HOW THE UNITED NATIONS CAN BE REFORMED

The Recommendations of Four Former Ambassadors to the U.N.

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BURTON YALE PINES, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION: I am delighted to welcome you to the Lehrman Auditorium. We at The Heritage Foundation are honored today to host a very distinguished panel of diplomats who in previous years represented their countries at the United Nations. It is very appropriate for them to address today's topic, "How the United Nations Can Be Reformed."

Now it is a very timely, relevant issue. It comes at a time when American views about the United Nations have been changing dramatically and profoundly and when American public support for the United Nations is near an all time low. American views of the United Nations have changed from support to indifference to dismay. And this change in American views, of course, is reflected here in Washington on Capitol Hill. It comes as no surprise to anyone in this room that barely a fortnight passes without some bill being introduced in the Congress that in one way or another reflects congressional dismay with the United Nations and which one way or another has as its aim reducing American participation in the United Nations.

Time may be running out for the United Nations and time may be running out for the United States at the United Nations. We at The Heritage Foundation, in fact, have been calling for changes at the U.N. for some time. Our United Nations Assessment Project is now more than four years old and has published some 75 studies on the United Nations and hosted several dozen roundtable discussions such as this and an endless number of working group luncheons.

We at Heritage probably rightfully can claim a tiny bit of credit for the changing views regarding the United Nations. We work very closely with members of Congress, the Administration, and the press. If it is true that we are partly responsible for changing U.S. views of the U.N. then we have done a service to the United States, given its role in the United Nations, and a service, above all, to the United Nations. If the United Nations is going to be saved, it can only be saved by being reformed.

We can also claim some credit for exploiting the skills and the talents of Ambassador Charles Lichenstein, who for the past two years has been a Senior Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. Before that Ambassador Lichenstein, as all of you well know, represented this country at the United Nations, serving on Jeane Kirkpatrick's staff in

a dual position as Alternative Representative for Special Political Affairs at the General Assembly and as a Deputy U.S. Representative for the Security Council. This meant, of course, that Chuck was almost always at the Security Council.

Ambassador Lichenstein brings many other talents to the Foundation and to us. He is in a sense a veteran warrior in the conservative revolution. He is in a way a veteran of the conservative long march, taking us from the political wilderness to victory. He served both in the Nixon and Ford Administrations. He began working with Richard Nixon in 1959, in Nixon's presidential campaign in 1960, the gubernatorial campaign in 1962, and helped write several of Richard Nixon's books. It therefore is with great pleasure that I introduce the moderator for this morning, Ambassador Charles Lichenstein.

AMBASSADOR CHARLES LICHENSTEIN: Thank you very much, Burt. I am sorry my Mao tunic is at the cleaners or I would have come in more appropriate "long march" type uniform. The relationship between diplomacy and dentistry is that after you are away from the venue for a while, you forget all of the pain and you forget all of the agony of sitting around both in the dentist chair and in the U.S. chair at the U.N. Security Council and you remember only friends and colleagues. I join Burt in welcoming all of you and in welcoming especially our three most distinguished guests.

Each will address the topic of "How the United Nations Can Be Reformed." I suppose the prior question is, should it be? Each will address the topic for between 15 and 20 minutes and then I hope we will have some time for questions from all of you. I have decided on strict U.N. procedure this morning and so the speakers list is by alphabetical order, by country, according to the English alphabet--Algeria, the Federal Republic of Germany, and then Singapore batting cleanup.

Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun has represented his country of Algeria in Washington since September 1984. For two and half to three years prior to that date, he was the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations. He has long been a leading figure in the principal political group of his country--first within the liberation movement and then in the nation of Algeria. He served for almost ten years as an Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity and has served as well successively as Algerian Ambassador to West Germany and to France. It is a privilege to welcome an old colleague and friend to The Heritage Foundation, Mohamed Sahnoun, Ambassador of Algeria.

