

GENERAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

Introductory quotes

"Some ordinary villages are peaceful and well policed. The global village is of another kind. It has feuds and vendettas which often break into violence. All the inhabitants are armed. The part-time police force is amateurish and weak. It is run by a committee of villagers who rarely agree on what it should do. Powerful neighbors sometimes suppress violence by force. Peace will only come to such a village when the rule of law is imposed."

Jonathan Glover, Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century, Chapter 18, "The political containment of tribalism: Policing the global village", Yale University, New Haven, CT, **1999**, p. 140.

"A new group of power-seekers are leaping on the world stage and seizing sizable chunks of the clout once controlled by nations alone. Some are good, some, decidedly evil. ...

... 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 non-states (beyond the token consultative role now granted to certain ... NGOs). ...

But whether or not such speculations prove correct in the future, the new Global Gladiators -- corporate, criminal, religious, and other -- already share increasing *de facto* power with nation states."

Alvin Toffler, Powershift: Knowledge, wealth, and violence at the edge of the 21st century, Bantam, New York, **1991**, pp. 450, 456-457.

"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 they may be."

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

[Note: As the most astute chronicler of UN successes and problems over the years, *The Economist* would surely extend this wise advice to the UN as well.]

"Above all, he warns, never tolerate 'a concrete evil' in the name of 'an abstract good'; expose the

pretenses of the system at every opportunity."

Andrew Nagorski, a phrasing of Vaclav Havel's beliefs, in a book review "The most potent weapon of all: How Havel prepared for 'the gentle revolution'", Newsweek International, **June 25, 1990**.

[Note: The book is Vaclav Havel, Disturbing the peace, A conversation with Karel Hvizdala, translated by Paul Wilson, Vintage, New York, 1991.]

"It is precisely those committed to struggling for a better world who stand most in need of abandoning the fantasy of an idealized international system."

David Rieff, "Goodbye, new world order", Mother Jones, **July/August 2003**, pp.37-41.

Chronological quotes

"The great essayist E.B. White was a leading booster of the United Nations, probably its most articulate American defender ever. Nevertheless: by December 1956, 11 years after the UN was born, even White was fed up. He saw the pattern.

The U.N. made no sense, he concluded, if members were allowed to do whatever they felt like behind the locked doors of their own 'internal domestic affairs', no matter what kind of shrieking and hollering the neighbors reported. ... "

E.B. White, writing in **December 1956**, as cited in Gelerntner, David, "Replacing the United Nations: Make way for the Big Three", The Weekly Standard, March 17, 2003, pp. 24-26.

" ... the question remains: how in practice to revitalize a flagging organization which is somehow out of tune with the needs and moods of the times? ... I believe that a shock treatment is called for and the present moment provides an unique opportunity to apply that treatment ... I have come to the conclusion that the only practical way to revitalize the organization is through a major consolidation and regrouping. This must be no mere cosmetic surgery. It would require some drastic staff reduction -- up to 50 percent in some areas -- and a major redeployment of UN resources in those tasks in which it can be most useful to its members and the world community."

Maurice Strong, then the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in **1971**, as quoted in Shirley Hazard, Defeat of an ideal: A study of the self-destruction of the United Nations, Macmillan, London, 1973, pp. 112-113.

"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 immoral."

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Nobel Prize in Literature, Acceptance Address, **1972**, as quoted in Houshang Ameri, Fraud, waste and abuse: Aspects of U.N. management and personnel policies, University Press of America, Lanham, MD (USA), June 2003.

" ... Member States [difficulty] in obtaining a complete picture of the processes of planning, budgeting, performance monitoring, and evaluation [was compounded because there was] ... no information on the implementation of the programmes of the preceding budget.'

' ... the new proposed programme budget ... had been drawn up without the benefit of a critical analysis of ongoing activities ... Member States were therefore unable to form a precise idea of the efficiency with which the resources were used or of the quality of the results ...'

" ... more time ought to be spent on evaluating the application and implementation of ... programmes.'

' ... [given the lack of] a fully operational monitoring system ... [he had] serious reservations concerning the provision of statements of programme budget implications ... priority setting ... would be useful once monitoring and evaluation functions had been placed on a sound footing.'

