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Chapter Fifteen

The UN in the Twenty-first Century

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Predictions of the demise of the United Nations are, Mark Twain-like, greatly exaggerated. Ambitions for a new world order mediated by American power are running aground in the inhospitable realities of Iraq. As one of the most multicultural and cosmopolitan of states, a good global citizen in word and often in deed, with interests in every corner of the globe, Canada benefits from its close relationship with the United States and from an effective multilateral system of governance. Managing relations with the United States is a perennial preoccupation for Ottawa, but Canada, whose principles largely constitute its power, equally needs a UN that is effective as both stage and actor. The health of the UN is not robust, however, and the membership is fractious at a time when the institution is being tested as rarely before. Clearly, reforms of the world organization are overdue and innovations in international governance are necessary. It is manifestly in Canada's interest as well as in its ability to assist the UN to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

It was not long ago that fate had seemed to smile again on the United Nations. In December 2001, Secretary-General Kofi Annan accepted the UN's eighth Nobel Prize for its "work for a better

organized and more peaceful world.”¹ The shame of the UN’s failure in Rwanda was receding in the collective consciousness, if not conscience. The guns were silent in Bosnia, and the UN was back in charge in Kosovo after sitting out the war. Following rocky starts, the UN’s military interventions in East Timor and in Sierra Leone and between Ethiopia and Eritrea were succeeding and saving lives. In the fall of 2000, seventy-five heads of government-record attendance at the time for a diplomatic conference-had come to New York for a Millennium summit and established very ambitious international economic and social development targets, the Millennium Development Goals.² The subsequent “Monterey consensus,” achieved at the 2002 conference on financing for development, seemed to express a new financial compact between rich and poor.³ The secretary-general had personally put HIV/AIDS back at the top of the international agenda, persuading (some say coercing) drug companies and governments to cooperate and, himself, raising hundreds of millions of dollars for the cause.

Scant months later, the Security Council split over Iraq and some of the UN’s harshest critics happily began writing its obituary. International public support for the UN was sagging, in the US because the world organization did not support the war in Iraq, and in the Muslim world especially, but elsewhere as well, because it did not prevent the war. The UN, at least the Secretariat, was reeling from its tragic personnel losses in

Iraq and burdened by the alleged scandal in the UN Security Council's Iraqi Oil for Food programme. Further, the sheer weight of coping with the world's most intractable problems was proving draining for a long-serving secretary-general and his increasingly fatigued staff.

It is evidence of the UN's resilience that it has persevered in the face of such difficulties and, even, begun to rally. Member countries have rediscovered the old maxim that multilateral cooperation is a necessary means to some important ends. The UN is not irrelevant, as President Bush implied in his UN General Debate statement in September 2002, but indispensable to the good management of international relations. As a consequence of the Iraq experience, it has become evident that the general concurrence of the world expressed through the UN remains necessary in order to confer legitimacy on acts of war and that that legitimacy is a prerequisite to broad-based, effective cooperation in the management of war's aftermath. Resolution 1546 of 8 June 2004, among other resolutions, helps to re-situate the UN at the heart of international relations.

In an integrating world, where international decision-making authority is allocated by means of informal "subsidiarity,"⁴ it is more evident than ever that overarching economic and social problems, such as climate change and communicable diseases, can best and often only be resolved globally. Most governments have come to the realization that the UN *per se* is central to such

global cooperation. All of this is not to say that the UN is sufficient unto itself. Nor that the universality of membership of the UN, which is integral to the organization's unique legitimacy, lends itself to efficiency. Nor that the UN is ready for the new challenges of a new era. Nor, more fundamentally, that a constitution written in and for another age, i.e., the Charter, which has come over time to contradict itself, can go on forever unamended. Reform is clearly and urgently needed.