AMBASSADOR MOHAMED SAHNOUN: Today, the United Nations is an organization that is a little over forty years of age. Ever since it was set up to replace the ill-fated League of Nations, it has experienced ups and downs, just like any other kind of human

endeavor. Because the United Nations is first and foremost a human institution, its performance rests upon the work, performance, and achievements of those who meet within its walls. It is people who are the architects of what the United Nations was, is, and will be. As a human institution with such a diversity of opinions and wishes being expressed on its floor, the United Nations should not be labeled as useless and subjected to an outright condemnation. Our assessment of the United Nations' performance should be undertaken in a realistic manner, keeping in mind that a past endeavor, namely the League of Nations, failed where the present institution has succeeded. Indeed, the United Nations has so far shown a capacity for adaptation and a commitment to human development. Yet I believe that forty years is long enough for its members to assess the work done so far and suggest much-needed reforms.

Anyone who has observed the scene of international affairs would indeed acknowledge that the world institution is very much in need of reforms. But what kind of reforms? I personally believe that what needs to be changed is the overall approach to the decision-making process in all its fora. Whatever the issue, the General Assembly's decisions are not binding. They are or have gradually become recommendations directed to the member states. Then, one might ask, how should the General Assembly's recommendations be interpreted? Effectively, morally, or just as an expression of a particular feeling of the world community at a specific time? And I believe, in most cases, it is indeed a mere expression of that feeling and we should accept it as such. That, therefore, should be kept in mind when we articulate our approach to the decision-making process.

The General Assembly makes different types of recommendations. Roughly speaking, the first type comprises recommendations of universal interest, that is to say, recommendations that concern everybody and deal with issues such as disarmament, outer space, peace, and so on. These recommendations actually are dealt with mostly in the First Committee of the General Assembly, which by the way should be meshed with the Special Political Committee. And some of them are dealt with directly in the Plenary Session of the General Assembly. I believe that these recommendations should be made strictly on the basis of a consensus, if we are to reflect the concerns of overall world public opinion.

The second type of recommendation relates to political issues that generally deal with local or regional conflicts, such as the Middle East, southern Africa, Southeast Asia, and Central America. This category creates serious political issues which ideally should also become an object of consensus. Nonetheless, I think that it is unrealistic for the moment to envisage such a decision-making process. These questions are usually debated in the Fourth Committee or Special Political Committee or directly by the Plenary Session of the General Assembly. I believe that in these cases, any recommendation made by the General Assembly should be interpreted as

an expression of the feeling of the public opinion directly concerned. And, consequently, a majority decision should be interpreted as an expression of that opinion. The views of the minority, however, should be explained and passed on in a more adequate manner so that the rules of the democratic process are respected.

The third category of problems plaguing the United Nations deals with economic and humanitarian issues. These are dealt with principally by the Second and Third Committees. In this case, the General Assembly should be a mere coordinating body of the activities of the specialized agencies. Unfortunately, the General Assembly has a tendency to engage in lengthy and fastidious debates on issues already discussed by other bodies. This is, I think, a very strenuous and unhealthy exercise on the part of the General Assembly. In fact, it could and should simply take note of the reports submitted by the Economic and Social Council, which is the coordinating body of the General Assembly. One immediate measure, in my opinion, would be to merge the Second and Third Committees.

The fourth category of problems comprises legal issues that are covered by the Sixth Committee. I believe this is one of the most important functions of the United Nations. The purpose is to shape a body of international law. In this case, the decision-making process can only be dealt with in a pragmatic way and should seek unanimity or general agreement. Member states could signal their opposition to an issue by making reservations but should not hinder the process, which is a very long one.

Today, almost everybody agrees on the fundamental issue, i.e., that the world institution needs an infusion of new blood. That should be the concern of all. As for me, I believe that the overall performance of the United Nations could be improved with the help of some changes.

First of all, as I said before, the making of decisions by consensus should be encouraged and incorporated in the rules of procedure.

Second, a period of "reflection and cooling off" should be instituted before any proposal is put to a vote.

Third, more serious consideration should be given to negotiating procedures and devices.

Fourth, the agenda of the General Assembly should be drastically reduced.

