NGO's and the Security Council

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Beginning around 1990, non-governmental organizations dramatically increased their contact with the UN Security Council. This chapter will consider why this happened, describe the new interaction, and analyze means used by NGOs to influence Council decisions. It will show that NGOs have had an impact on the Council's procedure, openness and field of vision, as well as a few significant legal and policy issues. On many matters of great importance, however, NGOs ran into frustrating and unshakeable opposition from veto-bearing permanent members, whose national interests ran counter to NGO priorities. NGOs are now more savvy about the Council and they are better aware of the possibilities and limitations of its realpolitik. They continue to promote a vision of legality and human security, believing that it must steadily gain ground over national interest, aggressive relations and the headstrong use of force.

Background

At the United Nations, non-governmental organizations enjoy official status only with the Department of Public Information and with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).[1]Article 71 of the Charter speaks of NGO consultation with ECOSOC and many texts regulate these relations, but no official texts authorize or encourage NGO relations with the Security Council. The organization's founders saw the need for NGO consultation on such ECOSOC issues as labor, health and social policy. But in 1945 and for long thereafter, governments considered issues of peace and security to be their unique province. Council practice, including the formality of Council deliberations and the special powers of the five permanent members (P-5), as well as outright hostility from Council members, discouraged most NGOs from working with the Council for the next forty-five years. As the world changed after the Cold War, under the influence of globalization and the politics of the single superpower, NGOs began to assume a new role in the peace and security realm.

The international community of NGOs, numbering in the millions, is an extremely diverse group. Some are large international confederations, while others are very small local groups. Some have ample budgets while others are chronically short of funds. All are private, non-profit organizations, serving public purposes and most have specific policy mandates like disarmament or human rights. Compared to states, NGOs are very small and have no capacity to wage war, levy taxes or enforce sovereign authority. Their strength lies in their committed members, capable staff, transnational values and substantial moral authority.

NGOs affiliated with the UN tend to be among the largest and most important NGOs. To work effectively in the UN arena, they must demonstrate international recognition and public credibility as well as high quality work. Secretary General Kofi Annan has called them 'the conscience of humanity'. The NGOs that approached the Security Council were among the world's most respected and effective -diverse in their mandates and policy preferences, but united in their interest in peace and security.

Trends Favoring NGO Involvement

Beginning in the 1990s, several trends led towards greater NGO involvement with the Council. Firstly, in this period, the Council assumed a much more active program of work and began to meet on an almost continuous basis. In the six years from 1988 to 1993, the Council's total number of meetings and consultations grew nearly fourfold while its total resolutions and presidential statements increased more than six fold.[2] As the Council took unprecedented action in the area of sanctions, peacekeeping, election monitoring, policing, and post-conflict peace-building, NGOs with international policy mandates decided that they must follow the Council's work much more closely.

Secondly, Council delegations (and especially those of the ten Elected members, the E-10) faced a large and growing policy burden as the Council took on responsibilities in dozens of active crisis areas. The smaller delegations could not keep up with this pace. They urgently sought information, expertise and policy ideas from NGOs that could help them fulfill their responsibilities in the Council and act as a counter-weight to the large mission staffs and vast intelligence capabilities of the Council's P-5.[3] Even larger and richer E-10 missions were grateful for assistance in policy formulation and support for their national positions with international public opinion.

Thirdly, in this period, NGOs were assuming a larger role in international affairs and a greater influence in shaping public opinion on international policy issues. Council members found it much more difficult to brush them off as insignificant or irrelevant to the Council's deliberations, since in many crisis areas NGOs remained active on the ground after the UN and government aid agencies had left the scene. Further, NGO public advocacy and media campaigns often shaped public understanding of the crises and created public pressure on governments to act. NGOs, then, increasingly appeared as actors in the policy process that could not be ignored and whose goodwill and support was useful, and at times even essential, to the success of government policies and Council initiatives.

Fourthly, because the Council's work increasingly addressed civil wars, the collapse of government authority, and internal strife “not interstate wars as had been largely the case previously“ its work entered an arena where the expertise and action of NGOs was especially critical. In every crisis, NGOs were present, struggling to feed the hungry, care for the sick, shelter the homeless and protect the vulnerable. If the Council was to end such conflicts, it obviously had to seek more than formal peace agreements between belligerents. Rather, Council-built peace depended on economic and social development, respect for human rights, disarmament, and other areas of NGO expertise. Member states did not always have such benign goals in these crises, of course, but formally and publicly, the Council was in the business of seeking and promoting such goals and no state could be seen to oppose them.

