

GENERAL PERFORMANCE

ASSESSMENTS II

"Imagine if U.S. troops were accused of sexually exploiting children in impoverished nations ... a U.S. Cabinet Secretary were accused of groping a female subordinate, [but then exonerated] ... by the president [an agency head] ... and the president's own offspring stood accused of complicity in [a massive embezzlement racket] ...

... [These things happened in the UN this year.]

Where's the outrage? ... Why didn't the mainstream ... devote more attention to these scandals? Far from demanding high-level resignations, they are circling the wagons.

The U.N.'s friends are doing ... no favors with this knee-jerk defense. Even [Kofi] Annan recognizes [the problems with his 1997 and 2002 management reform attempts, and reports on Rwanda, Bosnia, and general peacekeeping failures.] ...

[Yet] all the *reformistas*' efforts founder on the rocks of apathy and inertia. ... Most of the U.N.'s 191 member states ... [and] 49,000 employees ... have other priorities.

Flawed as it is, the UN does some useful things ... Leaving the U.N. ... is unrealistic. But it will never live up to the grandiose expectations of its starry-eyed supporters, unless they get mad enough to demand real change. So far there's no sign of that happening."

Max Boot, "Why U.N. stays mired in its defects: Start with too-friendly media, apathy and members' entrenched interests", Los Angeles Times, **December 9, 2004**.

"A debate currently rages about whether Kofi Annan enjoys the moral authority to lead the United Nations because the Oil for Food scandal happened under his command. ... [But] the salient indictment of Mr. Annan's leadership is lethal cowardice, not corruption; the evidence is genocide, not oil.

... 10 years ago, [in Rwanda] ... some 800,000 bodies rotted in the African sun.

... Most of the U.N.'s armed troops [had] evacuated ... abandoning vulnerable civilians to their fate, which included, literally the worst things ... a human being can do to another human being.

[In] Srebrenica ten years ago, thousands of Muslim civilians [sought] ... shelter at a U.N. base. But Serb militias separated the men and boys ... and put them on buses. Armed Blue Helmeted U.N. Peacekeepers -- tasked under Mr. Annan's leadership to protect them in this U.N.-declared 'Safe Area' watched passively. ... Across the street [now] lies a new cemetery and memorial for the 8,000 fallen men of Srebrenica. ...

If anyone's values have been betrayed at the U.N. over the years it is those of us who believe most deeply in the organization's ideals. Just ask the men and women of Rwanda and Srebrenica."

Kenneth L. Cain, "The real reason Kofi Annan must go", Wall Street Journal, WSJ.com, Opinion Journal, **December 21, 2004**.

[Note: Mr. Cain served in U.N. peacekeeping operations in Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti and Liberia.]

"Isolated diplomatically over Iraq, beset with financial and sexual scandals and manifestly failing to halt genocide in Sudan, the UN must prove its mettle in dealing with the humanitarian crisis in South-east Asia or face a threat to its very existence. ...

... Two interrelated crises ... have now brought the UN not only to impotence (a regular occurrence), but to institutional meltdown under Kofi Annan.

The 9/11 attacks ... created a new kind of threat to world order ... The UN Security Council is a forum for the big players to settle their differences, eyeball to eyeball. You can't do that with Osama bin Laden. ...

The other new crisis is the descent of the permanent UN bureaucracy into wholesale corruption. There has always been petty sleaze, but it was accelerated vastly by the UN's oil-for-food programme ...

Annan is the first secretary general to be recruited from the ranks of the UN permanent staff. As such, he ... is more prone to defend his bureaucrats from outside criticism. ...

The best solution is a new secretary general ... perhaps a former prime minister or president -- who carries respect in the major world capitals."

George Kerevan, "Has impotent UN finally outlived its usefulness?", The Scotsman, 5 January 2005.

"Can Kofi Annan survive? The secretary-general of the United Nations has just finished what he himself admits was an annus horribilis for his organization. Now an American-led campaign to unseat him is probably closer to its goal than ever. ...

... Although Mr. Annan is unlikely to be directly implicated in any personal corruption [in the UN's much-criticised oil-for-food programme in Iraq], some of his staff could well be. As the overall boss, he could be culpable of negligence at least. ...

More troubling could be his son's links to Cotecna, a Swiss-based company that monitored imports of humanitarian aid into Iraq. ...

Meanwhile, ... there are grumbles from America about the UN's alleged mishandling of relief for the tsunami disaster. Wrangles [continue] ... about the UN's role in Darfur, [and] charges of rape and sexual abuse of children by UN peacekeepers in Congo ...

This week [Mr. Annan] announced that Mark Malloch Brown, the media-savvy head of the [UNDP] ... is to take over as his chief of staff ... But he will need to draw on all Mr. Malloch Brown's presentational skills if he is to mount an effective defense to the Volcker report."

"Kofi creamed: The secretary-general is under increasing pressure to quit", The Economist, January 8th, 2005, pp. 44-45.

" ... [Secretary-General Kofi] Annan is doing the right thing by planning further management changes ... Major shakeups are needed in critical areas like peacekeeping and refugee assistance.