Fifth, the number of resolutions also should be drastically reduced. I was amazed during the short time I spent in the United Nations when I went to the First Committee and saw so many resolutions

on one single item. On disarmament we had over 68 resolutions; a lot of them in effect repeating themselves.

Sixth, the length of statements should be reduced in order to deal with a greater number of issues within a shorter period of time.

Seventh, the volume of documents necessary for the various conferences should be reduced and their quality improved.

Eighth, there should be a ban on the creation of committees and subcommittees that need services, and better use made of the Secretary-General's staff instead.

Ninth, there should be a limitation of the duration of the regular session of the General Assembly.

Tenth, budgetary implications of all resolutions should be minimal.

There is, however, one aspect of the decision-making process that also should be underlined. That is the influence and pressure exercised by some countries on others. There is nothing strange about that, since the General Assembly reflects more or less the nature of bilateral relations that exist between various countries and the ability of country "X" to use its prestige or influence without prejudice to international ethics. If the influence of country "X" is temporarily at a low because of its behavior in foreign politics, or because of its lack of generosity, country "X" should then blame no one but itself.

We have mentioned how some of the program discussion is merely a repetition of prior discussions undertaken by specialized institutions. This process has serious consequences on the elaboration of the budget of the world institution. Besides there is also the pattern of creating new bodies whose usefulness is questionable, which exercises a strain on the institution. How the budgetary decisions should take into consideration the weighted contribution of the member states is a matter that deserves serious study, which the Committee of Eighteen, I believe, is undertaking. I remain, however, aloof to the idea of changing the existing scale of assessments.

Very often, when people are frustrated with the United Nations, they say that the institution has no authority or they even talk about sending it back to the drawing board. I personally have a different opinion in this regard. My comments and suggestions do not represent defense of the United Nations per se. They are a defense of the principle that nations, small and large, need a forum where issues can be debated--if not always resolved--in a peaceful manner and according to democratic principles. Before the inception of the United Nations, the only form of real authority was the actual power of the strongest

states. The world institution was founded to replace this state of affairs, to deal with issues in a different manner. However, in order for the United Nations to achieve real international authority, there must be a steady consensus of the world community on important matters. That consensus has never really emerged because of ideological differences that led to discord, but this should not stop us from continuing to strive for it.

The Security Council of the United Nations may not appear to be the best mechanism for fixing things up between quarreling states. But it would be hard to find a replacement for achieving the same objective of resolving issues in a peaceful manner. The Security Council is the most important organ of the United Nations. It is where we turn when we want an acute crisis situation handled--at least, that should be the case. Unfortunately, the Security Council has, in fact, become a kind of mini-General Assembly, and that is regrettable. I believe that, by becoming a forum used for argument for the mere sake of argument, the Security Council will lose its credibility and efficiency. Strict measures indicating when and how the Security Council can be seized should be introduced in the rules of procedure of the Security Council. This means that some members will have to determine whether a situation should be considered an acute crisis and whether an immediate meeting of the Security Council would be helpful.

The current procedure involves what are called "consultations" before a formal gathering of the Security Council takes place. Such consultations, however, are meaningless. It is thus necessary to give a clear mandate to those who are entrusted with the formal authority to convene a meeting of the Security Council. In my opinion, such a capacity should be granted to the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the Security Council, and the member states holding veto powers. In this respect, however, I suggest letting America, Africa, and Asia be through individual countries represented among the permanent members. In the case of Asia, that would obviously be another representative in addition to the People's Republic of China. These members should be made aware of the serious character of a Security Council meeting. Furthermore, we should also retain the possibility for members of the Security Council to issue a statement after consultation on problems and issues that do not reflect the urgency of an acute crisis.

Among the reforms that should be introduced is one relating to the role of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I feel that he should play an important coordinating role and that he should have more control of the agenda discussed by the member states. The Secretary-General should provide the organization with pragmatic leadership. He should be a chief executive for the feasibility and quality control of the various programs. He should also be assured publicly by the permanent members of the Security Council that they will respect his autonomy in management matters. The Secretary-General of the United Nations should be the initiator and

monitor of the global watch functions. He should be responsible for addressing the General Assembly whenever necessary to focus world attention on emerging issues that are likely to require multilateral response at the regional or local level. He should vigorously defend his duties and prerogatives as chief executive. His role under the Charter requires that he be a risk taker and not a caretaker. He will, however, gain more credibility and moral authority if staff management is kept at a minimum cost for the member states. A position in the Secretariat should not become a life career. I think the Secretary-General should have a single mandate of five to six years.

