

“In Larger Freedom” – an analysis of UN reform

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Abstract:

The United Nations has arrived at a “fork in the road”, with threats and challenges being very different to those of 1945. This paper presents an analysis of some of the main proposals incorporated in the Secretary-General’s reform package, “In Larger Freedom”, as well as a background to the document and its creation.

Drawing heavily on media and academic discourse, the author presents the common criticisms for the main proposals, as well as comments on the debate, developments and expected outcomes of the September 2005 summit. It is the author’s contention that the summit will witness some of the most important reforms in the organisation’s history, given the political will of the member states. The author concludes with discussion of the US/UN relationship, and also considers member state opinions on the reform process.

Date: August 8, 2005

Word Count: 5195

“The pursuit of peace and progress cannot end in a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned.”

(Hammarskjöld, D. UN Secretary-General, 1953 - 1961)

Introduction

Recent years have been devastating for the United Nations (UN) due to bitter policy debates which divided world opinion over the war in Iraq, the Baghdad bombing which killed 15 UN staff in August 2003 and the lack of clear role for the UN which damaged confidence in the organisation.

“For instance, both sides of the debate on the Iraq war feel let down by the Organization — for failing, as one side saw it, to enforce its own resolutions, or as the other side saw it, for not being able to prevent a premature or unnecessary war.”¹

In response, the Secretary-General (SG) appointed the 16-member High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (HLP), with the task of redefining the UN to face new threats. The panel aimed to analyse the threats to peace and security, evaluate how well existing policies and institutions address them, and recommend changes to those policies and institutions to ensure an effective collective response to the threats. William H. Luers, President and CEO of the United Nations Association of the United States of America, commented *“He wants them to be bold, and he wants them to be bold”²*.

The panel published the document *“A more secure world: our shared responsibility”³* in November 2004, and made *“101 far-sighted but realistic recommendations. If acted on, they would address the security concerns of all states, ensure that the UN works better, strengthen the international rule of law and make all people safer”⁴*.

In January 2005, the UN commissioned Sachs report, *“Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals”⁵* was published. This evaluated the progress achieved in

¹ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap1.htm>

² http://www.cfr.org/pub7754/esther_pan/un_reform.php

³ <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>

⁴ http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3445764

⁵ <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/fullreport.htm>

relations to the Millenium Development Goals since 2000, and presented recommendations on how they could be achieved within the remaining 10 years of the plan.

Using these 2 documents, containing proposals for both peace & security and development respectively, the SG consulted with various organisations in civil society, governments and academics on the feasibility of these proposals. His Strategic Planning Unit took soundings from many quarters, and worked closely with the authors of both of the main documents, using these proposals as a foundation from which to begin debate. The SG's remit was clear for what he wanted – solid proposals that were “*bold and achievable*”.

*“In the present report, I have resisted the temptation to include all areas in which progress is important or desirable. I have limited myself to items on which I believe action is both vital and achievable in the coming months. These are reforms that are within reach — reforms that are actionable if we can garner the necessary political will.”*⁶

And so on March 21st 2005, the SG's 63-page report “In Larger Freedom - Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All”⁷ was published. The SG personally proposed groundbreaking recommendations as part of a comprehensive strategy to reform the 60-year old, United Nations. Mark Malloch Brown, the SG's chief of staff commented, “*If any report has Kofi Annan's name all over it, it is this one*”⁸. The SG invested much personal prestige on the reform project, as Robert Orr, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination & Strategic Planning explained, “*This is important to him. He wants to leave the organization (at the end of his term in 2006) in good shape to meet the new challenges of the 21st century.*”⁹ The SG also emphasized the urgency of the situation, and in the report he explains that this is a key moment to make concerted reform:

“...60 years later, we once again find ourselves mired in disillusionment, in an all too imperfect world. It is easy to stand at the sidelines and criticise. And we could talk endlessly about UN reform. But our world no longer has that luxury. The time has come to adapt our collective security system, so that it works efficiently, effectively and equitably... ...I fervently hope that world leaders will rise to this challenge. In

⁶ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap1.htm>

⁷ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/>

⁸ <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F30E11F935580C728EDDA0894DD404482&incamp=archive:se arch>

