INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDIES and the UNITED NATIONS

Reforming the United Nations: Lessons from a History in Progress

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Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., Secretary of State and Chairman of the Delegation from the United States, signing the United Nations Charter, 26 June 1945. President Harry S. Truman, standing to the left. (UNCIO 1534: Yould)

The Impulse for Reform

he never-ending quest for reform, for improving the functioning of the United Nations, has been an integral part of the life of the world body since its earliest days. Indeed, one of the more controversial issues at the United Nations' founding conference in San Francisco during the spring of 1945 was how the process of amending its Charter should be structured and when a general review conference of the Charter's provisions should be called.¹ Those delegations unhappy with some of the compromises reached in San Francisco, especially concerning the inequities of the veto power granted the "Big Five" Permanent Members of the Security Council (P-5), wanted to schedule a general review relatively soon and to make the hurdles to amendment relatively low. The Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, the other "Big Five" powers, on the other hand, naturally preferred to keep the barriers to Charter change relatively high.

On a more operational level, the United Nations had barely passed its second birthday before members of the US Congress started to call for sweeping reforms of UN finance and administration. In October 1947, the Senate expenditures committee launched a study that found serious problems of overlap, duplication of effort, weak coordination, proliferating mandates and programs, and overly generous compensation of staff within the infant, but rapidly growing, UN system.² Similar complaints have been voiced countless times since.

Through the years, scores of independent commissions, governmental studies, and individual scholars have put forward literally hundreds of proposals aimed at making the world body work better, decide more fairly, modify its mandate, or operate more efficiently. Not to be left behind by the reform bandwagon, successive Secretaries-General and units of the Secretariat have engaged in frequent, if episodic, bouts of self-examination and self-criticism, offering their own reform agendas.

What explains this apparently irresistible impulse for reforming the United Nations? Six factors suggest themselves:

- Public institutions depend on recurring processes of criticism, reassessment, change, and renewal to retain their relevance and vitality. Reform is a sign of institutional health and dynamism, not a penalty for bad behavior.
- 2) Highly complex, decentralized, and multi-faceted institutions, like the UN system, offer more targets for criticism and more opportunities for change. The temptation to tinker with the United Nations is only magnified by its high visibility, symbolic aura, and broad agenda.

- 3) The diversity of the United Nations' membership and the ambitious nature of its mandates make it highly likely that some constituencies will be seriously disappointed with its power-sharing arrangements and/or its accomplishments at any point in time. Persistent disappointment or feelings of disenfranchisement have often led to calls for reform.
- 4) As the world changes, so do the politics of the United Nations and the priorities of its Member States. In looking to the United Nations to fulfill new mandates that exceed its capacities, influential non-governmental groups often look to structural innovations or to the creation of new bodies to close the gap between expectations and capabilities. In both cases, proposals for reform usually follow.
- 5) Critics keep calling for reform, in part, because the United Nations has been so slow in delivering it. As the major powers hoped in San Francisco, formal institutional and structural reforms have proven hard to achieve in the UN system. The concerns about UN management and finance voiced by Congress in the late 1940s, moreover, were echoed, a half-century later, in the late 1990s.
- 6) The universality of the United Nations has fueled a dual pattern on the intergovernmental level: frequent calls for change by one Member State or group or another, followed by blocking moves by others with divergent interests or perspectives. At times, it seems as if every Member State is in favor of some sort of reform, but their individual notions of what this should entail differ so markedly as to make consensus on the direction reform should take hard to achieve.

These dynamics insure almost continuous attention to the reform agenda, but much slower progress on the intergovernmental than Secretariat plane.

If gauged by the sheer quantity of deliberations, debates, studies, and resolutions devoted to it, reform has become one of the enduring pastimes and primary products of the UN system. For example, during the last broad-based reform drive, from 1995 to 1997, the General Assembly was consumed with no less than five working groups on different aspects of reform, its President was engrossed in developing his own reform package, the Security Council reviewed its working methods, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted new procedures for relating to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the new Secretary-General offered a comprehensive, if generally modest, plan for Secretariat reform. Before the dust had settled from these battles, the US-led drive to have the Member State assessment scales revised took center stage in the Assembly from 1998 to 2000. As of this writing, in mid-2002, the Deputy Secretary-General is heading yet another drive for internal reform.

The hardest reforms to achieve, of course, are those entailing amendments to the UN Charter. As noted above, after a good deal of divisive debate, the Big Five managed at San Francisco to set the political bar quite high for any modifications of the Charter. Contending that their unity was key to making the new body more successful at securing the peace than its predecessor, the League of Nations, the Five insisted on their having individual vetoes over amendments to the Charter. As a result, Article 108 stipulates:

Amendments to the present Charter shall come into force for all Members of the United Nations when they have been adopted by a vote of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly and ratified in accordance with their respective constitutional processes by two thirds of the Members of the United Nations, including all the permanent members of the Security Council.

Some of the other delegations not only objected to the inequity of these provisions but also fretted that those Member States in the minority opposing a particular amendment were given no recourse. Unlike the League's Covenant, the Charter offers no mechanism for a dissatisfied member to withdraw from the United Nations - a practice that had disabled the League in the years preceding World War II. As a gesture toward these concerns, Article 109 offers the possibility of convening a General Conference to review the Charter. While a number of delegations at San Francisco expected this to take place within the Organization's first decade, the polarization of the membership during the Cold War years made this look like an unpromising course.³

As discussed in the next section, the Charter has been amended only three times in over half a century. The Security Council has been enlarged once and the Economic and Social Council twice. The last of these moves took place almost three decades ago. So, while much of the public debate on reform continues to focus on possible Charter amendments, such as further expanding and diversifying the composition of the Security Council, in practice this has proved to be difficult to accomplish.

Much of the action, instead, has occurred below this level and often with little publicity. The rules of procedure for the Security Council, the General Assembly, and ECOSOC have repeatedly been modified, as have their rosters of subsidiary bodies.⁴ The latter, naturally, have been more prone to expansion to meet new priorities than to contraction as old mandates fade. The relationships among UN bodies have provided material for successive waves of reform aimed at greater coordination, coherence, or even unity of purpose among the United Nations' many and disparate pieces. The activities of one principal organ, the

Trusteeship Council, were suspended when the task of eliminating it from the Charter appeared too ambitious.⁵ Financial, administrative, and personnel matters have been the target of so many reform and retrenchment campaigns through the years that some wags in the Secretariat have suggested that the most useful reform would be to declare a moratorium on introspection and reform so that the United Nations' workers could get back to their assigned tasks. More seriously, the dizzying diversity of initiatives and proposals labeled "reform" has led to some reflective inquiries about the proper meaning of the term.⁶

In theory, it would be analytically cleaner to adopt a relatively narrow and rigorous definition, such as the following: Reform is the purposeful act of modifying the structure, composition, decision-making procedures, working methods, funding, or staffing of an institution in order to enhance its efficiency and/or effectiveness in advancing its core goals and principles. In terms of the United Nations, this would encompass those steps intended to make the Organization more efficient, more effective, and/or more capable of fulfilling the purposes laid out in Article 1 of its Charter, consistent with the principles expressed in Article 2.

In practice, however, many other endeavors have also been called reform by one party or another in the world body. In this field, as in others, the seemingly irresistible impulse at the United Nations to expand the definition and scope of basic terms until they begin to lose their meaning, as well as their analytical value, is much in evidence. Reform has taken on so many guises through the years as to be almost unrecognizable. When there appears to be political momentum behind a reform exercise, various delegations are quick to repackage some of their favorite perennial hobbyhorses as innovative reform measures. Few Member States, for example, are reticent about claiming that measures to reduce their assessments or to increase their voice in the Organization qualify as essential reforms that would make the United Nations both more effective and more equitable. Seen in that context, of course, what looks like reform to one national delegation may appear regressive to others. At other points, when the term "reform" has taken on negative connotations, there has been a reticence to label reform measures by their real name. It was telling, for example, that during the intergovernmental deliberations of the late 1990s none of the five reform working groups established in the General Assembly had the term included in their elongated and carefully negotiated titles. 7 Clearly the notion of reform is more popular with larger and richer delegations than with others these days.

Another unsettled question—whether reform should encompass changes in what the United Nations does, i.e., in its mandates and priorities, or only modifications in its administration, budgeting, financing, structure, and decision—making methods—also directly affects the scope of the concept. Judging from the titles and mandates of the five reform working groups in the General

Assembly referred to above, it would seem that some believe that adjustments in programmatic substance should be included, as well as steps related to structure and procedures. In addition to the more traditional areas of Security Council, financial, and management reform, there were also working groups on an Agenda for Peace and an Agenda for Development that ranged over most of the Organization's extensive substantive interests. Except for the smallest delegations, most national missions to the United Nations assigned different people to the different working groups in recognition of their topical diversity. Some of the larger missions had one or more officers detailed exclusively to work on reform and finance, but most handled these various parallel deliberations subject by subject, given the breadth of the undertaking. In that sense, reform was not treated as an abstract phenomenon, but rather as one of the potential tools for strengthening the Organization's capacities for dealing with specific issue areas.⁸ Given this context, it is understandable why the United Nations has not sought to develop a single definition of reform that would be acceptable to all or most of the Member States. Such an undertaking might well prove as frustrating, controversial, and time-consuming as the decades-long attempts to negotiate universal definitions for terms such as aggression or terrorism.

The first step toward understanding the twisting course of UN reform efforts through the years and the confusing maze of reform proposals that have been put forward is to bear in mind the fundamentally political nature of the United Nations. Within the UN context, even seemingly routine matters of administration, personnel, and finance have a way of assuming a political character, should one group of Member States or another come to perceive potential slights to their interests, stature, or priorities. To put it crudely, much of the reform debate, at its basest level, is a struggle over political turf, over who is perceived to gain or lose influence within the Organization if the proposed changes are enacted or implemented. One of the most frequently voiced questions in UN corridors during the late 1990s reform exercise was: reform for what purpose? To gain support, the answers needed to be on two levels: substantive and political. Even if the goal of a particular proposal was to enhance efficiency, to some it mattered a good deal in which priority areas these efficiencies were to be carried out, who headed those programs, and whether the balance of attention and resources *vis-à-vis* other priorities would be affected. And, at a time of relatively low trust between different groups of Member States, in assessing an initiative it mattered considerably to other Member States who was putting forward the proposal and what each group might be expected to gain or lose from it. In short, much of the reform debate has been about three things: who makes decisions; who implements them; and who pays for them. If these political questions are settled, then international cooperation on moving the reform agenda will most assuredly flourish.

Who Decides?

Reforming the United Nations' Intergovernmental Organs

bodies was largely a question of numbers. How large should ECOSOC and the Security Council be to represent properly the Organization's rapidly growing membership? What should the balance be between different geographical or ideological groups of states? In other words, who decides? For the past two-plus decades, however, the emphasis has shifted. While debates about numbers and names have continued without agreement, the action in terms of reform progress has moved to matters of working methods and of relations with other organs and with civil society. The key "Who decides?" questions have become: "How are decisions reached, including whether there should be limitations on the use of the veto in the Security Council?" and "Who is consulted along the way, even if the formal composition of these bodies has not changed?"

During the 1950s and 1960s, one of the United Nations' cardinal achievements was to serve as midwife to the decolonization process. With the resulting influx of newly independent Member States, the ranks of UN members swelled from 51 in 1945 to 114 in 1963 (compared to 191 by October 2002). Though only three African and three Asian countries were among the founders at San Francisco, by the early 1960s more than half of the Member States came from those two regions. 10 In 1956, after 20 new Member States were admitted to the United Nations over the two previous years, the calls for enlarging the two Councils came into the open. The original "gentlemen's agreement" on the geographical distribution of non-permanent seats in the Security Council could no longer hold, since Latin America and Europe increasingly appeared to be "overrepresented" and the new majority "under-represented." Unresolved squabbles over the six non-permanent seats led to the constitutionally questionable practice of dividing a two-year term between countries from different regions. At one point, the Soviet Union favored redistributing the existing six non-permanent seats, a step that would not have required Charter amendment. But this would have entailed a major sacrifice on the part of the West-leaning nations of Latin America and Europe, something Washington opposed.

The expansion of ECOSOC, in contrast, appeared to be a simpler and less consequential step. One-third of its 18 members were elected each year for three-year terms, with each member having a single vote and equal rights. Not only were there no permanent members or vetoes in ECOSOC, but its mandate avoided core security issues, its primary task was coordination not policy, and its decisions were only recommendations, with none of the binding character of Security Council decisions under Chapter VII.¹¹ So as early as 1956, US repre-

sentatives acknowledged that both Councils should eventually be enlarged and suggested that the initial focus be on ECOSOC expansion.¹²

The developing countries, on the other hand, were especially keen on having a louder voice in the Security Council, which had become increasingly active in dispute resolution and peacekeeping efforts in the developing world. Some complained that their second-class status in the world body seemed to mirror the colonial status that they had recently struggled to overcome. For example, the heads of state of the members of the new Organization of African Unity (OAU), at their founding meeting in 1963, made this the topic of their very first joint summit resolution. In this context, and given their competition for influence in what was then known as the "Third World," neither Washington nor Moscow wanted to be the first to oppose openly the growing campaign for enlargement, whatever their actual misgivings. 13

The expansion debate came to a head at the 18th General Assembly session in the fall of 1963. ¹⁴ Despite the building momentum, there was no consensus during the Assembly debate on either the need for an immediate expansion or on the dimensions and voting rules of the enlarged bodies. In fact, on the final day of the session, none of the Five Permanent Members of the Security Council - all of whose ratifications would be needed for formal amendment—voted in favor of the resolution to expand ECOSOC, and only China, of the five, voted for the resolution to expand the Security Council. During the debates preceding the votes, all Five Permanent Members had called, in one form or another, for more time and further consultation before action was taken. ¹⁵



Meeting of the Security Council in London, 1946. (UN Photo: 24481)

Nevertheless, on December 17, 1963, the General Assembly passed resolutions 1990 (XVIII) and 1991 (XVIII), the latter for the first time calling for amendments to the UN Charter. The first resolution, which passed 111 votes to none, enlarged the General Assembly's gate-keeping General Committee to permit fuller representation of the new African and Asian members. The second resolution was divided into two parts, each subject to its own roll-call vote. Part A, to expand the Security Council from 11 to 15 members, to increase the majority required from seven to nine, and to specify the geographical distribution of the 10 non-permanent members, was adopted by a vote of 97 to 11, with four abstentions. Those opposed included France and the Soviet bloc, while the United States and the United Kingdom were among those abstaining. Part B, which passed 96 to 11 with five abstentions, enlarged ECOSOC from 18 to 27 and indicated the geographical breakdown of the nine new members. The only difference in the voting pattern was that China shifted from an affirmative vote in Part A to an abstention on Part B, dealing with ECOSOC, a body on which it had been denied a seat in recent years. 16 Adding a note of urgency, both parts called on the Member States to ratify the amendments by September 1, 1965, less than two years away.

Following the Assembly vote, the expansion bandwagon inexorably gathered momentum. Of the Five Permanent Members, the Soviet Union was the first to reverse course and to ratify the amendments (followed, of course, by the rest of the Soviet bloc). By the time the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearings on this question in late April 1965, the United Kingdom had also announced its intention to ratify the alterations in the Charter, and 65 of the required 76 Member State ratifications had already been completed. When the Senate gave its consent to ratification in June, France had added its intention to ratify, and 71 of the 76 required ratifications were in hand. Though none of the permanent members had voted for both amendments in the General Assembly, within 19 months all had overcome their reservations and ratified them.

The reasons for this remarkable about-face could be instructive for future efforts to amend the Charter. In theory, because of the need to attain ratification by all Five Permanent Members, the amendment process is ultimately subject to a veto by any of them, including a pocket veto in which one or more of them simply fails to act. In practice, however, this step can be invoked only after at least a two-thirds majority of the Member States has expressed support for the amendment through their votes in the Assembly and possibly through their national ratification processes. So, in terms of the politics of the United Nations, the costs of vetoing a proposed Charter amendment can be quite high, and this has never been done once an amendment has cleared the Assembly. The political costs are disproportionately high, of course, if one permanent member has to cast a lonely veto, so there is a premium on cooperation among the five.

Cold War politics and the lack of coordination among the five were not the only explanations for this historic reversal. The United Nations' precarious financial position also contributed. In the early 1960s, the United Nations was in the midst of a severe financial and constitutional crisis, brought on by the refusals of the Soviet Union, France, and some developing countries to pay their assessments for the United Nations' first two large-scale peacekeeping operations, in the Congo and the Middle East, despite the decision of the International Court of Justice that they were required to do so. Washington and most Western capitals were very concerned with rallying the support of developing countries on these questions. The Article 19 crisis reached its boiling point in 1964, when the Soviet Union threatened to quit the United Nations, the United States pushed to have Moscow denied its vote in the General Assembly under Article 19 of the Charter for its accumulated arrears, and, as a result, voting was suspended in the Assembly session that fall.¹⁷ For those capitals concerned about preserving the fiscal and political integrity of the United Nations and in those days Washington was in the front ranks—this was no time to veto reforms sought so fervently by the developing-country majority.

Then, as now, the dominant argument for expansion of both Councils was equity, not performance in fulfilling their august missions. In their statements before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on this matter, none of the Johnson Administration witnesses raised cautions about whether the expanded Councils would be better equipped to carry out their missions effectively, or whether due regard would be paid to the first Charter qualification for Security Council membership: the Member State's contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. 18 Nor, in turn, did any of the Committee members ask such pointed questions about the effects of the amendments during the public hearings, which ranged over a wide spectrum of UN and foreign policy matters. On the floor of the House, several representatives spoke in favor of the amendments and none raised these issues. 19 Prior to giving its consent to ratification virtually without dissent, by a 71-0 vote, the Senate held a perfunctory debate on the floor.²⁰ Only Strom Thurmond, the conservative Republican from South Carolina, spoke against the measure.²¹ So, with ringing words of endorsement from the Johnson Administration and a unanimous vote by the Senate, the United States acceded to the proposition that bigger is better in terms of UN fora.

