mid-1990s] The [U.S.] State Department reported that soldiers not only engaged in the systematic looting of small, easily transportable goods, but even shipped entire buildings for scrap to be sold abroad. The looting sometimes reached farcical proportions -- soldiers once loaded a military barge so full of stolen goods that it sank in full view of onlookers in the harbor. But the criminalization of peacekeeping wasn't funny"

Kenneth L. Cain, "How to save Liberia: Don't count on regional forces, send the Marines", International Herald Tribune, **August 11, 2003**.

[Note: Mr. Cain was a UN human rights officer in Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti and Liberia.]

Emergency!!, Part I "This elaborate administrative structure [of the United Nation's development system] over the years has grown into what is probably the most complex organization in the world. the machine as a whole has become unmanageable in the strictest use of the word. As a result, it is becoming slower and more unwieldy, like some prehistoric monster."

A study of the capacity of the United Nations development system, 2 vols., DP/5, United Nations, Geneva, **1969**, Vol. 1, pp. ii-iii.

Emergency!!, Part II "The United Nations agencies: A case for emergency treatment: The UN was supposed to build mankind a better world. Too many of its agencies have become private worlds of cronyism, sloth and incompetence."

Title and subtitles of an excellent assessment in The Economist, **December 2, 1989**, pp. 27-28, 30 [30].

[Note: the article offers a set of sensible suggestions for improvement as of 1989. At present, most if not almost all still seem to have been ignored.]

Emergency!!, Part III "The United Nations at 50: While still embodying the 1945 vision of a global human commonwealth, the U.N. at its half-century mark faces a historic reckoning. Overextended and groping for a fresh start, it needs reforming as never before."

Title and subtitle of an extensive overview article in Time, **October 23, 1995**, pp. 22-47, [contents page.]

Emergency!!, Part IV "Foday Sankoh is a jolly, self-adoring thug whose fighters used to chop the limbs off children. Last week they picked an ostensibly tougher target: peacekeepers of the United Nations [and took] at least 278 hostages.

How can foreign forces bring peace to countries rived by brutal war without becoming a party to the conflict?

These are issues that have been debated for years, and yet they need to be addressed now more than ever. As a knowledgeable official said, 'If [Sankoh] gets away with it, peacekeepers are in danger everywhere.'

Tom Masland and Jeffrey Bartholet, "The thin blue line: After a string of peacekeeping failures in Africa, the United Nations may be facing yet another", Newsweek, **May 15, 2000**, pp. 34-35.

Emergency!!, Part V "Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Monday that the United Nations must consider sweeping reforms in the wake of the Iraq war and warned that the organization had lost the confidence of many across the globe.

In unusually strong language Annan suggested that the credibility of the Security Council, the General Assembly and other UN bodies was at stake.

'If they are to regain their authority, they may need radical reform,' Annan said before making public his report on the organization's future."

"UN needs big changes, Annan says", AP, AFP, International Herald Tribune, **September 9, 2003**.

Emergency!!, Part VI "'Unprecedented challenges' faced by the UN have shown that the world body must immediately reform' ... [according to] background information distributed prior to a press briefing by [UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette.] 'The UN must take real action now ... particularly in the critical areas of management, oversight and accountability. ... Perhaps the most obvious shortcomings identified by the Volcker Inquiry and other crises are in the area of oversight and accountability. The current 'control' systems for monitoring management performance and preventing fraud and corruption are insufficient and must be significantly enhanced,' she said."

"Fréchette unveils UN reforms responding to Volcker panel's criticisms", UN News Service, **17 May 2005**.

Emer... Oh, just forget it! Let's start all over again. "A radically expanded range of activities calls for a radical overhaul of the United Nations Secretariat -- its rules, structure, systems, and culture. Up to now, that has not happened. ... We have too few skilled managers ... The present top management structure of the Secretariat is not well equipped to manage large and complex operations ... Our management system ... lacks the capacity, controls, flexibility, robustness and indeed transparency to handle multi-billion-dollar global operations, which often have to be deployed at great speed ... Perhaps above all [in] the management culture, the operating model has not changed significantly since at least the 1970s. Indeed, systems have continued to weaken as challenges have grown."

"Investing in the United Nations: Report of Secretary-General [Kofi Annan]", UN document A/60/692, **7 March 2006**, pp. 1, 2, and paras. 7-9.

Exclusivity "Given the growing diversity and power of Global Gladiators [corporate, criminal, religious, and other], the United Nations, which until now has been little more than a trade association of nation-states, may eventually be compelled to provide representation for nonstates, too, (beyond the token consultative role now granted to certain non-governmental groups, or NGOs.) if the nation-states who own and operate the U.N. refuse to widen representation, counterorganizations may arise as global corporations multiply and gather strength."