Today the world organization is in great need of refurbishment. Some of its mechanisms are not working properly or at all. There is a great need for all members of the institution to redefine some aspects of its role. The nations of this world can and should work together for the sake of preserving this forum, for the sake of maintaining open communication channels, for the sake of the institution, for the sake of us all.

AMBASSADOR LICHENSTEIN: Thank you very much, Ambassador Sahnoun. I do not know whether you solved any of the problems, but I think you have put virtually every key issue on the agenda.

Ambassador Gunther van Well has represented the government of the Federal Republic of Germany in Washington since July 1984. His career, after studies in law and economics in Bonn, embraces the entire foreign office establishment in his country. He rose to the level of State Secretary for the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany. He has actually had two stints at the United Nations. From 1954 to 1959, he was part of the Permanent Observer Mission before West Germany's membership in the United Nations and, of course, from 1981 to 1984 he served West Germany as its Permanent Representative to the United Nations. It is a great pleasure and a great personal privilege for me to introduce Gunther van Well.

AMBASSADOR GUNTHER VAN WELL: Thank you very much for the invitation.

I am glad that Mohamed Sahnoun looked at the problem very much from the organization side. I would like to look at the role of the major countries in the United Nations, particularly the crucial role of the United States.

When President Reagan took office in 1980, U.S. foreign policy was reviewed in depth and changed in many substantial aspects--among them U.S. policy vis-a-vis multilateral processes, international organizations, and in particular, the United Nations. Let me mention only the Law of the Sea Convention, UNESCO, global negotiations on economic development, southern Africa. The Heritage Foundation played an important role in this review of U.S. policy. The review reflected

the change of mood and a change of attitude toward the outside world felt throughout this country.

People have been talking of a U.S. shift away from internationalism and toward global unilateralism, away from consultation, from the search for compromise and consensus toward tough pursuit of national interest, a shift away from international law and international arbitration toward the primacy of national law and national interest. People quote as one of the last and most striking examples of this general trend the withholding of obligatory contributions to the budgets of international organizations, especially of the United Nations.

The question is asked: What is the future of the concept of world order envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations if the main architect, founder, and guarantor of the Charter moves away from it? This is a question fundamental for the future of the United Nations. Is the United States really moving away from the Charter? It is, I think, important to distinguish between the Charter and the reality of the United Nations as an organization. Maybe the problem is that the organization itself has turned away from the ideal concept of world order as laid down in the Charter--if you consider human rights, civil liberties, self-determination of peoples, nonuse of force, peaceful resolution of conflict. Maybe it has even moved away from important basics of international life reflected in the Charter as an instrument not only of idealism, but also of Realpolitik.

The special status of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council is a case in point. This status is not only codified in the Chapter dealing with the Security Council, but it has been taken account of in the operation of the United Nations organization as a whole. While I do not think that the original selection and limitation of the special status powers has to be maintained for all time, the realities of international life require that the major powers in the world be included in international decisions on matters in which they exercise influence and, at least, that they do not feel compelled to oppose them.

Therefore, the first prerequisite of an appropriately functioning United Nations is to seek participation or acquiescence in a certain course of action by the major powers. While third parties, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations, can play an important role in preparing the ground for the major powers to move toward consensus--express or tacit--it is a political fact of life that direct diplomacy between the major powers leading to basic bilateral understandings between them on problem resolution remains necessary in our present world. The routine of co-membership in the Security Council or other bodies can be useful in maintaining a generally cooperative relationship between the major powers to facilitate bargaining in concrete cases. But the basic political impulse has to come from the leadership level.