A scant six years later, with this precedent firmly in place, the United States put forward a package of ECOSOC reform measures that included a substantial enlargement.²² Many developing countries wanted to go further and faster, proposing a doubling of the size of ECOSOC, from 27 to 54. In opposing this step, the French representative complained that the General Assembly had not

"devoted as much time to this problem as it did 10 years ago, the last time the membership of the Economic and Social Council was enlarged."²³ Arguing that the Council's "authority is not necessarily a function of the size of its membership and the distribution of seats among regions," he suggested that already "the number of seats is too large."24 Along similar lines, the Soviet delegate stressed that "the belief that the work of the Council can be improved solely through enlargement and through corresponding changes in the United Nations Charter is unfounded."25 The United States, however, had accepted the principle of proportional growth in ECOSOC to parallel the proliferation of UN members, which reached 135—well beyond State Department predictions—by the end of 1973, the year the second expansion of ECOSOC came into force.²⁶ When the question of doubling the membership of ECOSOC came to a head in 1971, first in ECOSOC and then in the General Assembly, on both occasions the United States was the only P-5 member to vote in favor.²⁷ In terms of ratification, however, the United States was the last of the P-5 (including China) to complete the process, with the others deciding once again not to resist the international political tide. With the deposit of the US ratification on September 24, 1973, this second expansion of ECOSOC, the last Charter amendment to be accomplished, came into force.

Calls for ECOSOC reform, of course, hardly subsided with this second increment to its membership. Indeed, many Member States went along with the two expansion steps on the assumption that they would be followed by measures to enhance ECOSOC's working methods, to bolster its capacity to coordinate system-wide programs, and to rationalize its structure.²⁸ By the early 1970s, it had become increasingly apparent that the United Nations system was failing to fulfill the expectations of Member States—from the North as well as the South—in the realm of economic and social development, despite the fact that some four-fifths of its outlays then went to such programs.²⁹ A group of highlevel experts, appointed by the Secretary-General under a mandate from the General Assembly, concluded in 1975 that the revitalization of ECOSOC would be one of the keys to more effective global policy-making.³⁰ Their report urged ECOSOC to adopt a biennial calendar, with a series of short subject-oriented sessions, a one-week ministerial session, and annual reviews of program budgets, medium-term plans, and operational activities. It stressed the utility of the Council establishing small negotiating groups to facilitate the search for common ground on key economic issues, as well as initiating consultations at an early stage with the most affected states on each issue. In addition, the report identified steps to raise the level of participation in ECOSOC sessions and called on the Council to assume the responsibilities of many of its subsidiary bodies.

A number of UN-sponsored and independent studies have proposed even more sweeping reorganizations of ECOSOC.³¹ Some would enlarge it further, while others would eliminate it altogether or divide it in two. Several have advocated the creation of a smaller executive body to set priorities and negotiate key issues, and most urge that the specialized agencies be made more subservient to the Council. Some of the more modest reform proposals have been realized—the institution of a high-level segment, shorter sessions, a somewhat more theme-oriented agenda, and greater use of panels of independent experts on selected issues—but there has been no agreement among the Member States on a more fundamental restructuring. One area where ECOSOC has been somewhat more innovative, however, is in recasting and clarifying the rules for the engagement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the work of the United Nations.³² In this respect, ECOSOC reform progress compares favorably to that of the General Assembly, which has resisted the adoption of new rules for NGO access.

In retrospect, however, the effects of ECOSOC expansion appear to have been mixed at best. As some developing countries have gained a stronger sense of ownership of the Council, developed countries on the whole have been more prone to question its relevance and effectiveness.³³ In part because of its unwieldy size—too big for serious negotiation and too small to represent the membership as a whole—ECOSOC has been the target of repeated reform campaigns during the 1970s, '80s, and '90s. It is not evident, moreover, that ECOSOC has found it any easier to coordinate the disparate and decentralized pieces of the UN system as it has itself grown larger and more diverse. After all, ECOSOC's powers have not expanded appreciably, its decisions remain only recommendations, it is still subservient to the Assembly on political questions, and the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and International Monetary Fund) as always have their own political and financial constituencies, charters, and governing bodies. For these and similar constitutional reasons, the enlargement of ECOSOC has been irrelevant to addressing that body's core weaknesses.

Though they were linked in the package of Charter amendments that came into force in 1965, the efforts to reform ECOSOC and the Security Council have followed quite distinct paths since then. The Security Council, for instance, has not undergone a second tranche of expansion. Yet the pressures for enlarging the Security Council, at least judging by the public expressions of Member State policies, have been far greater than has been the case for ECOSOC. But then, of course, so too has been the resistance to tinkering with a body charged with such awesome security responsibilities. (In fact, the mixed results of ECOSOC expansion are often cited as reasons not to enlarge the

Council.) The end of the Cold War, moreover, has had a far more profound effect on the debate over changes in the Security Council than in ECOSOC. On the one hand, the Council was rejuvenated as East-West divisions began to fade and the scope of its possible actions grew dramatically. Its new-found activism led some to declare that there had been nothing wrong with its structure and working methods, only a lack of political will, and that if there was nothing amiss in its performance then there was no need to fix it. On the other hand, once the Council was freed of its Cold War shackles, it appeared to become, more than ever, the most dynamic and consequential piece of the system. The attractiveness of becoming a member rose, as did the stigma of being excluded from this inequitable and, some said, anachronistic club. In the consensus-driven atmosphere of this new era, moreover, the casting of vetoes came to appear decidedly out of step with the tenor of the times.

In 1993, the General Assembly convened the "Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council," a body whose very title embodied the complexities, uncertainties, and general awkwardness of its mandate. It divided its task into two clusters: one on membership, including expansion, the veto and voting; the second on enhancing transparency through improved working methods and decision-making processes. While the first cluster has attracted far more public attention and Member State rhetoric, the second one has spurred the greater progress. ³⁴ In truth, however, nine years into their deliberations—as of this writing in 2002—the 191 members of the General Assembly had not been able to come close to agreement on any Council reform package. But their high profile debate has encouraged the Security Council to take a number of parallel steps on cluster two, i.e. on working methods.

As the pace and profile of Security Council activities rose during the 1990s, a series of modifications in its working methods were adopted.³⁵ Among these were the following:

- Under the Arria formula, a member of the Council invites the others to
 meet with one or more independent experts for a candid exchange of
 views on a pressing issue before the Council. This innovative practice,
 which permits more direct input from civil society and encourages
 Council members to reflect on the complexities of the choices facing
 them, has proven quite popular, as have more formal meetings with
 agency heads and others with knowledge of developments in the field.
- The Council has also participated in a number of retreats, away from headquarters, with the Secretary-General, other UN officials, and sometimes leading independent experts.

- The Council members have undertaken a number of missions to visit
 areas where developments are of particular interest or concern to the
 Council. This has allowed much more extensive contact with government
 officials, non-governmental groups, and UN personnel on the ground in
 regions of crisis.
- The Council has met a number of times over the past decade at either the foreign minister or summit level.
- To assist transparency and accountability, it has become common practice for the President of the Council to brief non-members, and often the press, on the results of informal (private) consultations.
- Tentative forecasts and the provisional agendas for the Council's upcoming work are now provided regularly to non-members, as are provisional draft resolutions.
- Consultations among Security Council members and troop contributors, along with key Secretariat officials, are now held on a more regular basis.

While acknowledging the progress that has been made on cluster two, most Member States contend that it has not gone nearly far enough. For example, the 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council called for the institutionalization of the steps that had been taken, for taking several of them further, and for more public meetings and fewer informal consultations.³⁶ It is questionable, however, whether all of the transparency and reporting measures called for would result in a more efficient or effective Security Council. The bulk of the negotiations among the members are bound to be carried out in private, and the public sessions of the Council have become opportunities largely for restating official positions and for public rationalizations. Even nonmembers of the Council frequently complain of the number and repetitiveness of the speeches given in the formal, public sessions. While it would aid accountability to require states to explain why they cast each veto, and the Council could be more forthcoming in its reports to the General Assembly, excessively detailed or frequent reporting could make it that much harder for an already overburdened Council to devote sufficient time and attention to its wide-ranging substantive work.

Cluster one has proven more problematic. Most pointedly, the volume of complaints about the veto privilege of the Five Permanent Members, a point of contention since the founding conference in San Francisco, seemed to rise precipitously during the 1990s.³⁷ Most of the other 186 Member States, as well as numerous scholars and blue ribbon commissions, have criticized the veto provision for being inequitable, undemocratic, and debilitating to the capacity of the Council to fulfill its core responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Others, however, have stressed that the principle of unanimity

among the major powers was central to the conception of the United Nations, and that principle has permitted it not only to survive the tensions of the Cold War, but also to play a role in helping to resolve them.

The veto controversy has complicated progress on the array of cluster one issues in several ways:

- 1) Since Article 108 gives the permanent members a veto over Charter amendments, they can trump any efforts to weaken formally their veto power.
- 2) Those seeking to expand the number and geographical spread of the permanent members face a dilemma: Should additional permanent members, in the name of equity, be given the very veto power that critics claim is so debilitating to the work of the Council? Wouldn't a Council with eight or 10 permanent members be even more restricted in terms of where it could act, and wouldn't the common denominator for Council action be even lower in most cases?³⁸
- 3) Alternative formulas for coping with the veto dilemma raise additional concerns. A number of delegations criticized the proposal by Ismail Razali, when he was President of the General Assembly in 1997, to add Five Permanent Members without veto power because they said it would add a third layer to the Council hierarchy.³⁹ Asking the current permanent members to exercise greater restraint in their use of the veto, for example by restricting it to matters under Chapter VII of the Charter, offers no guarantees and sets a precedent of calling on selected Member States to relinquish rights given them under the Charter.⁴⁰
- 4) Divisive questions about which states should have the veto have exacerbated splits within each region about which local states should be on the Council, especially since most security threats come from within one's own region, not from afar. Moreover, there is no provision in the Charter suggesting that one Member State may or should represent the interests and positions of others, neighbors or not.

So, while the General Assembly Working Group has made progress on narrowing differences over the size of a reformed Council, there has been little agreement either about names or about vetoes.

In sum, though it has now been almost 30 years since the Assembly last voted to amend the Charter, there seems to be little prospect of further amendments

anytime soon. In retrospect, the three Charter amendments did make participation in the Security Council and ECOSOC accessible to more Member States, more of the time. They made some accommodation, if not full places, at the decision-making table for the scores of new members. They demonstrated a degree of flexibility, i.e. some willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. But clearly they did not address the root shortcomings of either body, nor quench the public's thirst for stronger tools and machinery for dealing with the world's persistent security, economic, and social problems. Indeed, the fact that the only Charter revisions that have proven capable of sparking wide support among the members have been those to increase the size of limited membership bodies has also served to fuel skepticism about whether Charter reform is the best route to a stronger and more effective Organization.



Meeting of the U.S. Delegation: (sitting, I-r) Tom Connally, U.S. Senate; Edward R. Stettinius Jr., Secretary of State; Arthur H. Vandenberg, U.S. Senate; Charles A. Eaton, House of Representatives. (UN Photo: Lundquist)

Who Implements?

Coordination and Management

hough lacking the high drama of the debates over "Who decides?" chronicled in the previous section, the question of implementationhow the mandates agreed upon by the intergovernmental bodies are to be carried out—has generated sustained attention since the Organization's infancy. At the United Nations' opening session in London, Arthur H. Vandenberg, the influential Republican senator who led the administrative and financial committee in both San Francisco and London, warned his colleagues against mistaking "pomp for power" and letting their aspirations for the United Nations "outrun its resources." ⁴¹ The next year, in November 1946, he wrote to Secretary of State James Byrnes that the specialized agencies "are being created entirely too rapidly and too ambitiously."42 The following year, as noted above, the US Senate initiated its first critical review of UN management and administration. The problems identified—overlap, duplication, coordination, proliferating papers and mandates, and staff competence and compensation—have formed the core of the reform agenda ever since, in part because such challenges are common in, perhaps endemic to, complex multilateral organizations.

International bodies may properly be assessed first and foremost by what they stand for and seek to accomplish, the things determined by their constitutions and principal intergovernmental decision-making bodies. Yet over time, the most stinging rebukes are often about their failure to perform, about the gaps between their high purposes and meager capacities to carry them out. It has been to this second set of challenges, to narrowing the implementation gap, that most of the United Nations' internal reform efforts have been devoted.

From early on, two characteristics of the UN system underlined the value of developing effective practices and/or mechanisms for coordination: One was the interdisciplinary and multisectoral nature of many of the key issues on the international agenda, and the other was the complex and horizontally segmented mix of agencies, funds, and programs that comprised the "system." The whole, it seemed, often acted as less than the sum of its parts. The Charter, in Articles 57 and 63, called on ECOSOC to "enter into agreements" with the various specialized agencies, several of which predated the world body, so as to bring them "into relationship with the United Nations." ECOSOC was asked to coordinate their activities "through consultations and recommendations," while Article 64 gave ECOSOC permission to seek reports from the agencies. Nowhere in the Charter, however, is there any suggestion that ECOSOC would have any binding power over them.

In practice, of course, a number of the agencies had their own boards, by-laws, mandates, and funding sources, giving them every reason to maintain a substantial degree of independence from the central United Nations. As Since the major donor countries were members of most of these agencies—as well as of the Bretton Woods institutions that were established a few years after the United Nations—they could, if they worked together, enforce substantial discipline and coherence on the pieces of the system. But this would have required a degree of coordination among national ministries and within capitals that was only occasionally achieved. According to the 1948 Senate review, a considerable portion of the problem of coordination seems to be due to the failure of national governments to achieve coordination in their own policy formulation. As a result, various departments of government often tend toward an autonomous handling of relationships with specific international organizations. Within the UN system, the senators found that weaknesses in program coordination were compounded by an inability to set and maintain clear priorities:

The United Nations and the specialized agencies have limited budgets and limited staffs with which to perform their various functions. It therefore becomes necessary that some sort of fairly rigid priority system be established with respect to the projects undertaken if the maximum use is to be made of the funds available. There appears to be a tendency on the part of the agencies concerned to undertake far more than they can hope to accomplish, and very often without proper regard for the importance of the work undertaken The result is that funds are spread very thin and very little is accomplished generally.

Whenever a particular project appears important at the moment, a new commission or committee is appointed to look into the matter. This ultimately results in a proliferation of bodies, attempting to accomplish a great deal of work, much of which constitutes duplication of effort already being made and some of which overlaps other projects.⁴⁵

Of course, the Member States, with their disparate interests and priorities, have been as much or more to blame as the Secretariat for the proliferation of mandates and the mismatch between ambitions and resources, problems that continue to plague the world body. To be fair, however, at times the various agencies and programs have managed to pull together to respond to emergencies and special opportunities with a sense of common purpose. When the goal is clearly articulated by the Secretary-General and the Member States pull together, so do the programs and agencies. On the whole, though, the highly

decentralized nature of the system and its resistance to integrative reforms have tended to fuel perceptions of institutional disarray and fragmentation.

No one has more pungently described the malady or more painstakingly detailed possible remedies than Sir Robert Jackson, a former high-ranking international civil servant from Australia, who had been tapped in 1968 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to carry out a "study of the capacity of the United Nations system to carry out an expanded development program." Unlike the more pessimistic premises of recent reforms, which have been identified with cost and post retrenchments, this assessment was undertaken at a time of rapid growth in development funding through multilateral channels. The challenge was not whether the world body could do more with less, but whether the United Nations could handle another doubling of its development programs in the course of a few years time.

Sir Robert and his small team of researchers produced a report of almost 600 pages, laying out a detailed plan for restructuring the way the United Nations goes about assisting the development process. Yet it was a few unvarnished comments in the Foreword about the shortcomings of the existing arrangements that gained the study almost instantaneous notoriety around the world. Sir Robert noted that he had been left with two strong impressions: one positive, one negative. On the plus side, he was "convinced that technical co-operation and pre-investment are one of the most effective ways of assisting the developing countries in achieving economic and social progress. I believe the United Nations, despite its present limitations, has demonstrated conclusively that it is the ideal instrument for the job." There was, according to Sir Robert, "an unprecedented opportunity to revitalize the United Nations development system." Yet he doubted that the governments of the world could grasp this chance given "the great inertia of this elaborate administrative structure which no one, it seems, can change. Yet change is now imperative."