[The General Assembly and relevant bodies] should be given more information ... to review the proposed programme properly and take enlightened decisions ... '

' ...he could not believe that every programme element ... was fully useful ... Indeed, ... Member States [broadly believed] ... there was ample room for improvement, internal redeployment and reassessment of priorities. What the United Nations lacked was the machinery [for this purpose] ... A new impetus must be given to the identification of activities that were obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective."

Critical statements made in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, in "Summary records", General Assembly, Fifth Committee document A/C.5/40/SR.22, paras. 3-5, 7, 15, 20 and 22, and A/C.5/40/SR.23, paras. 12-13, 38, 48, both of **6 November 1985**,

as quoted in Joint Inspection Unit, "Reporting on the performance and results of United Nations programmes: Monitoring, evaluation and management review components"", UN document A/43/124,1988, p. 3.

"Member States have ... stressed the need to be told, more clearly and more extensively what has been the programmatic performance of the Secretariat, which outputs have been delivered, and with which result....

Let us strengthen the monitoring and evaluation functions ...

Let us say clearly and dispassionately what has been done and with which result, and equally what has not been done and why....

Let us produce more analytical performance reports

I find the essential problem one of better and more transparent information, thus permitting better decisions."

"Statement", Response to the above criticisms by UN Under-Secretary-General for Management Patricio Ruedas **12 November 1985**,

as quoted in Joint Inspection Unit, "Reporting on the performance and results of United Nations programmes: Monitoring, evaluation and management review components"", UN document A/43/124,1988, p. 3.

" ... la confusion intellectuelle au sujet des organisations mondiales est aujourd'hui complète: on leur attribue une importance qu'elles n'ont pas; on leur reproche de ne pas faire ce qu'on ne leur donne pas les moyens de faire; on ne comprend pas ce qu'elles font réellement; on leur reconnaît des défauts souvent imaginaires, en ignorant leurs défauts réels; on invente des explications mythologiques des causes de leur inefficacité; enfin on identifie très mal les quelques résultats importants qu'elles obtiennent réellement."

Maurice Bertrand, Refaire l'ONU: Un programme pour la paix, Éditions Zoé, Genève, **1986**, p. 31.

"The crude truth about many of the UN agencies is that they don't know what they are trying to achieve; and that cronyism, sloth and incompetence would ensure they could not achieve it even if they did. The obstacles to reform are huge, the courage to tackle them nowhere visible. Still, here are some suggestions.

The system reflects the whims and false starts of 44 years ... some parts should be radically slimmed or closed entirely.

Other parts are paralysed by having too many separate aims, too many programmes Each should be given a manageable set of objectives and focused on these.

Accountability must be improved. That would at least mean regular and public reports on where and how the money goes, and on how far pre-stated targets of achievement are being met.

Co-ordination between the various agencies is much talked about. It should happen.

The quality and morale of professional staff must be raised ... start rewarding merit, not political or personal connections.

Not least, the length of time anyone can run an agency should be strictly limited."

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

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

" never in its 47-year history has the [UN] had so much to do in so many areas of the globe.

'We've bumbled into a world where everything effects everything' muses [40-year UN veteran] Brian Urquhart.

But the U.N. has not even begun to change in a way that will allow it to take advantage of the revolution in world politics. The U.N. is overstaffed, underfunded, and mismanaged. Its activities are often badly conceived, wasteful and hobbled by petty politics.

[Secretary-General] Butros-Ghali's predecessor, Javier Perez de Cuellar, retired with well-earned praise as a peacemaker [but] His most serious shortcoming during his decade in office was his unwillingness to bring the U.N. bureaucracy under control.

Observes Urquhart : 'The model home designed by the founders in 1945 has become a sprawling, ramshackle structure; people have long since forgotten the rooms that have been added over the years.'

Australian Ambassador Peter Wilenski, [a management expert urging UN reform] says the U.N. 'is run as a club rather than as an organization.'

Notes Edward Luck, president of the UN Association of the USA, 'The organization doesn't know how to set priorities -- and good management starts there.'

Bonnie Angelo, "United Nations: Challenges for the new boss," Time, **February 3, 1992**, pp. 40-41 [41].

"The images are familiar: blue-bereted U.N. peace keepers ... humanitarian relief workers fighting poverty and hunger ...

But behind these images lies an enormous, largely uncontrolled bureaucracy, subject to abuses and deficiencies that impair its effectiveness, a nine-month study by *The Washington Post* has found.