And fifthly, as awareness of globalization emerged, the international public began to recognize the 'democratic deficit' in the global decision making process. Such a democratic deficit was especially evident in the Security Council, with its Permanent members and vetoes. Indeed, after 1990, the Council's deliberations had become more secretive and unaccountable than ever, with meetings largely held behind closed doors in private 'consultations of the whole'.[4] Critics of the Council, including many influential government delegations, argued that the Council's work lacked legitimacy because its practices included so little transparency or public accountability. Countries providing troops and other personnel for the Council's increasing peacekeeping missions grew irate that the

Council was placing their nationals at risk with scarcely any explanation or accountability. The Nordic countries and Canada urged better Council consultation with 'Troop Contributing Countries' while the Non-Aligned Movement called for a full-scale reform of the membership and procedures of the Council itself. On December 3, 1993, reflecting these pressures, the General Assembly passed Resolution 48/26, setting up an Open Ended Working Group on Council reform.

As criticism of the Council grew, a number of delegations came to see increased Council interaction with NGOs as an essential step towards a more legitimate and effective international political and legal order. As we shall see, they felt that NGOs could join with states to produce better policy results. Some also felt that NGO partnerships could help counterbalance the power of the Permanent Members in the Council, especially the U.S. superpower. Powerful states, they believed, often had a nefarious self-interest in conflicts, hobbling the Council with a 'foxes guarding the chicken coop' system of power. NGOs, they hoped, could expose these practices to public scrutiny and give pause to the worst abuses, yielding a more lawful, legitimate and peace-promoting Council. [5]

The setting, then, proved far more advantageous than in the past for NGOs. But it still remained quite unwelcoming. Permanent Members of the Council sternly resisted NGOs scrutiny of their special terrain. Many elected members also had doubts, because their governments had faced negative comments from human rights organizations and other critics from the NGO community. NGOs nonetheless began to make sporadic contacts with the Council as an institution, or with individual Council members. And, conversely, Council members reached out to NGOs.

The new contacts arose mainly from urgent international crises such as the Gulf War in 1991 and the Somalia crisis in 1993. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda, during which the Council had remained shockingly inactive, alerted human rights and humanitarian NGOs to the need for regular communication and advocacy. The Balkan wars, the conflict in Chechnya, the deepening Palestine crisis, and conflicts in central and western Africa had a similar effect: the post-Cold War world was obviously not going to be an era of peace, and NGOs could not count on states to solve these problems. NGOs with such concerns, however, had little or no regular representation at UN headquarters in the early 1990s. Nor were they familiar with the Council, its arcane traditions or its secretive working methods.

Models and Beginnings

Four organizations offered models for interaction with the Council, attracting the interest of NGO newcomers. The Quaker United Nations Office, representing the worldwide religious Society of Friends, had perhaps the longest-standing

relations of an NGO with Council members. For many decades, it had organized informal gatherings of delegates and experts at nearby Quaker House to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes in a low-key atmosphere. A more recent player was the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), a venerable body working to protect and assist victims of armed conflicts and to defend international humanitarian law. The ICRC had set up an office in New York in the early 1980s and it had established regular relations with Council members. Gaining UN Observer status in 1991, the ICRC strengthened its access, including regular meetings with Council Presidents. Council members turned to the ICRC because of its very high reputation, its legendary neutrality, its quiet diplomacy, and its unique sources of information on field conditions in crisis areas. [6] Though not an NGO, the ICRC was also not a state, so it bridged the two worlds and helped to erode the 'states only' thinking of Council members.

The Stanley Foundation and the International Peace Academy (IPA) provided different models. Both were specialized NGOs involved in policy research and adept at organizing conferences and roundtables on key policy issues. Stanley, based in Iowa and without a direct New York presence, had nevertheless organized influential private conferences since the 1960s several times each year on peace and security issues, which Council ambassadors and high UN officials attended. IPA, founded in 1970, had headquarters directly across the street from the UN and had built a solid reputation based upon longtime work on peacekeeping. In 1990, IPA began a series of well-received Roundtable meetings on a variety of Council issues, assembling high-ranking diplomats, executives, lawyers, academics, and others.