.... Helping the poor and desperate ... demands strengthening the management of peacekeeping operations. Some kind of appalling nadir was reached last month with reports that members of an international contingent of UN peacekeepers in Congo had been raping the young girls they had been sent to protect. Annan and his staff must spare no effort to see that these crimes are prosecuted and punished

Sweeping changes are also needed at the UN refugee agency ... Not only has the current high commissioner, Ruud Lubbers, performed uninspiringly, but his relations with his staff have been embittered by a charge of sexual harassment. Although ... the complainant withdrew formal charges and Lubbers says he intends to finish his term, which ends in December. He should be asked to leave now.

Given the unremitting hostility of the Bush administration, the survival of the United Nations as an effective organization cannot be taken for granted. Annan will have to challenge the self-protective bureaucracy more radically than it has ever been challenged."

"Housecleaning at the UN", International Herald Tribune, January 12, 2005.

"The man appointed to oversee a management shake-up at the United Nations has warned that it must brace itself for wide-ranging reform ...

'The crisis is still building,' [Mark] Malloch Brown said. 'It's very hard after [last] week's revelations to believe there isn't going to be some pretty tough stuff on management.'

Paul [Volcker's group] last week criticized the UN for its limited response to internal audits showing irregularities in the \$65 billion [Iraq oil-for-food] programme.

... Mr. Malloch Brown also warned that it was no longer only the institution's traditional, conservative critics that were calling for a shake-up.

Mr. Volcker also claimed the volume of allegations surrounding the former [head of the Iraq] programme, Benon Sevan, suggested there must have been some 'monkey business.'

At the end of January Mr. Volcker will issue his preliminary findings. 'That may be a transition point', Mr. Malloch Brown said ...

'It should be a mainstream preoccupation of every government share holder of the UN.' ,,,

A reshuffle of Mr. Annan's cabinet would take place within six weeks, maybe sooner, he said. ...

... The management shuffle would be followed by 'human accountability' reforms addressing other recent scandals."

Mark Turner, "UN warned to get ready for sweeping reforms", Financial Times (UK), **January 17, 2005**.

"[In my view,] ... the UN is constitutionally incapable of conducting any operation efficiently or honestly. 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. ... the UN is beyond reform until membership is restricted to civilized powers that practice democracy and the rule of law and hold their rulers responsible for their actions."

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

[Note: Mr. Johnson is an 'eminent British historian and author.']

"The General Assembly ...

6. Emphasizes the importance of establishing real, effective and efficient mechanisms for responsibility and accountability:

7. Regrets that despite previous information provided by the Secretary-General on the establishment of accountability mechanisms, including the accountability panel, such mechanisms are not in place, thereby affecting the efficient and effective functioning of the Organization:"

"Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/218B and 54/244: Report of the Fifth Committee", UN document A/59/649 of **22 December 2004**, and "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/218B and 54/244", General Assembly resolution 59/272 of **23 December 2004**, paras. 6-7. [emphasis added]

"Today I shall be presenting my report, "In Larger Freedom" to the United Nations General Assembly. ...

I wanted to remind the governments of the world, who put me in my job and to whom I am accountable, that they are in the UN to represent not themselves but their peoples, who expect them to work for the [UN Charter's] ... aims

These aims can be summarized as peace, human rights, justice and development ...

Of course, the UN often falls far short of these noble aspirations, since it reflects the realities of world politics ...

The UN ... can be a much more effective instrument if its governing body, the General Assembly, is better organized and gives clearer directives to us in the secretariat, with the flexibility to carry them out, and holds us clearly accountable for how we do it. ...

I shall today propose decisions in all ... areas, and challenge world leaders to respond with action at the UN summit in September. ...

... **If world leaders rise to their responsibilities**, the rebirth and **renewal of the UN will be just beginning** - and with it, renewed hope for a freer, fairer, and safer world."

Kofi Annan, "An aspiration to a larger freedom", Financial Times (UK), **March 21, 2005**.
[emphasis added.]

"C. The Secretariat

184. A capable and effective Secretariat is indispensable to the work of the United Nations. ... In 1997 I launched a package of structural reforms ... and followed up with a further set of managerial and technical improvements in 2002 ...

185. ... But these reforms do not go far enough. If the United Nations is to be truly effective the Secretariat will have to be completely transformed.

186. ... The Secretary-General and his or her managers must be given the discretion, the means, the authority and the expert assistance that they need to manage [the] organization ... Similarly, Member States must have the oversight tools they need to hold the Secretary-General truly accountable for his/her strategy and leadership.

190. ... I therefore request the General Assembly to provide me with the authority and resources to pursue a one-time staff buyout so as to refresh and realign the staff to meet current needs.

191. ... I ask Member States to work with me to undertake a comprehensive review of the budget and human resources rules under which we operate.

192. Thirdly, we must continue to improve the transparency and accountability of the Secretariat. ..."

"In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" Report of the Secretary-General", UN document A/59/2005 of **21 March 2005**.

"Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette today unveiled a series of reforms taken by the United Nations in response to criticisms of UN management from entities appointed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and from the world body's own staff.

'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 Ms. Fréchette.

Noting that reform has been on the UN agenda since 1997, it said, 'The UN must take real action now, where it is in the Secretary-General's authority to do so directly, **particularly in the critical areas of management, oversight and accountability'** ...

The major criticisms have come from the ... [Volcker group examining the Iraq Oil-for-Food programme, which] raised questions about the selection, briefing, oversight and accountability of senior management. ...

'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.

Useful sources

(Note: informally assembled by IO Watch, roughly ranked from "most useful" on down, and subject to change as new sources are added)

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

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