[1]Dissatisfaction With The United Nations

Although by no means the only member dissatisfied with the UN, the discontent of the United States has been the most prominent and most consequential. In contemplating the way ahead, it is worth remembering that antipathy to the UN has not been a basic operating principle of past US administrations. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, early in his career a member of his country's League of Nations delegation, was the driving force internationally for the creation of a world body, against the judgment of some of America's major wartime allies. President Harry Truman was equally convinced of the need for such a world body, and made its establishment literally his first priority.⁵ President John F. Kennedy called in 1963 for the United Nations to become "a genuine world security system... capable of solving disputes on the basis of law."⁶ President Richard Nixon said the

US would go the extra mile to make the UN succeed. More recently, speaking at the inauguration of the Reagan Library, President Bill Clinton recalled that Ronald Reagan had said that the UN stood as a symbol of the hopes of all mankind for a more peaceful and productive world. For most of the UN's existence, then, United States administrations have seen an effective UN as in American interests and constructive participation in the UN as a civic duty. It is not evident that either proposition remains true today.

The US, whose domestic exercise of power is governed by a system of checks and balances, progressively came to realize that, with the demise of the Soviet Union, American power no longer faced check or balance abroad. In addition, American will and capacity for international leadership continued undiminished at a time when others, particularly other industrialized countries, were content to see Washington lead if it wanted to, in part because of the US's sheer capacity to do so, in part because they saw no international threat to themselves or obligation to others requiring heavy investments in military capability. They preferred to spend their money and effort on domestic programme needs. As a consequence of the leadership role others readily conceded to the US, and because of the considerable costs and risks of its self-appointed mission to propagate democracy, many in Washington on both sides of the political aisle came increasingly to see the US as bearing a

disproportionate burden and meriting exceptional dispensations from international law and norms.

The notion of America-as-exceptional harks back to the Puritan landing at Plymouth Rock⁷ and has ebbed and flowed in the American psyche ever since. De Tocqueville observed it in nineteenth century America⁸ and Margaret MacMillan discerned it in her recent study of the Paris peace talks of 1919.⁹ US "exceptionalism" gained modern currency in the 1980s when President Reagan borrowed from the Bible¹⁰ and from John Winthrop¹¹ for his favoured portrayal of the United States as the "shining city on a hill," the exemplar of democracy.

As Harold Koh of Yale, a former assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor has written, American "exceptionalism" unquestionably has its positive as well as its negative characteristics.¹² The US has exercised exceptional leadership, for example, in the development of postwar institutions, in the promotion of human rights and the development of international law and in the preservation of stability, particularly in North-East Asia. But from Iran in the fifties, to Vietnam in the sixties, to Chile in the seventies, to Iraq in the eighties, the US has chalked up some considerable errors. In its more self-serving expressions of exceptionalism, the United States has also questioned the applicability to itself of the UN Charter and of international law writ large, alienating many others in the process. It has also progressively

eroded the equality principle that most UN members consider integral to the democratic character of the UN Charter, much as the legal equality of American states is integral to the US Constitution, even if in both cases actual power correlations are otherwise. The US abuse of the UN Security Council and the Charter, in giving effect to its opposition to the International Criminal Court, was seen by many as exceptionalism taken to counterproductive lengths an unvarnished and unapologetic assertion of one law for the goose and another for the gander.

It was not always thus. At the end of the Second World War, when the US bestrode the world even more colossally than it does today, President Truman told the assembled UN delegates in San Francisco that "[w]e all have to recognize that no matter how great our strength, we must deny ourselves the license to do always as we please."¹³ Now, many in the US seem to expect to lead, not by example, but by exception.

11 September 2001 did not "change everything," but it did change some things, especially in the United States. A country that had pursued a policy of invulnerability by means of a high cost, high tech defence found itself unexpectedly vulnerable to a low cost, low tech attack, with horrific consequences. In response, the US administration propounded a national security strategy positing not just pre-emption, which is foreseen in international law, but prevention, which is not. The war in Iraq was actually preventive - to bring down a tyrant with

potentially malignant intentions and capabilities - but was presented as pre-emptive, to stop a tyrant who already had weapons of mass destruction.¹⁴ A preventive attack should, in theory, be based on unassailable evidence that an adversary has not just the capability but the intent to do great harm. It, also, presumes very high quality, if not irrefutable, intelligence on the part of the attacker, which was catastrophically absent in the Iraq case. The new national security strategy of the United States articulated an intent to dominate which, if carried to its logical conclusions, could eventually generate major, preventive wars, directly violating international law and US treaty obligations under the Charter.