The UN development "machine," in Sir Robert's view, had evolved into "probably the most complex organization in the world." He pointed out that "about thirty separate governing bodies" tried to exercise control over different pieces of the administrative machine, yet "at the headquarters level, there is no real 'Headpiece'—no central co-ordinating organization—which could exercise effective control." He luridly described the "administrative tentacles" that ran down to a vast complex of regional, sub-regional, and field offices in over 90 developing countries. Governments could not control the process, and "the machine is incapable of intelligently controlling itself." As a result, "unmanageable in the strictest sense of the word," the machine "is becoming slower and more unwieldy, like some prehistoric monster." While praising the largely good work of UNDP, he concluded that management lapses and structural shortcom-

ings had permitted about 20 percent of the programs to qualify as "deadwood," or "non-essential projects." ⁴⁹

He had surmised, moreover, that his preferred solution was not politically feasible: "In theory, complete control of the machine would require the consolidation of all of the component parts—the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies—into a single organization, which is not within the realms of possibility." Movement in this direction, even restructuring UNDP into "a strong central co-ordinating organization," would be resisted, he feared, by UN officials, by agencies that had "become the equivalent of principalities," and by those national ministries that tend to take positions in UN agencies that conflict with their "government's policies toward the UN system as a whole." ⁵¹

An alternative way to reform the machine without amending the Charter, in his view, "would be to centralize the budgets of all of the Specialized Agencies—and bring them under effective co-ordinated control in ECOSOC. Then you really would see opposition to change! That battle was fought out when I was at Lake Success in the early days and the supporters of the sectoral approach won the day." Moreover, the UN system had become "a disproportionately old and bureaucratic organization," plagued with a pervasive sense of "negativism." Based on his consultations, Sir Robert had concluded that "the UN system has more than its fair share of 'experts' in the art of describing how things cannot be done."

For all of his doubts, Sir Robert saw some rays of light ahead. He urged his readers to reflect on how much the developing countries had already achieved, on the advances of science and technology, on the growing interdependence of nations, on the principles the General Assembly had articulated for relations between the United Nations and the Third World, and on the complementary roles that had been carved out for UNDP and the specialized agencies. With greater funds and top-flight managerial talent, he argued, a great deal could be accomplished given these favorable conditions. The sheer force of political circumstances, he concluded, will compel governments to act sooner or later. The sheer force of political circumstances are concluded, will compel governments to act sooner or later.

The study emphasized the importance of clarifying and defining the respective roles of the various pieces of the system. "The World Bank Group should be the chief arm of the UN system in the field of capital investment, while UNDP should perform the same function for basic technical co-operation and pre-investment." The UNDP should serve "as the hub of the UN development system," coordinating the efforts of the specialized agencies and other UN operational programs at the country level through the UNDP Resident Representatives; at headquarters through a new Program Policy Staff, four regional bureaus, and a Technical Advisory Panel; and at the highest interagency

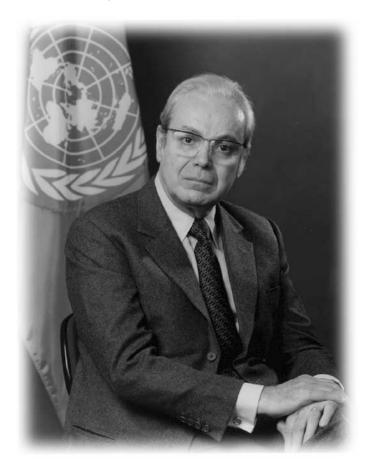
level through the replacement of the Inter-Agency Consultative Board (IACB) with a more powerful Policy Coordination Committee. The specialized agencies would serve both as executing agents for projects contracted with UNDP and as technical advisors in their respective fields of expertise, but "UNDP would assume full responsibility for all development activities carried out under its aegis, and with its funds, irrespective of which agency or other institution executed a particular programme or project on its behalf." Therefore, the agencies would have to be accountable to the Administrator of UNDP for these projects, just as he would be accountable to governments and to the UNDP Governing Council.

Once UNDP is reorganized, the study urged consideration of the merger of the governing bodies of the World Food Program (WFP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), and UNDP.⁶² Calling for a decentralization of line authority within UNDP, the report recommended a strengthening of the role of the Resident Representatives, an enhancement of the authority of the Administrator, and a focus on policy-making by the Governing Council.⁶³ To facilitate a more decentralized apparatus, he also stressed the need to upgrade the quality of the Secretariat, especially the Resident Representatives, and to improve communications throughout the system.⁶⁴

While much of Sir Robert's plan depended on establishing this more integrated organizational structure, in many ways the operational heart of his vision centered on the institution of country-based programming and a UN Development Cooperation Cycle. The latter would consist of five phases: country program and annual review; formulation and appraisal of projects; implementation; evaluation; and follow-up. The country program would be prepared by the recipient government and the UNDP Resident Representative, hopefully with the participation of the agencies and in association with the World Bank, and then submitted to the UNDP Governing Council for approval. This process would provide each developing country with "a comprehensive view of the total cooperation it might expect from the UN development system during the whole period of its national development plan." For developed countries, it would provide an overview of the use of resources, facilitate forward planning, and permit bilateral and multilateral programs to be harmonized country by country.

Much of the thrust of Jackson's vision has been implemented: some at that point and some over time. But the core dilemmas that he identified have not disappeared. In particular, though his proposed combination of central authority and country-based programming has its attractions, it does not eliminate the possibility of disputes between the priorities of field-level and headquarters-level decision making. This tension between centralization and decentralization has

plagued UN reform efforts from the Organization's early days.⁶⁷ Coordination problems arise within large, highly centralized institutions as well, of course. The difference derives from two factors: the potency of the levers available to the central decision-makers, and the unity and coherence of the priority-setting mechanism at the center. Because the Secretary-General lacks the power either of the purse or of appointment in dealing with the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, he must rely on persuasion, personality, and indirect appeals to publics and Member States to give a sense of direction and coherence to the system as a whole.⁶⁸ Some Secretaries-General, and Kofi Annan has set an especially good example, are better at pulling the disparate pieces of the system together than others have been. More fundamentally, the capacity of the Member States to set and hold priorities has been markedly episodic. Divisions or indifference among the Member States, in turn, provide ample opportunities for agency heads to engage in splitting tactics or to pursue independent agendas. As a 1987 blue ribbon commission convened by the



Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (term: 1982-1991). (UN Photo 169681)

United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) put it, the system's potential for interdisciplinary analysis and integrated implementation efforts has been hampered by the fact that "there is no center at the center of the U.N. system." ⁶⁹

The next wave of social and economic restructuring, undertaken between 1974 and 1977, unfolded in a much less propitious political context than had Jackson's capacity study a few years before. 70 The early 1970s saw growing strains between developed and developing countries on a host of economic, energy, trade, and financial questions of a bilateral, regional, and global nature. While solutions to problems of the magnitude of the oil crisis far transcended the bounds of the UN system, the world body, with its broad-based membership, became the favorite forum for the countries of the South to raise their concerns about the equity of the existing economic and political system. Through their numbers in the one-nation, one-vote General Assembly, the developing countries sought to codify a series of principles, targets, and procedures that would define a new set of global economic relationships. In this larger political context, the question of UN reform took on a more intense and divisive meaning in terms of the control, direction, and priorities of UN bodies. Amid calls by the developing countries for a new international economic order (NIEO), in 1974 the General Assembly (resolution 3343 (XXIX)) asked the Secretary-General to appoint a group of experts to prepare "a study containing proposals on structural changes within the United Nations system so as to make it fully capable of dealing with problems of international economic co-operation in a comprehensive manner." With Professor Richard N. Gardner of Columbia University as its rapporteur, the Group of Experts reached a consensus on a broad-ranging report in only four months of deliberations during the first half of 1975.

The experts' report acknowledged that "no amount of restructuring can replace the political will of Member States to discharge their obligations under Article 56 of the Charter." It stressed that the group viewed efficiencies and financial economies at best as secondary factors in its deliberations, though they expected that some of their recommendations could lead to staff reductions and budgetary savings. Of higher priority to the group was the need to bring much greater coherence to the planning, programming, and budgetary processes of the UN system. According to the report, at that point, of the almost \$1.5 billion expended annually by the system, less than one-quarter was covered by the regular budget, one quarter by 15 largely autonomous specialized agencies, one quarter by UNDP, and one quarter by voluntary contributions. Recognizing that this arrangement made policy direction and priority-setting that much more problematic, the experts called for a series of steps to make the

budgetary and programmatic reporting of the various pieces of the system at least sufficiently compatible to permit the possibility of cross-sectoral planning and monitoring.

The core themes in the report addressed the way intergovernmental decisions were made and the structure of the Secretariat in the economic and social realm. Following some modest suggestions for clarifying the division of labor between the Assembly's Second and Third Committees, as noted earlier the report focused on the revitalization of ECOSOC as one of the keys to global policymaking.⁷⁵ To reinforce these changes in intergovernmental decision making, the experts proposed a more radical reshaping of the economic and social Secretariat. 76 The group put forward a raft of recommendations on personnel policies, interagency mechanisms, joint research, and intersectoral analysis. The proposed innovation that attracted the most attention, however, was for the creation of the post of Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, to be placed above agency heads and Under-Secretaries-General, as the second highest official in the world body. The Director-General would be supported by two Deputy Directors-General, one for Research and Policy and the other to head a new United Nations Development Authority. While the Director-General could not exercise authority over the relatively autonomous specialized agencies, he or she would be in charge of interagency coordination and operational activities and would chair a new interagency Advisory Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development. It was suggested that the post be occupied by "a national of a developing country at least during those years when the post of Secretary-General is occupied by a developed country."77

The report also advocated the consolidation of all of the funds for technical assistance and pre-investment activities—except for those of UNICEF—into a new UN Development Authority. ECOSOC would be responsible for reviewing operational activities of the UN system as a whole, and the governing boards of a number of programs would be consolidated or replaced by a new Operations Board. On the regional level, the experts called for structural modifications of the regional commissions and steps to promote cooperation among developing countries. In a politically charged recommendation on a matter of high priority to the capitals of both developed and developing countries, the group urged that the weighted voting systems in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank be revised "to reflect the new balance of economic power and the legitimate interest of developing countries in a greater voice in the operation" of those institutions. The report did not specify how this should be done and, in any case, the General Assembly has no authority over the Bretton Woods institutions and the specialized agencies. But the special serior in the special property of the serior in the serior in the special property of the serior in the serior

Though the experts from around the world had managed to reach a consensus on a shared vision in short order, the same could not be said either of the Member States or of the heads of the various parts of the UN system.⁸² Though welcoming some aspects of the report, the West cautioned against any changes that might worsen the unstable North-South political dynamic of the time or weaken its control of the Bretton Woods institutions. The East opposed steps that would entail Charter amendment or additional costs. The "G-77" (so called because 77 states originally formed the group) lacked a coherent view, other than placing a higher priority on the achievement of the NIEO and on expanding the authority of the General Assembly than on restructuring the system. Wary of the implications of greater institutional integration, the "G-77" preferred to stress the need for a third expansion of ECOSOC. Several agency heads questioned the desirability of further centralization, while Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim praised the advantages of decentralization and reportedly let key delegations know that the establishment of the Director-General post could weaken the authority of his office.⁸³

Finally, on December 20, 1977, more than three years after the economic and social restructuring exercise was launched with the mandating of the Experts Group, the General Assembly, without vote, endorsed a substantially weakened version of the Group's proposals (resolution 32/197). In less controversial areas, such as regional and interregional cooperation, planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation, and interagency coordination, the resolution largely followed the lines of the experts' report. Most of these provisions, however, tended to be general and hortatory. The parallels also included measures to rationalize the work of the Second and Third Committees, to biennialize the agenda of ECOSOC, to institute shorter and more frequent subject-oriented sessions of ECOSOC over the course of the year, to hold periodic sessions of the Council at the ministerial level, and to have the Council "assume to the maximum extent possible direct responsibility for performing the functions of its subsidiary bodies." Lost, however, was the experts' core notion of small negotiating groups in both bodies on key economic issues. Instead, the Assembly predictably called for the consideration of ways to enable all Member States to participate in the work of the Council and to make "the Council fully representative." The idea of facilitating agreement through the convening of smaller groups of states on an ad hoc basis, for all of its appeal to logic, simply cut across the grain of the current political dynamics at a time of continuing North-South struggles over an array of macroeconomic issues.

Though the post of Director-General survived the negotiating process, it was stripped of the authority and support structures that would have allowed it to be a powerful new locus for policy coordination and advocacy within the system.

The two new Deputy Director-General posts were not established, none of the existing Under-Secretary-General posts were eliminated, the funds were not consolidated into a UN Development Authority, and their governing boards were not merged. The resolution called for greater uniformity in financial and administrative procedures and extolled UNDP's country-based programming process, but essentially the Director-General was superimposed on the existing highly decentralized structure, without the authority to reshape or redirect it. Kenneth Dadzie, the Ghanian chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, was appointed to be the first Director-General. Though widely liked, he had little real power and was never fully accepted by the Secretary-General.

Over the years, the post came to be seen at best as marginally useful at moving these issues within the Secretariat, and at worst as a high-level appendage with little influence. Fourteen years later, in a sweeping gesture of unilaterally imposed reform, incoming Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali unceremoniously included the position of Director-General as one of a list of 18 high-level posts he was abolishing "to redress the fragmentation which existed in the Secretariat" and "to consolidate and streamline the Organization's activities into well-defined functional categories." 84

Nevertheless, below the intergovernmental level, the efforts to bolster the system's capacity for coherent implementation of mandates have continued. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) has undertaken a number of assessments of how these efforts have been faring or might be enhanced. For example, a 1999 JIU report reviewed the history of steps to strengthen the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), and called for further modifications, including of its name. Established by ECOSOC in 1946 (resolution 13 (III)), the ACC was the only forum that convened the executive heads of all of the organizations of the UN system, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, to focus on questions of coordination and cross-cutting policy issues. While its effectiveness had varied with the personalities involved, its agenda had become increasingly substantive in recent years. In 2000, the name of the ACC was changed to the "Chief Executives Board" (CEB) and the responsibilities for coordination were divided into a High Level Committee on Management (HCLM) and a High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP).

Achieving greater unity of purpose was a central theme of Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 1997 reform plan. Earlier that year, he organized four sectoral Executive Committees to bring together all relevant departments, funds, and programs under the headings of peace and security, the United Nations Development Group, humanitarian affairs, and economic and social issues. ⁸⁶ He established a Senior Management Group to act as a sort of cabinet on management issues and a Strategic Planning Unit to identify and assess cross-cutting

issues and trends. He also asked the General Assembly to establish the post of Deputy Secretary-General to address, among other things, questions that "cross functional sectors and Secretariat units." While seeking to improve communication and the sense of common purpose at headquarters level, the Secretary-General also recognized the value in delegating authority and initiatives to the country level for operational development and humanitarian programs. In this regard, he called for "decentralization of decision-making at the country level and consolidation of the United Nations' presence under 'one flag.'" 88 Consolidations were undertaken to create a single Department of Economic and Social Affairs and a unified office to combat crime, drugs, and terrorism in Vienna.

While these steps have modified in significant ways the internal workings of the Organization, they have had relatively little impact either on the way intergovernmental decisions are made or on the way others perceive the world body. As Kofi Annan has often pointed out, reform is a process, not an event. In closing his reform report, he captured these points nicely, as follows:

In an Organization as large and complex as the United Nations, reform necessarily consists not of one or two simple actions but a multitude of tasks that amount to a major agenda that must be pursued over time. But the world will not measure the reform process by the number of items on the agenda - by how many more or fewer activities are undertaken, or how many committees are formed or disbanded. The Organization will be judged, rightly, by the impact all these efforts have on the poor, the hungry, the sick and the threatened - the peoples of the world whom the United Nations exists to serve. ⁸⁹



The UN General Assembly in session. (UN/DPI Photo 195009C: Eskinder Debebe)

Who Pays?

Assessments, Finance, and Budgeting

s noted in the preceding sections, the UN Charter is quite explicit about who decides and at least sketches a set of relationships among those charged with implementing the mandates from intergovernmental bodies. However, when it comes to revenues and outlays—questions about who pays for what—the Charter has relatively little to say, leaving these core matters to be determined by the Member States over time. According to Article 17 (1 and 2),

- 1) The General Assembly should consider and approve the budget of the Organization.
- 2) The expenses of the Organization shall be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly.

Article 18(2) lists "budgeting questions" as among those "important questions" requiring "a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting." The skeletal nature of these provisions did not reflect a downplaying of the potential importance of these issues at the San Francisco founding conference or the preparatory meetings that led up to it. Rather, it was widely believed that open debates on finance and burden sharing would become so contentious and divisive as to threaten the sense of unity and common purpose the founding members were seeking to achieve. Recognizing how acutely political questions of outlays and assessments would be, moreover, the founders of the world body felt it best to let the answers be adjusted periodically according to the ebb and flow of political power and economic means among the Member States over time. Thus, in seeking to postpone or finesse the issue, they ensured that finance would be a hardy perennial on the reform agenda for years to come.

