

SECURITY COUNCIL (UPDATED)

Chronological quotes

"Over 40 years, thinking about the purposes and justifications of the U.N. has evolved. the U.N. was [originally expected] to be the anchor or a new order of international law. The failure of the U.N. to fulfill this role is so obvious that **everyone now expects the U.N. to ignore wars, invasions, and acts of terror except in the most selective of cases.**

Which course is more likely to deter future international lawlessness: appeal to paper institutions or self-enforcement? ... handling the problem over to the U.N. is simply a way of tabling it.

... Camp David shows how utterly dispensable the U.N. is in its last 'peacekeeping' role. Peacekeeping troops can only remain in place at the sufferance of both belligerents. Belligerents that want to make war can get rid of the U.N. And belligerents that want to make peace do not need it. They can agree on any peacekeeping force they want. Indian troops police northern Sri Lanka, Syrian troops police Beirut, and a force put together by the United States polices Sinai. Lebanon shows that you can have blue helmets without peace. Sinai shows that you can have peace without blue helmets."

Charles Krauthammer, "Let it sink: Why the U.S. should bail out of the U.N.", The New Republic, **August 24, 1987**, pp. 18-23 [19-20].

"With the passing of the cold war, hard cases linger, of which Yugoslavia is currently the most conspicuous. Now, however, they are more likely to be brought out into the light of day and assigned to the United Nations.

There is visible, too, an intention to make virtue out of the very process of international diplomacy.

Much is said, and in some rapture, to the effect that finally the United Nations is doing these days what its high-minded founders had in mind in establishing a body to keep the international peace.

Still, **in Bosnia the United Nation's name and prestige adorn a rank political deal.** It leaves much Serbian aggression unreversed and unpunished and much Muslim agony unrequited.

It is not some abstract disembodied 'UN' that has brought the organization to this tortured pass. It is the collective decisions of the UN membership, especially the top dogs.

It will take time to tote up the costs of using the United Nations as a dumping ground for its members' political mistakes. What number of small and not so small nations are going to redouble their determination not to have to depend on the United Nations for their ultimate security?"

Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Using the United Nations as a dumping ground", International Herald Tribune, **March 2, 1993**.

"The idea behind the [New World Order] -- an idea never explicitly formulated, but powerfully present -- was that the United Nations, with the disappearance of the Soviet veto, had become the chosen instrument of a global Pax Americana.

.... But the United Nations does not apply anything. It can only supply blessing to whatever

action its member nations may be prepared to undertake. And the member nations will be reluctant to risk the lives of their people, in cases where their own vital interests are not seen to be involved. The New World Order is an illusion.

And it is a dangerous illusion. because the world is now much more dangerous than it was.

The best we can do is to begin to grapple seriously with the two largest of the threats which hang over us. On the nuclear front, the most urgent task is to crush the terrorist organizations before these acquire the means to destroy us. This is mainly a matter for national governments.

If the population explosion is to be fought at last, the theatre of the United Nations must be used, since it is largely a matter of mobilizing public information and spreading information."

Conor Cruise O'Brien, "R.I.P. New World Order (1990-1993)", Sunday Telegraph (UK), **June 13, 1993.** [A very prescient observation. The United Nations did "ride to the rescue", but only 11 years later, and even then with only a toothless resolution.]

"It is hard to believe that the United Nations -- or any imaginable new structure -- will produce the reliable machinery of judgment, decision and action that so many people now expect. men of goodwill have longed to believe that [in time] the world as a whole would have what all civilized states now possess - a legal system to decide what is right and wrong, an executive to shape the law, a police force to apply it.

.... these things are possible in civilized states because [their citizens feel a sense of common identity]. This has not happened to the world at large. ...

.... the gaps that separate different segments of humanity are still many, and wide. As long as that is true, there can be no world rule of law.

Is nothing to be done ... except when the UN assembles its infrequent consensus? Of course something has to be done. ... But if those who believe in freedom never fight for other people's right to be free, the world will never be civilized enough to have a sense of identity [and to] ever have a world government."

Brian Beedham, "The world can't always wait for the UN", International Herald Tribune, **July 1, 1993.**

"... UN officials, military men, and diplomats sense that **the machinery of international action is not working [to meet the challenge of new peacekeeping roles]**. Therese Gastaut, a senior [UN public information] official ... sums up its task very well. It is, she says, the only organization to keep so many issues together 'in a chaotic harmony.'

[Political pressure is transforming the UN] ... 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.' ...

'It seems to me that the identity of the UN, which started as a means to deal with conflicts between governments, has not been properly questioned,' argues Sir Brian Urquhart, 'and 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. ... the maintenance of 'chaotic harmony' awaits its transforming genius. Will he, or she, step forward?"