⁹ http://www.cfr.org/pub7754/esther_pan/un_reform.php

the past three years we have all lived through a period of deep division and sombre reflection. We must make 2005 a year of bold decision. As the panel simply puts it: "We all share a responsibility for each other's security." Let us summon the courage to fulfil that responsibility."¹⁰

Nevertheless, it must be recognised that this argument has been presented before, and whilst the SG may claim this is a "make or break" moment, the reality is quite far from this. The organisation will almost definitely continue to exist (as long as it serves the interests of the big powers, including the US) and that no reforms can create a "perfect" institution: "*no reforms, however well intentioned, will turn the UN into the perfect instrument millions of people seem to want – one capable, that is, of ordering international relations so that all states obey the same rules, and especially rules that govern the use of force*".¹¹

This paper aims to analyse the main comments and criticisms of the the report's main controversial proposals.

Now, in July 2005, as the United Nations (UN) celebrates its 60th anniversary, there is a large consensus in the international community, by both critics and supporters, that the institution needs to be reformed¹². Following consultations and negotiations, the SG's report will be formally presented to the General Assembly (GA) at a summit in September 2005. In order to be adopted, the reforms must be approved by a two thirds majority of the GA. There is widespread public support for reform and an overhaul of the UN as the SG is proposes. In a recent 23-country opinion survey, in every country (except Russia), a majority supported the expansion of the Security Council (SC). In most countries (including the US), a majority backed making the UN "significantly" more powerful¹³.

*"The secretary general has set the agenda for reform. UN members must carry it forward. Either they reinvigorate the United Nations for the 21st century, or they will become yesterday's men."*¹⁴

In Larger Freedom

¹⁰ http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3445764

¹¹ http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3786918

¹² http://www.economist.com/agenda/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3784676

¹³ http://www.economist.com/agenda/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3784676

¹⁴ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/06/02/opinion/edlarsen.php>

The report was named “In Larger Freedom” to “*stress the enduring relevance of the Charter of the United Nations and to emphasize that its purposes must be advanced in the lives of individual men and women.*” The thrust of the report highlights that development, security and human rights are intrinsically interlinked - “*humanity will not enjoy development without security, or security without development.*”¹⁵

The SG’s recommendations are classified into four “clusters”:

- **Freedom from want:** Poverty reduction and promotion of global prosperity are the primary goals within this category, with an emphasis on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals which were agreed to as part of the Millennium Declaration during the summit of world leaders in 2000.

- **Freedom from fear:** This set of recommendations is geared at creating an “*equitable, efficient and effective collective security system*” with “*comprehensive strategies*” for confronting a broad range of security threats¹⁶. Recommendations relate to terrorism, organized crime, weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons and criteria for the use of force by the Security Council.

- **Freedom to live in dignity:** These recommendations are rooted in principles of rule of law, human rights and democracy, which are at the heart of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Governments will be asked to recommit themselves to these principles, including by affirming the emerging norm of the “responsibility to protect”.

- **Strengthening the United Nations:** These proposals are aimed at strengthening the UN’s capacity to meet the needs and circumstances of the 21st Century. The SG acknowledges that “*it must be open not only to States but also to civil society*”¹⁷ and recommendations also include streamlining the work of the General Assembly and expanding the Security Council so that it is more representative of the world’s demographics. The report also calls for the establishment of a Human Rights Council as a new principal organ within the UN system.

¹⁵ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/>

¹⁶ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap3.htm>

Freedom from want

In 2000, the international community agreed to confront global poverty, hunger, disease and other development and laid out key pragmatic targets for 2015, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report acknowledges that *“developing countries should recommit themselves to taking primary responsibility for their own development by strengthening governance, combating corruption and putting in place the policies and investments to drive private-sector led growth and maximize domestic resources to fund national development strategies.”*¹⁸ This resonates with the Bush Administration’s Millennium Challenge Account¹⁹, although the US is against the raising of Overseas Development Aid (ODA) to 0.7%²⁰. There seems to be growing willingness from states to act on commitments made in 2000 and at Monterrey (2002).

*“Several donor states have laudably announced “road maps” to more than double their development assistance to 0.7 percent of their gross national product by 2015, or even go further.”*²¹

Most countries recognise that if action on this front is stymied, the impact of this cluster on all of the others will be negative²². They recognise that development underpins security, and the focus of the report concentrates on the implementation of the Sachs recommendations, aiming to make the MDG’s successful. Recent moves (such as the doubling of aid to Africa by the G8²³) indicate that this has support across the board. Other development initiatives that look promising include the creation of an International Finance Facility, implementation of country-led “quick wins”²⁴, as well as recognition of the special need of Africa and LDCs.