Such precursors had expanded Council members' comfort zones with NGOs. The newcomers of the 1990s brought a different type of NGO into the picture - large, international, membership-based NGOs like Amnesty International, Oxfam International and Medicines sans Frontiers/Doctors without Borders (MsF). These organizations operated less discretely and often through international public campaigns, with well-orchestrated press mobilization and pressures through affiliates directly in national capitals. They were bound to encounter resistance as they approached the Council for the first time. Still, they came to the table with large information networks, field presence in conflict areas, and wide public support.

Amnesty International was one of the first NGOs of this new type to begin an active advocacy. In 1991, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, Amnesty presented a major paper to the Council advocating human rights monitors for Iraq. Amnesty'™s Secretary General came to New York for meetings with Council ambassadors to argue for the monitors concept. Thereafter, Amnesty sent periodic letters to the Council and Amnesty'™s representative regularly attended Council meetings as an observer. The representative also met privately with

Council Presidents and delegations. As Amnesty'™s work progressed, it gained increasingly effective access to key diplomats. Behind the crisp, lawyerly positions of Amnesty lay an impressive research department and an aggressive press section in London, not to mention tens of thousands of letter-writing members ready to bombard foreign ministers and set in motion embarrassing parliamentary questions.

The NGO Working Group on the Security Council - First Steps

In May 1994, six months after the General Assembly set up the new Working Group on Security Council reform, a major NGO conference took place in New York on Council reform, greatly stimulating NGO thinking about the Council and building ties between NGOs and reform-minded ambassadors with Council experience. In early 1995, a group of NGOs under the leadership of Global Policy Forum (GPF) founded the NGO Working Group on the Security Council to pursue reform issues.[7] After a year, as the reform process languished in the General Assembly and NGO ties to delegations grew, the group shifted its focus to "dialogue"? with Council members. Skeptics thought this an unattainable goal, but success came surprisingly quickly, thanks to strong support from several E-10 members.

Ambassador Juan Somavía of Chile, a former NGO leader himself, joined the Council in January 1996 and began actively promoting Council contact with NGOs. Somavía emphasized in particular how the civil wars on the Council'™s agenda made action on the basis of traditional diplomacy much more difficult. "Under those conditions,"? he argued, a stronger link must evolve between the United Nations, the Security Council and organizations like Oxfam -- who are on the ground, doing humanitarian work, who are touching those societies, looking into the eyes of the people in danger, learning who they are and what is going on and who the factions are and what relations people have with their leaders -- much of which never gets to the table of the Security Council. [8]

In late 1996, Somavía and a number of other NGO-friendly delegates encouraged NGOs to request a monthly briefing from the Council president, as a step towards more regular interaction. As it turned out, P-5 members blocked this modest proposal when the Council took up the matter. Instead, the Council decided that Members could give "national"? briefings to NGOs and Ambassador Paolo Fulci of Italy offered to oblige as soon as he stepped down from the presidency in January.

For the meeting with Fulci, the Working Group leadership decided to invite a select group of respected NGO representatives, with special knowledge and program focus on the Council. Working Group leaders were convinced that this approach would be the most workable and most consistent with finding

"legitimate"? NGO voices that would command respect and access from Council members.

A Regular Meeting Process

The Fulci meeting launched a process that was soon to include virtually all Council members. Some newly-elected members of 1997, notably Ambassador Antoñio Monteiro of Portugal, acted as crucial allies and sponsors in this next phase. The membership of the Working Group soon grew to nearly thirty, adding a number of important organizations that had set up regular representation at the UN, including MsF, Oxfam International, CARE International and Human Rights Watch. Over the next five years, other organizations would establish a presence at the UN, or strengthen their representative offices, steadily increasing the power and capacity of the NGO community.

The NGO Working Group eventually met each ambassador on the Council on a regular basis. Though the P-5 had opposed formal NGO contact, they joined this informal process with surprisingly little hesitation. Evidently, once the meetings were under way, P-5 diplomats wanted to present their own national viewpoint and they hoped to gain NGO support for their national policies and initiatives. E-10 members were more natural partners of the NGOs, however. Most often, NGOs turned to Elected members for information and joint initiatives. Elected members, lacking Major Power status and Council vetoes, had the most to gain by working with NGOs.

Working Group meetings, currently held about four times per month, provide a central and ongoing point of contact between key NGOs and the Council. [9] At the same time, NGOs have developed a range of other activities and initiatives that compliment and deepen this process.