No doubt, the most highly charged issue has been the assessment scale, which determines the relative burden borne by each member for financing the Organization's regular budget and, since the late 1950s, its peacekeeping operations. Other than assigning the task of apportionment to the Assembly, the Charter provides neither a mechanism nor a set of principles by which this determination should be made. These tasks were assigned in 1945 to an expert Committee on Contributions, which encountered politically turbulent seas when it sought to lay down both a set of criteria and its initial recommendations for the percentage assessments for each Member State. The Preparatory Commission had suggested that "the expenses of the United Nations should be

apportioned broadly according to capacity to pay."⁹³ Warning against tendencies by Member States either "unduly to minimize their contributions" or "to increase them unduly for reasons of prestige," the Commission urged that "comparative estimates of national income" take into account "(a) comparative income per head of population; (b) temporary dislocation of national economies arising out of the second world war; (c) the ability of Members to secure foreign currency."⁹⁴ The Committee on Contributions largely accepted these guidelines, stressing "capacity to pay" as the core principle and underlining that "an equitable scale is of the highest importance." In its view, moreover, following this principle and achieving "economy in administration" would "offer the best prospect of the punctual payment of contributions essential to the stability of an international organization."⁹⁵

This, however, turned out to be the easy part. "Capacity to pay" looked markedly different from various perspectives, and the Committee and its experts based their subsequent calculations on a series of controversial assumptions. They applied "the principle of progressive taxation" in addition to making "appropriate reductions in the apportionments of countries that have suffered from the war." They had to rely, moreover, on data for the pre-war years of 1938-1940, making adjustments for the very different effects the war had on various economies. The presentation of the report sparked an intense debate, the convening of a sub-committee, and a recalculation of the assessment scale. 97

The resulting shares were disputed by several countries, but by none of the others as vigorously as by the United States, which was assigned almost one-half of the burden, or 49.89 percent. One of the reasons the figure looked so big to Washington was that earlier in 1946, at the initial meeting of the Assembly's Fifth Committee, it had been agreed that the US share of the United Nations' Working Capital Fund would be 24.614 percent, or less than half what was later set to be the regular assessment. 98 Though this was presented as a temporary and preliminary figure, it was based on the existing scales of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This lower figure, moreover, was closer to the share that Congress was accustomed to paying in "older" regional and global institutions, though the US portion varied considerably from organization to organization.⁹⁹ As an internal State Department memo put it in April 1946, "our Congress is already conditioned to the idea of a 25% contribution and I doubt very much whether they would take kindly to an increase." 100 This perception of what scale would be appropriate and legitimate was no doubt reinforced when Senator Vandenberg, upon returning from the United Nations' opening session in London, reported to his Senate colleagues that America's "provisional share is 25 percent." ¹⁰¹

In the Assembly debate during the fall of 1946, the US counterattack was led by Senator Vandenberg. He argued not only that the Committee's calculations were based on flawed statistics, but more importantly that it would undermine the principle of sovereign equality to assign such a disproportionately large share - and hence influence - to a single Member State. 102 In normal times, he concluded, the United States should not contribute more than one-third of the budget. The contrast between the US perspective and that of most other Member States could be seen vividly in the tepid reactions to his statement and the rigidity of the negotiations that preceded and followed it.¹⁰³ According to Vandenberg, his vigorous remarks were "received with polite but stony silence." ¹⁰⁴ As he remarked to Senator Tom Connally afterwards, it was like jumping into an empty pool. The American expert serving on the Committee on Contributions, Paul H. Appleby, found the group unwilling to consider either a ceiling or any modification of the capacity to pay principle. With only two exceptions, he reported to the State Department, "everyone seemed to think that the more the United States paid the better." 105

In the end, the United States agreed to pay 39.89 percent not only of the 1945 and 1947 budgets, but also of the Working Capital Fund; while the other Member States agreed that this was an "emergency contribution," that the scale would be revisited at the 1947 Assembly session, and that the United States could include in the Assembly resolution its reservation that "under no circumstances do we consent that under normal conditions any one nation should pay more than 33 1/3 percent in an organization of 'sovereign equals.'" 106 It took seven more years of pressure and hard bargaining, however, to get the US portion down to 33 1/3 percent and 27 years to reach the target of 25 percent— Vandenberg's "provisional" level. 107 To spur the process, the House and Senate passed nonbinding resolutions calling for the withholding of funds if the ceiling did not come down to 33 1/3 percent by 1953. And the rate of US payments did indeed slow after the unhappy December 1946 compromise was reached. 108 Neither the White House nor Congress, however, was ready at that point to cross the Rubicon of deliberately withholding dues to force change in the Organization or in the assessment scales.

Though the Charter had failed to address the principles or mechanisms for determining what dues Member States should pay, it did specify a punishment for nonpayment. Article 19 reads:

A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equal or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The

General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.

For the world body's first 15 years, there was no cause for considering the invocation of these provisions against any of the larger Member States. Despite Cold War tensions, the continuing frictions over the assessment scale, and congressional disgruntlement, Member States from both sides of the Iron Curtain by and large accepted their financial obligations to the United Nations with equanimity, if not enthusiasm. Article 19, though hardly forgotten, was anything but a lightning rod for controversy during these years.

All this changed, however, by the early 1960s. The cost of the United Nations' first two large-scale peacekeeping operations, UNEF I (1956) between Egypt and Israel and UNOC (1960) in the Republic of the Congo, were to be covered through assessed contributions. Though both missions were initially popular with the membership, they became more controversial as Cold War politics began to intrude and the Congo mission ran into serious opposition on the ground. As noted in section II above, a number of Member States, questioning whether paying for the operations should be compulsory, began to refuse to pay these assessments. Those withholding these dues payments included two of the permanent members, the Soviet Union and France, as well as scores of developing countries. By the end of 1961, about two-thirds of the Member States had failed to pay their allotted share for one or both missions, and the United Nations' deficit for the two operations topped \$100 million. The next year, the General Assembly sought an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, which held, in a split decision, that peacekeeping expenditures "constituted 'expenses of the Organization' within the meaning of Article 17, paragraph 2 of the Charter." 110 The General Assembly responded, five months later, with a resolution accepting the Court's advisory opinion. Some of those members that had been withholding then relented, but the Soviet Union, France, and a few developing countries would not budge. As its arrears mounted, it became clear that Moscow would top the two-years-behind trigger for loss of vote under Article 19 by the time the Assembly was to convene in the fall of 1964, while it appeared that France would follow a year later.

If the resulting crisis had produced a decisive result—either affirming or denying the applicability of the provisions of Article 19—much of the subsequent tugging and hauling between the United States and the United Nations over dues payments might have developed differently. But as Harlan Cleveland, then US Assistant Secretary of State, put it: Most Member States had a "passionate determination to avoid a decision." 111 As the session approached, the United

States insisted that the financial integrity of the world body demanded that Article 19 be enforced and that the Soviet Union lose its vote in the General Assembly. For his part, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev threatened to quit the Organization altogether if this happened. In a sudden turnabout, US Permanent Representative Adlai Stevenson proposed at the last minute to his Soviet counterpart that no votes be taken at that session of the Assembly while a compromise was sought. After a full year without formal voting, it was agreed that Article 19 would not apply to arrears related to the two peacekeeping missions, that highly developed countries should make voluntary contributions to help the world body overcome its financial problems, and that the Assembly would return to normal operations. Sensing that the norm had finally been breached, the new US Permanent Representative, Arthur Goldberg, in turn announced that "if any Member can insist on making an exception to the principle of collective financial responsibility with respect to certain activities of the Organization, the United States reserves the same option to make exceptions if, in our view, strong and compelling reasons exist for doing so."112

Twenty years later, in 1985, Congress decided for the first time that it had compelling reasons to link substantial financial withholdings to its preferred reform agenda for the world body. By the early 1980s, the United Nations, in addition to sharp political divisions within its halls, was facing another of its recurring financial crises. According to US figures, through 1985 the accumulated arrears to the UN regular budget exceeded \$200 million, of which about one-fifth (\$45 million) was attributable to the United States. ¹¹³ By the end of 1986, however, total arrears were projected to grow by \$50 million and the US share to more than one-third of the total. ¹¹⁴

The Reagan Administration, highly critical of what it viewed to be the politicization of UN operations and programs, had already withdrawn from UNESCO. It had lined up the other major western contributors behind a policy of seeking to hold UN budgets to zero net program growth, including the absorption of much of the nondiscretionary cost increases. Their efforts, however, were for the most part unsuccessful, as the United States, most other Western donors, and the Soviet bloc felt compelled year after year in the General Assembly to vote against or abstain on UN budget resolutions throughout the first half of the decade. Among their concerns was the persistent pattern of having the biennial budget increased in the second year by add-ons (supplementary expenditures presented for the second year of each budget cycle).

As Jeane Kirkpatrick testified before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs in May 1985, soon after she stepped down from the post of UN Permanent Representative,

The countries who pay the bills do not have the votes, and the countries who have the votes do not pay the bill The countries which contribute more than 85 percent of the U.N. budget regularly vote against that budget, but are unable to prevent its increases because the countries who pay less than 10 percent of the U.N. budget have the votes. 116

Likewise, Alan Keyes, the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, complained at a House hearing about the "fundamental disequilibrium between the size of contributions by certain member states and their influence on the U.N. budgetary process." ¹¹⁷ In his view, "a majority of U.N. members contribute little to the budget, and therefore have no incentive to take a positive interest in making serious and responsible budget decisions."

Fair or not, these arguments found a ready audience in Congress. Finding that the United Nations and its specialized agencies "have not paid sufficient attention in the development of their budgets to the views of the member governments who are major financial contributors," in August 1985 Congress passed the Kassebaum-Solomon Amendment as part of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY1986 and FY1987.¹¹⁸ It precluded for FY1987 and beyond payment of assessed contributions of over 20 percent to the United Nations or any of its specialized agencies—which meant the withholding of 20 percent of the US contribution—until they adopted weighted voting on budgetary matters "proportionate to the contribution of each such member state." In seeking to assert greater control by the major contributors over spending, Republican Senator Nancy Kassebaum insisted that her aim was to strengthen, not weaken, the world body. 119 Putting their intent more bluntly, her co-sponsor, the veteran Republican Representative Gerald Solomon of New York, later remarked that "the way to get the attention of a mule is to hit him in the head with a 2x4. The way to get the attention of the United Nations was to pass the Kassebaum-Solomon amendment."120

The worsening financial crisis and the growing US withholdings gave the United Nation's 40th General Assembly session a markedly somber cast. Unconsciously echoing the concerns of Arthur Vandenberg, Olof Palme, then Prime Minister of Sweden, endorsed the proposal that others had floated to reduce the ceiling on contributions from any nation. "A more even distribution of the assessed contributions would better reflect the fact that this organization is the instrument of all nations and make it less dependent on contributions from any single Member State." Sweden, he noted, would be ready to explore the idea of how the difference would be shared by other Member States. Japanese Foreign Minister Abe called for the current session of the General Assembly to establish a "group of eminent persons for a more efficient United"

Nations" that would "contribute to a thorough review of the administrative and financial operations of the organizations within the United Nations system." 122 After weeks of sharp debate, much of it directed toward US withholding tactics, the Assembly agreed to establish a group of 18 experts, though with a limited mandate, as most developing countries preferred. The group's purpose was to:

- (a) ... conduct a thorough review of the administrative and financial matters of the United Nations, with a view to identifying measures for further improving the efficiency of its administrative and financial functioning, which would contribute to strengthening its effectiveness in dealing with political, economic and social issues;
- (b) ... submit to the General Assembly, before the opening of its forty-first session, a report containing the observations and recommendations of the Group. 123

The experts were to stick to questions of efficiency and to avoid political matters, such as the relative priority of security and economic/social questions in the work of the Organization.¹²⁴

Meanwhile, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar and his top managers had been undertaking a review of possible personnel and spending cuts in parallel to the deliberations of the Group of 18. In January and March of 1986, the Secretary-General announced two series of economy measures, such as reductions in travel, consultants, overtime, recruitment, promotions, benefits, and maintenance. While not eliminating any mandated posts or activities, these initial steps produced an estimated \$30 million in savings. 125 Department heads were asked to identify how an additional 10 percent reduction in outlays could be achieved, if required. Deeper cuts and more far-reaching reforms, however, would require action by the Member States, since they are responsible for setting program mandates and priorities. So the Secretary-General asked the General Assembly to resume its 40th session in late April 1986 to consider further economies to ease the worsening financial crisis. In the end, the Assembly, despite the considerable reluctance of many developing countries, adopted the Secretary-General's interim package of austerity measures with the caveat that "no project or programme for which there was a legislative mandate would be eliminated if adequate financial resources were available." 126

Like the Gardner group a dozen years earlier, the Group of 18 had only six months to try to forge a consensus on matters on which the Member States were deeply divided. It soon became painfully obvious that there was little chance of the group reaching agreement on a proposal for a new scale of assess-

ments, something the Secretary-General had urged them to examine. 127 Reportedly, the US expert in the group rebuffed suggestions by some of the other members that the possibility of lowering the US assessment rate, as had been proposed by Olof Palme and others, be considered in their deliberations. 128 Likewise, questions relating to the elimination of marginal intergovernmental bodies, to a restructuring of the Organization's programs, or to recasting priorities among activities and budget line items also proved too divisive to be tackled. The group's report acknowledged problems of duplication and insufficient coordination of agendas and programs, but stated that the group did not have time to undertake an in-depth review, which "should be entrusted to an intergovernmental body."129 The group likewise called for a streamlining of the machinery for interagency coordination, but failed to specify how this should be done. 130 It urged reductions in the number and duration of conferences, and in documentation, travel costs, and conference facilities. 131 To improve the monitoring, evaluation, and inspection of UN activities, the group recommended an upgrading of the Joint Inspection Unit, a broadening of its mandate, and closer coordination and a clearer division of labor between the JIU and External Auditors, 132

As seems perennially to be the case with intergovernmental bodies, the one target the Member States can readily agree to criticize is the Secretariat. 133 In this respect, the group's report was both specific and far-reaching. Noting that the number of posts funded through the UN regular budget had grown more than sevenfold in 40 years, from 1,546 in 1946 to 11,423 in 1986,¹³⁴ the report devoted two full chapters to Secretariat-related questions. Of greater concern to coherent management than these aggregate numbers was that the structure was "both too top-heavy and too complex," with 28 Under-Secretary-General (USG) level and 29 Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) level posts under the regular budget, plus an additional seven and 23, respectively, financed through extrabudgetary sources. 135 The experts thus called for a 15 percent reduction in the overall number of regular budget posts and a deeper 25 percent cut in USG and ASG regular budget posts, both to be achieved within a three-year period.¹³⁶ They also proposed a consolidation of the political departments, a review of those devoted to economic and social affairs, a streamlining of administration, and a review of public information activities, though these recommendations were mostly expressed in general terms.¹³⁷

The experts put considerable stress on the importance of a highly motivated and qualified staff. They also recognized, however, that personnel policies had been subject to a host of General Assembly resolutions and studies by the International Civil Service Commission and the JIU in recent years, as well as to the core standards of independence, competence, and geographical breadth laid

out in Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter. While many of their personnel recommendations were therefore hortatory in nature, some of the specific proposals proved controversial within the group. Maurice Bertrand questioned how it would be possible to achieve such a rapid reduction of posts, while at the same time accelerating the recruitment of promising young professionals in light of the need to inject "new blood" into the tired system. Some members of the group, reportedly including the Soviet and Chinese experts, formally dissented from the recommendation that no more than one-half of the nationals of any Member State employed by the United Nations be appointed on a fixed-term basis, i.e. at least one-half would have to be employed on a permanent basis to ensure their independence. 139

The group had its greatest struggle in trying to produce a consensus on a new planning and budget mechanism, the key objective of the Kassebaum-Solomon legislation. According to Maurice Bertrand, "the fact that the dialogue on this subject had been undertaken under the United States threat of refusal to pay made it impossible to work out a compromise solution." The experts were largely in agreement, nevertheless, on the deficiencies of the existing system for setting budgetary priorities and for developing a persuasive medium-term plan. They agreed that new procedures were needed to facilitate "the widest possible agreement" on the budget, that the medium-term plan had not been used effectively as a priority-setting exercise, that obsolete or marginal programs were not being identified consistently, and that existing procedures had not permitted Member States to participate "in the process of definition of the programme budget." Unable to come together on the remedy, however, they reported three distinct options to the Assembly, each supported by some members of the group. 142

"Several" of the experts favored an option that was aimed at identifying a mechanism for drawing together what had been the parallel considerations of the programmatic and financial aspects of the budget in the CPC (Committee for Programme and Co-ordination) and the ACABQ (Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), respectively. The role of the CPC was to be enhanced as the "principal advisory body" for the Assembly both on the medium-term plan and on the program budget. It was to address program priorities at an early stage in the budgeting cycle and to recommend resource allocations to match them, while the ACABQ would continue to address the costing of the budget. Any add-ons legislated later in the biennium would have to be accommodated within the contingency fund included in the initial budget or be deferred. The CPC would continue to be a 21-member intergovern-

mental committee, though its members would be elected in an expert capacity and, most critically, it "should continue to take its decisions by consensus."

- "Several other" members preferred a similar, but less ambitious modification of budgetary procedures. The CPC would serve as the Assembly's "principal intergovernmental body" regarding the medium-term plan and "the programmatic aspects of the programme budget." By keeping the CPC out of the resource side of the process, these experts sought to avoid the "lack of clarity" between the CPC and ACABQ roles they perceived could be a source of tension in the first option. 143 The handling of addons and the character of the CPC would parallel the first option, with the major exception that no mention was made of the consensus rule. 144
- The third option, favored by "some other members," was both the simplest and the most far-reaching. Making no mention of either the CPC or the ACABQ, the proposal simply called for a merging of the budgeting and program planning processes, "to be entrusted to a single intergovernmental expert body" that "should work on the basis of consensus." This body would determine "the overall limit" of the budget before the Secretary-General "starts his work on the budget estimates." The intergovernmental expert group would then set relative priorities within this limit. This option finally declared that "it is desirable that decisions of intergovernmental bodies, including the Fifth Committee, on the overall limit of the budget and on the level of remuneration of the United Nations personnel are taken by consensus." 145

The experts did agree on the overall goal, however: that "a procedure must therefore be developed which makes it possible for Member States to exercise—at the beginning of the planning and budget process, as well as throughout the whole process—the necessary intergovernmental leadership, particularly regarding the setting of priorities within the resources likely to be available." ¹⁴⁶ How this should be accomplished was left to the Assembly.