Alvin Toffler, Powershift: Knowledge, wealth, and violence at the edge of the 21st century, Bantam Books, New York, paperback, **1991**, pp. 456-457.

Ethics games "The [new UN] codification of ethics standards ... [creates] an entirely new level of bureaucratic dispute, delay, cost and inefficiency for those who report corruption in UN operations and suffer retaliation as a result. ... The new bulletin is flawed by glaring omissions. The UN system is poised

to assume extra costs of about \$4.5 million per year for the purpose of avoiding the application of meaningful ethical standards.

'By allowing [UNDP head Kemal] Dervis to retaliate with impunity, Ban Ki-moon is now promoting a Potemkin Village of costly ethics offices through the system without independence, credibility or standards,' said [accountability expert Bea Edwards.]"

"New UN Ethics Guidelines greatly misleading", Government Accountability Project,
December 4, 2007.

Fighting terrorism -- this is progress? "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy ... [adopted in 2006 marks the first agreed framework] since the issue came before the League of Nations in 1934. [It] puts special emphasis on the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) and the Secretariat's Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF). ... The absence of a clear definition of terrorism ... [impedes] development of [necessary] uniform laws. ... The CTITF is currently an underfunded and understaffed committee that must borrow all but one intern of its 24-person staff. ... Funding and resource issues ...[should be discussed.] ... The way ahead requires a determined and dedicated holistic effort. ... Enable the United Nations to add badly needed coherence and governance to donor-recipient relations. ... Move away from current ad hoc and uncoordinated efforts that, though effective, fall short."

The Stanley Foundation, "Implementation of the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy",
August 2007.

Fraud-fighting failures at the UN "In 2000 a new United Nations senior official was surprised that so little was being done about a whole range of staff frauds: the only penalty they faced was job termination. ... [A 2004 OIOS report said that] investigators in 59 offices, funds, and programs surveyed didn't have any formal training courses except for one week-long fraud examination seminar. In April 2005, the UN General Assembly, in its set of measures to strengthen internal investigation functions, said that professional investigators should examine all cases of serious misconduct and/or criminal behavior."

"United Nations creating investigator positions", Fraudmagazine, **March/April 2007**, p. 31.

Freedom "There is some sort of law that states that any time an organization gets bigger than one thousand people, it no longer needs the outside world."

The conclusion of a Geneva bureaucrat, expounding at length on his theory of multilateral organizations, as quoted in Anne Applebaum, "An anarchy of abounding acronyms", The Spectator (UK), **12 November 1994**, pp. 9-11.

Friendly advice For its friends, of which we are two, [the problem is that the U.N.] is not particularly effective in averting conflict or fighting poverty.

The United Nations, as it is presently limping along, is clearly not up to the task of reversing these trends, let alone its own genteel deterioration. Officials carry on with their routine business ever more removed from the politics of the real world."

Sadrudin Aga Khan and Maurice F. Strong, "Proposals to reform the U.N., 'limping' in its 40th year", New York Times, **October 8, 1995.**

[Note: Both men were highly-respected senior UN officials.]

Fund-raising, UN-style "Just leave the money on a tree stump in the clearing in the middle of the forest in the moonlight at midnight."

An assessment of the UN's entrenched attitude in obtaining (and spending) the billions of

dollars it receives each year from Member States, which made the rounds in the **late 1990s**.

Get it done "In 2003 there was much talk among UN Member States about a 'coalition of the willing' and a 'coalition of the unwilling' , but when a decision is taken to act in the UN, it is only the 'coalition of the capable' Member States that can actually get it done."
observation by a long-time student of UN decision-making and implementation problems in late 2003

Get serious "The global landscape has dramatically changed in the last 50 years, but the institutions serving the world have not. The institutions cannot reform themselves. Two generations of institutional contamination and tenured self-interest ensure that this deadlock continues. But this lack of coherence damages their collective credibility, frustrates their donors and owners, and gives rise to public cynicism. There is a consensus that something must be done, but no consensus on how to go about it. It's time for a small group of national leaders to take on the challenge of reforming and rebuilding global governance ... around the issue of the democratic deficit in multilateral institutions. Similarly, [senior officials in national legislatures] should form a democratic caucus to provide systematic oversight of international institutions, focusing particularly on increasing the transparency of these institutions. [This informal] caucus would strengthen national governments in their role in holding these agencies to account."

Mike Moore, "Multilateral meltdown", Foreign Policy, **March/April 2003**, p. 75.