The United Nations, its internal critics say, has been self-protecting and self-perpetuating, rather than self-policing.

[an official of Africa Watch says] 'I think there's a great deal of incompetence, there's a lot of corruption, and there's no accountability.'

Despite broad agreement on the need for reform, abuses within the organization persist and often go unpunished. The chiefs of some autonomous U.N. agencies rule their fiefdoms like autocrats, answering to no one. Regional mafias of U.N. bureaucrats have taken roots, consolidating their power through favoritism in hiring and promotions.

... [a former UN Under-Secretary-General] attributes many [UN] problems to a shortage of management skills in an organization run largely by diplomats. ...

[An official of a Nordic U.N. Project] studying UN reform said a lack of [UN] ... accountability 'is [largely] a systemic problem ... We have a governmental system in the U.N. that is not geared to get accountability."

William Branigin, "The U.N. empire: polished image, tarnished reality", "As U.N. expands, so do its problems: Critics cite mismanagement, waste", Washington Post, **September 20, 1992**, pp. 1-3.

If, in the future, the UN hopes to avoid failures like that in Somalia, it will need to change on a more fundamental level.

Above all, if the UN is to be effective, it must be accountable. ***'The UN is probably the least accountable bureaucracy in the world'*** -- a main reason not only for the cataclysm in Somalia but for the persistence of famine through Africa', said Alex de Waal, a British anthropologist who has studied the UN's response to famines. 'Officials who are responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths must face the prospect of prosecution, not promotion.'

There is also the need for a freedom of information act, so UN officials cannot hide from the public everything from their salaries to their mistakes to how much they're spending on public relations. And finally, there must be an independent watchdog organization with full power to investigate U.N. agencies.

The General Assembly has the authority to establish a commission of inquiry to examine what went wrong in Somalia, but it has never examined its own performance."

Ray Bonner, "Why we went": How the United Nations turned its back on Somalia and subverted the best chance for peace", Mother Jones, (USA), **March-April 1993**, pp. 54-60. [emphasis added]

"The [World Health Organization] like all United Nations agencies, specializes in the production of pious verbiage, which skilfully combines highmindedness with the self-interest of its staff ... the fact is that agencies such as WHO are inherently corrupt and corrupting ...

This is not to say that the WHO does no good work at all ... or that it does not have sincere and competent staff in its lower echelons. But at its higher levels politicking and jockeying for position overwhelm any lingering concern for the health of the world's population.

The WHO hires not by competence but by allocation of jobs among member nations. This not only [discriminates] in favour of the incompetent but ensures that political skills matter more than technical capacity.

I once worked in a small tropical country where the WHO representative, though personable, was the most incompetent man ... I have ever encountered. ... he was finally removed from the country ... by promotion to the regional headquarters.

A UN official said that ... the WHO was [once] the most efficient of the special agencies. This may have well been so, but the standards by which he was judging it are abysmal."

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

[Note: The WHO and other UN system specialized agencies do indeed have such performance difficulties, but most people who know the system would say that the situation is most grievous in the United Nations Secretariat itself.]

"The world is in a new period of crisis, different in many ways from the past [and] it is time to do something about the United Nations so that it can do more about keeping peace.

The United Nations itself, with its sclerotic bureaucracy, its chronic budget crisis, its hamstrung decision process, is not up to the job.

There are basic problems of management, corporatism shielding waste and slovenly work, which require the rigorous techniques of big business.

There is the shibboleth of 'geographic distribution', which hands out jobs by nationality with little concern for competence, and the custom of many countries to designate failed or inconvenient politicians to these reserved UN posts to get them out of the way. Effective hiring must come first.

The sad fact is that not only was the United Nations largely paralyzed during the long Cold War, but infirmity brought serious deterioration that will not be reversed spontaneously. The time to propose and start negotiating reform is right now."

Flora Lewis, "Update the United Nations for a newfangled world", International Herald Tribune, **June 11, 1993**.

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

I couple of years ago, I spent some months in New York [to examine the work of] the Security Council and General Assembly at close quarters. I was prepared to believe that the UN was an interesting ... institution with a possible new lease of life.

I returned with a somewhat different set of beliefs. Today's UN, I now believe, is an essentially and intrinsically conservative institution ... no longer capable of reform along lines that would enable it to change in a progressive direction.