While the Group of 18 report was generally well-received, many delegations were wary of institutionalizing a US financial veto over the Organization's budget and programs or of appearing to buckle in the face of US financial and political pressure. The developing countries, in particular, seemed far less concerned about Secretariat retrenchment than about how their own voice and influence in the Organization might be affected by modification in the procedures for intergovernmental decision making. The one-nation, one-vote rule

mattered to them in terms of both principle and national interest. This sensitivity was especially apparent in the question of budgeting, the one area in which the Charter permits the Assembly to make binding decisions on its own accord.¹⁴⁷

Yet, on December 19, 1986, a weary Assembly approved by consensus resolution 41/213, calling for implementation of the agreed upon proposals of the Group of 18 and of a new consensus-based planning, programming, and budgeting process. 148 Three factors helped to turn the tide. One, throughout the fall, the financial straits of the United Nations had grown more desperate. According to UN officials, the Organization, which opened 1986 with a \$240 million deficit, had since depleted its contingency funds and exhausted ways of shifting funds among different accounts, leaving it increasingly vulnerable to financial pressures imposed by Member State withholdings. 149 At the end of October, the Secretary-General terminated 10 top officials, while maintaining the cuts and freezes announced earlier in the year. There was growing talk of "payless paydays" if the United States—and other countries—did not make substantial additional payments before year's end. 150 Two, top US officials and legislators began to make a positive linkage between UN reform and congressional restraint, contending that together they could produce a more effective and sounder world body. 151 The US Administration lobbied key capitals in the developing world on the value of consensus-based decision making, including sending an envoy with this message from Washington to selected capitals in Africa in early December - seen as the key to moving the process in New York. 152

Three, in New York, President of the General Assembly Humayun Rasheed Choudhury of Bangladesh helped shape a diplomatically worded description of the new budget process that would be relatively inoffensive to all parties. The final product, while heavily caveated and relegated to Annex I of resolution 41/213, retains the general thrust of the first option presented by the group of experts. In three of its key paragraphs on budgetary decision making, the resolution:

- reaffirms that the decision-making process is governed by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;
- agrees that, without prejudice to paragraph 5 above, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination should continue its existing practice of reaching decisions by consensus; explanatory views, if any, shall be presented to the General Assembly; and
- considers it desirable that the Fifth Committee, before submitting its recommendations on the outline of the programme budget to the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and the rules of

procedure of the Assembly, should continue to make all possible efforts with a view to establishing the broadest possible agreement.

Despite the reassuring language about continuing current practice, many delegations wanted an opinion from the UN Legal Counsel that these provisions would not undermine Article 18 of the Charter, which stipulates that "each member of the General Assembly shall have one vote" and that "important questions," including budgetary ones, require a two-thirds majority. The Counsel's opinion, included as Annex II of the resolution, found that "these draft proposals read separately or together do not in any way prejudice the provisions of Article 18 of the Charter of the United Nations or of the relevant rules of procedure of the General Assembly giving effect to that Article." ¹⁵³

With all of the horse-trading, however, opinions were divided about whether the multilateral negotiations had produced a mouse or something of historic proportions. Maurice Bertrand, a member of the group and a former JIU inspector, was skeptical. In his view, the resolution "defined the process of decision-making regarding the size and content of the programme budget so obscurely that everyone could declare himself satisfied but nothing was really settled."154 As US Permanent Representative Vernon Walters acknowledged, "we got most of what we wanted and so did nearly everyone else." 155 But he also claimed that "what has been done here is something really historic. We have gotten the things that the United States intended." ¹⁵⁶ Based on these results, he said that he would urge Congress to repeal the Kassebaum-Solomon Amendment and to appropriate the full US-assessed contribution to the world body. Yet critics could argue that very little had changed, given the option to resort to voting if consensus fails. On the other hand, while the new process fell well short of weighted voting, the emphasis had shifted toward the presumption that consensus was the preferred way to determine the size and shape of the budget. The new system, however, offered no guarantees. Small contributors, as well as large ones, could conceivably prevent the attainment of a consensus in the CPC. While traditionally the Five Permanent Members of the Security Council had regularly been elected to the CPC, there was no formal rule requiring that the United States or any of the others be seated. 157 Even if the CPC reached a consensus, the Assembly retained its prerogative to accept, modify, or reject those recommendations.

As President Choudhury asserted, the new mechanism would depend on a tacit agreement between the big contributors and the developing countries, as well as on Congress' willingness to provide sustained financial support.¹⁵⁸ In the State Department's view, the new system would change relationships and assumptions among the Member States, as follows:

This process has the effect of reducing the ability of the numerical majority to dictate decisions about the size and use of UN resources. If the resort to majority power cannot simply be assumed, real compromise becomes essential. Trade-offs must be achieved between minority and majority viewpoints, involving the exchange and modification of tangible interests. That is why the reform program budget decision-making process is so significant.¹⁵⁹

More bluntly, Assistant Secretary of State Alan Keyes cautioned that the United States would consider further funding cuts down the road if the CPC failed to maintain a consensus. In his words, "a failure to maintain the commitment to consensus will put us back in this critical situation. That is going to create a remarkable sense of moral and political pressure to avoid such complications." ¹⁶⁰ As one unnamed US official phrased it, "[I]t is a system of checks and balances. If Congress doesn't come through, they won't abide by consensus; if they break consensus intentionally, we don't hand over the checks." ¹⁶¹

The implementation of 41/213, not surprisingly, proved almost as problematic as had its negotiation in the first place. The centerpiece of the 1985-1986 reform effort, the consensus-based budgeting process, was not fully operational until the adoption of the 1990-1991 program budget in December 1989, a full three years after its adoption. 162 American officials, moreover, were concerned when the Assembly chose in December 1987 to expand the CPC from 21 to 34 members. 163 Despite these developments, the consensus-based budgeting process has been adopted by almost all UN agencies and it has been respected with a remarkable degree of consistency to this day, almost 15 years later. Those reforms that were implementable by the Secretary-General unfolded more quickly, including a reshuffling of some departments, reductions in staff travel and consultants, and cuts in professional and clerical staff. However, lacking either political guidance from the Member States or the means to provide an incentive for early retirement for selected employees, the Secretary-General largely sought to attain this target through an across-the-board hiring freeze and attrition. 164 Such an approach, while perhaps the most even-handed and politically the least painful option, did not take into account either individual performance or whether particular departments and programs were understaffed or overstaffed, whether their mandates were ebbing or flowing. It also complicated efforts to bring in fresh blood and younger professionals.

The hesitant steps toward implementing the 1986 reforms were monitored closely by Congress and the Reagan Administration. The week after the General Assembly decided to expand the CPC, Congress enacted legislation placing new conditions on US payments to the UN, this time geared to the implementation of the provisions of 41/213.¹⁶⁵ Though a range of assessments could be heard

in Washington about the degree of progress being made in carrying out these provisions, over the course of 1988 the Reagan Administration seemed to gain greater confidence that UN reform, on balance, was moving forward. The Secretary-General had not yet reached the 15 percent personnel cut targeted for the end of 1989, but he appeared to be closing in on that goal. 166 The 1988-1989 budget estimates were revised modestly upwards, but with the United States joining the consensus because the additional outlays related to UN peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan and the Western Sahara, which the United States strongly supported. These add-ons were termed by the US delegation as ones that were "critically important" or would "strengthen the organization," unlike ones in earlier years that "were marginally useful, and, in some cases, politically divisive." ¹⁶⁷ Though the 41/213 procedures had not yet been fully operationalized, the United States was pleased with the way the 1990-1991 budget outline had been developed and, again, joined in the consensus approval of it. 168 Though there were no breakthroughs on the secondment question, the US administration could at least claim to have raised cognizance of the issue both in the Secretariat and in national missions.

More fundamentally, the larger political context within which relations with the United Nations had been viewed was changing in important ways. The Soviet Union had agreed to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, and Mikhail Gorbachev was bringing "new thinking" to Soviet domestic and foreign policy. The prospects and utility of UN peacekeeping operations were rising in Washington's strategic calculations. In the US presidential election campaign, both candidates pledged to repay US arrears to the world body. President Reagan launched an interagency review, headed by his National Security Assistant, General Colin Powell, on US relations with the United Nations. On the eve of the president's final speech to the General Assembly, the White House announced its decision to authorize the release of outstanding 1988 dues and to develop a multiyear plan to pay back the accumulated arrears. 169

These years of crisis in US-UN relations produced a number of intriguing ironies and lessons for the process of UN reform and renewal. Most striking was the metamorphosis in Reagan Administration attitudes towards and perceptions of the United Nations. The question of reform played a major role in this transformation, at first seeming to confirm the widely held assumption that the Organization would never change and later, after 41/213, fueling a sense that the world body had been somehow transformed into a far more effective and promising vehicle. Positive developments in the larger political atmosphere mattered a great deal in the end, boosting both reform and US-UN relations. By the latter stages of the second Reagan term, US officials seemed inclined to see the reform glass as half full, when earlier it appeared at best as half empty. The ulti-

mate irony was that the Reagan team had left office and the United States was committed to full funding and to repaying the arrears *before* the supposedly pivotal consensus-based budgeting mechanism was fully realized in December 1989.¹⁷⁰ Ultimately, it required carrots, as well as sticks, to accomplish durable fiscal reform.

The progress of the late 1980s, while encouraging in some respects, hardly satiated the financial reform agenda. 171 The 1990s saw continued pressure from the major donors to reduce posts and maintain budgetary discipline, even as the Organization's program mandates kept expanding. In his 1997 reform package, Secretary-General Kofi Annan pledged to reduce the portion of the regular budget devoted to administrative and other overhead costs from 38 to 25 percent.¹⁷² He also called for the institution of results-based budgeting, which he described as a shift from "input accounting to accountability for results" or from "micro-management to macro-accountability." 173 While the Member States have gradually come to accept this adjustment, they have rebuffed more firmly the Secretary-General's repeated calls for a sunset provision, i.e. for the General Assembly to adopt the practice "that each initiative that involves new organizational structures and/or major commitments of funds be subjected to specific time limits, by which it would be reviewed or renewed only by explicit action of the Assembly."174 This rule, strongly backed by the United States and other major donors, would seek to redress the tendency of the Assembly to adopt new programs and to create new structures without eliminating those that have outlived their usefulness.

Under threat of further congressionally mandated withholdings, the General Assembly agreed in 1994 to establish the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to identify and investigate possible cases of inefficiencies or malfeasance within the Organization. Headed by an Under-Secretary-General, OIOS is to "exercise operational independence under the authority of the Secretary-General" as it carries out its "responsibilities with regard to monitoring, internal audit, inspection and evaluation and investigation." Though the creation of the OIOS was a sensitive matter for the Assembly, for existing auditing and inspection units, and for the Office of the Secretary-General, the new office has served to identify a number of areas for significant savings and has uncovered several instances of management lapses.

Despite these forward steps, a number of skeptical and influential members of Congress concluded both that more could be done to reform the United Nations and that further unilateral US withholdings—their lesson from the crisis of the late 1980s—would be the quickest and surest way to obtain their vision of reform.¹⁷⁶ In the spring of 1994, President Clinton signed legislation placing a 25 percent ceiling on US peacekeeping payments to the world body,

substantially less than the 31.7 percent then assessed by the United Nations. 177 As a result of this and other withholdings, over the course of the 1990s US arrears to the world body more than doubled to considerably more than \$1 billion, plunging the United Nations into another deep financial crisis. 178 So, as the Organization reached its 50th birthday in 1995, it was deluged with a raft of far-reaching suggestions for renovations from independent scholars and commissions, the convening of the five intergovernmental reform working groups described earlier, and a sea of red ink. 179 By the latter years of the decade, moreover, the growth in US arrears came closer and closer to triggering the Article 19 penalty of loss of vote in the Assembly, something that all but the most strident voices in Washington, D.C., wanted to avoid.

In an effort to break this counterproductive cycle, the Clinton Administration sought to reach a "grand bargain" with congressional leaders: It would seek to negotiate an ambitious package of reforms at the United Nations in return for the legislators' consent to pay off all or most of the arrears. The first step, in its view, was to try to get Washington to speak with a single voice by entering into a series of consultations with congressional leaders and staff about which reform goals should be sought in New York. The key, it was felt, was to engage Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and a longtime skeptic of the United Nations. On the plus side, this strategy encouraged a bipartisan effort by Senator Helms and the ranking minority member of the Committee, Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del.), to craft a bill they could both live with and that would embody the essence of the "grand bargain." On the downside, the House of Representatives was largely neglected in this strategy, and it would later be in that chamber that the largest hurdles to completing this bargain would arise.

The initial Helms-Biden bill included three dozen "benchmarks" that the United Nations would have to meet before the arrears would be paid. Though it cleared both houses easily, President Clinton vetoed the bill in October 1998. The president acted not because of the unilateral conditions placed on the payment of the arrears, but because of an unrelated provision attached by Representative Christopher Smith (R-NJ) that deeply troubled constituencies concerned about family planning and freedom of choice. ¹⁸⁰ Helms and Biden then produced a slimmed-down version of their bill, with a mere two dozen benchmarks and weaker family planning language. Duly signed by the president, the Helms-Biden UN Reform Act of 1999 (Title IX Public Law 106-113) offered to pay about two-thirds of the arrears in three tranches as certain conditions were met. ¹⁸¹ The rest of the money was to be relegated to a contested arrears account that would not count against Washington's Article 19 obligations. The first year's benchmarks, largely pledging that the United Nations



Senator Jesse Helmes (R-NC) visits the United Nations, 20 January 2000. (UN Photo 202832)

would not take steps to compromise American sovereignty, were relatively easy to meet. The second year's conditions, on which the largest arrears payments would be based, however, were much harder for other Member States to swallow. In addition to the contested arrears account, which echoed the settlement of the first Article 19 crisis, Helms-Biden called for reducing the US share of the regular budget to 22 percent and of peacekeeping costs to 25 percent.

Not surprisingly, what followed was the most protracted and bitter struggle over the scale of assessments yet. Assigned the completion of this package as his top priority, newly confirmed US Permanent Representative Richard Holbrooke doggedly worked Capitol Hill, the UN community, and foreign capitals for 14 months to put the pieces together. While some countries were prepared to shoulder more of the burden if it would ease the UN financial crisis and

improve US-UN relations, most US allies contended that the world's richest country was already getting a break under the current formula. Beyond questions of equity, there was universal resentment of Washington's heavy-handed employment of the kind of financial pressures it once abhorred. Though going along with the final consensus to lower the ceiling, Penny Wensley, the Permanent Representative of Australia, underlined that "the ceiling is a distortion of the principle of capacity to pay, and this reduction a further distortion of this important principle." Seeking to build bridges between Turtle Bay and Capitol Hill, Ambassador Holbrooke arranged to have Senator Helms speak in the Security Council chamber, convinced him to convene the first-ever hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in New York, and brought the Permanent Representatives of key Member States to Washington. 184

Congressional concerns were eased somewhat by a relatively positive GAO assessment of the course of UN reform implementation. 185

The wearying negotiations finally concluded in the early morning hours of December 23, 2000, with a consensus on reducing the ceiling to 22 percent on assessments for the regular budget and on revising the methodology for determining peacekeeping assessments. The latter left the United States with a peacekeeping share of about 27 percent, a reduction of approximately 4 percent, but some 2 percent short of the Helms-Biden benchmark. The United States also agreed to pay the 3 percent increment for the regular budget that other Member States would face for the first year, in order to ease their adjustment to the higher burden and to sweeten the otherwise sour package. In an unusual arrangement, a private citizen, media mogul Ted Turner, agreed to pay this onetime charge of \$34 million. 186 Though jury-rigged, the compromise agreement was greeted with relief, if not enthusiasm, by all sides. The Senate voted unanimously two months later to provide the substantial second payment of \$582 million in arrears to the United Nations. The House, however, dragged its feet, finding additional reasons for dissatisfaction with the United Nations, including the loss of a US seat on the UN Commission on Human Rights. Indeed, it took the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001 and mounting pressure from the Bush Administration for the House finally to vote for the second arrears payment to the world body (and for the Senate to confirm John Negroponte to be the next US Permanent Representative to the United Nations). 187 To those hoping for a promising new chapter in US-UN relations or for an end to squabbles over dues and assessments, these developments could not offer much encouragement. No one was in a position, of course, to guarantee either that the United Nations would no longer need reform or that Congress would not impose further conditions on payments down the road.

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s this historical review makes abundantly clear, the process of institutional change at the United Nations works in subtle, complex, and uneven ways. The dual phenomena of reform and adaptation have not been widely studied and are not well understood. Some of the following lessons, drawn from this review, are consistent with prevalent assumptions, but others seem counterintuitive.

- 1) Reform does not come easily to the UN system. The Secretary-General has little leverage, the system is diffuse, and the Member States are rarely united behind specific reform goals. Any number of reform initiatives have fizzled because the sponsors lacked the time, patience, political capital, or commitment to see the process through to the end.
- 2) On the other hand, the process of reform is a constant. Big waves of high-visibility initiatives may only come every five to seven years, but less publicized and less contentious tinkering closer to the surface never seems to cease. In the United Nations, as the premier multilateral political entity, a premium is put on consultative processes. At times, process seems more important than results, while at other times process is the desired result.
- 3) Those unaware of the history of reform may indeed be condemned to repeat it. Since conditions change, it may make sense to test the waters again from time to time with proposals that have been tried before. But a lot of time and aggravation can be saved by learning the history first, especially because the United Nations is such a precedent-dependent institution. Delegations that are uncertain or reluctant to press forward on a particular initiative can be counted on to recite their version of the history of past efforts and steps on that subject.
- 4) The key to UN reform, in that sense, may lie less in trying to be innovative than in understanding why past initiatives have failed and how the strategies and tactics for achieving them could be improved. Independent scholars and commissions thus might utilize their time more productively in thinking through how to advance existing proposals than in developing new ones that have little chance of implementation.