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

"What has happened in Gorazde in Bosnia was not simply a failure of the international community. It was a demonstration that the international community is a phantom.

Even today, were [the Security Council to agree] on defending the remaining safe havens in

Bosnia, they would inevitably fall into disagreement about how to do it, or what to do afterward.

[There is] an important body of international law and inspired international agreement in a great many technical and regulatory areas of common international interest.

.... liberal internationalism [assumes] that enlightened people agree on the values that should govern international society [However,] what makes a better world is a matter of moral conviction and philosophy of history, on which agreement is limited even among the democracies.

The fiasco is apparent to all The new world order thus reveals itself to be the old one in which individual nations pursue their national well-being, cooperating in areas of clear mutual advantage but governed on all matters involving risk and sacrifice by national or domestic political interest alone. This is an unpleasant reality to face, but such is life."

William Pfaff, "There is no world community", International Herald Tribune, April 20, 1994.

"In [eastern Rwanda, I went to with two Canadian officers] to a church, where [many] Tutsis were slaughtered in 1994

[In a parish classroom] At least fifty mostly decomposed cadavers covered the floor, wadded in clothing, their belongings strewn about and smashed.

They were dead. They will be with me forever, I suspect, which was why I had felt compelled to come look

The killers killed all day ... and at night went off to eat behind the church, roasting whole stolen cows in big fires, and then in the morning, still drunk on banana beer ... they went back and killed again. For [several] days they worked like that. So I had to imagine a lot, even as I entered the room and stepped carefully between the remains.

Standing there, I heard a crunch. The old Canadian colonel stumbled [and did] not notice that his foot had rolled on a skull and broken it. I felt a small but keen anger at this man. Then I heard another crunch and felt a vibration underfoot. I had stepped on one, too."

Philip Gourevich, "Among the dead", Harper's Magazine, February 1998, pp. 24-26, from an essay in the Winter issue of *Doubletake* (US).

[Note: Mr. Gourevich subsequently wrote *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: Stories from Rwanda*, Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, New York, 1998, and Picador, London, 1999, Winner of the Guardian (UK) First Book Award.]

"For the first decade since the Cold War's end, the atmosphere in **the United Nations Security Council** was decidedly improved

But then the initial optimism turned sour During the past 12 months, **it has been particularly dismaying to watch as the council has been bypassed, defied and abused.**

.... To fix it, two key areas must be addressed urgently.

First, is the veto, which has been abused by permanent members in defense of their interests, client states and ideological concerns

Arms control is the second area.

The Council is the custodian of non-proliferation.

[But its authority] is deeply challenged when objective cases of treaty violation [such as North Korea and Iraq] end up being judged on a narrow, subjective political basis by veto-wielding permanent members.

[If this becomes] the council's standard way of dealing with weapons proliferation, it would amount to a profound and, I suspect, mortal failure.

If the permanent members could make **reforms** in the area of arms control and veto power, it **might help the Security Council get over its 'annus horribilis'** --- as well as serve the interests of the international community in the 21st century."

Richard Butler, "United Nations: The Security Council isn't performing", International

Herald Tribune, August 6, 1999.

[Note: Mr. Butler was Australia's permanent representative to the UN, then chairman of the special body charged with disarming Iraq, and is the author of The Greatest Threat: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Growing Crisis of Global Security, Public Affairs, New York, 2000.]

"A long-awaited internal investigation ... [concludes] that the United Nations appeased and unwittingly abetted the Bosnian Serb military in 1995 as it carried out the worst mass murder in Europe since World War II.

The 155-page report is a chilling play-by-play of one of the UN's darkest episodes.

The blame for the fall of **Srebrenica** was not the UN's alone, according to the report. It says the 15-nation **UN Security Council was the chief architect of a policy that was doomed to fail from the start.** The outgunned, lightly armed Dutch peacekeepers also come under criticism for failing to [fight] or to warn of the enormous danger facing the enclave.

But the report reserves its harshest criticism for the UN leadership

The use of force, not diplomacy, is the only appropriate way to confront a determined aggressor, the report says, a lesson that was [however] repeated

'In Bosnia and Kosovo, the international community tried to reach a negotiated settlement with an unscrupulous and murderous regime' it says. 'In both instances, it required the use of force to bring a halt to the planned and systematic killing and expulsion of civilians.'

Colum Lynch, "UN admits it appeased Bosnian Serbs in '95", International Herald Tribune, November 16, 1999.

"Secretary-General Kofi Annan has made an extraordinary apology for the United Nations' failure to prevent the massacre of nearly 8,000 Bosnian Muslims by local Serbs at Srebrenica in the summer of 1995. It is an accusation against the underlying UN policy of 'impartiality and non-violence', which Mr. Annan calls a 'totally improper philosophy in the Bosnian conflict.'