¹⁷ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap5.htm>

¹⁸ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap2.htm>

¹⁹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/developingnations/millennium.html>

²⁰ http://www.globalsolutions.org/programs/intl_instit/latest_news/in_larger_freedom.html

²¹ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/06/02/opinion/edlarsen.php>

²² <http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/reports/BCOSR05.pdf>

²³ <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/news/news-group-africa-aid.html>

²⁴ <http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php?module=uploads&func=download&fileId=723>

Freedom from fear

Definition of terrorism

The SG encourages Member States to agree on a clear definition of terrorism as any intentional attack on civilians and noncombatants by non state actors for political purposes – any act intended to “*cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians*”²⁵. This would be a major step for the UN, defying the notion of some Member States that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” The reaction to this has varied. States largely agree that resistance against occupation cannot include killing civilians, but some Arab UN members (most notably Palestine) may demand exemptions. Divisions remain over the issue of “state terrorism”²⁶ and America and other states might also worry that “*too sweeping a definition risked labelling as terrorism the bombing of military targets hidden in civilian neighbourhoods, as in Iraq.*”²⁷ The SG’s panel achieved unanimity on the definition, but reactions from some governments led the SG to temper the proposed definition of terrorism of the HLP²⁸. Decision on this issue is hoped to be completed during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly²⁹.

Use of force

The SG also proposes that the rules concerning use of force are made more flexible so that an attack does not have to be imminent or under way before self-defence can be invoked. This is a radical departure from previous policy and essentially permits pre-emptive action in the face of an “imminent” threat. However, the US would have preferred this proposal to have avoided the need for the SC’s permission for preventative action in the case of “latent” threats – of which Iraq would have surely been³⁰. Their ideal

²⁵ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap3.htm>

²⁶ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/06/02/opinion/edlarsen.php>

²⁷ http://www.economist.com/agenda/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3784676

²⁸ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/03/20/news/nations.php>

²⁹ http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php/united_nations/1290

³⁰ http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3793408

would be to let countries launch preventative strikes without SC permission even where no attack seems imminent (eg. where a terrorist group is about to acquire nuclear know-how but is not yet able to make a bomb).

The SG also proposed that members reach a “common view”, a criteria to be used in future cases when the Security Council (SC) is asked to endorse military action. The criteria would consider the seriousness of the threat, proportionality of response and likelihood of success. For the US, this looks like a way to restrain the world’s superpower³¹. For some commentators, it is better by far when use of force can be sanctioned by the SC in accordance with the Charter, “*but there will still be times – Kosovo, Darfur, arguably Iraq – when the council chooses to withhold its approval but a country or group of countries will nevertheless be right to take armed action, either in self-defence or for humanitarian purposes. Short of the creation of world government, no amount of legal ingenuity is ever going to change that.*”³²

With most states seeing the provisions in the Charter as sufficient in this respect, any changes are unlikely³³.

Peacekeeping

Due to the increased number of peacekeeping missions that have been deployed in recent years, the demand for peacekeepers is “*severely stretched*”³⁴. The SG calls for the creation of strategic reserves that can be deployed rapidly and the establishment of a UN civilian police standby capacity. This proposal has strong support from civil society³⁵, but less so from Member States who wish to select their contributions to peacekeeping missions on an ad hoc basis and so will probably just opt to support development of EU standby capabilities³⁶. The report also recognizes the importance of regional organizations. Governments have been asked to support a stronger relationship between the UN and

³¹ http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3793408

³² http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3786918

³³ http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php/united_nations/1290

³⁴ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap3.htm>

³⁵ <http://www.un-ngls.org/sg-report-NGOs-comment.htm>

regional organizations and to consider linking regional peacekeeping capacities to the UN peacekeeping system.

WMD

On April 13, 2005, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Nuclear Terrorism Convention.