- 5) More study is needed of how independent scholars and commissions have helped to shape the UN reform process. 189 In a few of the cases addressed here, such as the Jackson capacity study, the Gardner experts group, the Group of 18, the Razali plan, and Kofi Annan's July 1997 package, there have been direct, creative, and productive interactions between idea producers from civil society and the official reform processes. In each case, of course, the independent voice is sought by those actors who believe that this expert input will help to bolster their case for or against a particular step. In turn, the perspectives, values, and positions of official actors may well have been shaped to some extent by what scholars and blue ribbon commissions had been saying and/or writing. At the same time, however, it is striking how often the reform debates have proceeded with only modest or marginal input from civil society, which is readily excluded from these processes and which tends to gravitate to less technical and tedious topics. Though they took place at the height of the clamor for greater NGO access to UN proceedings, the five General Assembly working groups established during the mid-1990s largely operated behind closed doors and interacted regularly with only a handful of enterprising NGO representatives.
- 6) When it comes to moving an agenda for reform in the United Nations, it is not always clear where power dwells (or who, if anyone, is in charge). In the 1960s, none of the Five Permanent Members voted for the expansion of both ECOSOC and the Security Council, yet all eventually found it easier to go along with the tide for expansion. In the 1990s, by contrast, their mere ambivalence helped to foster doubts and divisions among the rest of the membership regarding enlarging the Security Council. Through dues withholding, the United States has been able to achieve some of its financial goals, but has less to show in terms of structural, institutional, or programmatic change. And, to the extent that financial leverage matters, the United States has worked hard to ensure that it has less and less of this dwindling asset at the United Nations. Some Secretaries-General, moreover, have been far more adept than others at playing their modest reform cards.
- 7) Change happens even if reform doesn't. The United Nations is highly adaptable to changing world conditions. Sometimes formal reform follows (it never leads). When reform fails to keep pace with changing needs or conditions, entrepreneurial UN officials, Member States, and civil society representatives are all adept at circumventing the rules and procedures to

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get things done. Given the often glacial pace of institutional reform, it is not surprising that through the years more and more funding and programmatic initiatives have avoided the regular budget and scrutiny by the Assembly, finding voluntary and ad hoc routes instead.

- 8) The course of reform tends to be decidedly unpredictable. Rarely does a reform wave end up where its initiators expected. Sometimes the detour takes place at the negotiating stage, sometimes during implementation. Given the number and diversity of players in the UN community, as well as the episodic nature of the engagement of national leaders in these matters, it is very difficult to map the political course reform initiatives are likely to take. They invite free-riding, empty gestures, and playing to domestic audiences along the way.
- 9) As this review has demonstrated, the temptation to mistake modest and short-term adjustments for epochal change has proven irresistible time and again. Unfortunately, such repeated overselling of reform accomplishments has tended to undermine support for reform in two ways: It has led to overly high expectations and resulting disillusionment with the whole enterprise; and it has too often made the best the enemy of the good, encouraging flashy proposals that squeeze out sound but incremental ones.

Where do these lessons leave us in terms of future prospects? If the energies of the late-1990s reform drive—the most comprehensive and inclusive yet undertaken—have largely subsided, where will the enthusiasms and agendas come from for the next round? And what dangers lie ahead?

In terms of historical lessons, perhaps the most important is also the most obvious: UN reform has an unusually full and rich history. The impulse to improve the workings of the world body has been with us since San Francisco. It ebbs and flows, of course, but it keeps coming back. The tensions, divisions, and distasteful compromises of the last reform drive have left delegations, officials, specialists, and even private foundations with a mighty anti-reform hangover. In UN circles, congressional withholdings have given reform a bad name. But a lot of parties have also been left with a sense of incomplete agendas and unfulfilled ambitions. Very few delegations, in particular, got what they wanted out of the last reform campaign.

As this review documents, the pace of UN reform has become markedly skewed. There have been repeated incremental refinements to the United Nations' response to the question, "Who implements?" The ongoing 2002 Secretariat-led reform may add another step or two. Likewise, the struggle over

"Who pays?" never ends. The most disgruntled party, the United States, has been forcing its will on the rest and getting results. Others are deeply resentful of its tactics, but can live with the results. There has been no new answer, however, to the core question of "Who decides?" for the past three decades. The ongoing debate about Security Council reform, in particular, increasingly revolves around complaints about the inequity of the current system.

The rhetoric of injustice and inequity sounds a lot like that of the early 1960s, the last and only time the Security Council was enlarged. But should the same tactics be employed this round? In the 1960s, the developing countries in essence used their overwhelming numbers in the Assembly to compel the permanent members to accept expansion of the Security Council and ECOSOC as a virtual *fait accompli*. The rapid growth of UN membership gave them a strong rationale and the Cold War gave them political leverage. Today, their case is weaker and the political situation is more dynamic and possibly more volatile. Unlike the 1960s, today all the permanent members agree that some expansion of nonpermanent membership on the Security Council is justified, as well as some increase in permanent membership, though not necessarily with the veto power. Moreover, there is little evidence that the developing countries could present a united front behind a single formula for expansion at this point, particularly when the matters of permanent membership and the veto are included.

The Razali plan recognized that deciding on the size and shape of the Council and on the names that would be new permanent members are two quite different challenges. It therefore proposed that they be handled in stages. First the Member States would need to decide on the aggregate size of the Council and on the number and regions of the new permanent members, as well as on the sensitive question of who would or would not have the veto. The next step, once these matters were settled, would be to give the Member States a specified period of time to come up with the country names to fill in the blanks. Presumably this would be decided regionally, initially, and then approved by the whole Assembly, though there are a number of ways this could be done. Tellingly, the primary opposition to the Razali plan, centered around the socalled "coffee club," came from middle powers that felt that they would be somewhat disenfranchised under a plan that would elevate certain large developing countries to permanent member status without reducing the current number of permanent members. The P-5, in other words, may pose one set of obstacles to Security Council reform, but an equally difficult hurdle - so far an insurmountable one - derives from profound differences both within regions and within the ranks of the 186 Member States that are not permanent members. So there is every reason to expect that the skewed character of UN reform progress will be with us for the foreseeable future.

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The question of "Who decides?" raises a related dilemma: Should the goal of UN reform be to make its decision-making processes more reflective of the membership as a whole or more in line with the prevailing balance of power and capacity outside of its halls? Clearly, most Member States, in calling for democratization, equity, and transparency, have the former in mind. The founders, as noted earlier, recognized this dilemma and sought, in the creation of an Assembly and a Council, to have it both ways. Today, however, the question is more pointed because of the growing imbalance of power in the real world outside. The United States has not only built an unrivaled power position, including importantly in the projection of military force, but has also shown a growing willingness to go it alone on a number of issues of great concern to the rest of the membership. The latter, in turn, have begun to see multilateral organization as a way of discouraging or even countering America's unilateral instincts. It is frequently said, as well, that the United Nations is an organization for smaller countries and should be restructured to reflect this. So the bulk of reform proposals put forward by Member States—and often by NGOs as well would have the intentional or unintentional effect of trying to reduce US influence in the Organization. The United States, for its part, as seen in the struggle over the assessment scale, would like to have its cake and eat it too: to scale back its financial commitment, while gaining a role in decision making in the Organization more reflective of its power position outside. The competition between these opposing and largely incompatible visions of reform is likely to define the terms of the reform struggle even more in the coming years than it did in the turbulent 1990s. The question of US power and influence within the world body, it seems, will become the sub-text for much of the debate about what kind of a United Nations the world will need in the future: one that constrains or multiplies US power?

People, however, will also matter. Kofi Annan, perhaps because of his 30-plus years in the Secretariat, has been more attentive to reform issues than his predecessors. As chronicled above, he has taken a number of steps to improve the inner-workings of the central United Nations and its relations with other multilateral institutions. Not insignificantly, he has been perceived in Washington as a major force for management reform. While the actual accomplishments of recent reforms have been less revolutionary than boosters would suggest, the overall record has been relatively consistent and positive under Annan's tenure. Now that he is well into his second term, however, the question of how this momentum can best be assured under his successor—whoever he or she may be—needs to be addressed. Potential candidates for the post may be reluctant to run on a reform platform (except in Washington and a few other major donor capitals, of course), given the hangover from the last big round of reforms and

worries others have of US dominance. In terms of the "Who implements?" issues, the only ones over which the Secretary-General can exercise decisive influence, the possibility of slippage is always present. So too are pressures to create new posts and increase spending, especially after so many years of relative austerity. The next Secretary-General will have big shoes to fill, since it is never easy to succeed a popular leader. The political dilemmas noted above, moreover, suggest that the dual tasks of political management and institutional management will be merged in a most challenging way. But, after all, in the United Nations, reform has always been about politics. That is what its history teaches us.



Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Richard Holbrooke, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, 10 January 2000. (UN Photo 202759)

Endnotes

- 1. Ruth B. Russell, *A History of the United Nations Charter: The Role of the United States,* 1940-1945 (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1958), pp. 742-749.
- 2. For the preliminary results of the study, see Senate Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, *United States Relations with International Organizations*, 80th Cong., 2d sess., 1948, S. Rept. 1757, pp. 11-19. For a broader discussion of Congressional concerns about UN management in these early days, see Edward C. Luck, *Mixed Messages: American Politics and International Organization*, 1919-1999 (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), pp. 201-205.
- 3. For a compendium of suggestions for UN reform compiled by the Brookings Institution in anticipation that such a review conference would be held in 1955, see Francis O. Wilcox and Carl M. Marcy, *Proposals for Changes in the United Nations* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1955).
- 4. An authoritative account of the evolution of how the Security Council conducts its business can be found in Sydney D. Bailey and Sam Daws, *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- 5. The work of the Trusteeship Council ebbed with the completion of the decolonization process and Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali urged, in his 1994 report on the work of the Organization, that "the General Assembly proceed with steps to eliminate the organ, in accordance with Article 108 of the Charter." His next annual report regretted "that no decision to abolish the Trusteeship Council has been taken." See A/49/1, paragraph 46, and A/50/1, paragraph 69. Inventive observers, however, have suggested from time to time that it take up new mandates, ranging from overseeing global commons to governing failed states. Malta has advocated the former for the past 10 years (see, for example, A/50/PV.40, p. 56). For an explication of the latter idea, see Thomas Weiss, "The United Nations at Fifty: Recent Lessons," Current History, May 1995, p. 227. The notion that the Trusteeship Council "be reconstituted as the forum through which Member States exercise their collective trusteeship for the integrity of the global environment and common areas such as the oceans, atmosphere and outer space" was revived in Secretary-General Kofi Annan's July 1997 reform package. The proposal, however, has received little resonance from the Member States or subsequent expert groups. See Kofi Annan, Report of the Secretary-General, Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform, A/51/950, paragraphs 84, 85, and 282; Note by the Secretary-General, *United Nations Reform:* Measures and Proposals, A New Concept of Trusteeship, March 31, 1998, A/52/849; and Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations Reform: Measures and Proposals, Environment and Human Settlements, October 6, 1998, A/53/463, paragraph 61 and recommendation 24(b). Instead, in its limbo status, the Council's operations have ceased and it no longer receives staff support. Its august chamber, on the other hand, still offers one of the United Nations' better conference rooms, and it paradoxically served as the home to many of the intergovernmental deliberations during the 1995-1997 reform wave.
- 6. For example, see W. Andy Knight, *A Changing United Nations: Multilateral Evolution and the Quest for Global Governance* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 41-50.
- 7. The five groups included the following: the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other

Matters Related to the Security Council; the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development; the High-Level Open-Ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations; the Informal Open-Ended Working Group on an Agenda for Peace; and the High-Level Open-Ended Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System.

- 8. One of the more influential drives to enhance the UN is performance of a specific function culminated in the so-called "Brahimi Report" on UN peace operations. See the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/55/305, August 21, 2000.
- 9. Of the United Nations' four principal intergovernmental organs, this review focuses on the two that have been the targets of the most reform attention: the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The attempts to eliminate or redirect the Trusteeship Council are noted in footnote 5 above. There have been sporadic efforts to revise the Rules of Procedure and streamline the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly, but these have produced modest and largely technical changes. Some significant revisions of budgetary decision making were obtained in the mid-1980s, and these are discussed in Section IV. For the results of the latest drive to improve the Assembly's performance, achieved by the Strengthening Working Group in 1997, see *Report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System,* A/51/24, July 18, 1997.
- 10. This count of founding members deletes Australia, New Zealand, and several countries of the Middle East.
- 11. ECOSOC has attracted only a fraction of the scholarly attention that the Security Council, the General Assembly, and office of the Secretary-General have. Probably the most authoritative and thorough of the early studies was by Walter R. Sharp, *The United Nations Economic and Social Council* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).
- 12. For a useful review of this expansion process from a US government perspective, see Report by the President to the Congress for the Year 1963, *U.S. Participation in the U.N.*, Department of State (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1964), pp.143-161.
- 13. See, for example, the ambivalent statement of Dr. Nikolai Fedorenko, the Soviet Permanent Representative to the United Nations, to the Special Political Committee on December 10, 1963, A/SPC/96, pp. 1-9.
- 14. For a sense of the ebb and flow of the Assembly debate, see A/PV.1285, December 17, 1963, pp. 6-17. For the report of the Committee on Arrangements for a Conference for the Purpose of Reviewing the Charter, see A/5487, September 4, 1963, pp. 1-4. For a summary of Security Council resolutions the previous year dealing with these matters, see Report of the Security Council, A/5502, July 16, 1962-July 15, 1963, pp. 95-96. In addition to seeking the enlargement of both Councils, the African and Asian members also sought to expand the Assembly's General Committee, a move that would not entail Charter amendment. Over the course of the summer prior to the opening of that General Assembly session, the supporters of expansion had achieved the endorsement of ECOSOC and of the Assembly's Committee on Arrangements for a Charter Review Conference.
- 15. On December 14, in fact, the United States declared that it would support enlargements of the Security Council from 11 to 13 members, and of ECOSOC from 18 to 24 members, a proposal that had been put forward by Latin American and Caribbean countries. However, the United States indicated it would oppose larger increases, as had been proposed by the African and Asian nations.

- 16. Until 1971, the Taiwan-based Republic of China had held the Chinese seat in the United Nations.
 - 17. Luck, Mixed Messages, pp. 233-238. This crisis is addressed more extensively in Section IV.
- 18. In a speech to the American Society of International Law, however, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Richard N. Gardner noted that this latter "provision has not received the attention it deserves. It would enhance the effectiveness of an enlarged council if this consideration could be adequately reflected in Council elections in the years ahead." See U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. *Hearings on United Nations Charter Amendments* 89th Cong., 1st sess., 1965 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1965, #89-51678-1), p. 22.
- 19. House, *Congressional Record*, 89th Cong., 1st sess., 1965, vol. 111, pt. 7 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1965), 8713-8716.
- 20. Senate, *Congressional Record*, 89th Cong., 1st sess., 1965, vol. 111, pt. 9 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1965), 12547-12559. Three Senators had indicated that, if present for the vote, they would have opposed the amendments, including Richard Russell, D-Georgia; Alan Simpson, R-Wyoming; and Strom Thurmond, R-South Carolina.
- 21. Noting that this formula for the Councils had been imposed on the United States by other Member States, he warned that "the actual effect of the proposed increase in the membership of the Security Council will be to propel the Security Council along the same road of irresponsibility and paralysis that the General Assembly has already traveled." In his view, the amendments would "dilute our influence on the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, while the United States is having to provide a major and increasing portion of the financial support of the United Nations." *ibid.*, pp. 12548-12549.
- 22. For a summary of the US package, see Report by the President to the Congress for the Year 1971, *U.S. Participation in the U. N.* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1972), pp.134-136.
- 23. United Nations, General Assembly, 2026th Plenary Meeting, December 20, 1971, A/PV.2026, p. 1.
 - 24. *Ibid.*, p. 1-2.
 - 25. Ibid., p. 3.
- 26. As in 1963, in the second round the United States actually had proposed a much more modest increase in ECOSOC membership of only 12 to 15 new members, to a total of between 39 and 42. It was willing to concede on the larger number, however, in return for support in creating two new standing subsidiary bodies, a Review and Appraisal Committee and a Committee on Science and Technology for Development (the phrase "for development" added, of course, by the developing countries). The Assembly resolution also specified the new geographical allocation of seats, with the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America to receive almost two-thirds (35) of the 54 seats. While this more closely reflected the evolving shape of the Organization's membership, it moved farther from the principle of balance between developed and developing countries espoused by the United States in 1963 at the outset of the first wave of ECOSOC reform. A brief history of these developments is cited in the statement of Martin F. Herz, Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 24, 1973, reproduced as an Appendix in the Committee's Report, *Amendment to Article 61 of the Charter of the United Nations*, July 26, 1973, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., Executive Report No. 93-9, pp. 2-4.