Undermining the UN would in some American minds be neither an incidental nor an unwelcome consequence of American policy. Richard Perle, until the spring of 2003 chairman of the US Defense Policy Board, probably spoke for many members of the current US Administration when he professed to see two benefits from the war in Iraq: first, the disappearance of Saddam Hussein and, second, the end of the United Nations. "Thank God for the death of the UN," he wrote in *The Guardian*, in March 2003.¹⁵

It is not only the far right in the United States that has been expressing its dissatisfaction. More moderate Americans, such as Ivo Daalder, who served in the Clinton White House, have called for an Alliance of Democratic States that would either enhance the effectiveness of the world organization or replace

it.¹⁶ The common values of an Alliance of Democracies, it is argued, would confer a legitimacy on its decisions that would attract the respect of Americans, which the UN, a supposed rogues' gallery of despots, human rights abusers and mini-states, had definitively lost. This thesis confers too much rectitude on democracies, which are capable of self-serving action and chicanery and which have, contrary to popular belief, frequently been far from peace-loving. In any case, the UN membership is already two-thirds free or partly free.¹⁷ Resistance to US policy on Iraq was led in the Security Council by democratic governments. Further, it is precisely the non-democracies that must be persuaded if progress is to be made, for example, when human rights are at stake.

There was little in the reaction of the international community to the tragic events of 11 September to warrant putting sixty years of the development of international law, most of which previous US Administrations had promoted (and all of which was significant to Canadian interests), into jeopardy. After the al Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington, the UN General Assembly and the Security Council acted sympathetically to the United States and with despatch. On 12 September 2001, the General Assembly, which is not a decision-making body, issued a unanimous declaration of solidarity with the American people. Within days of 11 September, the UN Security Council, whose decisions are legally binding in international law,

proscribed cooperation with terrorists, ordering member states to deny them both safe haven and the use of national banking systems to finance their operations. The Council also established an oversight committee to monitor member states' compliance and to promote capacity-building in the poorer states. Many governments, the Canadian government included, sent troops to Afghanistan to fight the Taliban and Al Qaeda alongside the Americans. Many, also, committed themselves to spending substantial sums to lift Afghanistan out of its failed-state status, so that it would not again become a rear operating base for terrorists. Afghanistan became the largest recipient of Canadian funding, both in the Official Development Assistance and military categories.

By portraying the war against terrorism in indiscriminate and monolithic terms, Washington gave itself mission impossible. Terrorism is a heinous tactic but a tactic nonetheless, not a tangible enemy such as the Al Qaeda network that can be defeated. It also gave itself a hunting license to attack Iraq, despite the most tenuous links between Al Qaeda and the Iraqi regime and the absence of hard evidence of the existence there of weapons of mass destruction. The US also rode roughshod over the objections of the great majority of UN members, isolating itself in world public opinion. By conflating Iraq with the Palestinian-Israeli issue, US foreign policy became, in the eyes of many, the problem. It has not helped matters that throughout

the latter part of 2002 and the first quarter of 2003 some senior administration figures in Washington directed a steady stream of invective against the UN, an institution that, however flawed, most other members considered central to their national interests. In the process, the UN weapons inspectors were treated with surprising contempt, given that US and other intelligence services had depended on them to investigate third-party allegations. Those in Washington who still favoured multilateralism appeared to want it *à la carte*, to be a selective instrument for validating US action when Washington so wanted and to be ignored when it proved uncooperative.