The Arria Formula

From their earliest contact with the Security Council, NGO representatives yearned to speak to the whole Council, rather than meeting with Council members one-by-one. In the Council itself, some Elected members had a similar vision. Juan Somavía was one. He believed that humanitarian NGOs would have a strong claim on the Council'™s attention, so he proposed that key humanitarian NGOs make presentations in an "Arria Formula Briefing,"? an informal process devised in 1993 to enable the Council hear the views of outsiders.[10] The P-5 opposed this use of the Arria Formula, however, preferring that such meetings be restricted to heads of state and other top officials. Eventually, Somavía tried to modify the Arria Formula by adding non-Council delegates as well. This " Somavía Formula"? met on February 12, 1997, with three humanitarian NGOs "“ Oxfam, MsF and CARE "“ as well as the ICRC, to discuss the crisis in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. During the meeting and in a press conference afterwards, the organizations were highly critical of the

Council'™s failure to take action and to find political solutions in the region, and outcome with which P-5 delegations were not pleased. [11] The " Somavía Formula"? never got a second chance.

Soon afterwards, Antoñio Monteiro returned to the Arria Formula and argued that not only humanitarian but also human rights voices should be heard. A campaign by Portugal, with the support of Chile, Sweden and others, culminated in the fall of 1997. After much hesitation, the Council overcame P-5 objections and agreed to hold a briefing with Pierre Sané, Secretary General of Amnesty, on September 15, 1997. Monteiro tried hard to win further Arria-style briefings with NGOs, but the P-5 kept the matter frozen for another two and a half years. Finally, in early 2000, as delegates came to see interaction with NGOs as normal, and even advantageous, the Arria possibility reappeared on the political horizon.

On April 12, 2000, Ambassador Peter van Walsum of the Netherlands convened an Arria briefing on "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict"? with CARE, Oxfam and MsF, the threesome originally invited by Somavía. Canada"™s ambassador Robert Fowler, President of the Council, engineered the briefing and won P-5 support. Five days later, the Council debated the same subject, with the Canadian Foreign Minister in the Presidential chair, and eventually the related Resolution 1296 was adopted. NGOs were happy to debut as Canada"™s supporting cast. Everyone understood that the policy interests of like-minded states were crucial to NGO progress. The Arria Formula was thence open to regular NGO use.

In the next two years, the Council held five or six Arria Briefings annually with NGOs. No further opposition arose to NGO briefings as such, though many briefings proposed by NGOs were blocked because of political objections to the subject matter (Kashmir and Sudan being two notable cases).

As the Arria process continued, however, it lost some of its appeal. NGOs devoted much time and expense to give the Council their very best " presenting top leaders, key policy experts and grassroots voices from the crisis regions. But the briefings seemed to shorten and far fewer ambassadors or other top diplomats attended. Consequently, NGOs lowered their expectations and sought briefings less eagerly than at first. Though the Arria Formula was a precedent worth gaining, it offered, on balance, only a modest payoff.

Informal Channels

By contrast to the disappointments of the Arria briefings, NGOs valued the increasing informal communication with Council delegations, especially private meetings between representatives of a single NGO and delegates from a single mission, often referred to in UN parlance as "bilateral"? meetings. As we have already seen, E-10 delegations urgently needed good information as the Council

expanded its scope and as the tempo of Council meetings increased. The E-10 could not get adequate information from their ministries, nor could they trust the information offered by the P-5. They found media sources often sketchy and unreliable. So they welcomed NGO information, seeing it as trustworthy, timely and richly-detailed.

In April 1994, delegations were shocked at P-5 secrecy (and Secretariat silence) as the genocide in Rwanda was unfolding. New Zealand ambassador Colin Keating, President of the Council, invited MsF and the ICRC to brief him, while the Czech ambassador invited an expert from Human Rights Watch to his residence to brief all E-10 members. Rwanda firmly established NGOs as indispensable information sources.

NGOs were increasingly well-equipped to provide first-rate information. As they got to know the Council and learned its Program of Work, they could intervene on precisely the questions delegates were grappling with. Humanitarian organizations with field operations like MsF, CARE, World Vision, Save the Children and Oxfam were especially well-placed to produce strategic information. So were the big human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty. By the late 1990s, NGO representatives received a steadily-rising flow of daily emails bringing timely information from the field. About the same time, as mobile phone service grew more common and came into operation via satellite, NGO representatives could place calls to field representatives in crisis-ridden locations of Africa or Asia, garnering the latest information for a briefing with a Council ambassador.