- 27. See, respectively, Report of the Economic and Social Council on the Work of its Fiftieth and Fifty-First Sessions, General Assembly, Official Records: Twenty-Sixth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/8403), pp. 9-13. The vote on Part A of draft resolution E/L.1451 was 17 to 10, with the United States in favor and France, the United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics against. In the General Assembly, resolution 2847 (XXVI) was adopted on December 20, 1971 by a margin of 105 to 2, with 15 abstentions. France and the United Kingdom were against the resolution and the Soviet Union abstained. See A/PV. 2026, op. cit., p. 2. China was not a member of ECOSOC and was absent for the Assembly vote.
- 28. Ronald I. Meltzer, "Restructuring the United Nations System: Institutional Reform Efforts in the Context of North-South Relations," *International Organization*, 32/4 (Autumn 1978), pp. 993-1018.
- 29. This figure excludes the loans and programs of the international financial institutions. Report of the Group of Experts on the Structure of the United Nations System, *A New United Nations Structure for Global Economic Co-operation*, E/AC.62.9 (New York: United Nations, 1975), p. 1.
 - 30. Ibid., pp. 13-19.
- 31. Sir Robert G.A. Jackson, *A Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System*, vols. I and II, DP/5 (Geneva: United Nations, 1969); *A Successor Vision: The United Nations of Tomorrow* (New York: United Nations Association of the United States of America, 1988); *The United Nations in Its Second Half-Century: The Report of the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations* (New York: Yale University/Ford Foundation, 1995); Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); The South Centre, *For A Strong and Democratic United Nations: A South Perspective of UN Reform* (Geneva: The South Centre, 1996); and The South Centre, *The Economic Role of the United Nations* (Dar-es-Salaam and Geneva: The South Centre, 1992).
- 32. ECOSOC resolution 1296 (XLIV) of May 23, 1968, which long governed the relationship between NGOs and the United Nations, was revised to expand NGOs' access and to underline their responsibilities in ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 of July 25, 1996. For a detailed discussion of the process that led to these changes, see the NGLS Roundup of November 1996, which can be found at http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/docs96/review.htm.
- 33. As Maurice Bertrand of the United Nations' Joint Inspection Unit noted in his candid final report of 1985, the result of this "inflationary movement" has been that "the forums where it would have been possible to negotiate on important problems have been drained of all content, the industrialized countries refusing to use them to deal with any question likely to have any follow-up." Maurice Bertrand, *Some Reflections on Reform of the United Nations*, Joint Inspection Unit, JIU/REP/85/9 (Geneva: United Nations, 1985), p. 59. Also presented to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General as A/40/988, December 6, 1985.
- 34. While the meetings of the Working Group have been closed, for a sense of the flavor of the deliberations see Press Releases of the annual General Assembly plenary debate on Security Council reform, such as GA/9945 of November 1, 2001, GA/9692 and 9693 of December 20, 1999. For the Working Group's annual reports of its proceedings, see A/[49 55]/47 (1994 to 2000).
- 35. For a recent accounting of these steps, see Note by the President of the Security Council, *Procedural Developments in the Security Council 2001*, 30 May 2002, S/2002/603. For a description of such measures up to 1996, see a Non-Paper by the Bureau of the Working Group, *Working Methods and Procedures of the Security Council*, April 16, 1996, A/AC/247/1996/CRP.4.

- 36. Memorandum by the Elected Members on Transparency in the Security Council, December 22, 1997, http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/docs/memo1297.htm.
- 37. For discussions of the controversies surrounding the veto provision at the founding conference, see Russell, *A History of the United Nations Charter*, pp. 713-749; Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 198-203; and James S. Sutterlin, "The Past as Prologue," ed. Bruce Russett, *The Once and Future Security Council* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 2-5.
- 38. As the Commission on Global Governance phrased it, "to add more permanent members and give them a veto would be regression, not reform." *Our Global Neighborhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 239.
- 39. Submitted to the Open-Ended Working Group in the form of a draft resolution, the Razali plan of 20 March 1997, the only such initiative by a leading officer of the world body, can be found at http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/reform/raz-497.htm.
- 40. The Razali plan called for such restraint, as did the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations in its report, *The United Nations in its Second Half-Century* (New York: The Ford Foundation and Yale University, 1995), p. 16. A similar suggestion was made by Bruce Russett, Barry O'Neill, and James Sutterlin, "Breaking the Security Council Logjam," *Global Governance*, vol. 2 (1996), p. 77.
- 41. Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952), pp. 238-239.
- 42. US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, vol. I: General, The United Nations (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 494.
- 43. The UN Charter makes clear that the General Assembly's budgeting authority does not extend to the specialized agencies. According to Article 17(3), "The General Assembly shall consider and approve any financial and budgetary arrangements with specialized agencies referred to in Article 57 and shall examine the administrative budgets of such specialized agencies with a view to making recommendations to the agencies concerned."
 - 44. Senate Committee on Expenditures, United States Relations, pp. 16-17.
 - 45. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
- 46. UNDP, *Progress Report by the Administrator to the Governing Council*, May 9, 1968, DP/L.79, p. 2.
 - 47. Jackson, *Capacity Study*, vol. I, pp. ii.
 - 48. *Ibid.*, p. iii.
 - 49. Ibid., p. 10.
 - 50. *Ibid.*, p. iv.
 - 51. *Ibid.*, pp. iv-v.
 - 52. *Ibid.*, p. vi.
 - 53. Ibid., p. 49.

- 54. Ibid.
- 55. Ibid., pp. viii-x.
- 56. *Ibid.*, pp. ix-x.
- 57. Ibid., p. x.
- 58. Ibid., p. 21.
- 59. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 60. Ibid., pp. 34-36.
- 61. Ibid., vol. II, p. 302.
- 62. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 329. As noted in the previous section, the report also proposed a number of steps for strengthening ECOSOC.
- 63. *Ibid.*, a summary of recommendations dealing with organizational matters can be found on pp. 335-337 of vol. II.
 - 64. Ibid., see vol. II, Chapters Eight (pp. 339-372) and Six (pp. 215-278), respectively.
 - 65. These are summarized in vol. I, pp. 25-29.
 - 66. Ibid., p. 28.
- 67. For a discussion of this problem relating to Jackson's plan, see Johan Kaufmann, "The Capacity of the United Nations Development Program: The Jackson Report," *International Organization*, vol. XXV, no. 1 (Winter 1971), p. 946.
- 68. The 1948 Senate report lamented that "the Secretary-General of the United Nations has no authority to direct priorities with respect to the United Nations or the specialized agencies. Nor does the General Assembly of the United Nations possess the constitutional power to modify the programs of the specialized agencies. It would seem that the Charters of the United Nations and the specialized agencies should be amended so as to give the General Assembly of the United Nations the necessary authority to determine priorities." Senate Committee on Expenditures, *United States Relations*, p. 18.
- 69. Report of the International Panel, U.N. Management and Decision-Making Project, *A Successor Vision: The United Nations of Tomorrow*, ed. Peter J. Fromuth (New York: United Nations Association of the United States of America, 1988), p. xx.
- 70. For a commentary on the relationship between global politics and UN reform prospects during those years, see Rosemary Righter, *Utopia Lost: The United Nations and World Order* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1995), pp. 155-184.
- 71. Report of the Group of Experts on the Structure of the United Nations System, *A New United Nations Structure for Global Economic Co-operation*, E/AC.62.9 (New York: United Nations, 1975), p. 1. Under Article 56, "all members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization for the achievement of the purposes set forth in Article 55." The latter lays out a series of economic and social goals for the Organization.
- 72. *Ibid.*, pp. 2 and 21. The report does not include financial calculations of the effects of its proposals, however.

- 73. For analysis and proposals on these matters, see *ibid.*, pp. 32-39.
- 74. Ibid., p. 32.
- 75. For the discussion of the General Assembly, see *ibid.*, pp. 11-13, and of ECOSOC, see pp. 13-19.
 - 76. Ibid.; staffing questions are addressed on pp. 22-29.
 - 77. Ibid., p. 23.
 - 78. *Ibid.*; operational activities are covered on pp. 40-47.
 - 79. See *ibid*., pp. 48-51.
- 80. *Ibid.*, pp. 56 and 57. The United States did support an increase in voting strength in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for oil exporting countries and the maintenance of the position of other developing countries, even though economic indicators would have indicated a decrease in the voting position of non-oil exporting, developing countries. See the testimony of Paul H. Boeker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, on May 21, 1975, during the House Subcommittee Hearings on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations, *Issues at the Special Session of the 1975 U.N. General Assembly*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., Pub. No. 75-H381-50 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 82.
- 81. The report also mentioned the possibility of merging the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) into a new international trade organization with two chambers, but this was not included among its recommendations. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- 82. See statements at the September 1975 Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Development and International Economic Cooperation, as well as the Summary Records and Addendum to the Report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System.
- 83. Contributions by the Executive Heads of the Organization of the United Nations System, A/AC.179/16, October 20, 1977, and Note by the Secretary-General, A/AC.179/6, April 15, 1976.
- 84. *Note by the Secretary-General*, A/46/882, February 21, 1992. Also see the Secretary-General's revised estimates for the Programme Budget for the Biennium 1992-1993, A/C.5/47/2, July 31, 1992. Ironically, by that point the last few incumbents of the post of Director-General had been French nationals, so the goal of making this a high-level post for developing country nationals was not being served in any case.
- 85. Francesco Mezzalama, Khalid Issa Othaman, and Louis-Dominique Ouedraogo, *Review of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and Its Machinery* (Geneva: Joint Inspection Unit, 1999), JIU/REP/99/1.
 - 86. For a listing of these units, see Renewing the United Nations, p. 31.
 - 87. *Ibid.*, p. 17, paragraph 38.
- 88. *Ibid.*, p. 6, plus p. 20, paragraphs 49-51. For the rationale and workings of the new UN Development Group and other aspects of development cooperation, see pp. 49-56, paragraphs 146-169 and Actions 9-11.

- 89. Ibid., p. 90, paragraph 283.
- 90. J. David Singer, *Financing International Organization: The United Nations Budget Process* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), pp. 122-123 and Russell, *History of the United Nations Charter*, pp. 62-63.
- 91. While voluntary payments for particular agencies, programs, or trust funds have grown very substantially over time, they have not proven nearly so controversial as assessments either in UN fora or in capitals.
 - 92. For a more detailed account of these early debates, see Singer, pp. 122-146.
- 93. UN General Assembly, *Report of the Committee on Contributions*, A/80, October 11, 1946, p. 1.
 - 94. Ibid., p. 2.
 - 95. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 96. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-9. An amendment by Ecuador to the Preparatory Commission's report seeking to add "due account being taken of the principle of the progressive contribution," however, was narrowly defeated. Ninth meeting of the UN's Fifth Committee (administrative and budgetary matters), A/C.5/21, January 29, 1946, p. 25.
 - 97. Singer, pp. 125-127.
 - 98. Res. A/XII, February 13, 1946.
- 99. Senate Committee on Expenditures, *United States Relations*, pp. 4-5, 7-8, Appendix D, pp. 21-22, and Appendix E, pp. 23-26 and Senate Committee on Expenditures, *United States Relations with International Organizations: IV. United States Participation in International Organizations During the Fiscal Year Ending June 20, 1949, Rept.1274, 1950, 81st Cong., 2d sess., pp. 5-15.*
 - 100. US Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1946, vol. I, p. 463, see footnote 70.
- 101. Luck, *Mixed Messages*, p. 225. Contrary to Vandenberg's interpretation, the Fifth Committee had stated at the opening session that "the suggested provisional scale of advances to the Working Capital Fund is in no sense a precedent for the assessment of contributions and the Committee on Contributions which is to be appointed by the General Assembly at this session will accordingly be required to make a completely new approach towards this whole problem." *Report of the Committee on Contributions*, October 1946, p. 2.
- 102. US Delegation to the General Assembly, Press Release No. 66, November 8, 1946. Also see Singer, *Financing International Organization*, p. 126. The Committee on Contributions readily acceded that the "compilation of national income statistics is a relatively new art" and that "the international comparison of national incomes offers special difficulties." *Report*, October 1946, pp. 6 and 7. The primitive state of such statistics, in fact, was a primary rationale for keeping both the methodology and the scales relatively flexible, so that they could be amended over time.
- 103. At a meeting of the US delegation a week before Vandenberg's speech, Republican Congressman Charles Eaton of New Jersey cautioned that the House would never agree to a 50 percent US share; Eleanor Roosevelt stressed that "any group making such a large contribution

to the budget as 50 percent would be open to pressure by its constituency to exercise pressure on the Organization"; Democratic Senator Thomas T. Connally of Texas asserted that for the United States to make such large payments would spur "a spirit of suspicion"; and Republican Senator John Foster Dulles of New York warned that "it would also stimulate a tendency toward extravagance." Cited from US Department of State, *Foreign Relations, 1946*, pp. 469-470. See also, pp. 461-499, for the intensity of the negotiations. For reactions from other delegations to Vandenberg's speech, see Summary Records of the Fifth Committee, A/C.5/59-67, November 1946 and Singer, *Financing International Organization*, pp. 126-127.

- 104. Vandenberg Papers, p. 240.
- 105. US Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1946, pp. 469-470.
- 106. Report of the Fifth Committee, Scale of Contributions of the United Nations Budgets for 1946 and 1947 and the Working Capital Fund, December 13, 1946, A/274.
 - 107.Luck, Mixed Messages, pp. 226-228.
- 108. As of April 1, 1947, 77 percent of the arrears for the Working Capital Fund were due from the United States, as well as 42 percent of the arrears for the 1945 regular budget. The United States had also made no payment in its assessments for the 1947 budget, which had been due in January. See House, *Congressional Record*, 80th Congress, 1st session, vol. 93, pt. 4, May 2, 1947 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1947), p. 4466.
 - 109. Luck, Mixed Messages, op. cit., pp. 229-230.
- 110. John G. Stoessinger and Associates, *Financing the United Nations System* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1964), pp. 140-156 on the Court decision and pp. 106-124 on other aspects of the crisis.
- 111. Quoted in Ruth B. Russell, *The United Nations and United States Security Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1968), p. 202.
- 112. UN General Assembly, Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, A/AC.121/PV.15, August 16, 1965, p. 12.
- 113. House Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations and the Subcommittee on International Operations, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Impact of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings on US Contributions to International Organizations*, 99th Cong., 2d sess., 1986 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1986), # 86-H381-79, p. 4.
 - 114. Ibid.
 - 115. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 116. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, *US Financial and Political Involvement in the United Nations*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1985), p. 6.
 - 117. Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Impact of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings*, p. 7.
- 118. See Section 143 of Public Law 99-93 [H.R. 2068]; August 16, 1985. The law refers to this matter as one of "voting rights."

- 119. See, in particular, the comments of Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas and Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana, two moderate Republican internationalists, during the floor debate on her amendment. Then Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Lugar stated that he supported the amendment and saw it as a means of signaling the United Nations and of spurring a negotiation on the "proportionality" of the US assessment. See US Congress, Congressional Record, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, vol. 131, part 11 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1985), 14937-14940. In her original amendment, Senator Kassebaum included both this condition on weighted voting and a second one stipulating that the United Nations and the agencies would have to adopt "a plan to reduce salaries and pensions of the organization's employees to a level no higher than that paid United States Civil Service employees for performing comparable duties, adjusted as appropriate for differences in the cost of living in the United States and the duty post of the employee." For the text of the amendment, see p. 14937. It was passed that day easily by the Senate, by a 71 to 13 vote. The thrust of the original amendment by Representative Gerald Solomon, Republican of New York, was offered and passed in the House on May 8, 1985 by voice vote, without any members speaking against it. His amendment also differed from the final result. Solomon's amendment called for striking \$52 million, or 15 percent of the amount the United States was assessed for the regular UN budget in FY1987. According to his calculus, such a cut was justified because three-quarters of the regular budget was devoted to administrative and personnel costs and UN personnel were compensated at a rate at least 20 percent higher than their US civil service counterparts. See House, Congressional Record, May 8, 1985 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1985), 99th Congress, 1st session, vol. 131, part 8, pp. 11096-11098.
- 120. House Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations and Subcommittee on International Operations, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Recent Developments in the United Nations System*, 100th Cong., 2d sess., 1988 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1988), #88-H381-61, p. 66.
- 121. A/40/PV.43, pp. 67-68. Earlier that month, Sadruddin Aga Khan and Maurice F. Strong, two widely respected former international civil servants, had called for the cap to be lowered to 10 percent with the difference to be made up by the middle powers. See article by Aga Khan and Strong, "Proposals to Reform the U.N., 'Limping' in its 40th Year," *The New York Times*, October 8, 1985.
 - 122. A/40/PV.7, p. 26.
 - 123. Sub-paragraphs 2(a) and 2(b) of resolution 40/237 of December 18, 1985.
- 124. See statement of Japan, A/40/PV.121, pp. 7-8, as well as comments by Mexico, A/40/PV.121, p. 16, Syria, A/40/PV.121, p. 27, and Burundi on behalf of the African group, A/40/121, p. 41.
- 125. For a summary of economies, see Tapio Kanninen, *Leadership and Reform: The Secretary-General and the UN Financial Crisis of the Late 1980s* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1995), pp. 44-45, and for the full list see Report of the Secretary-General, *Current Financial Crisis of the United Nations*, A/40/1102, April 12, 1986, pp. 5-8, paragraphs 15-31.
- 126. Sub-paragraph (c) of resolution 40/572, Current Financial Crisis of the United Nations, May 9, 1986. For the Secretary-General's proposed cutbacks, see his report to the Assembly, A/40/1102 and its addenda.
- 127. Tapio Kanninen, *Leadership and Reform*, p. 51. According to Kanninen, the Secretary-General also suggested budgetary reform and staff reductions as additional topics for the group.

Frustrated by the US employment of withholdings as a tool to prod changes within the Organization, the Secretary-General and some prominent UN supporters had called for lowering the ceiling on contributions from a single Member State. In speaking to journalists, the Secretary-General went so far as to advocate a reduction in the US assessment to 15 or 20 percent and a raise in the rates for others. In fact, he suggested that the Five Permanent Members pay "more or less the same amount." See Elaine Sciolino, "U.N. Chief Suggests U.S. Contribution Be Cut," *The New York Times*, April 29, 1986.