Many influential Americans persuaded themselves that the potential nexus of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction meant that US security was best, in fact only, assured by the US acting free of the constraints of international law, multilateral institutions and quarrelsome allies. Books appeared describing self-serving theories of the inevitability of American dominion, justifying both its exceptionalist and unilateralist manifestations. Feckless allies were considered to owe the hegemon a decent loyalty, at least when it decided an action was in its vital interest, as in Iraq.¹⁸ There was no patience with disagreement, which was regarded as manifesting moralistic qualms or strategic quibbles. At no time did it seem to register in official Washington that a large number of UN member states disagreed that war in Iraq was necessary and

urgent and that their disagreement mattered, not least to the US's prospects of success there. Washington had tuned dissonance out.

Washington's dissatisfaction with the UN was mirrored in public opinion polls taken after the Iraq war that showed that the UN had lost support in two very different quarters: among the war's proponents, because the UN failed to sanction the war, and among the war's opponents, because it failed to prevent it. Although 55 per cent of Americans continued to view the UN positively, this was substantially down from pre-war figures. Outside of the US, a majority of those polled in Muslim countries had a much more negative opinion of the UN. For example, more than seven in ten Jordanians and nearly as many Moroccans expressed an unfavourable opinion.¹⁹ Turkey was the single exception to this trend; a bare plurality viewed the UN positively.

Washington, with the bottom falling out of its standing in the Arab world,²⁰ its Iraq enterprise in jeopardy and the November 2004 elections at risk, came to see the utility of greater UN engagement. And, in fact, the UN played an indispensable role in the creation of an interim Iraqi government. Washington appeared to recognize that it needed the cooperation of UN and its members. What was less clear was the extent to which a weakened UN could help retrieve such a flawed enterprise.

[1]The UN Has Its Own Problems

In attacking Iraq against the will of the international community, and in mishandling the occupation, the US did itself, and the UN, incalculable harm. Nevertheless, it would simply be wrong to lay all the UN's misfortunes at Washington's door. Rote apologies for the UN are no less damaging than mindless attacks on it. The UN Charter was written in and for a different age and treats national sovereignty as an absolute and constant good. As a consequence, over time a contradiction has arisen between the most basic purpose of the UN, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," and one of its cardinal tenets, state sovereignty.²¹ Because most of today's wars, the Iraq war being a significant exception, currently arise within the borders of existing states, the inhabitants often cannot be protected without intervention from outside. There is no consensus on how to respond to this new reality. Equally, there is no agreement on how to reform the ageing, unrepresentative Security Council, still the most important political/security body on earth.

Fundamentally, the UN's strength, universal membership, has also become its weakness. Its membership has swollen to 191 countries, making the achievement of consensus on any issue a Sisyphean task. As the UN has expanded and the world economy has been globalized, disparity between the richest and poorest has deepened, making the North-South economic divide ever more

pronounced. Poverty eradication and development became the near exclusive compass points of the South, which often dismissed security as an issue of interest primarily to the North and of little consequence to the South. The poorer countries, feeling vulnerable to the more powerful states, especially to the sole superpower, banded ever more resolutely together in the hoary Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and G-77. Combined with the strong preference for consensus in the General Assembly, this herd instinct made lowest-common-denominator outcomes the norm and provided a ready tool for political mischief, which was happily exploited by spoilers in the service of long dead ideologies and activists and reactionaries with dubious political objectives. Further, faced with the impossibility of moving the Security Council on Middle Eastern issues, largely because of the US veto, the Arabs under Palestinian leadership made the General Assembly their default forum. They have ready allies in much of the South, which has only relatively recently emerged from occupation and/or colonialism and which identifies with the Palestinians' powerlessness and plight.

Meanwhile, regional groups, which are indispensable to the efficient administration and management of the business of UN bodies, have themselves sometimes produced destructive electoral outcomes, notably in the stunningly counterproductive election of Libya to the chair of the Commission on Human Rights. Under these various pressures, the General Assembly has come to be

seen in some countries, notably in the US, but also in Canada, as more theatre than parliament, with performances that are usually ignored outside the UN's immediate precincts, except where they censure Israel.