This is something new, this re-examination of what has been done, or rather not done, and the admission of a terrible mistake.

The candor is startling in an international context usually given to self-serving justification, hypocrisy, and therefore a habit of cynicism, which pervades and undermines the whole idea of maintaining peace. The familiar excuses are pared away, and the unwillingness to react to impending tragedy is laid bare.

The Secretary-General does not seek to apply the lesson directly to other areas, but he **is advancing a much more robust, active, interventionist kind of peacekeeping** than the United Nations has normally known.

At the least, if the report does not bring a change in policy for protecting victims of atrocities, it is a big breakthrough for simple honesty. **We can hope this is a start.**"

Flora Lewis, "A strong blow to hypocrisy at the United Nations," International Herald Tribune, November 19, 1999.

"It is not easy to admit the truth of Srebrenica, the Bosnian town where thousands of Muslim men were executed and hundreds buried alive ... But in its report on Monday, the United Nations accepts its share of the blame.

The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, should be commended for this stark admission. The question, however, is whether his honesty will spur bolder peacekeeping in the future.

.... In the recent case of East Timor, the council supported the idea of a UN referendum on independence but refused to send troops to deter a bloodbath that was widely predicted.

Sometimes the United Nations' failure is built into its structure. Where a permanent member of the Security Council opposes intervention, no action will be authorized -- hence the current UN silence

about war crimes in Chechnya, and its early impotence on Kosovo. But **in cases where the Security Council does approve action, it is fair to insist that it be serious.** The UN member states need to embrace force to secure peace; they need to shove neutrality aside and denounce evil in order to combat it."

"The UN apologizes", *The Washington Post*, International Herald Tribune, **November 19, 1999.**

"American and British officials have accused the presidents of **Liberia and Burkina Faso** of taking a personal role in **trading arms for diamonds in violation of a UN arms embargo.** They also said the two presidents had helped Sierra Leone rebels to continue fighting a brutal civil war.

A British diplomat said Monday at a UN hearing on the role of diamonds in the Sierra Leone war that Mr. Taylor had personally taken command of rebel forces fighting there against UN peacekeepers and that he has in recent weeks sent arms to the rebels and taken smuggled diamonds in payment.

He also made unusually specific allegations against President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, saying that in return for diamonds Mr. Compaore has sent mercenaries from Burkina Faso to fight with rebels in Sierra Leone against UN peacekeepers ...

Diplomats from Liberia and Burkina Faso denied the allegations, demanding that hard evidence be presented.

Monie Captan, Liberia's foreign minister, categorically denied that Mr. Taylor had been trading arms for diamonds this year, although he acknowledged that 'in the past' the president had dealt with the rebels. "

Blaine Harden, "2 presidents accused of diamond dealing: U.S. and Britain say Burkina Faso and Liberia are fueling Africa strife", International Herald Tribune, **December 21, 1999.**

"A damning report issued Thursday by an international panel of experts **holds both United Nations officials and leading member countries, primarily the United States, responsible for failing to prevent or stop the genocide** in which hundreds of thousands of Rwandans were slaughtered in 1994.

.... the leader of the investigation, Ingvar Carlsson, a former Swedish prime minister, said it was 'hard to understand' why the Security Council decimated the peacekeeping force in Rwanda, reducing it to a few hundred from 2,500 troops when the genocide began, and then increased the force to 5,500 when the weeks of massacres were over.

'Information received by a United Nations mission that plans are being made to exterminate any group of people requires an immediate and determined response,' the report said.

The panel found that a cable from [General Romeo Dallaire of Canada] in January 1994 warning of Hutu plans for massacres of Tutsi was not given to Secretary-General [Butros Butros-Ghali], whom activists in Europe have attempted to charge with genocide.

[That cable] has become the center of accusations that the United Nations could have predicted genocide and did nothing."

Barbara Crossette, "UN bungled intervention in Rwanda, inquiry says", International Herald Tribune, **December 17, 1999.**

"[The] release by the United Nations of results of an internal investigation of its July 1995 conduct at Srebrenica, in Bosnia, was remarkable.

The report concludes that 'through error, misjudgment, and an inability to recognize the scope of evil confronting us, we failed to do our part to save the people of Srebrenica from the Serb campaign of mass murder.' It is a handsome apology, if useless to the murdered. It must surely provoke changed attitudes and bureaucratic practices in the UN peacekeeping apparatus. It vindicates what the press and engaged observers of the Bosnian situation were desperately saying at the time.

Kofi Annan said in September that 'unless the Security Council is restored to its preeminent position as the sole source of legitimacy on the use of force, we are on a dangerous path to anarchy.' He

is mistaken. That is the path we were on when the United Nations failed Srebrenica.