The treaty obliges governments to punish those who illegally possess atomic devices or radioactive materials. The treaty is the 13th anti-terrorism convention introduced to the General Assembly and the first completed since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the US. The Convention is a key recommendation in the SG's recent report; he believes that the measure will serve as "*an important step toward multilateral efforts to combat terrorism, by preventing terrorists' access to "the most lethal weapons known to humanity."*"³⁷ The revitalisation of this regime for non-proliferation and disarmament is vital, and requires urgent attention.

*"At last month's review of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, recalcitrant states hid behind each other and behind debates over process, to avoid confronting the hard issues. Meanwhile, there are still 27,000 nuclear weapons in the world, and North Korea's announced withdrawal from the treaty, together with undeclared Iranian enrichment activity, hint at real risks that more states could go nuclear".*³⁸

Peacebuilding Commission

Another key proposal is to establish a Peacebuilding Commission and a Peacebuilding Support Office in the Secretariat to improve the quality and coherence of international support for countries recovering from conflict. In the report, Kofi Annan stated that the UN's "*record of success in mediating and implementing peace agreements is sadly blemished by some devastating failures*". He also noted a "*gaping hole*" in the UN's institutional machinery to "*effectively addresses the challenge of helping countries with the transition from war to lasting peace.*"³⁹ Failed and failing states provide breeding grounds for terrorism and international crime; thus, preventing destabilizing events is in the interests of

³⁶ http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php/united_nations/1290

³⁷ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap3.htm>

³⁸ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/06/02/opinion/edlarsen.php>

³⁹ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap3.htm>

many Member States. Therefore, the SG proposes a permanent office that would identify states on the verge of collapse, provide assistance to prevent such collapses, and sustain the efforts of the international community in post-conflict peacebuilding. Most governments perceive this as an “*idea whose time has come*”⁴⁰, and are also supportive of the strengthening UN capabilities for mediation, humanitarian response and peacekeeping⁴¹. However, agreement on the Commission’s general composition, functions, institutional place and strategy remains unsettled⁴².

Freedom to live in dignity

Commission on Human Rights

The SG states that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights “*suffers from declining credibility and professionalism, and is in need of major reform.*”⁴³ It is no secret that the current commission is dysfunctional and has been a way for many countries such as Liberia and Sudan to cover up human rights abuses in their countries rather than advance better practices. His proposal would “*replace the Commission on Human Rights with a smaller standing Human Rights Council, as a principal organ of the United Nations or subsidiary body of the General Assembly.*”⁴⁴ The US supports this, and membership in the new Council would be limited only to states with a credible human rights record, who would be elected by a two-thirds vote of the GA. Some commentators have mentioned that democracy should be a prerequisite for entry onto the Commission, but this seems unlikely due to China’s position⁴⁵. NGOs have also advocated that a new Human Rights Council recognises that no human rights record is perfect, and that there needs to be a “*sustained, depoliticized process of authoritative, impartial and objective*

⁴⁰ <http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/reports/Issues05.pdf>

⁴¹ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/06/02/opinion/edlarsen.php>

⁴² <http://www.fride.org/eng/Publications/Publication.aspx?Item=802>

⁴³ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap5.htm>

⁴⁴ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap5.htm>

⁴⁵ http://www.economist.com/agenda/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3784676

analysis”, namely, the increased power of independent human rights experts within the Commission⁴⁶.

Again, criticism from some governments led the SG to avoid creating specific criteria for membership on the human rights panel⁴⁷.

Responsibility to Protect

“In Larger Freedom” also calls for the adoption of a collective “responsibility to protect” policy by the SC. This ascertains that *“if national authorities are unable or unwilling to protect their citizens, then the responsibility shifts to the international community to use diplomatic, humanitarian and other methods to help protect the human rights and well-being of civilian populations”*⁴⁸. This makes it easier for the SC to authorise intervention for humanitarian purposes in cases where people’s rights and needs are not protected by their own government, and would also mean a shift in focus from the preservation of national sovereignty to that of human security. Through the negotiations, the debate has shifted and has recently considered the P5’s use of veto with respect to certain cases; *“We invite the permanent members of the Security Council to refrain from using the veto in cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”*⁴⁹ Nevertheless, critics would argue that the underlying problem still remains, and that nothing would change as the core problem is political will.