The world has also changed. There is very little international agreement on what the most important issues are, much less on how to resolve them. Most fundamentally, there is little common perception of the threat, including terrorism. There is correspondingly little agreement on how to respond. Some of the most dangerous confrontations attract only episodic Security Council engagement: the China-Taiwan issue, the Korean peninsula division and the South-Asian nuclear standoff. While the number of interstate conflicts has declined in recent years, the proportion of intrastate conflicts has increased and it is here that the contradictions inherent in the UN Charter itself have become a central issue. Further, economically and socially, the world is polarized between rich countries and poor. There is no real consensus about the contributing factors of the all pervasive issue of poverty and how to remedy it. At once seen as a cause and a cure, globalization has generated great wealth and considerable disparity within and between countries and revealed how inadequate existing institutions are for coping with the problems of the twenty-first century.

[1]The UN Remains Indispensable

None of this is to say that the UN has failed definitively and that it is time to walk away from it. Warts and all, it remains indispensable. Most fundamentally, the UN Charter is at the heart of the development of international law. Few outside the ambit of American exceptionalists doubt that the rule of law is preferable to the law of the jungle; a world governing itself by freely accepted laws is likely to be safer and more stable than one run by the self-appointed and self-interested powerful. In forty years time, would Canadians be content to grant similar, exceptional dispensations from international law to China as they might concede to the US now? Would Americans?

Global problems can only be solved through over-arching cooperation. From security to trade to finance to the environment to human rights, in sum, the complex of treaties, conventions, norms, institutions and formal and informal networks that the world has created, and continues to create, is integral to international order and prosperity. Multilateral cooperation, not multilateralism as an ideal or end in itself, is essential. For example, while the UN is often an object of uninformed criticism on terrorism, the UN General Assembly has passed a dozen basic counter-terrorism treaties. As these treaties have been progressively absorbed into domestic legislation around the world, norms and standards of international behaviour have been established and performance

and compliance enhanced. What is true for terrorism is equally true for human rights, where the UN has passed six core treaties, including on women's rights; for arms control and disarmament, where the UN is at the heart of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, including its weapons inspection capability; for health, where the World Health Organization is central to the effort to control and eradicate communicable and other diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and SARS; for the environment where the UN has generated seventy-six treaties, including the ozone treaty so important to the health of Canadians; for international trade and investment, where GATT and WTO-written rules have fostered an explosion of international commerce, and so on. Beyond rules, norms and laws, there is an alphabet soup of UN acronyms IAEA, ICAO, IPU, ITU, WMO, WIPO, among many others, that stand for organizations helping the world to manage one aspect or another of international interchange.²²

The UN is also indispensable to international humanitarian operations. For example, UNICEF has inoculated 575,000,000 children against childhood diseases, the World Food Program fed over 100,000,000 people last year alone, the UNHCR has protected 22,000,000 refugees and internally displaced people, and the UN Mine Action Service has reported the destruction of over 30,000,000 landmines, which has saved countless limbs and lives. This work has been belittled by some as mere international

social work. It may be social work but it delivers very real human and international security benefits.

[1]Towards Reform Of The United Nations

The UN suffers from excessive caution and diplomatic sclerosis at a time when it is facing decidedly new demands. The fundamental political and legal challenge facing the UN is to determine when and under what conditions the international community is justified in intervening in the internal affairs of member states. The grounds on which there is a disposition to contemplate reform in descending order of practicability, include humanitarian crises, the illegal development or acquisition of weapons of mass destruction, the provision of safe haven for terrorists and the overthrow of democratic governments. Officials from countries that gained their independence in the living memories of their citizens see sovereignty as a crucial bulwark against once and future domination and are understandably reluctant to risk creating new pretexts for interference by others. Their worries are entirely comprehensible but not, nevertheless, a sufficient basis on which to protect the interests of their citizens in a changing world. As Secretary General Annan said in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech: "[t]he sovereignty of States must no longer be used as a shield for gross violations of human rights."²³