Nations have moral existence. The 'international community' does not. Nations remain the ultimate agents of moral conscience."

William Pfaff, "A valuable UN apology, but nations were mainly at fault", International Herald Tribune, -- **December, 1999.**

"**Kofi Annan** was brave to set up an **inquiry [into the Rwanda genocide in 1994]**. The report does indeed show that Mr. Annan acted as an ultra-cautious bureaucrat, who urged his staff to stick strictly to their mandate in the midst of murder, asked for information not action and, worst of all, failed to follow up a crucial telegram that gave warning of impending planned genocide.

[However,] the blame is widespread.

Mr. Annan has apologized to the Rwandan people for the UN's failures. Should he have resigned? He would certainly have set a new standard in international public life had he done so. But his resignation alone would not have been right. First, several other individuals were also culpable. Second, he has admitted publicly to his errors and is [seeking agreement on new intervention principles for the future].

[The reactions of the Secretariat and Security Council] seem at best like incompetence, at worst like callous indifference. But the crucial failure of political will was not the fault of UN officials [but] most of all [that of three] permanent members of the Security Council -- America, Britain and France."

"Rwanda revisited: A look back at the biggest bloodstain on the world's conscience in the 1990s", The Economist, **December 23, 1999**, pp. 5-6.

"An **explosive report on how sanctions against a rebel army in Angola are being broken**, and by whom, has provoked **a heated debate in the Security Council**. A dozen or more African and European nations challenged the investigators' methods and evidence.

The report, by 10 international experts working for a [Council committee], implicated two African presidents as well as the government of Bulgaria and one of the world's largest diamond exchanges, in Antwerp, Belgium, in the methods that rebels have used to smuggle Angolan diamonds to buy weapons to sustain decades of civil war.

.... the panel [organizer] intends to press the Security Council to put sanctions on countries or leaders involved in the illegal arms and diamond trade, as recommended by the panel.

Some delegations are wary of what they see as a trend in the United Nations toward interfering in countries' internal affairs.

All countries named in the allegations denied the allegations against them or tried to explain But in almost every case, representatives pledged to cooperate in closing loopholes if any did exist."

Barbara Crossette, "Angola report stirs up UN: Inquiry into sanctions violations raises hackles", International Herald Tribune, **March 17, 2000.**

"For almost a decade [Foday Sankoh's rebels have terrorized Sierra Leone], killing, raping, and hacking the arms and legs off innocent people.

[Yet] under last year's U.S.-blessed Lome Peace accord, Mr. Sankoh [was] granted amnesty, a share of Sierra Leone's diamond wealth and positions in government.

Mr. Sankoh chafes at even these undeservedly generous terms and [has engaged in] further thuggish deeds.

This violent treachery [challenges the wisdom of bargaining with him] and the viability of UN peacekeeping in Africa as a whole. If [one warlord can block] the operation in tiny Sierra Leone, what hope is there for the mission envisioned to help pacify Congo? Sierra Leone may be the last chance to show that international action still offers some hope to ravaged 'failed states' in Africa, despite awful failures in Liberia, Somalia and Rwanda.

.... The United Nations must recognize that **half measures will not do this time**. Either the mission to salvage this brutalized little country is not vital to international peace and security, in which case it should cease before more peacekeepers' lives are lost, or [it needs to act swiftly], with a force to match."

"Sierra Leone and the UN: No half measures", *The Washington Post*, International Herald Tribune, **May 6, 2000**.

"With one United Nations peacekeeping force under violent attack in Sierra Leone, the international organization moved ahead Thursday with plans to dispatch another to Congo. The juxtaposition clearly suggests **a need to improve the planning and execution of such UN missions to ensure that peacekeeping forces do not become casualties in the conflicts they are supposed to help end.**

... **The UN's mistakes in Sierra Leone should not be repeated in Congo**, which agreed to accept a UN force of 5,500 troops to monitor a tenuous ceasefire there. But an outside force should be called upon to maintain peace, not to make it. A mission of this kind is appropriate only when a realistic peace deal is respected by all sides and a cease fire has been established. An international force must then be given the financial resources, manpower and disciplined command needed to protect itself and effectively carry out its mandate."

"Sierra Leone and the UN: Learn the lessons", *The New York Times*, International Herald Tribune, **May 6, 2000**.

"The Sierra Leone fiasco calls into question the will of world powers to stop atrocities in distant lands and highlights a basic flaw in UN peacekeeping missions, whose soldiers are often ill-equipped and ill-prepared for actual fighting.