*“Nor, of course, would embracing a “responsibility to protect” ensure UN intervention in a future Darfur. The council could sanction military force right away (as it did, after the fact, when NATO intervened in Kosovo) if its members had the political will. It is the absence of that will, not some legal quibble, that is holding them back now.”*⁵⁰

Strengthening the United Nations

Secretariat Overhaul

⁴⁶ <http://www.un-ngls.org/UNreform/Amnestyinternational.doc>

⁴⁷ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/03/20/news/nations.php>

⁴⁸ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap4.htm>

⁴⁹ http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php/united_nations/1290

⁵⁰ http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3786918

The SG urged Member States to endorse reforms to improve accountability, transparency and efficiency within the Secretariat. In addition, he is seeking to reform the Secretariat by “*commissioning a comprehensive review of the Office of Internal Oversight Services with a view to strengthening its independence and authority, as well as its expertise and capacity.*”⁵¹ This also has widespread support (including the US⁵²) especially following the accusations against the SG in the “Oil for Food” crisis.

Security Council enlargement

Perhaps the most controversial and for many states, important, reform is that of expansion of the SC through the addition of new permanent members. This is hoped to make it more representative.

*“Everyone agrees that the Security Council is an unrepresentative relic: five of its 15 seats are occupied by permanent, veto-wielding members (America, Russia, China, Britain and France), while the remaining 196 countries have to take turns occupying the remaining 10 seats, and have no veto.”*⁵³

There have been many complaints by various countries concerning the 2 models with most opting for one or the other. The SG himself did not express a preference between the two options⁵⁴, which both propose enlargement from 15 to 24 members. Model A provides for 6 new permanent seats, with no veto being created, and 3 new 2-year-term non-permanent seats divided among the major regional areas. Model B provides for no new permanent seats but creates a new category of 8 4-year renewable-term seats and one new two-year non-permanent and non-renewable seat, divided among the major regional areas⁵⁵. The SG also realistic, in that he realises that the Permanent 5 (P5) will not give up their cherished veto, one of the main points of contention and arguments posed to demonstrate the lack of representativeness in the SC.

*“Asked whether he felt that in ruling out removal of the highly prized veto powers from the current five permanent member states a newly enlarged council would still reflect the world order of 60 years ago, rather than a modern status quo, Annan said: “Let us not get so focused on the veto. It is a reality that it is not going to be possible to remove the veto. It is utopian to think that we can do it”.”*⁵⁶

⁵¹ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap5.htm>

⁵² http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3793408

⁵³ http://www.economist.com/agenda/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3784676

⁵⁴ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/03/20/news/nations.php>

⁵⁵ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap5.htm>

⁵⁶ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/04/28/news/india.php>

Nevertheless, some civil society commentators had hoped for the proposal to include the HLP's recommendation that permanent members "*pledge themselves to refrain from the use of veto in cases of genocide and large-scale human rights abuses*"⁵⁷, as well as the use of indicative voting "a public indication of member's positions"⁵⁸.

In recent weeks some interesting model variations have appeared. The G4's failed deal with the 53-member African Union proposed a "Model A + 2" (6 additional permanent and 5 non-permanent seats with no veto rights for 15 years). This would have given the G4 a much needed boost for their resolution, which needs a total of 128 votes to be adopted by the General Assembly. The Coffee Club reacted with their own proposal for the addition of 10 non-permanent members, whilst present P5 members US and China are also currently opposed to the G4 bid⁵⁹, being in favour of no or limited reform.

Some criticisms of the proposals relate to the size (some say that it will be more difficult to achieve decisions in a 25-member body), as well as the criteria used for membership of the SC (geographical balance, population and contributions), specifically the absence of non-proliferation⁶⁰ and democracy as criteria to membership. The first area is most commonly considered in relation to India, which contains one-fifth of the world's population. However, the world's 2nd most populous country remains outside the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty framework and has not been asked to take any steps to cap its nuclear capabilities as a condition of membership. Concerning the latter area, Egypt is cited, with over 1.3 billion Muslims, as a prime contender for a seat. However, the country's democratic record has been criticised:

*"...a sham of a democracy, with President Hosni Mubarak already believed to be grooming his son for possible succession. Presidential elections routinely generate 90 percent or more of the vote for the incumbent. Even at the local and grass-roots levels, Egypt leaves much to be desired politically."*⁶¹

⁵⁷ <http://www.un-ngls.org/sg-report-NGOs-comment.htm>

⁵⁸ <http://www.un-ngls.org/sg-report-NGOs-comment.htm>

⁵⁹ http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000087&sid=aWnfrQ19azc&refer=top_world_news

⁶⁰ <http://www.un-ngls.org/UNreform/centreforpeaceandconflict.doc>

⁶¹ <http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/ohanlon/20041217.htm>

Indeed, if democracy was a prerequisite for a seat on the SC, the message would be heard across the world. With Russia and China already holding permanent seats on the SC, their positions would not be threatened, but it would indeed introduce a new policy of privilege for democracies. The adaptation of the proposal for a permanent democracy fund by the UN could be indicative that this criterion is perhaps not so far-fetched.