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

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

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

.... I believe we should regard it with ... suspicion ... and shed no tears if it were to disappear."

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

"From the Secretary-General on down, UN officials, military men, and diplomats sense that the machinery of international action is not working [to meet the challenge of new peacekeeping roles].

... the bureaucracy of the United Nations [is] an organism apparently impervious to external pressure and capable of self-preservation in the most hostile climate. Stories of its inertia and folly have passed into staff legend and acres of newsprint. ... Within the Secretariat, [however,] several inescapable, if under-reported changes are in train.

The first is the transformation of the UN by political pressure from an organization mainly devoted to arranging conferences into an active body charged with enforcement, preventive diplomacy, and intervention. This will create as one official puts it, 'a culture crisis.' ...

Sir Brian Urquhart says that ' the identity of the UN, which started as a means to deal with conflicts between nations, has not been properly questioned ... there is no basic discussion on the role of the UN.' 'It is' he says, 'something of a miracle' that the Secretariat functions at all.

Harmonious chaos is an elegant description of the natural state of things, but it is not desirable for an organization guiding the world into a new century."

Michael Sheridan, "United Nations: What's gone wrong? Structural defects: Chaotic harmony or just chaos?", The Independent (UK), **1 November 1993**.

"Gambertini highlighted that in a few days the UN would celebrate its first fifty years in an 'international bazaar'.

An unnamed UN official was quoted as commenting on the event: 'It will be an absurd situation, almost an insult to us', and wondered where the money was coming from.

Gambertini stressed that the UN was close to bankruptcy ... Some observers wondered what was being celebrated after the failures in Somalia, Rwanda, and former Yugoslavia, while others questioned what purpose the UN served today and whether it could survive in its present 'grandiose and vain' form.

.... Gambertini recalled that [recently US Ambassador] Albright described the Organization as a society of 185 members, each with a loud and contradictory position, coming from every culture, talking every language, with the objective 'of getting a relative hired by the UN.'

For the journalist, the UN headquarters was a photocopy of Italy at the planetary level: 'Both had the same age and suffered from the same illness. The member states do not pay their dues and, therefore, the budget is permanently in the red.' He pointed to the excessive and inefficient bureaucracy, the repeated embezzlement scandals and the system of patronage by countries to ensure their quota of posts."

Excerpts from the first of a series of articles, "United Nations 50 years later", by its special envoy Paolo Garimberti, on **17 October 1995**, in the Italian daily La Repubblica, as translated by the UN Information Center, Rome.

"United Nations, heal thyself. Such is the virtually unanimous sentiment being expressed this week ... [at] the organization's fiftieth birthday.

Calling for reform is one thing: agreeing on the details is quite another. The United States, Britain, and other wealthy Western countries tend to see the UN as an inefficient bureaucratic behemoth that encourages corruption and waste when it is not providing a forum for the spewing of anti-Western rhetoric. The West's message to the UN can be summed up as 'Do more useful things and charge us less.'

For the smaller and poorer countries that make up the majority of the world's states, however, the UN's problems appear in a rather different light. Their biggest complaint is that the five permanent Security Council members -- Britain, China, France, Russia, and the US -- use their elevated status to order the planet's affairs in their own interests. 'The Security Council can no longer be maintained like the sanctuary of the holy of holies, ... acting as high priests deciding on issues for the rest of the world', President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia told his fellow leaders on Sunday."

Tony Barber, "Life begins at 50: can the UN show how?", The Independent (UK), **October 24, 1995**.

"History, that insufferable know-it-all, has its noble brow furrowed. While noting much to commend in the way this lofty experiment has played out, it finds the U.N.'s charter conference an affair doomed by internal contradictions. Haunted by the disaster of appeasement, the framers assumed all humanity would rally behind the rescue of any country, no matter how remote the peril to any other country's vital interest. They believed each government would surrender at any time its warmaking powers to a supranational force. They provided not at all for conflicts within nations, and they considered open debate and resolutions of good will to be a cure for all evils.

As the globe's potentates assembly in New York City next week to celebrate the U.N.'s

formal 50th anniversary, the occasion augurs more than traffic gridlock unlike any that Manhattan has ever seen. Outside the champagne parties on Turtle Bay where the UN has its quarters, the anniversary stands to produce a feast of cynicism about the visions of 1945. From this angle, the organization's ambitions look overblown and its bureaucratic arthritis embarrassing. As fashion statement, the U.N. is growing scandalously démodé."