Since the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to UN peacekeepers **peacekeeping missions have failed in Rwanda, Angola, Somalia, and, for a lengthy period**, Bosnia. Now, [even with the Sierra Leone crisis, the UN] is being asked to send more troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where 250 peacekeepers were killed from 1961 to 1963, still the highest number of fatalities ever suffered by UN peacekeepers.

If [diplomacy] fails, then what? UN peacekeepers, despite their name mostly monitor peace. They carry guns they are never meant to fire. When warring factions violate peace accords and begin to fight, then UN peacekeepers turn into spectators and, often, victims. Since 1948, 1,631 peacekeepers have lost their lives, with the biggest losses coming in Congo, the former Yugoslavia, and Lebanon.

'Peacekeepers go in as a symbolic presence' [a] New York diplomat said. When one of the parties [starts fighting again] then the peacekeepers are in trouble."

Steven Mufson, "West African fiasco renews doubts on UN missions", International Herald Tribune, **May 6, 2000**.

"Just before a United Nations Security Council delegation arrived [in Kinshasa, Congo] to [consider] sending 5,500 peacekeepers to Congo, violence erupted in [Sierra Leone] [where] at least 92 UN officials are being held hostage [despite the signing of] a peace accord last July.

Those events immediately raised **doubts about a peacekeeping mission in Congo in particular, and in Africa in general.**

The current trouble in Sierra Leone seems to [be] largely because the rebels were never really interested in peace.

And so it is a fair question to ask whether the warring parties in Congo are really interested in peace.

Here in Kinshasa, the capital, the signs have not been encouraging. The government of President Laurent Kabila has continually [obstructed certain visits] of about 100 UN monitors

.... there is pressure [on other countries fighting in Congo], particularly Zimbabwe, to stop their

war efforts. But all are busy profiting from Congo's vast mineral resources.

[A knowledgeable former Congolese official] says 'Rwanda and Uganda, or the government's allies, Zimbabwe and Angola -- all of them have been enriching themselves on our diamonds. So it is not in their interest to stop the war.'

Norimitsu Onishi, "Events in Sierra Leone make UN intervention in Congo less likely", International Herald Tribune, **May 8, 2000**.

"The United Nations **[peacekeeping efforts] in Sierra Leone have failed in part because the isolated and impoverished nation of Burkina Faso has provided a key lifeline** in the rebels' procurement of weapons, intelligence sources and diplomats say.

.... Angola's UNITA rebels and the Liberian government of Charles Taylor, both under international arms embargoes, are also recipients, according to sources and a recent hard-hitting report to the UN Security Council.

These groups' payoffs and friendships with often-ignored countries are a key obstacle to finding lasting peace, diplomats say.

'That is what makes it so difficult' said a long-time diplomat in the region. 'You are touching the lucrative livelihood, not just of rebel groups but of the states that support them. That reality should give us all pause.'

The Sierra Leonean and Angolan rebels make millions of dollars a year by selling diamonds.

In Congo, where UN troops [are preparing] to monitor another fragile cease fire, all sides finance their activities through the mining of diamonds and gold.

Burkina Faso often, for a price, signs papers saying the weapons are being brought by its government, the sources said."

Douglas Farah, "Defying embargo, Burkina Faso ships arms to African rebels", International Herald Tribune, **May 8, 2000**.

"Nine days ago, **a Security Council delegation went to Africa to assess] small hopes for lasting peace**

A lot was at stake, they thought: the political and economic stability of at least six countries; the fabulous wealth of Democratic Republic of the Congo itself and the future of United Nations peacekeeping.

[When they returned to New York] Congo had all but receded to the background. But broader concerns about Africa and its evolving political leadership had mushroomed.

[A US official assessed] the costs of African wars: 'Of the 4 to 5 million people who have died in communal and regional conflicts worldwide over the past decade, more than 3 million have died on this continent. The most obvious threat to peace comes from the barrel of a gun or the blade of a machete But insecurity can also come from corrupt politicians; it can come from crime lords and narcotics syndicates. It can come from diamond mines as well as land mines.'

.... Buffeted by events, **several of the diplomats spoke at they headed home about the profound unease they felt about Africa's future, given the demonstrated willfulness of key leaders.**"

Barbara Crossette, "A continent is seething: No remedy for Africa", International Herald Tribune, **May 11, 2000**.

"After nearly a yearlong lull in fighting, two of the world's poorest countries, **Eritrea and Ethiopia**, are at war again. It is hard to think of a more pointless and wasteful international conflict.

Some 270,000 people have been displaced by the fighting. The war compounds the danger of a looming famine in southeast Ethiopia

The leaders of the two countries bear responsibility for perpetuating the war. They are both able men and erstwhile allies

But they have been obstinate in defense of their own narrow agendas and heedless of the suffering that the war has caused. [Ethiopia] began this latest offensive just two days after a United Nations Security Council team failed to bridge minute differences in a proposed peace accord.