Elsewhere he argued, "[t]his developing international norm in favour of intervention to protect civilians from wholesale slaughter will no doubt continue to pose profound challenges to the international community. In some quarters it will arouse distrust, scepticism, even hostility. But I believe on balance we should welcome it."²⁴

The tragic losses of 11 September raised a related challenge. Does the nexus of WMD and terrorism provide another justification for outside intervention in a state's internal affairs? Secretary-General Annan also put this issue starkly, in his seminal address to almost one hundred heads of government gathered in New York for the 2003 General Debate: "[s]ome say . . . since an armed attack with weapons of mass destruction could be launched at any time . . . states have the right and obligation to use force pre-emptively." [The secretary-general clearly was referring to the US Administration.] "This logic represents a fundamental challenge to the principles on which, however imperfect, world peace and stability have rested for the last fifty-eight years. . . ." He told the leaders assembled that "we have come to a fork in the road and that we must decide whether radical changes are needed."²⁵

The secretary-general has done his part to respond to changing needs, using his bully pulpit to urge reform and establishing a blue ribbon panel to propose specific remedies to the UN's problems, both as regards what the UN does and how the UN does

it, in that order. It is incumbent on UN member states to acknowledge the new dangers we all face collectively and to find the will and creativity to adapt the world organization to changed times. All UN members but particularly the developing countries are going to have to come to a new understanding of the limits of state sovereignty and the advantages of sharing and pooling it, if the UN is to be effective. The onus to adapt does not fall, nonetheless, exclusively on the poorer, younger countries. The United States and some others are also strongly attached to the idea of sovereignty. The US will need to resist the temptations of exceptionalism and unilateralism and resolve to cooperate on global issues, which can only be resolved multilaterally.

Nor is security the only major problem facing the UN. The yawning gap between rich and poor belies many western countries' charitable self-images, bedevils multilateral cooperation and undermines international security. The international community is not on track to achieve the economic and social goals leaders set themselves at the Millennium Summit. Rich and poor country governments, business and civil society organizations, all get a failing grade in the effort to meet the voluntarily chosen targets.

[1]Canada And The United Nations

Canada can help the UN to reform itself. As much by virtue of our values, of who we are as a society, as by what we do in the world, although that needs our urgent attention too, we do have the standing to contribute. Other countries rightly see Canada as one of the very few countries where minorities' rights are protected and diversity is valued. Our years of peacekeeping and putting the protection of people at the heart of our foreign policy have gained us considerable respect. Our position on the Iraq war has earned us substantial political credit with the less powerful among the UN's members and with many, probably most, of the more powerful, as well. Canada is well positioned to carry out an effective foreign policy.

An effective foreign policy requires a beefed-up, combat-capable, peace-building-trained military, especially ground forces capable of intervening in conflict, a contemporary rather than a prospective financial commitment to poorer countries, and a diplomatic service with the resources to meet our own and others' expectations of us. Finally, our will needs to match our wallet, which has never in Canadian history been better able to afford an effective foreign policy.

On the two overarching challenges the UN faces, the absence of a common threat perception and the stubborn disparity between rich and poor, Canada, with its long tradition of bridge-building among different international constituencies, can play an important role, as the secretary-general reminded Canadians

in the Canadian Parliament in March, 2004. Perhaps the most important such role is to help the world and the US reconcile their very considerable differences. This means taking the initiative to impart to others the particular insights into what motivates the United States that we gain from geographic proximity and political and cultural propinquity. In an effort to alleviate American isolation and insecurity, and to be credible to others, we will have to "speak truth to power" in Washington. This means not shrinking from dealing frankly, albeit courteously, with US administrations when we think they are wrong, as many Canadians believe they were on issues as diverse as Iraq, the International Criminal Court, Kyoto, and the development of still another generation of nuclear weapons and missile systems. It, equally, means not shrinking from supporting and defending American positions when we think the US is right, as for example, on North Korea, on Taiwan and on the propagation of democracy by example, generally. It also means, finally, not subordinating foreign policy imperatives to bilateral anxieties.