Some critics are pessimistic, and claim that harsh reality shows that these reforms will not make any difference and they do not resolve the fundamental problem – lack of political will and differences of perceptions between nations.

“...just ask what would have happened is the debate that took place in the Security Council before the Iraq war had taken place in an expanded council applying Mr. Annan’s new principles. The answer is: the same thing. The permanent five did not fall out over Iraq because they could not agree on the rules. They fell out because America and Britain climed to have a different view from Russia, France and China about precisely the questions Mr. Annan would like them to pose in future: the seriousness of the threat, proportionality, chances of success and so on.”⁶²

Others respond that although it is not possible to make the SC perfect, it is possible to improve it. As the debate develops, it is becoming evident that the issue of Security Council reform is one of the most divisive, and the proposals put forward are imaginative and strongly defended. Nevertheless, many commentators and member states are wary about letting this overshadow other important proposals in the SG’s package.

Conclusion

"In a world of interconnected threats and challenges, it is in each country's self-interest that all of them are addressed effectively. Hence, the cause of larger freedom can only be advanced by broad, deep and sustained global cooperation among States. Such cooperation is possible if every country's policies take into account not only the needs of its own citizens but also the needs of others. This kind of cooperation not only advances everyone's interests but also recognizes our common humanity.”⁶³

⁶² http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3786918

⁶³ <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap1.htm>

So what are the next steps? Throughout the negotiations, the President of the GA, Jean Ping has published various Draft Outcome documents⁶⁴ based upon the GA statements by Member States and the feeling is optimistic - *“Member States are ready to take ambitious decisions on all fronts. There is much possibility for consensus.”*⁶⁵ Whilst the battle lines have been firmly drawn on SC expansion (the G4 vs the “Coffee Club”⁶⁶), other proposals and areas are open to more negotiation. The trans-Atlantic aspect is likely to be very interesting and influential judging by the profound differences which were manifested over Iraq over the SC and wider issues.

*“...as was the case in 1945, the roles of the United States and Europe will be crucial. It is impossible to envision a successful effort to revitalise the United Nations in the absence of a solid trans-Atlantic consensus on the substance of a reform agenda... ...some will start with some of the report’s bolder proposals, such as enlargement of the Security Council and new criteria for the legitimate use of force. Such issues should, indeed, command urgent trans-Atlantic attention, but if history is any guide, it is precisely on these issues that agreement is likely to be most elusive. Therefore it will be important not to neglect or postpone the other urgent aspects of the reform agenda where near-term progress can and must be made.”*⁶⁷

Civil society has also been involved in an intense dialogue with the UN on the proposals. The SG’s envoys are visiting capitals across the world, shoring up support for his recommendations, which are to be seen as a complete package with everything interlinking, and not to be taken as an “à la carte” mixture to cherry-pick. Mark Malloch Brown claims the package has *“something in it for everyone... ...but it’s also got some things in it that everybody will be mad about.”*⁶⁸ If reforms are not pursued as a collective and the recommendations debated individually, they will be at risk of being picked apart very quickly⁶⁹.