"Cover: Reform or die! The United Nations at 50", Time, **October 30, 1995**, pp. 22-47.

"No one loves the United Nations. Not its stern but neglectful parent, the United States, which gave birth to the U.N. 50 years ago, but has fallen about 10 years behind in child-support payments. Not the other member-states, which have their own motley complaints (... the U.N. should spend more money on our pet projects and less on yours). Not UN staffers; despite their generous, tax-free salaries, morale is awful. Certainly not journalists, who are subjected to an Orwellian flow of 'public information' but still find the organization 'so transparent it's opaque,' in the words of one career U.N. employee (who, tellingly, didn't want his name used). Even the U.N.'s boosters are skeptical these days. Says Ed Luck, former president of the United Nations Association [of the USA], 'Your friends should be the first to tell you there's something wrong.'

With friends like that, who wants to throw a birthday party? The U.N. decided to call it a 'commemoration' instead."

Carroll Bogert, "The United Nations: Midlife crisis: On its 50th anniversary, the United Nations is one of the world's least happy organizations. But we still need it", Newsweek International, **October 30, 1995**, pp. 14-18.

"Conclusions

... Today the United Nations Secretariat is in a shambles. It suffers from considerable malaise which is due to a wide range of causes. These include doubts about such central questions as its independence, integrity and competence, as well as the existence of corruption, 'waste, fraud and abuse.' [**] There is also concern that demands for 'equitable geographical distribution' have had the effect of relegating the principle of merit to a secondary position. But these causes also include problems regarding the declining quality of the staff, poor personnel management, the politicization of the Secretariat's policies and practices with regard to recruitment, appointment and promotion of the staff, as well as the lack of a proper career development plan."

Houshang Ameri, Politics of staffing the United Nations Secretariat, Major Concepts in Politics and Political Theory, Vol. 8, Peter Lang, New York, **1996**, pp. 549-550.

[Note ** the author observes in a footnote that these three sentences are drawn from criticisms made by three senior US officials deeply involved with the UN in 1993 (Madeleine K. Albright, Richard Thornburgh, and Melissa Wells) and that "While these criticisms are for the most part, justified, they should nevertheless be seen in their proper political context."]

"When the [UN] was founded in 1945, Very quickly, the Cold War not only paralyzed the central peacekeeping capacity but distorted practically all UN activities through the filter of ideological and strategic confrontation. Nonetheless, the United Nations not only survived but expanded and enlarged its long list of activities.

At last came the happy day when the Cold War ended and big power hostility need no longer be taken for granted.

[However,] there hasn't yet been the invigorating, determined new launch that ought to be

available in what could amount to a second UN incarnation.

.... it is a time to review what the United Nations does and is expected to do, what methods exist to make a better match of missions and means, what credibility is about and how to establish it.

.... But there needs to be a lucid distinction between feel-good measures and for-the-record measures in cases where effective action is just not possible.

.... there needs to be an effort of reflection and a search for consensus so that the UN can [better] fulfill its functions This isn't impossible. It's just that America can't be bothered, and others are too busy bickering."

Flora Lewis, "It's time to give the United Nations a new start", International Herald Tribune, December 31, 1999-January 1, 2000.

"President Vaclav Havel [of the Czech Republic says] that 'the UN ... 'should do everything to make people see it as their own organization, representing everyone, not as some sort of club of governments and diplomats.'

While governments represent their citizens at the UN, 'perhaps in some cases it's not a very authentic representation,' he said, adding 'It's important that people don't regard the United Nations as an organization of the powerful, but rather as their own organization.'

Steven Erlanger, "'Hear the voices of the people', Havel implores world bodies", International Herald Tribune, August 23, 2000.

"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 they may be."

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

[Note: As the most astute chronicler of UN successes and problems over the years, *The Economist* would surely extend this wise advice to the UN as well.]

"In the many conflicts and crises of the post-1945 era the UN's record has been mixed. ... Despite its many weaknesses and perennial financial crises, the UN has become the first genuinely global international organization, bringing almost all sovereign states under one set of principles."