In addition to the large, international NGOs, other influential NGO players began to take advantage of the new environment. The International Peace Academy increased the tempo of its breakfast and luncheon briefings, which offered expert analysts, talking on very current topics. Ambassadors and other high-level delegates on the Council frequently attended. In 2001, the Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG), opened an office in New York and began to provide its own original information briefings to delegations. With a large network of researchers deployed in crisis areas, the ICG offered delegations valuable strategic information. In May 2002, an ICG representative was even invited to join the Council on its field mission to the Great Lakes region.

London-based Global Witness (GW) won standing in 1998 with a powerful report, "A Rough Trade,"? that linked the diamonds sold by the rebel UNITA forces in war-wracked Angola to the giant DeBeers company and other Western diamond interests. The report attracted such attention that Global Witness leaders were invited to meet with the Security Council'™s Angola sanctions committee less than a month after publication. Soon, under Canadian leadership, the Council toughened its sanctions enforcement, using many innovative techniques. Three

years later, UNITA collapsed, unable to finance its forces, bringing and end to a terrible, decades-long civil war.

Global Witness showed how a compelling and original analysis could mobilize public support, affect government positions and change thinking and action in the Council. In this case, diamonds'™ value depended on their symbolism of purity and beauty. An international campaign associating diamonds with a corrupt, violent and ugly civil war threatened the industry and governments that defended it. Official positions changed rapidly as the media took up the "Blood Diamond"? theme. This was NGO advocacy at its best and most effective.

Reports and the Internet

As NGO interest in the Council increased, and as NGO thinking about global security deepened, NGO policy papers, advocacy books and web sites had a growing sway over the shape of issues. This influence was due not to a few clever thinkers, but to NGOs'™ unique vantage point, novel mandates, and rapid research deployment. Ever-more-busy Council delegates felt compelled to read and pay attention to documents like IPA books, MsF and ICG reports, and Human Rights Watch policy papers.[12]

New technologies reinforced the power of NGOs, helping them knit together and mobilize global like-minded constituencies. Computers, fax machines and cheaper international telecom costs had propelled the first wave of global networking in the early 1990s. Advances in email and mobile telecom carried the process further still. The emerging technology of the world wide web gave NGOs an unparalleled new opportunity to circulate their reports directly to a global public at very low cost.

NGOs used their web sites to post information and analysis on conflicts and on the work of the Security Council. These reports could reach hundreds of thousands of worldwide readers. Newspapers, television and other media came to rely on the web, further magnifying the power of this new information system and the NGOs that used it to good effect. At the very end of the 1990s, Council delegations themselves started to use the web more commonly, for their own research on Council issues, enabling NGOs to reach them directly in this new way.

Eventually, Council delegations saw the value of establishing their own web sites. By 2001, sites of larger delegations posted not only official speeches to the Council, but also policy papers, news conferences, draft resolutions and many other documents. With NGO encouragement, Slovenia (1998-99), Canada (1999-2000) and Singapore (2001-2002) posted special web-based information during their presidencies, including extensive descriptions of the Council'™s work. The Council itself decided in 2001 to set up a Presidency area on the UN'™s web site.

By early 2003, that site posted the current Program of Work, wrap-ups and assessments of previous months, presidential statements, resolutions and transcripts of formal Council meetings. The site also posted streaming videos of the Council'™s meetings. The Council thus moved steadily away from the secrecy of the early and mid 1990s, when it did not even allow the Secretariat to tape record the Council President'™s press statements. NGO information culture, magnified by the web, had seeped into the Council, changing its outlook and working methods.

Further Lobbying Tools

NGOs developed many more advocacy tools to sway the Council. They wrote letters to the Council, at times as individual NGOs and at times as substantial international coalitions. Well-drafted and carefully-timed letters could sometimes gain the Council'™s attention and bring subtle influence to bear. NGOs also caught the Council'™s attention through conferences and meetings on Council-related policy topics. Stanley, Save the Children, the Quakers, the Mennonites, Hague Appeal for Peace and especially IPA organized events that attracted participation and attendance from Council delegates, nudging thinking at times in new directions.

NGOs lobbied Secretariat and other agency officials who viewed them as partners and friends and invited them to participate in task forces and special consultation meetings. NGOs especially tried to influence and improve the Council-mandated reports of the Secretary General, typically subject to intense P-5 pressure.