On Monday **the Security Council discussed an American proposal to impose a long overdue arms embargo on both countries.** That may be difficult to clear with Russia and China, both of which are profiting from arms sales to the impoverished antagonists. But Washington should pursue [such pressures] to make clear to the two leaders that international legitimacy and development assistance depend on good faith negotiations and a cessation of military adventures."

Ian Fischer, "A ruinous war", International Herald Tribune, **May 15, 2000.**

"People are literally dancing in the streets in Sierra Leone. Foday Sankoh, leader of the brutal [rebels], was captured by pro-government forces on Wednesday and turned over to British forces. [His] soldiers had violated a cease-fire and were holding as many as 340 United Nations peacekeepers hostage. His arrest offers hope for Sierra Leone after its nightmarish nine-year civil war.

.... Yet as recently as Tuesday, the Clinton administration seemed to be encouraging another deal with Mr. Sankoh.

A hard line entails risk. Back in 1997 Mr. Sankoh was captured and sentenced to death [which provoked a rebel invasion] of Freetown that a Nigerian intervention force [repelled]. Under international pressure [President] Kabbah consented to release Mr. Sankoh and sign the cease-fire deal that Mr. Sankoh shredded earlier this month.

But that history suggests that nothing is to be gained by giving Mr. Sankoh yet another chance.

.... Mr. Sankoh's front has murdered, maimed, robbed and enslaved thousands of Sierra Leoneans, many of them children. It has done all of this for the sake of no coherent political agenda -- in pursuit only of illicit enrichment. **Negotiations with these thugs is not the way to peace.**"

"Sankoh in custody", *The Washington Post*, International Herald Tribune, **May 19, 2000.**

"The women peer tentatively at the massive bound volume, studying photographs of jewelry, shoes, socks, There is no art here, merely suffering.

They are searching for some evidence of their loved ones, missing and believed dead in the massacre of Srebrenica, the 1995 murder by the Bosnian Serbs of up to 7,000 men. who thought they were under the protection of the United Nations.

[The Red Cross financed the book to help] forensic scientists ... make positive identifications, [and because, for most families] 'not knowing is worse than knowing the worst.'

Srebrenica has become a metaphor for many big topics: the worst atrocity of the Bosnian war; the empty promises of a West in love with its own moralizing; **the bureaucratic, murderous failure of a United Nations trying to make peace without fighting;** the cowardice of Dutch troops serving with the United Nations who let Bosnian Serbs overrun Srebrenica and watched them march the men away.

.... Of the 20,000 people reported missing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Red Cross has been able to resolve the fate of only 3,000, even five years years [after the war ended.]"

Steven Erlanger, "A book confirms Bosnians' worst fears," International Herald Tribune, **July 31, 2000.**

"[For a decade, world politicians have marked the cold war's end but act as if it still exists]. In 2001, they may at last have to face up to [the radical changes].

[First] New powers are [emerging, as] are new areas of potential conflict ...

[Second is] the break-up of some of the countries which [the cold war's] ice unnaturally held together.

.... The global tally of separate countries -- 74 in 1946, around 190 now -- could [sometime soon approach] the 300s.

[Third] ... **the cold war also artificially prolonged the old definition of 'sovereignty'**, which

said that what went on inside a country's borders, no matter how dictatorially brutal, was nobody else's business. [but now modern media and new technology give the world awareness of what a dictator is doing, and] the means of trying to stop him.

.... **The rules of legitimate intervention have still to be clearly spelled out** so that [ordinary people ... can understand and support them]. But the dangers are smaller than the possible outcome -- the end of dictatorial immunity, the worldwide elimination of the old baronial principle"

Brian Beedham, "It really is a new world now", The world in 2001, *The Economist*, 2000, p. 33.

"There was always an air of unreality about the UN Security Council debate on Iraq. ...

Why would the Security Council spend two months deciding to authorize the use of force if its decision was not binding? How can the council's decision bind Iraq but not the United States? ...

... It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the charter provisions governing use of force are simply no longer regarded as binding international law.

... Since 1945, dozens of member states have engaged in well over 100 inter-state conflicts that have killed millions of people.

This record of violation is legally significant. ... A treaty can lose its binding effect if a sufficient number of parties engage in conduct that is at odds with the constraints of the treaty.

Of course, it remains politically useful to act with the backing of the Security Council. But the charter was supposed to be about more than politics.

The urgent issue today is **the breakdown once again of international rules of force**. Until that problem is addressed, the Security Council's deliberations will continue to seem surreal."

Michael J. Glennon, "The rule of law is breaking down", International Herald Tribune, November 22, 2002.