Getting better all the time "Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar's assertion that only one in four U.N. employees performs useful work has the ring of truth ... [But] responsibility for this situation rests with our masters, the member states, who still have to address these serious issues..."
from a letter from H. K. Rahim to the International Herald Tribune, on **April 29, 1986**, as cited in the *UN Special* (Geneva), May 1986, p. 30.

"I went [to Geneva] and I was attacked. There are thousands of staff. Half of them do not work. I decided to launch a reorganization campaign."

Secretary-General Butros Butros-Ghali, as quoted in William Branigan, "The UN empire: Polished image, Tarnished Reality", Washington Post, **September 22, 1992**.

Global governance, international cooperation? "In the post-cold-war model of saving the world, ... international bodies will ... parcel out the problem according to their expertise. ... [But] two of the West's most important institutions ... have been taken hostage by single-issue bloody-mindedness [in Afghanistan and Kosovo] ... They cannot make the EU and NATO work properly even though 80% of EU members belong to NATO – and vice versa. What then are the chances that in future conflicts, in which a wider range of international organizations could be involved, even broader alliances of alliances will be any more successful?"

"Charlemagne: There is no excuse for the failure of NATO and the EU to talk to each other", The Economist, **February 10th, 2007**, p. 34.

Global governance, legitimacy "It was first proposed, as far as I can discover, in 1842, by Alfred Tennyson. ... [Now] the demand for a world parliament is at last acquiring some serious political muscle. ... With every presumed transfer of democratic consent, the imprint of our cross on the [election] ballot paper becomes fainter. Though the international bodies operate in our name, we have no more influence

over them than the people of Burma have over the military junta. Global governance is a tyranny speaking the language of democracy. The purpose of a world parliament is to hold international bodies to account. It is not a panacea. ... But it does have the potential to impose a check on them. ... It possesses something that none of the other global bodies have: legitimacy."

George Monbiot, "The best way to give the poor a real voice is through a world parliament", The Guardian (UK), **April 24, 2007**.

Global governance reform "Global governance currently faces multiple critical deadlocks on [essential] issues. ... Formal multilateral institutions like the UN have lacked sufficient dynamism and flexibility to generate the necessary advances on their own. ... The L-20, ... the leaders of twenty important states from all major world regions, would constitute a significant advance. ... Each leader ... should be held accountable by their own country's civil society and legislative bodies. ... It would be a serious mistake to delay significant reforms of global decisionmaking any further. The problems of globalization are too immediate. ... The world beyond the G8 wants in ... and they are going to get their wish, ... [whether in a constructive way or one] that leaves lasting resentment. The L-20 is part of the positive answer to that question."

The editors, "Global insights: A symposium" and Paul Martin, "Breaking deadlocks in global governance: The L-20 proposal", Global Governance, **July-Sept. 2007**, pp.299-323 (299-304.)

Grand titles "Director General, International Potato Center (CIP) "

Job advertisement in The Economist, **August 16th 2003**, p. 14.

Note: The job is no doubt a worthy and useful one, but the incumbent will become only one of sixteen such personages heading Future Harvest Centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), which itself is only a small speck in a sea of international organizations and their hundreds of Secretaries-General, Directors-General, and Deputy-, Under-, and Assistant-Secretaries-General or -Directors-General]

Great jobs! "The conventional wisdom in Third World up-market employment circles is that the best job opportunities in these recessionary days are still available in the United Nations system -- a bewildering alphabet soup rich in countless commissions, subcommissions, fact-finding missions, agencies, expert groups, blue-ribbon panels and blue-helmet peacekeeping operations. For the most part, it is a sprawling secretive system, where many modern-day rajahs reign with conspicuous disregard for accountability"

Pranay Gupte [executive editor of The Earth Times], "United Nations shenanigans", Newsweek International, **May 24, 1993**, p. 6.

Hard earned insights "I have just retired after fifteen years as a translator at the UN. I would like to share a few insights earned the hard way.

The UN bureaucracy is distinctive in a number of ways. It forbids the English acronym by which it is universally known; it operates on the principle that accountability is inversely proportional to rank; and it illustrates as do few other bodies Voltaire's dictum that man was given language in order that he might better conceal his thoughts.

With regard to languages, in fifteen years of attending meetings, most of which had the intellectual substance of a surfers' convention, I have noticed some linguistic quirks. For instance, at the UN, one encounters such words as funds, financing, allocations, appropriations, resources, but never money! "

Oren Jarinkes, "Resources are human, indexes are forbidden", Secretariat News (New York), **May 1991**, p. 16.