- 128. Ibid., p. 73.
- 129. Report of the High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, A/41/49, August 15, 1986, p. 4, paragraph 19. Also see p. 7, paragraph 22 and Recommendation 8, pp. 7-8.
 - 130. Ibid., Recommendations 9-13, pp. 8-9.
- 131. *Ibid.*, Recommendations 1-7, pp. 4-6. Recommendation 38, p. 18, urged a reduction in official travel and limiting first-class travel to the Secretary-General.
 - 132. Ibid., Recommendations 63-67, pp. 24-25.
- 133. Maurice Bertrand, the French expert in the group, reports that he found it "paradoxical" that his colleagues were so ready to call the Secretariat "overstaffed, badly organized and mismanaged," yet were so reluctant to criticize the performance of the Secretary-General as the administrative head of the Organization. Bertrand, *The Third Generation World Organization* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1989), p. 111.
 - 134. A/41/49, p. 1, paragraph 4.
 - 135. Ibid., p. 10, paragraph 30.
- 136. *Ibid.*, Recommendation 15, pp. 11-12. As discussed below, the implementation of staff reductions at the United Nations was added in 1987 as one of three conditions for full US payment of its assessment.
- 137. *Ibid.*, Recommendations 16-40, pp. 12-18. One specific recommendation was for a 30 percent cut in the use of consultants. Recommendation 35, p. 17.
 - 138. Bertrand, The Third Generation, p. 113.
- 139. A/41/49, Recommendations 55 and 57, pp. 22-23. As discussed below, a year later the implementation of this proposal became one of three conditions imposed for full US payment of its assessment. According to a State Department report, "the Soviet countries and the Chinese did not agree to these recommendations and a reservation was entered into the Group of 18 report." Report by the President to the Congress for the Year 1986, *United States Participation in the U.N.* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1987), p. 307.
 - 140. Bertrand, The Third Generation, p. 112.
 - 141. A/41/49, pp. 26-28, paragraphs 57-68.
- 142. While expressing his "serious disappointment" in their ability to produce a consensus on this key item, Tom Vraalsen, the group's chair, underlined that "the members of the group moved a long way toward a common position, and their report should provide a good basis for shaping the answer during the coming General Assembly." See Tom Vraalsen, "What Will Keep

- the U.N. Afloat?: Full Support in Funding," *The New York Times*, September 15, 1986. The group sought to work by consensus as much as possible, so there was no public disclosure of which experts favored which options. It was widely believed, however, that the basic divide, as expected, fell between larger and smaller contributors, with the five African experts especially skeptical of a consolidated budget mechanism that would operate by consensus. For two somewhat different accounts of this division, see comments attributed to the US Mission to the United Nations in "Report at U.N. Backs Cuts of 1,700 Jobs," *The New York Times*, August 21, 1986 and Margaret E. Galey, "Reforming the Regime for Financing the United Nations," *Howard Law Journal*, vol. 31, no. 4 (1988), p. 565.
- 143. A/41/49, Recommendation H (1), p. 31. This first option (a) includes Recommendations A through H, pp. 29-31.
 - 144. *Ibid.*, the second option (b) includes Recommendations A through F, pp. 32-34.
- 145. *Ibid.*, Recommendation D, p. 35. The third option includes Recommendations A through D, pp. 34-35.
 - 146. Ibid., p. 28, paragraph 68.
- 147. While the Assembly also makes binding decisions on the appointment of the Secretary-General, it in essence ratifies the nomination put forward by the Security Council.
- 148. Just three days before 41/213 was adopted, the President reported to the Assembly that, while progress had been made, more consultations would be required before a plenary meeting could be scheduled to consider the draft text. A/41/PV.101, p. 92.
- 149. Michael J. Berlin, "U.N. Adopts Agreement to Trim Costs; Weighted Voting, Staff Cuts Approved," *Washington Post*, December 20, 1986.
- 150. Don Shannon, "State Department to Lobby Congress for U.N. Budget," *Los Angeles Times*, September 15, 1986 and James F. Clarity, Milt Freudenheim, and Katherine Roberts, "U.N.'s Bloated Bottom Line," *The New York Times*, August 24, 1986.
- 151. Assistant Secretary of State Alan Keyes, known as an outspoken critic of the United Nations and as a proponent of selective withholdings, warned that additional cutbacks passed by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees would jeopardize the "fundamental changes" proposed by the Group of 18. See Alan L. Keyes, "Why Imperil U.N. Reform?", The New York Times, September 25, 1986. The American expert in the Group of 18, José S. Sorzano, wrote that US withholdings were "not indiscriminate and destructive 'UN bashing' actions," but rather "selective and legitimate responses that target specific abuses" and were tied to progress in the UN reform process. See José S. Sorzano, "The Congress Is Not 'Bashing' the UN," Christian Science Monitor, August 19, 1986. Representative Dante B. Fascell, Democrat of Florida and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, on the other hand, accused Congress and the Reagan Administration of UN bashing; he noted that the United Nations was beginning to put "its house in order" and urged his Congressional colleagues to "provide adequate funding to enable the United Nations to get on with the more serious business at hand." See Dante B. Fascell, "Enough U.N.-Bashing," The New York Times, September 19, 1986. For newspaper coverage of the administration's turnaround, see George D. Moffett III, "Concern Grows as US Threatens to Cut UN Funding," Christian Science Monitor, August 29, 1986; Elaine Sciolino, "US to Pay U.N. \$100 Million," The New York Times, October 28, 1986, and Don Shannon, "State Department to Lobby Congress," Los Angeles Times.

- 152. Among the materials brought along to support this diplomatic trek were copies of a just-released report by a blue-ribbon panel of the United Nations Association of the United States of America that proposed a consensus-based budgeting mechanism similar to the one eventually adopted by the Assembly and that was signed by four African leaders, the influential foreign minister of a Latin American country, and Senator Kassebaum, among others. See The United Nations Management and Decision-Making Project, *U.N. Leadership: The Roles of the Secretary-General and the Member States* (New York: United Nations Association of the United States of America, December 1986). It was widely believed, based on this and other evidence, that Senator Kassebaum would find this consensus-based formula as sufficient to meet the purposes of her legislation.
- 153. For the statement of the President of the Assembly, including the opinion of the UN Legal Counsel, see A/41/PV.102, pp. 7-8.
 - 154. Bertrand, The Third Generation, p. 115.
- 155. Quoted in Elaine Sciolino, "U.N. Assembly Favors Plan to Alter the Budget Process," *The New York Times.* December 20, 1986.
 - 156. "Walters Says U.S. Should Restore U.N. Dues," The New York Times, December 21, 1986.
- 157.The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) was established by ECOSOC as a subsidiary body by resolution 920 (XXXIV) of 1962. Also see ECOSOC resolutions 1171 (XLI) of 1966 and 2008 (LX) of 1976. It serves as the principal subsidiary body of both ECOSOC and the General Assembly for planning, programming, and coordination. Its members are nominated by the Council and elected by the Assembly for three-year terms, according to a formula for equitable geographical distribution.
 - 158. Michael J. Berlin, "U.N. Adopts Agreement," Washington Post.
 - 159. United States Participation in the U.N., 1986, p. 306.
 - 160. "Walters Says U.S. Should Restore U.N. Dues," The New York Times.
 - 161. Michael J. Berlin, "U.N. Adopts Agreement," Washington Post.
 - 162. See the statement of the United States on that occasion, A/44/PV.84, pp. 17-21.
 - 163. A/RES/42/450, December 17, 1987.
- 164. To some extent, the Secretary-General acknowledged the shortcomings of this approach, though he doubted the feasibility of other options. *Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Resolution* 41/213, A/42/234, April 23, 1987, pp. 19-20, paragraphs 55 and 56.
- 165. Public Law 100-204, Section 143, December 22, 1987, Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989. The bill required the rationing of payments of assessed contributions to the United Nations in three parts: 40 percent on October 1st or later of the calendar year, another 40 percent once the president had made a determination, and notified Congress, that the United Nations had met three conditions, and the final 20 percent to be paid 30 days later if a Congressional joint resolution is not passed to prohibit payment. The three conditions related to proposals of the Group of 18 and provisions of 41/213, as follows: (i) the consensus-based decision-making procedure established by the General Assembly Resolution 41/213 is being implemented and its results respected by the General Assembly; (ii) progress is being made toward the 50 percent limitation on seconded employees of the Secretariat as called for by the

Group of 18; and (iii) the 15 percent reduction in the staff of the Secretariat (recommendations 55 and 57) is being implemented equitably among the nationals on such staff. For the UN specialized agencies, the law prohibited payment of more than 20 percent of their assessed budgets unless the president determined, and reported to Congress, that the agency had made "substantial progress" toward adopting and implementing budgetary decision-making procedures that would assure a larger voice for major contributors and "greater financial responsibility." In essence, Congress—a full year after the passage of 41/213—decided to ease one condition but to add two new ones before the United Nations could receive full funding.

166. Report by the President to the Congress for the Year 1988, *United States Participation in the UN* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1989), pp. 305-6.

167. Ibid., p. 309.

168. Ibid., pp. 309-310.

169. Elaine Sciolino, "Reagan, In Switch, Says U.S. Will Pay Some Old U.N. Dues," *The New York Times*, September 14, 1988 and Lou Cannon, "U.S. To Pay Dues, Debt to U.N.; White House Offers Olive Branch, Praise for Fiscal Reforms," *Washington Post*, September 14, 1988. Also, see Department of State, *United States Participation in the United Nations, Report by the President to the Congress for the Year 1988* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1989).

170. See the US statement to the Assembly on the consensus adoption of the 1990-1991 program budget, A/44/PV.84, pp. 17-21.

171. For a coherent and thoughtful set of proposals, very few of which have been implemented, see the report of the Independent Advisory Group on U.N. Financing, *Financing an Effective United Nations* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1993), especially pp. 25-26.

172. Renewing the United Nations, pp. 75-6, paragraphs 234-235, Actions 21-2.

173. *Ibid.*, pp. 19 and 78, paras 45-6 and 240-1. To answer some of the concerns about the implications of results-based budgeting, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) investigated the experiences of other UN agencies that had adopted it. See Andrzej T. Abraszewski, Fatih Bouayad-Agha, John D. Fox, and Wolfgang Münch, *Results-Based Budgeting: The Experience of United Nations System Organizations* (Geneva: JIU, 1999), JIU/REP/99/3. For an attempt to report on the work of the Organization based on outputs produced, see Report of the Secretary-General, *Programme Performance of the United Nations for the Biennium 2000-2001*, April 17, 2002, A/57/62.

174. *Ibid.*, p. 19, paragraph 44.

175. A/RES/48/218B, July 29, 1994. Also see A/RES/54/244, January 31, 2000.

176. For accounts of the withholding-reform cycles of the 1990s, see Margaret P. Karns and Karen A. Mingst, "The United States as 'Deadbeat'? U.S. Policy and the UN Financial Crisis," in *Multilateralism and US Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 267-294; Jeffrey Laurenti, *Financing the United Nations* (New Haven, CT: Academic Council on the United Nations System, 2001), pp. 18-20; Luck, *Mixed Messages*, pp. 212-23 and 241-53; and Luck, "American Exceptionalism and International Organization: Lessons from the 1990s," in *The United States and Multilateral Organizations*, eds. Rosemary Foot, Neil MacFarlane, and Michael Mastanduno (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

- 177. Public Law 103-26, signed April 30, 1994.
- 178. Status of Contributions as at December 31, 1989, ST/ADM/SER.B/325, and Status of Contributions as at December 31, 1999, ST/ADM/SER.B/554.
- 179. For summaries of several of the independent reports and documentation related to the working groups and to proposals by the Secretary-General, see Joachim Müller, *Reforming the United Nations: The Quiet Revolution* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2001).
- 180. David Stout, "Clinton Vetoes Measures to Pay \$1 Billion in Late U.N. Dues," *New York Times*, October 21, 1998.
- 181. For a brief summary of the provisions, see Karns and Mingst, "Deadbeat?," pp. 279-80. Several of the budgetary and oversight provisions also had to be carried out by the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the International Labour Organization, so payments to the United Nations could have been jeopardized by resistance to change in agencies independent of the United Nations.
- 182. For accounts of this process by three of his aides, see Derek Chollet and Robert Orr, "Carpe Diem: Reclaiming Success at the United Nations," *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2001, pp. 7-18 and Suzanne Nossel, "Retail Diplomacy: The Edifying Story of UN Dues Reform," *The National Interest*, no. 66 (Winter 2001/02), pp. 94-105.
- 183. A/55/PV.89, December 23, 2000, p. 11. It should be noted that, while there is a set ceiling for US assessments for the regular budget, its peacekeeping assessments, like those of the other permanent members, are calculated by adding a premium to its assessments for the regular budget. Other than for the Five Permanent Members, the peacekeeping assessment rate for Member States is based in part on *per capita* Gross National Product, so the rate will vary a bit for all 191 Member States from year to year.
- 184. The attempt to trumpet a new, more positive, era in US-UN relations can be seen in the record of the New York hearings, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Implementation of United Nations Reforms*, January 21, 2000, 106th Cong., 2d sess.
- 185. "United Nations Reform Initiatives Have Strengthened Operations, but Overall Objectives Have Not Yet Been Achieved," US General Accounting Office Report GAO/NSIAD-00-150 (May 2000). Also see Barbara Crossette, "U.S. Report Says the U.N. Has Improved with Changes," *New York Times*, May 29, 2000.
- 186. For accounts of the final negotiation and package, see Barbara Crossette, "After Long Fight, U.N. Agrees to Cut Dues Paid by U.S.," *New York Times,* December 23, 2000 and Colum Lynch, "U.S. Dues Cut Gets Support at the U.N.; Share to Fall to 22%; Debt Repayment Seen," *Washington Post,* December 23, 2000. For the General Assembly resolutions, see A/RES/55/5B-F (regular budget), December 30, 2000, and A/RES/55/235 (peacekeeping), December 30, 2000.
- 187. Lizette Alvarez, "House Approves \$582 Million for Back Dues Owed to the U.N.," *New York Times*, September 25, 2001 and Stephen Kinzer, "Approval on U.N. Post," *New York Times*, September 19, 2001.
- 188. A start is made in Knight, *A Changing United Nations*, and Kanninen, *Leadership and Reform*, though neither attempts to capture the full historical depth or sectoral breadth of the efforts that have been made to reform the world body. The series of volumes by Müller, of

which *Reforming the United Nations: The Quiet Revolution* is the latest, are useful compilations of documents, but have little analytical content.

189. A first cut was made in a study by this author of the impact of high visibility panel reports on the reform process. See Luck, "Blue Ribbon Power: Independent Commissions and UN Reform," *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 1, issue 1, pp. 89-104 (International Studies Association, 2000).

Suggested Readings

- Annan, Kofi. Report of the Secretary-General. *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform.* A/51/950, July 14, 1997.
- Annan, Kofi. Report of the Secretary-General. *Strengthening of the United Nations: An Agenda for Further Change.* A/57/387, September 9, 2002.
- Bertrand, Maurice. *Some Reflections on Reform of the United Nations.* Joint Inspection Unit. JIU/REP/85/9. Geneva: United Nations, 1985; also UN document # A/40/988, 6 December 1985.
- Brahimi, Lakhdar. *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations.* The "Brahimi Report." August 21, 2000. UN document# A/55/305.
- Carpenter, Ted Galen, ed., *Delusions of Grandeur: The United Nations and Global Intervention* (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1997).
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Suggested Research Topics and Exam Questions

- What does the UN Charter say about amending the Charter? Was it envisioned at the time of its writing that it would be amended? What were some of the controversies in 1945 that displeased some of the founders?
- Why is it difficult to amend the Charter and what is the role of the five permanent members in that process? Are there reforms that can take place without amending the Charter?
- Why is there such an impulse to reform the United Nations? Discuss what areas of the UN get the most attention for reform. What evidence over the years demonstrate this preoccupation with UN reform?
- Discuss the decision making bodies in the UN, what their tasks are, and how they have been reformed over the years. Have these reforms affected their ability to perform their duties? If so, in what way? How have the politics of the day played into these reforms?
- Discuss some of the major debates on reforming the Security Council. Why
 did the UN founders give the veto power to the five permanent members
 and how does the veto both affect Security Council reform and play into the
 debate on expansion?
- How has the end of the Cold War affected the UN reform debate?
- Discuss some of the several proposals to reform the membership of the Security Council. What are some of the problems and advantages of each approach? What is your opinion on which proposal is best? Should the Security Council be reformed, or not?
- What are some of the criticisms of management and coordination within the UN system? What efforts have been made to correct some of these problems? What are some of the major obstacles to improving the ability of the UN to do its job? What were some of Sir Robert Jackson's recommendations?
- How does the political will of member states impact on the functioning of the United Nations?
- What UN body decides the budget for the Organization and how is the budget determined? What did the founders anticipate the debates over the budget would be like? What is the most highly charged issue?

- What principle are UN assessments based upon? How have rates of assessments altered over the years and what have been some of the political debates surrounding that controversy? What rate was the US supposed to pay in the first years of the UN? How has that changed?
- How did UN peacekeeping upset the financial system at the UN? What happened when Russia and France refused to pay?
- How have various US administrations used the withholding of payment of assessed dues to extract UN reforms? What effect has the withholding of dues had on the Organization?
- What scale of assessment is used today and who pays what? What portion of the total US annual budget is paid to the UN in the form of regular dues?
 Do you think that US arguments over UN dues is a financial question or a political question?
- What reforms were undertaken by the UN in the 1990s? What additional reforms were enacted by Kofi Annan? How has the US responded and what has been the role of the US Congress and Congressional leaders like Jesse Helmes?
- How would you assess the history of UN reform? What are some of the
 most important reforms that the UN should undertake? What should it not
 do? Do you think that the pressure on the UN to reform has always been
 fair? What lessons can be learned by what has gone on before?
- Has the UN adequately adapted to the changing world environment even though the Charter has rarely been amended? In what ways has that happened or not happened?