My first suggestion, therefore would be to include in the agendas of high-level contacts between major powers an item concerning the improvement of bilateral cooperation on matters of common interest before the United Nations. The special responsibilities of major powers as regards the proper functioning of the United Nations--or, for that matter, of other international organizations--extend beyond the right of veto in such prescribed circumstances as the U.N. Security Council. Members who do not realistically accept a middle course between the idealistic principle of one country, one vote, all votes being equal and the special responsibilities, not only financially, of the major countries, undermine the effectiveness of the organization. This has the tragic result that those who need the organization most for the realistic pursuit of their interests weaken that same organization.

There have been similar discussions in the European community, although the Treaty of Rome and subsequent instruments make special provisions for major countries. While it would be impractical to try to amend the Charter of the United Nations to better define this middle course between idealism and realism, there are many possibilities in the United Nations to proceed thus in actual practice.

My second suggestion, therefore, would be to develop an informal consultation procedure among U.N. members of all sizes to develop a course of responsibility toward the effectiveness of the organization and a course of reason and realism <u>vis-a-vis</u> the crucial role of the major countries. The objective would be to reduce the processes of confrontational voting, to avoid the overriding of essential positions of major countries by automatic bloc voting, and to facilitate consensus. This would be particularly important in decisions on conflict resolution and codification of international law as well as on work programs and the finances of the organization.

This informal consultation procedure would be strongly enhanced by more active participation of general, regional operative systems in the U.N. framework. The Charter devotes an entire chapter to the role of regional organizations in the U.N. system. Throughout the four decades of the U.N., such groupings as the Organization of American States, the Arab League, and the Organization of African Unity have established formal links with the U.N. But their contributions to the creation of a world order of peace, international security, economic and social development, self-determination of peoples, and human rights as envisaged in the Charter has remained unsatisfactory. In the course of increasing antagonism in the United Nations between West and East, North and South, and in particular as a consequence of Third World militancy, the groupings in the U.N. have become more and more ideologized. The rationale was not the integration of regional systems of security, stability, conflict resolution, and economic and social development into a worldwide order as envisioned in the U.N.

Charter, but the mobilization and confrontation of opposing ideological camps with bloc voting on resolutions, which failed to have much impact on real life. But it did increasingly spoil the atmosphere in the organization and contribute to the crises in which the U.N. has found itself since the 1970s.

Parallel to this unfortunate course of events lining up interest groups against each other in contests of pressure and counterpressure, reveling in extreme resolution rhetoric without practical significance, parallel to this and outside the U.N., new regional initiatives were spreading in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Some have reached important stages of structuring regional security and stability, political cooperation, economic and social development. Some, such as the European Community and ASEAN, have become active in the United Nations and have exerted a moderating influence.

My third suggestion would be to encourage the Secretary-General and other organs of the United Nations to make more use of genuine, regional cooperative systems with their political and economic weight, drawing upon their diplomatic resources for promoting U.N. initiatives toward reasonable compromise, realistic assessment of the role of the major powers, and consensus.

I believe the U.N. budget process should be at the heart of the deliberations about reform at the present time because of its urgency. The U.N. Secretary-General has defined the problem precisely: "Since 1979 member states accounting for 70 to 80 percent of assessed contributions either voted against or abstained on the regular program budget. Clearly, we need to restore a broader basis of agreement on central budgetary questions...not only on...the size of the budget [but] also [on] the question of priorities and the allocation of resources." I understand that members of the European Community are still debating concepts of reform in this field. Efforts to reach budget decisions by consensus would be welcome, but the formalization of the consensus principle would give every single member state of the U.N. a right of veto.

Weighted voting for budget decisions as proposed by the Kassebaum Amendment is incompatible with the one country, one vote system and would require a Charter revision that would open a "Pandora's Box." Equalizing assessed contributions to mirror the equality of the voting system would limit the budget to 159 times what the weakest member could afford to pay--obviously an impractical solution and one that would never attract a majority. In other words, the principle of assessing contributions on the basis of ability to pay must be maintained.