Hazards of alphabetizing "My own career reached a pinnacle when I was [a] winner of the new Staff Incentive Award. My winning idea? Include an index of the published volumes of General Assembly resolutions. the Secretary-General had ordered its implementation But I then received another letter [of] willful obfuscation and soon got the message: my suggestion would not be implemented, because it was too controversial.

In my blindness, I had failed to see how the order of letters in the English alphabet ... could be considered controversial. Then I [happened upon] a well known UN publication that had brazenly risked including an index. I encountered 'Waldheim, Kurt' [immediately followed by] 'war criminals, punishment of.' It suddenly dawned on me. I began to imagine consecutive entries, such as 'General Assembly' followed by 'genocidal regimes', and 'Security council, procedures and practices' followed by 'Sexual practices in underdeveloped countries.' I could see why my idea was not used.

I ended up getting a handshake from the Secretary-General "

Oren Jarinkes, "Resources are human, indexes are forbidden", Secretariat News (New York), **May 1991**, p. 16.

Hey! Thanks a lot! "[At a ceremony presenting plaques of appreciation for service to the UN to retired staff] a former ... unit staff member said after receiving his plaque, "I will give this to my mother. It is the only thing I have to prove that I worked for the United Nations for 30 years without even a promotion."

"OHRM will not take a back seat", UN Staff Report (New York), **December 1997**, p. 17.

Housecleaning required "The General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to organize an independent commission of internationally respected civil-service and recruitment specialists. It should carry out a thorough screening of the actual competence of officials at mid-professional and above grades to reliably establish how many existing staff actually have a useful function in UN service. Responsibility for the costs of the termination of those who do not must be shared by member governments."

Childers, Erskine, with Urquhart, Brian, "Renewing the United Nations System", Development Dialogue, 1994:1, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala, Sweden, **1994**, p. 165.

Human rights complexities "There is an unrealistic or even impractical obsession with your form of democracy, human rights and civil liberties, which you have taken centuries to acquire and which you expect us to adopt in a few years, in a few months."

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, addressing foreign diplomats, "Perspectives", Newsweek International, **December 10, 2007**, p. 5.

If a tree falls in a forest "A cluster of [UN] document offices spews out an avalanche of papers that are 'printed in six languages,' as one delegate notes, 'and read in none.'"

Excerpted from Bonnie Angelo, "The U.N. today: New responsibilities", Time, **February 3, 1992**, in UN Special (Geneva), March 1992, pp. 9-10.

Immorality "A quarter of a century ago, with great hopes from all mankind, the United Nations Organization was born. Alas, in an immoral world, it too grew up immoral."

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Nobel Prize in Literature, acceptance address, **1972**, as quoted

in Shirley Hazzard, Defeat of an ideal: A study of the self-destruction of the United Nations, Macmillan, London, 1973, inside book jacket.

Integrity deficit "A new survey of ... [UN integrity perceptions] has found that while structures for reporting and combating corruption exist, most staff members are either unaware of how to use them or afraid to do so for fear of high-level retaliation. 'The UN has a 'phone book' of rules and regulations which are totally useless as they are never practiced', a staff member is quoted as saying ... [Another says,] 'Senior leaders caught in serious breaches of ethics should be punished, not promoted as usual.' The new study[s] ,,, most negative findings have to do with ingrown leadership and the lack of response to reports of corruption. 'Get rid of the old boy network,' one staff member ... [says.] 'That network is wide, tenacious and powerful. ... Opposing the network is certainly the end of a UN career.'"

Warren Hoge, "Report criticizes the way UN fights corruption", International Herald Tribune, **June 16, 2004**.

Integrity urged, required, and explained "In 1943 ... Mr. C. W. Jenks emphasized that quality of leadership would dominate the effectuality of a future United Nations Organization; and listed as the desirable attributes of an international civil servant 'integrity, conviction, courage, imagination, drive, and technical grasp -- in that order.'"

Shirley Hazzard, Defeat of an ideal: A study of the self-destruction of the United Nations, 1973, p. 132.

"The paramount consideration in the employment of the [UN] staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. ... "

Charter of the United Nations, **1945**, Article 101, para. 3.

"Integrity is like the weather: everybody talks about it but nobody knows what to do about it. Integrity is that stuff we always say we want more of. When I refer to integrity, I have something very simple and very specific in mind. A person of integrity lurks somewhere inside each of us: a person we feel we can trust to do right, to play by the rules, to keep commitments. Indeed, one reason to focus on integrity as perhaps the first among the virtues that make for good character is that it is in some sense prior to everything else: the rest of what we think matters very little if we lack essential integrity, the courage of our convictions, the willingness to act and speak in behalf of what we know to be right."

Stephen L. Carter, Integrity, **1996**, pp. 6-7. [Note: Mr. Carter is the William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law at Yale University.]