"The multilateralists have failed dismally to make a case for their approach to solving the world's problems. The truth is that the institutions and procedures of multilateralism don't work very well. They rarely have. And it isn't just the Bush administration, with its unilateral impulses, that thinks so.

Despite the French efforts to make the U.N. an arbiter of legitimacy in global conflicts, it has played no such role in its history. Indeed, France itself has been a serial preemptor in French-speaking Africa for decades, with no by-your-leave from the U.N. It has 3,000 troops in the Ivory Coast today, protecting its economic interests.

The U.N., for its part, was paralyzed throughout the entire Cold War because of the veto power of the five permanent members

The European Union, too, failed to act. At [Davos in February 2003 many condemned] America for what many considered an immoral war. The Grand Mufti of Bosnia reminded the mostly European audience that "[it and the world] stood by for two years, and 10,000 of my people died."

Multilateralism that leads to paralysis is not inherently moral; any more than multilateralism in service to good is necessarily immoral."

Bruce Nussbaum, "Building a new multilateral world", Business Week International, April 21, 2003, p. 34.

"The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, recently called for **Security Council reform** What are the chances of meaningful change?

The Council's flaws have long been apparent. It is secretive, dominated by the Permanent Five [of its 15 members], and weighted toward the industrialized world. The existence of vetoes irritates many member states.

A larger Council with more countries from the developing world would widely be considered more legitimate. But decision-making is already tough with 15 delegations and only five potential vetoes. Could a results-oriented culture that is beginning to emerge in the Council survive the addition of a dozen

new members and several additional vetoes?

Most members do not want further vetoes.

More broadly, none of the Permanent Five has pressed strongly for Council reform, while Russia and China openly oppose it.

Most members have developed schemes for reform aimed to maximize their own access to the Council or to favor the status quo.

Although the logic of evolving international relations should, some day, produce a better tailored Council in which veto threats become largely academic, ***there's not much energy in this debate today***, even after the Council's shocking performance on Iraq."

David M. Malone, "Changing the Security Council: Calls for UN reform face many vetoes", International Herald Tribune, **September 22, 2003**.

[Note: Mr. Malone is a former Canadian ambassador to the UN, and president of the International Peace Academy in New York.]

"During [the 1990s I spent some time] in stately European palaces with diplomats, parliamentarians and multilateral men who used the word 'modalities' a lot, and we'd discuss the post-Cold-War international order.

Far from mastering events, the poor souls found history moving in unfathomable directions. Their careful negotiations often had nothing to do with reality.

[The UN ***deliberations on reconstruction of Iraq***] ***face a series of tortuous problems***: it's neighborhood building in all its granular specificity.

But the talk at the Security Council is 8,000 miles above all that. There are lofty and vapid formulations about moving from the 'logic of occupation' to the 'logic of sovereignty.'

The more you look at the Security Council negotiations, the more they resemble one of those horrible divorces in which the children get ignored because the parents are caught up in the psychodrama of each other's perfidies.

.... we need to focus on serving the Iraqis first, second and last. We don't need to get caught up in a distracting round of lofty debates among the world's Metternichs, who treat the Iraqi people as pawns in their great game power struggles."

David Brooks, "All the lofty policy talk ignores Iraq's needs", International Herald Tribune, **September 24, 2003**.

"Just as the nuclear standoff between the U.S. and the Soviet Union defined an age, so too may the emerging era of [nuclear weapons] proliferation.

.... the 'axiom of proliferation' is still operative -- as long as any state possesses nuclear weapons (or any weapon of mass destruction), others will seek to acquire them.

The problem is that the ultimate [preventive] power is supposed to be the UN Security Council. And as [former UN chief weapons inspector] Richard Butler concedes, ***'deep concern about the Security Council's unreliability' in enforcing its nonproliferation treaties is 'reasonable.'***

Despite the UN's inadequacies, [some think] now is precisely the time for the Security Council to show it has teeth on this, the most pressing issue it faces. [But] If, despite a UN-ordered embargo, North Korea or Iran continues to flout the nuclear nonproliferation treaty (NPT), what then? Does the UN accede to [or the US undertake] military action to defang the violator? If [they don't], it would mean the end of arms control as we know it.

What other options are there? Anyone have any ideas? If not, last one into the bomb shelter shut the door, thank you."

Bill Powell, "The end of the world: Is there any way to stop the spread of nuclear weapons", Fortune, **October 27, 2003**, p. 72.

"The Security Council has unanimously approved a resolution to keep chemical, biological and nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists. ...

First proposed in a UN General Assembly speech by resident George W. Bush in September, the resolution extends the reach of nonproliferation treaty power beyond states to 'nonstate actors,' meaning terror groups. ...