To strengthen their effectiveness and coordinate their advocacy, NGOs created ad hoc like-minded policy groupings. One such cluster brought together humanitarian agencies for regular meetings. Other groups assembled organizations interested in "Iraq,"? "Israel/Palestine,"? "Women and Peace and Security"? and "Children and Armed Conflict."? International contacts and networks widened the circle of such ad hoc advocacy and magnified the influence of these groups.

Security Council field missions to crisis areas in 2000 and after attracted special NGO lobbying action. Prior to the departure of the special missions, NGOs offered delegates fresh information on the areas to be visited and they urged that the travel programs include meetings with local NGOs. Ambassadors organizing the missions often saw NGO involvement as favorable to their national policy goals and actively sought NGO support. [13]

As NGOs gained experience in Council advocacy, many concluded that the most effective strategy combined diplomacy in New York with world-wide public advocacy campaigns. Amnesty had discovered this formula early on. Later,

similar techniques were adopted by other NGOs such as Save the Children, Oxfam, Human Rights Watch and, of course, Global Witness. Campaigning NGOs would mobilize pressure on parliamentarians, generate press exposure, garner statements by celebrities and sometimes stir high-profile boycotts or mass meetings. Armed with email and the web, NGOs could launch campaigns quickly, flexibly and inexpensively.

Brick Walls and Paradoxes

NGOs began their work with the Security Council in the early 1990s with high hopes, idealism and perhaps a certain amount of naivetÃ©. Some were inclined to believe that solutions could be found to even the worst crises if only enough patience, good information and effective analysis could be mobilized. These illusions were steadily dispelled by a close monitoring of the Council and a growing awareness of how it operated. NGOs became painfully aware how the P-5 had refused to act on the 1994 Rwanda genocide, how Council resolutions were disregarded and undermined by leading members, how powerful members sometimes issued economic threats to win important Council votes, how strategic resources like oil and diamonds could secretly drive Council deliberations and how ambassadors could be chastised or even recalled if they angered mighty opponents.

NGOs worked steadfastly on urgent issues such as Iraq, Sudan, the Balkans, the Great Lakes, disarmament, sanctions reform and the Israel/Palestine conflict, learning that support by a Council majority was not enough, no matter how just the cause. They faced the brick wall of P-5 vetoes, whether cast or threatened, most often by the United States. Close observation of the Council revealed an institution where, again and again, national interests prevailed over the interests of humanity and where at times power was exercised in a crude and even despotic way.

Paradoxically, though, the Council could at times overcome its worst tendencies and act wisely and well. Though all too rarely, it could rise above the squalor of state interests and bring peace in war-wracked places. So in spite of the many disillusions and setbacks, the Council offered NGOs some regular glimmers of hope.

Summing Up

In just ten years, NGOs developed a broad range of advocacy with Security Council members, from private bilateral meetings to mass-based campaigns. The influence of NGOs cannot be easily separated from the complex of pressures and influences on the Council and NGO accomplishment always came through alliance with Council allies and other international partners. In this light, some tentative conclusions are possible:

Greater Council Transparency and Accountability.

NGOs succeeded in learning a great deal about the Securit y Council and making information about its work far more available to the public. After more than a decade of NGO action, the public knows much more about the Council than before, and citizens are in a stronger position to demand accountability for Council action.

Better Information and Analysis Available to the Council.

NGOs succeeded in persuading many Council members to use and even rely on NGO information and analysis. This was especially true of the E-10, who not only welcomed such input from NGOs but actively sought it out. As a result, the P-5 intelligence monopoly was broken and the Council was much better informed, on a wider range of issues, than at the start of the 1990s and before.

Council Procedural Reforms.

NGOs successfully influenced changes in the Council'™s procedures, both formally and informally. Among other things, they established their own regular process of consultations with Council members, broadened the Arria Formula, gained more informative Mission web sites and greatly expanded UN information on the Council and its work. They nudged the Council into new approaches to its field missions, promoted expert panels to reinforce sanctions, and joined in pressures that resulted in far more frequent open meetings.

Legal and Political Policy Accomplishments.