International community", the "Law must be backed by coercion legitimized by a political process. The 'international community' has no such process. Indeed, the phrase 'international community' is metaphoric and misleading.

.... Rhapsodizing about the U.N. as the 'international community' incarnate obscures this fact: the U.N. is composed of representatives of regimes most of which rule in ways repellent to the U.N.'s democratic minority."

George F. Will, "The perils of 'legality': If international law is really law, who enacts, construes, adjudicates and enforces it?", Newsweek, **September 10, 1990**, p. 25.

Ivestigations, UN-style "It is a time-honored tradition at the U.N. to bury a scandal by conducting an inadequate inquiry and then declaring the matter closed. [Kofi] Annan did precisely that when news first broke in January 1999 of his son's involvement with a Swiss firm that won a U.N. contract in Iraq."

James Bone, "Where is the car?: Why Kofi Annan said I'm not a serious journalist," The

Times of London, December 27, 2005.

"Kofi Annan's ... practice when confronted with scandal was to set up inquiries so opaque, oddly timed, and inadequate that the investigations themselves tended to evolve into cover-ups. And so it seems to be going now."

Claudia Rosett, "More questions about the U.N. in North Korea", National Review (US), **March 16, 2007.**

Ivory tower, come down from the "Unless we, as scholars, begin to undertake a more focused and sober analysis of the [UN] implementation process and of lessons learned from past efforts, the academic community could well become part of the problem instead of the solution."

Edward Luck [an expert on the UN], The Academic Council on the United Nations System, "Informational Memorandum" No. 66, **Spring/Summer 2006**, p. 3.

Jobs for sale A particularly pernicious activity of bad UN managers that goes beyond mere "jobs for the boys" (see the item on cronyism above.)

Nothing discourages UN staff members more than hearing that their boss is offering the jobs or "posts" that they occupy to UN staff outside their unit. Such self-obsessed managers regard the staff and "posts" entrusted to them not as key means to fulfill their programme's objectives, but as bargaining chips to obtain present or future favors from those given the job offers, including in some cases actual money or sexual arrangements. The gambit is of exploitative use even when the potential job switch never actually occurs. Recent new UN decisions to allow managers much greater hiring freedom, and to increase staff mobility, will surely only increase this shabby process.

Just call me PBO of OPPB&F of DAM, for short

"Programme Budget Officer
Data Analysis and Systems Control Unit
Programme Planning and Budget Division
Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance
Department of Administration and Management"

A fairly typical job title of a mid-level professional UN staff member in the headquarters bureaucracy in New York, from the **1988** UN telephone book.

Justice, a clear UN requirement, and a glaring contradiction "The jurisdictional immunity of the Organization legally obligates it to have just and effective internal processes to deal with grievances and appeals by staff, and with disciplinary cases ... [as] an indispensable aid to maintaining staff morale, as well as enforcing accountability. ..."

"Accountability and responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General [Kofi Annan]", A/55/270 of **3 August 2000**, Summary, para. 39.

"While there is currently a comprehensive system of justice in place, its highly formalized nature 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 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."

"Human resources management reform: Report of the Secretary-General [Kofi Annan]," UN document A/55/253 of **1 August 2000**, para. 51.

Justice for all but, at the UN, when? "The issues raised in the ... [Secretary-General's October 2004 report on internal justice] had been raised by the [ACABQ] as far back as 1985. ... The problems alluded to had persisted over many years ... The Committee takes this matter very seriously as it has a significant impact on staff morale and productivity as well as ... [organizational efficiency] ... At the core of the matter lie difficulties with administrative processes and procedures and the culture of staff-management relations. The Committee [trusts that] ... information will also be made available on how ... [the General Assembly's 2003 request to link] the administration of justice and personal responsibility and accountability [is] being met."

"Administration of justice in the Secretariat: Interim report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions", **28 February 2005**, paras. 3-4, 8, 10.

"The General Assembly today ... [mandated] the first overhaul [of the UN system of internal justice] since its creation six decades ago. ... [The General Assembly president said] ... 'Around the world, the Organization promotes justice and equality and represents the rule of law to its members. ... Over time, ... the independence and credibility of [its own system have been] seriously compromised.' [The General Assembly noted] ... that the 'overwhelming majority of individuals serving in the system of administration of justice lack legal training or qualifications' ... [Its Redesign Panel noted in its July, 2006 report that the UN] ... 'fails to meet many basic standards of due process established in international human rights instruments'. This must be corrected, the experts argued, 'to avoid the double standard which currently exists ... [where international standards] are not met within the Secretariat or the funds and programmes themselves.'"