The 15-to-0 vote followed months of negotiating and redrafting to win over one reluctant permanent member [China] and several non-permanent ones [the last holdout being Pakistan.]

The resolution compels all 191 UN members to draw up legislation and strengthen laws to prevent terrorists and black market agents from being able to 'manufacture, acquire, possess, develop, transport or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery.'

The measure asks countries to report on their compliance within six months, and it establishes Security Council monitoring for two years.

No specific enforcement power was included in the resolution, though UN rules allow for sanctions against non-cooperating countries.

Joining the United States as drafters of the resolution were France, the Philippines, Romania, Russia and Spain."

Warren Hoge, "Security Council passes ban on weapons for terrorists," International Herald Tribune, **May 2, 2004**.

[Note: The effort is certainly a good thing. But the achingly slow response, and of course 9/11 and all subsequent tragedies), and the complexity of getting all 191 Member States to eventually act on this complex matter (especially since some of the weakest states are the most vulnerable to terrorist activities) do underscore doubts about Security Council ability to provide global leadership responses to urgent 21st century problems.]

"U.S. allies defended the legal basis for the invasion of Iraq and their military roles there Thursday after Secretary General Kofi Annan of the United Nations reignited the debate over its legitimacy. ...

In an interview ... Annan said the invaders had needed permission from the United Nations Security Council. From the point of view of the UN charter, 'it was illegal', Annan said.

Since the Gulf crisis in 1990-1991, the Security Council had adopted a number of resolutions ... the last in November 2002 ... warning Baghdad of 'serious consequences' if the country was found in breach of earlier resolutions.

Annan ... said that it had been 'up to the Security Council to approve or determine what those consequences should be.'

[A British spokeswoman said] 'We spelled out at the time our reasons for believing the conflict in Iraq was indeed lawful' ... [but] conceded that international lawyers disagreed about the war's legality.

[Australian] Prime Minister **John Howard** not only rejected Annan's remarks but **criticized the United Nations as a 'paralyzed' body**, incapable of acting on major crises, such as the current one in Sudan's Darfur region.

[Polish, Bulgarian, and Japanese spokespeople also disagreed or expressed doubts.]"

"U.S. allies argue war was legal: Britain and 4 others attack Annan's claim that it wasn't justified", Agence France-Press, International Herald Tribune, **September 17, 2004**.

"Confronted with the murder of 50,000 in Sudan, ... calls were issued and exhortations were made ... The great hum of diplomacy signaled that the global community was whirring into action. ...

But **the multilateral process moved along in its dignified way**. The UN secretary general was making preparations to set up a commission. Preliminary UN resolutions were passed, and the mass murderers were told they should stop ...

And meanwhile 1.2 million were driven from their homes in Darfur. ...

Finally, a week ago the Security Council passed a resolution threatening to 'consider' sanctions against Sudan at some point. ... The resolution passed and it was a good day ... for the burden of doing nothing was shared equally by all. And **we are by now used to the pattern**. Every time there is an ongoing atrocity, we watch the world community go through the same series of stages (1) shock and

concern (2) gathering resolve (3) fruitless negotiation (4) pathetic inaction (5) shame and humiliation (6) steadfast vows to never let this happen again.

... ***It's a pity about the poor dead people in Darfur.*** Their numbers are still rising, at 6,000 to 10,000 a month."

David Brooks, "Another triumph for the UN," International Herald Tribune, **September 27, 2004.**

"***[The recent UN High-Level Panel*** on Threats, Challenges, and Changes'[... central conclusion is that, without ***Security Council approval***, no state should use force to defend itself against a threat that is not imminent. ... If the Council dallies, too bad: the target state must ask again.

The same applies when genocide occurs. 'Genocide anywhere ...', the Panel declares, ' ... should never be tolerated.' But [the panel asserts] ... armed force cannot be used to stop genocide ... unless the Security Council permits it. ...

The central problem is that the 'global order' posited by the panel is largely non-existent. Notions of justice vary from one culture to another. ... [The Panel] ... makes no effort to assess the effectiveness of the [UN] Charter's rules, whether the benefits of saving them are worth the costs, whether they still command international support, or whether alternatives such as strengthening regional peacekeeping organizations might work better.

A little empirical spadework, coupled with a little more disinterestedness, would have gone a long way in lighting the way toward a more peaceful and just world. That is the issue -- not how the Security Council can get a bigger piece of the action."

Michael Glennon, "A stronger Security Council is no solution", Financial Times (UK), **December 13, 2004.** [Note: Mr. Glennon, a professor of international law, is the author of *Limits of law, prerogatives of power: Interventionism after Kosovo*, Palgrave, New York, 2001.

This discussion continues in [Security Council, II](#)

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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