Adam Roberts, pp. 868, 874,

"Despite a less than perfect record ... the UN has served an irreplaceable function.

A robust United Nations ... has great potential to address the complex problems of today's world. Translating that potential into reality, however, means that the deficiencies of the UN system must be remedied. ...

Enhancing the capacity of the United Nations ... also means finding a new way of structuring the Organization to increase its effectiveness and make it more accountable."

Lloyd Axworthy, pp. 868-869,

"The United Nations is a deeply flawed institution that has, nonetheless, served foreign policy interests from time to time. ...

The most likely future role for the UN will be an approximate continuation of its muddled, incoherent, and marginally important present status. ...

Any international organization that purports to assert governmental power, even indirectly, and certainly one that embodies no indicia of democratic accountability, is automatically (and properly) viewed as suspect. ...

[Its history] unambiguously demonstrates that the UN is a forum for the conflict of national interest, not a place of worship for what some believe are humanity's higher ideals."

John R. Bolton, p. 871.

All three of the above articles are in

Joel Krieger, ed., "United Nations", The Oxford companion to politics of the world, Oxford, London, **2001**, pp. 865-874

"The legitimacy, effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations continue to erode. The UN suffers from a "democratic deficit" that was an integral part of the original design but needs to be remedied now. The UN's moral authority is seriously undermined because its laws or principles are enforced selectively to suit the interests of the rich and the powerful. ...

The United Nations is the core of any international system of governance. Therefore, it is essential to contemplate reform that would make it more credible, more legitimate and more effective. It must act in accordance with its charter. It must be democratic in achieving representation and making decisions, through participation, transparency and accountability. It must move toward political independence in relation to the powerful geopolitical actors. Some institutional changes are obviously desirable. ..."

Deepak Nayyar and Julius Court, Governing globalization: Issues and Institutions, Policy Brief No. 5, United Nations University and World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), Helsinki, Finland, **2002**, pp. viii, 11.

"The global landscape has changed dramatically in the past 50 years, but the institutions serving it have not. The array of institutions is bewildering. Within the U.N. system alone, there are 112 agencies. More than 20 agencies deal with water, for instance.

Functions overlap, mandates conflict, and each agency has its own standard of accountability (or no accountability) to member governments.

The [UN system] agencies 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."

Mike Moore, "Multilateral meltdown", Foreign Policy, **March/April 2003**, pp. 74-75..

[Note: Mr. Moore was Director General of the World Trade Organization from 1999 to 2002 and is a former Prime Minister of New Zealand. He is the author of A world without walls: Freedom, development, free trade, and global governance, Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK, 2003.]

" To a baby-boomer kid growing up in New York, the United Nations was a revered, almost magical place. Le Corbusier's sleek glass-and-marble building rising from the East River was a symbol of our hopes for the world's future. I remember my first grade-school trip there, marveling at people from all over the globe ... and at the cavernous General Assembly hall where delegates used headphones to listen to the proceedings in languages they could understand.

Somehow it's hard to image Kofi Annan racing off to one of the world's hot spots. The United Nations -- and the world's expectations for it -- has declined drastically over the last few decades."

Roger Cohn, "Editor's note", Mother Jones, **July/August 2003**, p. 4.

"It is precisely those committed to struggling for a better world who stand most in need of abandoning the fantasy of an idealized international system."

David Rieff, "Goodbye, new world order", Mother Jones, **July/August 2003**, pp. 37-41.

"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**.

"The bombing of the U.N. headquarters in Iraq was the United Nation's 9/11. Now a stricken organization must regain its equilibrium, knowing that its personnel are a target in Iraq, and perhaps elsewhere.

As always, though, the future of the United Nations lies not in what is said or done in the dispirited buildings along New York's East River, but in what the United Nations' leading members do to strengthen the organization they created in 1945 to deal with just such a challenge.

The days immediately following the death of [UN senior official Sergio Vieira de Mello] and his colleagues were sorry ones for the United Nations. Instead of the tragedy's triggering a coming together of major nations to lay out a plan to protect U.N. personnel, it produced an embarrassing American proposal that was little more than a plea for other nations to serve in the existing American command; an all-too-predictable French counter-attack from Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, and a toothless Security Council resolution calling for better protection of U.N. personnel. It was an insult to the memory of those who had died in Baghdad."