One interesting idea, but one which has not yet been submitted formally by any nation, would be the creation of a body consisting of the main contributors, which would vote in advance on all

appropriations. The normal scale of assessments would apply to all expenditures decided by consensus or by majority vote of the body of main contributors and the General Assembly. This would be the core budget. Budget decisions that found a majority in the General Assembly but not in the body of the main contributors would still be effective as a supplementary budget, but an adjusted scale of assessments would be applied in such cases to ensure that the majority felt the financial pinch of such a supplementary budget, while the outvoted main contributors would be relieved of part of the cost of unwanted programs. I do not know how viable this idea is, but it may be worth considering.

These four suggestions that I have contributed to the discussion here today are of a broad and general nature. They give rise to many questions of details. But to me, after 35 years in the foreign service of my country--three years as Permanent Representative to the U.N., now two years here in Washington--these four points seem to address the problem areas that lie at the center of the crisis of the U.N., which must be dealt with in any effort at reform for a U.N. of the future.

The goals of 1945 were those of American idealism and internationalism. They were in philosophical terms the courageous, optimistic antithesis of an old-fashioned European realism and nationalism, which appeared bankrupt at the end of the war. It was important to be shown a way out of the Hobbesian world at that time. I think there is a rather emphatic desire in today's Germany to retain as much American idealism in international affairs as possible, which is why we have an instinctive preference for leaving the U.N. Charter intact and working within that framework to improve its functioning. Thank you very much.

AMBASSADOR LICHENSTEIN: It is a great pleasure and privilege to introduce Ambassador Tommy T.B. Koh of Singapore.

AMBASSADOR TOMMY KOH: Can the United Nations be reformed? I would answer the question in the affirmative but with two major caveats. My first caveat is that no amount of reforming can effect the realization of the two central goals of 1945 enshrined in the U.N. Charter, i.e., that disputes between states be settled by peaceful means and that international peace and security maintained by the Security Council. The fact that more than 20 million persons have been killed in armed conflicts since 1945 is a horrible but irrefutable evidence of the failure of those goals. The reality of international politics leads me to the conclusion that those goals cannot realistically be achieved in the future. My second caveat is that we should have no illusions about the formidable vested interests, both in the Secretariat and in the delegations of member states, which will oppose any reform that impinges on their interests. This unholy alliance has succeeded in defeating all previous attempts at reforming the United Nations.

The following is a highly subjective and selective agenda of reforms that I would like to see implemented at the U.N.

Personnel Policy and Management

The strength of the U.N. depends upon two factors. First, it can only be as strong as its member states will allow it to be. Second, its strength and effectiveness depend upon the competence and integrity of the men and women who make up the Secretariat. My first cluster of suggestions relates to the reform of personnel policy and management. Over the past 41 years, the concept of the international civil service has been progressively eroded. No region or group can be exempt from blame. However, the worst offenders are the communist countries who have never accepted the concept. Their nationals are not permitted to become career international civil servants. They are seconded to the Secretariat, and a portion of their salaries is siphoned off by their governments. I support Ambassador Charles Lichenstein's proposal that not more than 50 percent of the nationals of any communist country should be allowed to serve in the U.N. Secretariat on secondment. I object equally to the practice of communist countries in siphoning off a portion of the salaries of their nationals in the Secretariat and to the practice of some Western countries of paying a supplement to their nationals in the Secretariat.

The process of recruitment and promotion has become highly politicized. This has two deleterious consequences. First, the U.N. does not always recruit the best and brightest. Second, it has a demoralizing effect on the staff. Both the delegations and the Secretariat are to be blamed for this deplorable state of affairs. The Secretary-General must insulate his personal office from pressure from the delegations. He should let the missions know that he is not prepared to receive any ambassador if the purpose of his visit is to lobby for the recruitment or promotion of a national from his country or region. The Secretary-General should back the substantive heads of the various departments and the Office of Personnel Services. My third suggestion is that a Search Committee should be established to assist the Secretary-General in shortlisting qualified candidates for each vacancy at the level of D2 and above. The members of the Search Committee should be recruited from outside the U.N. system. The purpose of the Search Committee is not to take away the Secretary-General's prerogative of selecting his senior staff. It is to assist him by presenting him with the most qualified candidates. My fourth suggestion is to stop the wasteful duplication of resources in the Secretariat. Let me give you one simple example. At present, there are two offices within the Secretariat working in the field of the Law of the Sea. They are the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Law of the Sea and the Office of Ocean