Redressing the insecurities of both the US and the Developing World is impeded by rigid interpretations of sovereignty on both sides. In the Developing World, there is a historically understandable, albeit irrational, fear of too much outside intervention but an all too true and present reality of too little, as Rwanda tragically demonstrated, and the conflicts

in the Congo and Sudan continue to confirm. In Washington, an atavistic interpretation of sovereignty often fuels exceptionalist policies and frequently encumbers the negotiation and even precludes the ratification of treaties.

We need to use our political capital to persuade Developing World countries, the Africans above all, that by limiting and pooling their national sovereignty they can serve their own interests. It is Africans who have most desperately needed intervention in recent years. The African Union charter is a pudding that will be proved in the eating. We can work to alleviate the concerns of Latin Americans, who hear in the US invasion of Iraq echoes of the Monroe Doctrine and of a century of intervention. We can urge Asians to recalibrate their surprisingly strong attachment to the seventeenth century European idea of Westphalian sovereignty. We need to work to understand, and to persuade others to address, Washington's sense of unique vulnerability.

Canada can also help the secretary-general to rebalance the international agenda, and to empower the United Nations to organize a global response to the global challenges of disease control, hunger, lack of schooling and environmental destruction.²⁶ The past thirty years have seen some dramatic improvements in the Developing World. Life expectancy has increased by eight years. Illiteracy has been cut nearly in half, to 25 per cent. People surviving on less than \$1 a day has

been almost halved in the 1990s. Still, some fifty-four countries are poorer now than they were in 1990. In twenty-one, a larger proportion of people are going hungry. In fourteen, more children are dying before age five. In twelve, primary school enrolments are shrinking. In thirty-four, life expectancy has fallen. Such reversals in survival were previously rare.²⁷

The Millennium Development Goals address these daunting challenges. They present an effective framework for delivering on the commitment to alleviating poverty. Many of the solutions to hunger, disease and lack of education are well known. UN-bashers notwithstanding, the specialized UN programs and agencies have extensive expertise and hands-on experience in dealing with these challenges. Here, Canada could help by marshalling talent from across our widely respected public service and civil society organizations to support the UN's efforts to build capacity in the poorer countries, in order to enhance the quality of their own governance. As we help others build their own effective institutions, we also help the UN regain its effectiveness, an interest that we and the Americans share.

Reform of the United Nations system is necessary but not sufficient to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The weaknesses of other international bodies need remedying and the lacunae between them need filling. The Bretton Woods organizations, for example, have representation and voting

rights anomalies. The World Bank has grown to dominate others in the field and its role vis-à-vis the regional development banks and especially vis-à-vis the UNDP needs recalibrating. Nor, in a floating exchange rate world, is the IMF's mandate clear, including vis-à-vis the more powerful countries which currently can and do ignore its prescriptions. NATO, a trans-regional alliance, is also struggling with the reality that neither the values of its members nor the threats they face are as common as they once were.

The G-8, while effective in mobilizing the major industrialized countries on key issues, such as HIV/AIDS and the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), is nonetheless handicapped in achieving broader objectives by virtue of its limited membership. Prime Minister Paul Martin's proposal for the creation of a larger, north-south group that would be more representative of power and population realities now and foreseen is one possible answer to this problem. Such broader-based participation would facilitate broader-based "buy-in" by developing countries. Because heads of government have both the horizontal perspective and political authority that their individual ministers by definition do not have, a G-20 at leaders' level could make breakthroughs on intractable problems. Prospects for progress on HIV-AIDS and other communicable diseases, on trade and agricultural subsidies, on terrorism and WMD, on international financial reform, on the Millennium

Development Goals and, not least, on the reform of the UN itself would be enhanced if the world's leading countries could sensitize each other and reach general understandings among themselves. Such a group would complement rather than compete with the UN, which would retain its unique legitimacy by virtue of its universal membership, its statutory responsibility for peace and security and the centrality of its Charter to international law. A G-20 could also facilitate the work of the UN, including the Security Council, by helping reduce North-South economic polarity and US-"other" security gaps that often bedevil UN deliberations.