Richard C. Holbrooke, "The U.N.'s day of reckoning", Newsweek International, **September 8, 2003**, p. 22.

" ... after all these years, the United Nations is still struggling to adjust its human resources policies and practices to the reality that surrounds it. ...

This is no time to stand idly by. In the era of development, the Bretton Woods institutions threaten to marginalize the UN system. In the area of global trade, the WTO overshadows UNCTAD. IN peacekeeping and peace building, large regional organizations such as NATO move in when their interests are at stake (as in the Balkans) and play dead when there is nothing to be gained (as in Rwanda). In the delivery of humanitarian assistance, NGOs and bilateral agencies are becoming the agents of choice (as became manifest in Kosovo). In this highly competitive environment, the UN will have to reform its reforms, or go down reforming.

Several dilemmas that have crippled the UN for generations, however, remain unresolved, and this organizational pathology stands in the way of the UN's efforts to remain meaningful. ...

For most pathologies, there is a cure. For the UN, faith healing will not suffice."

Dirk Salomons, "Good intentions to naught: The pathology of human resources management at the United Nations," in Dennis Dijkzeul, and Yves Beigbeder, eds., Rethinking international organizations: Pathology and promise, Berghahn, New York and Oxford, **2003**, pp. 111-139 [136-137].

"Why GAO did this study

The U.N. Secretary General launched two reform agendas, in 1997 and 2002, to address the U.N.'s core management challenges -- poor leadership of the Secretariat, duplication among its many offices and programs, and the lack of accountability for staff performance. ... In 2000, GAO reported that the reforms were not yet complete.

What GAO found

... First, the Secretariat has taken positive steps to strengthen its human capital management, but reforms in this area are ongoing and additional challenges remain. Second, the U.N. has begun to adopt results-oriented budgeting, but its monitoring and evaluation system does not measure program impact. ...

UN reform faces several challenges. For example, the Secretariat does not conduct comprehensive assessments of the status and impact of U.N. reforms. In addition, the reform agendas lack clearly stated priorities, interim goals, and target dates for overall completion. Other challenges include resistance to change from program managers and possible resource constraints.

What GAO recommends

... the [US] Secretary of State and [US Mission to the UN] should work with other member states to encourage the Secretary-General to (1) report regularly on the status and impact of reforms; (2) identify short- and long-term goals and establish target end dates for remaining reforms; and conduct assessments of the resulting resource implications."

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

[Note: available at www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-339 .]

"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 study] is being made public at a time when Secretary-General Kofi Annan has been forced by the widespread publicity [about corruption in the Iraq oil-for-food program] to appoint a high-level panel to look into [it] ...

The new study records relatively high levels of worker satisfaction ... but its 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. ... So long as you can wind your way into that network, you are OK. ... 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**. [Note: The actual survey is "United Nations organizational integrity survey", Final Report, prepared by Deloitte Consulting LLP, **June 2004**.]

"[The UN integrity survey] is of course just one of the UN's various investigations into itself. ...

Does anyone see a problem here?

The basic flaws are simple. Any time you create a large institution, accord it great privileges of secrecy, give it a big budget and have it run immune from any sane standard of

accountability, you are likely to get a corrupt organization. ...

The problem with the Secretariat isn't "tone" at the top. It's accountability at the top and secrecy throughout. ...

Someone needs to help this institution, and it's not a consulting team hired by the same institution, nor is it a batch of investigators operating under terms defined by the U.N, nor is it a grand gathering of staff members being urged to risk reprisals by telling tales of earlier reprisals.

A better place to start is to ... withhold part of the U.N.'s budget ... [or] tackle the system that engendered Oil-for-Food ... For now, I'm [starting to believe] that in ... reforming the UN, the only thing worse than having the U.N. ignore a problem is to have the U.N. investigate it."

Claudia Rosett, "The problem with the Secretariat", The Wall Street Journal, **June 16, 2004**.

"The UN is not in good shape and the world is in worse shape. ...

[UN critics know ... their chosen target is vulnerable. As a [US expert] put it, 'The UN is useful, but it is also a terribly flawed and defective organization.'

[A panel is looking at changed threats and Security Council changes] ... [major countries seek new permanent Security Council seats] ... Investigations of widespread corruption in the UN-directed oil-for-food program in Iraq continue. All of this is unsettling.