Economics and Technology, which belongs to the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. In order to maximize economy and efficiency, the two offices should be merged. My fifth suggestion is that the Secretary-General should redeploy staff from sunset departments of the Secretariat, for example, the Department of Decolonization, to sunrise departments. My sixth suggestion is that the Secretary-General should improve the morale of his staff by rewarding good work and by punishing incompetence. The Secretary-General should be given enhanced power to get rid of deadwood in the Secretariat.

The Budget

The U.N. budget, like the U.S. federal budget, has a lot of fat in it that can be cut. One way to do this is to strengthen the powers of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), which has a good track record of fiscal responsibility. My second suggestion is to bring Secretariat salaries into line with those of the U.S. federal civil service. This is in accordance with the Noblemaire principle, which states that an international organization must be prepared to pay enough to attract the citizens of the countries with the best paid national civil service. At present, U.N. salaries are about 20 percent higher than U.S. salaries. My third suggestion is to stop, or at least to reduce substantially, the junkets and needless conferences that the U.N. has become addicted to. Let me give you two examples. I see no justification for allowing members of the U.N. Council on Namibia to go on junkets to preach the gospel of a free Namibia to those who are already converted to the cause. I also see no justification for allowing the members of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to hold their summer meetings in Geneva just because the weather is more pleasant in Geneva during the summer than it is in New York. My fourth suggestion is to create a procedure to discourage the creation of new committees. Very often, when a delegation runs out of ideas on an item that it has inscribed on the agenda, it resorts to the expedient of proposing the creation of a committee to examine the question. The U.N. has literally hundreds of such committees, many of which have overlapping jurisdictions. My suggestion is that, before any resolution that contains a proposal to create a new committee is adopted, the Secretary-General should be required to submit a report containing his observations on whether there are existing committees which could look into the question and on the usefulness of creating a new committee.

The Nonaligned Movement and the Group of 77

The key to the revitalization of the United Nations lies not in amending its Charter, its institutions, and its procedures, but in the attitudes and policies which its members adopt toward the organization and toward the subjects and questions that appear on the global agenda. In the political field, the member states of the U.N. which belong to the nonaligned movement, now numbering 99, can play a vital

role in the revitalization of the U.N. However, if the movement is to play such a role, it must first set its house in order. If the nonaligned movement can act objectively and impartially between the two superpowers and their respective alliances, if the movement will uphold and apply its principles uniformly and not on a selective basis, if it will exercise its majoritarian power in the General Assembly with wisdom and with prudence and if it will put forward realistic and imaginative proposals on the whole range of subjects and issues on the global agenda, then the nonaligned movement will have made an important contribution toward the revitalization of the U.N.

In the economic field, the Group of 77 must alter its agenda, its posture, and its rhetoric if it is to be taken seriously and if the U.N. is to become an important forum for the North-South dialogue. The Group of 77, like the nonaligned movement, has come to be dominated by a hard core of unrepresentative and radical countries. Economically speaking, most of the leaders of the Group of 77 are countries that have failed to make economic progress. Their attitude is therefore to blame the "inequitable international economic order" for their own failures. They are basically hostile to free enterprise and to multinational corporations. They seek confrontation instead of accommodation. They demand the transfer of resources from the rich to the poor instead of seeking mutual benefits. If the Group of 77 is to be taken seriously by the industrialized countries, a change of attitude, of tone, and of rhetoric would be helpful. The Group should put forward proposals that are economically sound and will bring about mutual benefits to the developed as well as the developing countries.