International organizations are notoriously difficult to reform, the UN perhaps most difficult of all. Still, no one can be confident that absent a determined effort at innovation the world organization on which we count for nearly every facet of international relations and global governance will muddle through. The system of laws, norms and treaties that the UN represents, backed up by formal and informal networks of officials and experts on economic and social cooperation, human rights, the judiciary, the police and security, is crucial to Canada's well-being and independence. It is manifestly in Canada's interest to promote UN reform so that the organization functions effectively as a universal forum for the deliberation on and collective management of the world's global problems. Overcoming the fear of change is neither easy nor certain but

the attempt to do so is timely and necessary. The suffering of the Second World War generated the international will to create the United Nations. It is not too much to hope that the shock of the second Iraq war will generate the collective resolve to reform it.

[1]Endnotes

This paper reflects the views of the author alone.

1. The Norwegian Nobel Committee, "The Nobel Peace Prize 2001," (press release), Oslo, 12 October 2001.
2. The Millennium Development Goals were established at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, when member states reaffirmed their commitment to assess development progress and achieve specific development goals within specified time frames. 147 heads of state adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, and it was passed unanimously by all the 189 members of the UN General Assembly. See <http://www.un.org/geninfo/ir/millen-main.htm>.
3. The Monterrey Consensus was adopted on 22 March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico. Heads of state and government gathered to address the challenges of financing for development. The consensus, effectively, held that increased financial flows and sounder governance were both prerequisites to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. See <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/aconf198-11.pdf>.
4. A European Union term for distributing decision-making to the level of government international, regional, national, local best positioned by circumstance to succeed.
5. "Flags of Convenience," *The Economist*, 368, 8341 (13 Sept. 2003), 76-77, review of Stephen Schlesinger, *Act of Creation:*

The Founding of the United Nations (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2003).

6. Theodore C. Sorensen, "Arrogance and Ignorance," American University commencement address, Washington, DC, 11 May 2003.
7. William Ames, "Emergence of Puritan Technology," in Alden Vaughan, ed, *The Puritan Tradition in America 1620-1730* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 14.
8. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), 14.
9. Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (London: J. Murray, 2001), 22.
10. Matthew 5:13-16.
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12. Harold Hongju Koh, "On American Exceptionalism," *Stanford Law Review*, 55, 5 (May 2003), 1479-1527.
13. "Flags of Convenience."
14. Geoffrey Wheatcroft, "The Tragedy of Tony Blair," *The Atlantic*, 293,5 (June 2004), 56-72.

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<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,918764,00.html>>.
16. Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay, "An Alliance of Democracies," op-ed in *Washington Post*, 23 May 2004, B.07.
17. Linda Stern, ed, *Freedom in the World 2002*, (New York: Freedom House, 2002).
18. Timothy Appleby, "US still upset with Canada: Rice; Bush adviser says time needed to heal rift," *Globe and Mail*, 31 May 2003, A1.
19. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "Views of a Changing World 2003: War with Iraq Further Divides Global Politics," 3 June 2003, 1.
20. Report of the US Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Moslem World, "Changing Minds, Winning Peace," submitted to the Committee on Appropriations, US House of Representatives.
21. See especially *Responsibility to Protect*, the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, Canadian International Development Research Centre, Ottawa.
22. IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency; ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization; IPU Inter-Parliamentary Union; ITU International Telecommunications Union; WMO World

Meteorological Organization; WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization.

23. Kofi Annan, Nobel lecture, Oslo, 10 December 2001.

24. Kofi Annan, "Two concepts of sovereignty," *The Economist*, 352, 8137 (19 Sept. 1999), 49-50.

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27. UNDP Human Development Report 2003, Millennium Development Goals Overview.