"Calling UN's internal justice system 'ineffective,' General Assembly approves overhaul", UN News Service, **4 April 2007**.

"[The UN's] ... internal justice system is widely acknowledged as 'broken.' ... There are proposals for change, and on March 30 there was progress and little-noticed changes ... [in a General Assembly resolution ... The implementation date] was moved back a full year, to January 2009. ... Most telling ... there were no dollar figures attached ... [i.e.] nothing has yet been resolved. And so for now the broken and arbitrary system will continue. ... [If this UN system] is broken, how can it preach [to others]? To be continued."

Matthew Russell Lee, "At the UN, justice reform progress is delayed a year, money fight delayed, favoritism continues", Inner City Press, **April 2, 2007**.

Justice principles, for everyone else "Effective criminal justice systems can only be developed based on the rule of law and the rule of law itself requires the protection of effective criminal justice measures."

ECOSOC, "Resolution on Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme in the area of the rule of law and criminal justice reform", **22 July 2005**.

Key to success "The secret to life is honesty and fair dealing. If you can fake that, you've got it made."

Groucho Marx

Language skills "He/she speaks four languages fluently, but has nothing to say in any of them."

This not-so-infrequent observation is the downside of the fascination of the General Assembly with multilingualism in UN staff recruitment.

Let's goooo! "You have to hand it to the United Nations: ... When it comes to fighting corruption, the UN-ocrats are ready to go the extra mile, or ... thousands and thousands of extra miles – all the way to yet another UN conference at the plush Nusa Dua resort on Bali ... the same balmy Bali beach resort [where the UN gathered] in coldest December for a giant pow-wow on fine-tuning global weather. ... Maybe in the interest of synergy, the UN should simply move all its offices, agencies and meetings to Bali ... around the same swimming pool."

Claudia Rosett, "UN on Bali: the Sequel! Fighting corruption on the beaches! By the pool!", The Rosett Report, **February 5, 2008**.

Lovers and critics "the UN entered the 1990s in the position George Kennan once described as the most dangerous for any institution: too many of its lovers were uncritical, and its critics were too often unloving."

Rosemary Righter, Utopia lost: The United Nations and world order, Twentieth Century Fund, New York, **1995**, p. 19.

Managers, at the UN, the rosy scenario "Real reform requires an ongoing search for excellence ... above all, in the performance of our staff. In this I will not compromise. I expect ... a total commitment to excellence. I pledge to you today that we will develop a new management culture in the Organization. ... It is my intention to hold my managers accountable ... The excellence of our performance will turn our detractors into supporters. We all know [that] ... nobody argues with success."

"Secretary-General [Kofi Annan] urges staff to strive for excellence ...", SG/SM/6140 of **9 January 1997**, pp. 1,3, 4.

"The Secretary-General is confident that the comprehensive system of accountability now in place ensures that [UN] accountability mechanisms are effectively used, are seen to be used, and ensure that staff at all levels are held accountable for their actions and inaction."

"Accountability and responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General [Kofi Annan]", A/55/270 of **3 August 2000**, paras. 1-2, 47-48.

"Improving the quality of management was a priority of my first term. ... 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. ... 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. ... A thorough review will be conducted of delegated authority in order to increase the capacity and flexibility of managers to manage."

"Strengthening of the United Nations: ... Report of the Secretary-General [Kofi Annan]", A/57/387 of **9 September 2002**, paras. 188-190.

Managers, at the UN, the rosy scenario gone bad "Perhaps the most obvious shortcomings identified by the Volcker Inquiry and other crises are in the area of oversight and accountability. The current 'control' systems for monitoring management performance and preventing fraud and corruption are insufficient and must be significantly enhanced," [UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette] said."

"Fréchette unveils UN reforms responding to Volcker panel's criticisms", UN News Service, **17 May 2005**.

"The main conclusions are unambiguous. The Committee believes: *first*, 'professional disciplines' at the

United Nations are weak and eroded ...; *second*, there appears to be a pervasive culture of responsibility avoidance and resistance to accountability; *third*, there was ... an absence of suitable administrative infrastructure; and *fourth*, there was an absence of adequate and independent control and auditing capacity."

The "Volcker panel", "The Management of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme", **September 7, 2005**, Volume I, pages 1, 9, 13.

"A radically expanded range of activities calls for a radical overhaul of the United Nations Secretariat. ... We have too few skilled managers ... The present top management structure of the Secretariat is not well equipped to manage large and complex operations ... In the management culture, the operating model has not changed significantly since at least the 1970s. Indeed, systems have continued to weaken as challenges have grown."

"Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger organization worldwide: Report of the Secretary-General [Kofi Annan]", UN document A/60/692, **7 March 2006**, pp. 1, 2, and paras. 7-9.

"The General Assembly ... highlighted the importance of strengthened accountability in the Organization and of ensuring greater accountability of the Secretary-General to Member States. It requested the Secretary-General to specifically define accountability, as well as clear accountability mechanisms, in the context of a series of reports requested in the resolution, and to propose clear parameters for its applications and instruments for its rigorous enforcement -- without exception -- at all levels."

General Assembly document GA/10458, New York, **8 May 2006**, and A/RES/60/260 of 8 May 2006, esp. preambular paras and part I.]

Merit "No amount of money or resources can substitute for the significant changes that are urgently needed in the [UN] culture ... People everywhere are fully entitled to consider that [it] is *their* organization, and as such to pass judgement on its activities and the people who serve in it. Furthermore, wide disparities in staff quality exist ... 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.

Mistrust "Sins of member states. [UN] Secretariat staff resent ...member state interference in ... their daily work ... [their micromanagement of] the hiring and promotion of Secretariat personnel. [and of] Secretariat budgeting, too often ...seeking to control the minor details of spending allocations. Secretariat staff members are also frustrated by lack of clear direction from intergovernmental bodies.

Sins of the Secretariat. Member states contend that ineffective -- some would say nonexistent -- managerial practices throughout the Secretariat have led to inefficient use of the [UN resources] ...; a staff unaccountable for its actions and prone to delegate upwards; insufficient program coordination ...; and wasteful duplication of efforts. There has been a lack of transparency in Secretariat decision making [on] policy issues, personnel, and budget expenditures. ... Much of the information that is provided is not timely or readable. ... Overall, inefficiency and lack of accountability within the Secretariat, whether perceived or real, have invited member state micromanagement. "

"Making UN reform work: Improving member state-Secretariat relations", The Stanley Foundation, **February 21-23, 1997**, pp. 2, 14-16.

My country "The UN hires its professional staff not by competencies, but by country."
A long-time Secretariat personnel official, in the **early 2000's**.

My job "...the official who was asked what he did in the Secretariat and replied 'I am a Saudi Arabian.'"

From Shirley Hazzard, as quoted in Ali, Aamir, "The international civil service: The idea and the reality", in de Cooker, Chris, ed., International Administration: Law and Management Practice in International Organisations, UNITAR, Martinus Nijhoff, Dordrecht, the Netherlands, **1989**, p. I.1/9.

[Note: this anecdote is very widely known, no doubt because it so succinctly highlights underlying UN personnel and performance realities]

Naptime "Diplomacy is an exhausting business, with all those late dinners followed by pre-breakfast e-mail rockets from foreign ministries in distant time zones. ... So where to catch a midday nap? ...[French representative] Alain Dejammet ... has 'published' ... a guide, 'Dormir aux Nations Unies' ... [which] ranks 12 mostly cozy and largely dark corners on comfort, lighting, serenity and frequency of use. ... [Two highly-ranked places are] the UN periodicals library, which, he says, 'gives the impression of an abandoned monastery' ... [and] a dismal lobby-café near the upper gallery entrance to the General Assembly, where ... the chairs aren't great ..., but sleepers can rest their heads on tables otherwise used for discreet poker games. ... The ratings were pretty much confirmed on a recent warm afternoon after lunch, although a few habitués were dozing in plain view in the second-floor lobby."

Barbara Crossette, "Rating siesta sites: A UN veteran's guide", International Herald Tribune, **April 3, 2000**.

Nation-building "Timor-Leste gave the UN its first chance to play midwife at the birth of a brand-new country. If nation-building cannot succeed in such a small and relatively homogeneous spot, it will have little chance in bigger and more complex places. ... In May last year, after the UN had scaled down its operations, the country descended into violence, ... prompting the dispatch of fresh peacekeepers. ... a population of fewer than 1m still suffers widespread poverty, malnutrition and unemployment ... The UN has splashed out over \$3 billion since arriving in 1999. But this largesse has left few visible signs, save at the UN's huge base in Dili, where construction continues apace. ... The UN's hordes of experts have made huge efforts ... but it seems as if one stiff gust of wind could blow it all away."

"A half-built nation: An election season has begun peacefully, but Timor-Leste will need years more of babysitting from the UN", The Economist, **April 14th, 2007**, p. 60.

Nation-building II (realities on the ground) "[Hotel swimming pools, lounges, and bars] ... have sprung up in postliberation Kabul. ... [But a gap was vividly illustrated when the chief of a mud-walled settlement on the edge of Kabul assured a British patrol that] ... 'life is much better than it was under the Taliban.' When asked how, he had to think hard. 'We can watch videos,' he said finally. Then he added: 'At least we could if we had television. Or electricity.' Keen to please his visitors, he thought again. 'Our girls can go to school,' he said, then once more frowned. 'Only there is no school.'"