NGOs had some limited success in influencing Security Council decisions in the legal and political domains. Such influence was clearest and strongest in "soft "? policy areas like Resolution 1209 (November 19, 1998) on "Illicit Arms Flows in Africa, "?Resolution 1296 (April 19, 2000) on "The Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict"? and Resolution 1325 (October 31, 2000) on "Women and Peace and Security."? NGOs also successfully persuaded the Council to include many references to humanitarian and human rights mandates in peacekeeping and other resolutions, as well as establishing three important criminal tribunals (Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. NGOs had an influence on a few hard policy areas, too, such as the tightened Angola sanctions beginning in the spring of 1999, eventually ending one of Africa'™s most terrible civil wars, and the continuation of an arms embargo in the volatile Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict (late 2000-early 2001). In these cases, NGOs acted in coalitions with like-minded Council members, usually E-10 delegations. The P-5 permitted these decisions because they did not interpret them as a challenge to their key national interests.

Disappointments & Blockages.

When, the P-5 have strong positions, as they often do, NGOs encounter immoveable opposition. On sanctions reform, Chechnya, the Middle East, Iraq,

and many other important issues, even the most vigorous NGO advocacy runs into the brick wall of P-5 (and especially often, United States) opposition, as national interests block key NGO concerns.

A Realist Idealism.

NGOs are often dismayed and disheartened by the realpolitik that they observe and by the needless human suffering that so often results. But no one expects, after all, that the Security Council is a Boy Scout lodge or a chapter of Amnesty International. With a dose of realism, NGOs can take encouragement from the measure of their rapid, if limited success and the breadth of their support by international public opinion. In just a decade, NGOs have established a remarkably strong standing in the Council arena. Their presence, if only on the outskirts, of this states-only club reflects tectonic shifts in the international order. Looking ahead, NGOs can hope that their work with the Security Council may eventually contribute to a stronger system of international law and a global order that will eventually ensure the values of peace, democracy and human dignity.

Endnotes

[1] Forty-one NGOs were first granted consultative status with ECOSOC in 1948, by 1968 377 had that status and by 2002 the number was over 2000. Additionally, there were about 1400 NGOs accredited to the Department of Public Information in 2002.
[2] During this period, the number of Council meetings grew from 55 to 171 and consultations from 62 to 253. The number of resolutions grew from 20 to 93 and presidential statements from 8 to 88. (Data from UN Secretariat, see Global Policy Forum: "Table on Meetings"? and "Table on Resolutions"?
[3] Smaller delegations have just five or six persons on their Security Council teams. Some African members have even less. In 2002 the total UN-based diplomatic staff of states that were Council members ranged from 7 (Mauritius) to 123 (United States). See Global Policy Forum, "Size of Missions."?
[4] The Council in this period rarely met in public sessions except to pass resolutions and conduct other official business. Almost no debate took place in such sessions. These practices began to change significantly in 2000 and after.
[5] Some of these perspectives are to be found in the speeches at the NGO conference on Security Council reform. See transcript in Global Policy Forum "1994 Conference."?
[6] The ICRC sends Delegates to crisis areas and it is also able to draw on information resources of the local Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. ICRC

delegates have unique access to prisoners, prisoners of war, concentration camps, and hospitals, as well as access to high-level government officials.
[7] The founding partners were Amnesty International, Earth Action, Global Policy Forum, the Lawyers'™ Committee for Nuclear Policy, the World Council of Churches, the International Women'™s Tribune Center and the World Federalist Movement.
[8] Somavía "Humanitarian Responsibilities"?
[9] Typically, these meetings last an hour and a half, bringing 18-20 NGO representatives in contact with an ambassador and (sometimes) other members of the ambassador'™s Council team. Delegates often find these meetings a refreshing change of pace from the interminable diplomatic discourse in the Council. From just 15 meetings in 1997, Working Group activity had grown by 2002 to 40 meetings with ambassadors and 5 with UN Under-Secretary-Generals. In 2001-2002, Working Group members also met with foreign ministers of the UK and Ireland.
[10] These meetings were invented by Ambassador Diego Arria of Venezuela during his term as a member of the Council. He first invited a Croat priest to talk to his colleagues over coffee in the Delegates'™ Lounge. See Paul, "Arria Formula."?
[11] The United States and France both opposed action. The US had told Council members that its intelligence satellite photos demonstrated no refugee emergency, but NGOs in the briefing testified otherwise. ?
[12] Examples of IPA books are Cortright, Sanctions and Stedman, Ending Civil Wars.
[13] UK ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock invited NGOs to brief Council members at the UK mission on September 28, 2000 prior to the departure of the Council field mission to Sierra Leone. This marked the beginning of regular NGO input into field missions.