Member states seem to be in agreement about 5 main issues:

⁶⁴ http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php/united_nations/1290

⁶⁵ <http://www0.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=14492&Cr=un&Cr1=reform>

⁶⁶ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4673977.stm>

⁶⁷ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/04/08/opinion/edinder.php>

⁶⁸ http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3793408

⁶⁹ <http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/reports/BCOSR05.pdf>

- 1) sense of urgency – there is a sense that this is a “now or never” moment for UN reform, as well as a concern over the limited time left before the summit in September: *“There has never been a better opportunity for significant, sustainable UN reform”*.⁷⁰
- 2) reform is on track – discussions have been fruitful and there is potential for real change
- 3) sense of determination – there is a desire to overcome the obstacles that lie in the way of progress and a real desire to change the organisation for the better: *“Even the most irresponsible members of New York’s cosy diplomatic community – the official representatives of the UN’s member states – no longer pretend that business as usual can continue. Indeed, some of the most powerful forces for reform are in New York, not Washington, including at the highest levels of the Secretariat and among leading member states.”*⁷¹
- 4) structural reform obsession – some countries’ obsession with structural reform is seen as an obstacle which means that they lose sight of the other substantive reforms that could also make a difference
- 5) need for leadership – some worry that the SG’s problems with Oil-for-Food may have damaged his leadership potential at this crucial time⁷².

Perhaps, one of the most interesting developments has been of events in Washington, where the US has been grappling with how to work with the UN and how to influence the organisation’s reform. The SG’s proposals need US support, and debate on the Hill has been heated. The UN Reform Act of 2005 (drafted by House International Relations Committee Chair Henry Hyde) lays out some much-needed and visionary changes that will help the UN become a more effective institution – 40 reforms withing the UN. Nevertheless, the Hyde legislation (passed by the House by a vote of 221 to 184) threatens to withhold

⁷⁰ <http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/fellows/florini20050614.htm>

⁷¹ <http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/fellows/florini20050614.htm>

⁷² <http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/reports/BCOSR05.pdf>

50% of US dues to the UN if 32 of the 40 are not implemented in one or two years⁷³. Opposition to this legislation by commentators and civil society has been fierce:

“Nothing could be better calculated to infuriate the rest of the world and entrench the view that the US is a bully rather than a partner in international efforts to address international problems.”⁷⁴

Congress has 2 other alternatives; the “UN Reform and Institutional Strengthening Act” which allows more negotiating flexibility and authorises (but does not require) the withholding of dues, and the 174-page Gingrich-Mitchell United States Institute for Peace Task Force on the United Nations report⁷⁵. This is the product of a bi-partisan 12-member task force, and echoes many of the recommendations made by the SG. It also avoids the threat of withholding of dues, and sees this as a “last option”⁷⁶ as for pressure for reform – *“Real change may now be possible without resorting to the stick of US financial withholding.”⁷⁷*

Back in New York, the recent controversial appointment of Ambassador John Bolton to the UN has been cited by many commentators as *“terrible news”⁷⁸* for the UN, and many feel that his first test will be in playing a positive role in the success of the September summit⁷⁹. Nevertheless, many US officials feel much of their reform agenda has already been accomplished, and there is little concern that *“his combative personality would jeopardize the agenda.”⁸⁰*

For the wider UN community, there is a widespread acceptance that this is a real chance to make a difference, and the SG is putting all his weight behind the reform package. Every SG wants to make his mark and leave having “made a difference”. Although the SG recognises that reform is an ongoing process, he does push that the September summit is an opportunity to get as much achieved as possible⁸¹.

⁷³ http://www.globalsolutions.org/hill/HR_2745_Summary.html

⁷⁴ <http://www.brookings.edu/op-ed/fellows/florini20050614.htm>

⁷⁵ http://www.usip.org/un/report/usip_un_report.pdf

⁷⁶ <http://www.wpherald.com/storyview.php?StoryID=20050616-112936-1449r>

⁷⁷ http://www.iht.com/bin/print_ipub.php?file=/articles/2005/06/13/news/un.php

⁷⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/02/opinion/02tue1.html>

⁷⁹ <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-UN-Bolton.html>

⁸⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/02/politics/02diplo.html>

⁸¹ http://www.washtimes.com/world/20050802-115455-3855r_page2.htm

The SG has laid down the gauntlet to Member States, firmly placing the ball in their court, with bold, yet achievable recommendations:

“Indeed, what is most striking about the recent UN reports is that they are quite specific and practical about what needs to be done. For every contemporary threat – from terrorism and infectious disease to weapons of mass destruction and extreme poverty – proposed actions are on the table. It is as if the authors of the UN reports have issued a challenge to world leaders: ‘If you want safer, healthier, more productive lives for your people, and people everywhere, here is what you must do.’ Now in the run-up to the September summit, we will see whether they rise to this challenge.”⁸²

⁸² <http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/reports/BCOSR05.pdf>

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