Christina Lamb, "Sipping margaritas in the rubble of Kabul", International Herald Tribune, **July 10, 2004**. Ms. Lamb is the author of The sewing circles of Herat: A personal voyage through Afghanistan.

Nooooo problem "These things are big for a while, but they always blow over and eventually

disappear."

A veteran, senior-level UN administrative official, advising colleagues during one of the periodic phases of newspaper analyses (this time in the **early 1990s**) that sharply criticize UN mismanagement and poor performance

No thanks "For each success story there are half-a-dozen of UN waste, incompetence, and irresponsibility. The respected team that runs WHO's global program on AIDS avoids using the WHO representatives in some member countries to disseminate its work, because they are of such low calibre."

"The United Nations agencies: A case for emergency treatment", The Economist, **December 2, 1989**, pp. 27-28, [30].

Nothing we can do "When I worked in Liberia in the mid-Nineties a new [UN] chief administrative officer [tried to force many] ... young 'local staff' to sleep with him ... I was the human rights lawyer and these girls would come to my office in tears ... [I wrote many memos. but] when I visited the UN [personnel] office in New York, they laughed at my naïve outrage: 'It happens all the time in the field', they said. 'There is nothing we can do.' ...

That CAO had been knocking around West Africa for years, always mired in corruption, never disciplined, always promoted and reassigned ... -- during which time the head of personnel was Kofi Annan. What kind of leadership would tolerate this conduct 10 years ago? ... Precisely the same leadership that [has now] ... permitted the oil-for-food scandal and the sex-for-food scandal."

Kenneth Cain, "How many more must die before Kofi quits?", The Observer (UK), **April 2, 2005**.

Oil-for-food, the Volcker verdicts "The main conclusions are unambiguous. The [United Nations] requires stronger executive leadership, thoroughgoing administrative reform, and more reliable controls and auditing. ... There was corruption within the United Nations at a critical management point. There was exposure of important administrative and control weaknesses ... The consequences? An avoidable loss of assistance to Iraq's population and a grievous loss of credibility to the United Nations."

The "Volcker panel"), "The Management of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme", **September 7, 2005**, Volume I, pages 1, 9.

"Based on the evidence set forth in Chapters 1 through 5 of Volume III ...the Committee finds as follows: as the Chief Administrative Officer of the United Nations, the Secretary-General carried oversight and management responsibilities for the entire Secretariat. That particularly included auditing and controls functions that had demonstrable problems. ... The record amply demonstrates a number of instances where there was a lack of support for and oversight of the Programme by the Secretary-General. ... [In sum], the cumulative management performance of the Secretary-General fell short of the standards that the [UN] should strive to maintain."

The "Volcker inquiry"), "The Management of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme", **September 7, 2005**, Volume III, page. 185.

"OIOS did not have an adequate budget to properly investigate the [Oil-for-Food Programme]. ... [On] at least three occasions OIOS [Investigations Division] referred complaints back to ... the relevant departments to conduct their own internal inquiries. ... [Deviations] ...from 'best practices' ... included: (a) lack of direct reporting to an independent oversight board; (b) failure to perform risk assessments to professional ... standards; and (c) lack of budgetary independence. ... OIOS ID is generally not supported and accepted across the United Nations by both management and staff. This, together with a lack of a whistleblower protection policy, prevents OIOS ID from successfully carrying out its mandate."

The "Volcker inquiry"), "The Management of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme", **September 7, 2005**, Volume IV, pp.71, 73, 77.

Oil-for-food, UN follow-up action (not) "The United Nations has failed to ... [act on some] key recommendations of an investigation into corruption in its oil-for-food program in Iraq, ... [Volcker panel member Mark Pieth said in an interview.] ... They're not really taking us seriously," he said. ... Volcker's probe ... castigated top U.N. officials for tolerating corruption and the Security Council for ignoring \$11 billion in smuggled oil and other illicit earnings outside the program ... The Volcker inquiry said the United Nations needed a truly independent audit committee. It has established a panel, but it has only one independent member. ... [It] also said the United Nations needed to weed out and remove incompetent employees, but this has not been done. ... [Pieth also observed that] some 500-1,000 cases mentioned in the Volcker Inquiry's final report are clear-cut cases of corruption."

Sam Cage, "UN falls short on oil-for-food reform: Investigator", Yahoo! News,
September 7, 2006.

For the rest of the alphabet,
see Anecdotes and Observations II