[But then came] the startling declaration from ... [Secretary-General Annan] that the war in Iraq was illegal. ...

... it may provide a basis for a battery of lawsuits against the United States from Iraqis demanding reparations and from every sharp lawyer with a dislike of America's role on the planet.

I ... believe that a strong case can be made that [the war] was legal. Good lawyers in good faith have disagreed. ...

Complex issues, yes, but with a brutally simple bottom line: unless the UN can [develop] a system that is more streamlined and efficacious, and less open to legal dispute, it will not be adapted to the realities of today's world. ..."

Roger Cohen, "As world leaders meet, UN is at a crossroads", International Herald Tribune, **September 22, 2004**. [emphasis added]

" ... The United Nations' 60-year old machinery has never seemed so ill-equipped for its work, and its credibility has plummeted. ...

Regrettably, most [UN groups] ... have an interest in resisting reform. None of the permanent Security Council members wants to give up its veto; smaller powers delight in their General Assembly votes, which count as much as those of the major powers; repressive regimes cherish participation in United Nations' human rights bodies, where they can scuttle embarrassing resolutions; and the Western powers whose troops and treasure are needed to strengthen U.N. peacekeeping have other priorities. Even within the U.N. bureaucracy, many veterans shy away from dramatic reform – it has taken them decades to become masters of the old procedures, and change is risky. And while U.N. officials, including the secretary-general, are quick (and correct) to blame the member states for the constraints they face, they too rarely find the courage to spotlight those specific states whose obstinacy, stinginess, and abuses undermine the principles behind the U.N. Charter."

... [Three highly visible UN components] ... the Security Council, the Commission on Human Rights, and the peacekeepers in the field ... [are] in dire need of reform and rescue."

Samantha Power, "The world's most dangerous ideas: Business as usual at the U.N.," Foreign Policy, **September/October 2004**, pp. 38-39.

Samantha Power is also the author of A problem from hell: America and the age of genocide, Basic Books, New York, 2002.

"U. N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said yesterday he was disappointed in his son for accepting payments from a key contractor in the oil-for-food programme for more than four years longer than ... previously acknowledged. ...

But the appearance of a payoff to the Secretary-General's son was just the latest ... of revelations about the Iraqi oil-for-food program ...

While the organization scrambles to respond to oil-for-food inquiries, other troubles are piling up at the organization's doorstep. ...

The U.N. peacekeeping program is wracked by accusations of rape, sexual harassment and extortion by blue helmets and civilians in the U.N. mission in Congo. ...

International pressure also is building on the United Nations and the Security Council to do more to protect civilians in Darfur, Sudan. ...

Internally, a [staff] ... group seeks to reopen an investigation of [the head of the OIOS] ... over charges of sexual harassment and favoritism ...

The U.N. staff union also has criticized Mr. Annan's willingness to exonerate Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette for failing to protect U.N. staff members in Iraq ...

[Mr. Annan] also threw out an internal report finding merit in a [recent] sexual harassment complaint against ... [UNHCR head] Ruud Lubbers."

Betsy Pusic, "Another oil-food scandal emerges", The Washington Times, **November 29, 2004**.

"[In April 1994, Hutu gangs] ... killed almost 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus -- the fastest genocide in human history. ...

Rwanda was a failure at almost every level, but certainly it was a failure of the United Nations. ... It was the major powers -- the United States, Britain, and France that determined the exact nature of the peacekeeping mission. ...

This logic holds even more in the messy scandal over the Oil-for-Food programme, a badly managed affair surrounded by corruption. ...

And yet and yet. The United Nations is not simply a reflection of its major members, but a vast organization with a distinct culture and code -- one in desperate need of repair. ...

Given the enormous expansion of its responsibilities ... it has not structured itself to provide professional and competent management. It has some remarkable successes to its credit ... but also real failures. Oil-for-Food and the sexual scandals in Congo are examples of abysmal management, and there must be consequences. Kofi Annan has been the most reform-minded secretary-general in the U.N.'s history, but he needs to do much more, and fast: otherwise he will find himself doing too little, too late."

Fareed Zakaria, "When the UN fails, we all do", Newsweek International, **December 13, 2004**, p. 15. JCOL - 863 - 1

Note: Discussion of this topic, and a list of useful sources, continues in the subsection on General Performance Assessments II.