The Responsibility of the West

At present, the West tends to play a defensive and reactive role at the United Nations. One of my good friends from a Western delegation has told me that his objective at the U.N. is damage limitation. This is a very negative and defeatist attitude. The West should play a more active and positive role at the U.N. It should have an agenda of problems and questions, which it is willing to discuss or negotiate with the developing countries at the U.N. The West should learn how to play the game at the U.N. and adopt a more skillful and muscular strategy in furthering its foreign policy objectives through the U.N. When the West has nothing to offer, the moderate leadership in the Third World is weakened and the radical leadership is strengthened. The West should not abandon the U.N. because of a mistaken perception that the U.N. has already been captured by the Soviets and is therefore a forum in which the West cannot win. The defeat of the Soviet Union on Afghanistan, the defeat of Vietnam on Cambodia, and the victories of the U.S. on the status of Puerto Rico and the right of Israel to remain in the U.N. are ample proof of my assertion that the U.N. is a forum in which the West can win. The

U.N. is an important forum for winning the hearts and minds of the peoples of the world. Through a combination of skillful diplomacy and a positive agenda, the West can beat its principal ideological adversary at the U.N.

I cannot leave the subject of the responsibility of the West without commenting on two recent actions of the United States. First, after years of condemning the Soviet Union and others for illegally withholding their assessed contributions to the U.N., the United States, has, in recent years, joined the delinquents. Second, the U.S. Congress has unilaterally decided to reduce the assessed contributions of this country to the U.N. budget, in clear violation of the U.S. treaty obligations and of the due process of law. Actions such as these not only undermine the financial integrity of the U.N. but they also cause many friends of the U.S. to wonder whether its real intention is to reform the U.N. or to emasculate it.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by asking the two questions which are in the minds of many people. First, will the U.N. survive? Second, what kind of a U.N. will it be? I think the U.N. will survive. Although it has many flaws and shortcomings, on balance, it does more good than harm. If the U.N. does not exist, the imperative of global interdependence will compel us to create an organization very much like the U.N. The U.N. is particularly important for small countries such as Singapore because, in spite of all its inadequacies, the U.N. does provide us with some protection against the law of the jungle. Whether the U.N. of the future will become a stronger and effective organization will depend primarily on the policies and practices of its member states. The answer does not lie in tinkering with the Charter or in institutional reform.

AMBASSADOR LICHENSTEIN: Thank you very much. As always, Tommy, you were as good as your word. You have offended everyone. I am going to exercise the privilege of the moderator. We have very few minutes, unfortunately, left for questions. I will turn to you and ask questions, but first, I would like to call on, in exercise of right of reply, one of the most nondefensive--some in fact would say one of the most "offensive" members of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in recent years--the distinguished Assistant Secretary of State Alan Keyes. I wonder, Ambassador Keyes, whether you would like to rise and speak to any of the extraordinarily imaginative suggestions that we have heard this morning.

AMBASSADOR ALAN KEYES: I would like to say that Ambassador Koh may have been striving mightily to offend everybody. But I discovered when I was at the U.N. that in spite of all if Tommy was saying it, it was very difficult to be offended but always possible to be stimulated to a great deal of thought. I think this presentation and the previous presentations certainly did that.

Underlining it all, I think I would agree with the basic premise that what is required in order to deal with the U.N.'s problems is a change in attitude. But I am reminded of that old phrase which I think de Tocqueville--maybe he was quoting it, I cannot remember--but he said, "First men make the laws, then the laws make the men," which is a way of pointing to the interconnection between the institutions and the people, between the structures and the attitudes. I think that the failure of the structures is in great part due to some of the difficulties in attitudes and underlining problems, but I think that was also related to some of the structural deficiencies. We always talk about the Security Council and then the American notion of democracy. We think, "the Security Council, that is checks and balances." We fail to realize that for the great bulk of the U.N.'s activities, the Security Council has no relevance whatsoever in the areas that now take up most of the budget in the United Nations. There was no proper structural discipline imposed upon the system and that lack of structural discipline, in fact, was a basic flaw not in the democratic hopes of the United Nations, but in the sustainability of those hopes. At least in the United States, we have all understood that democracy requires a certain balance of structures if it is to succeed.

I think it is in pursuit of that balance, and in the interest of helping to create a context in which healthier attitudes will prevail at the United Nations, that we have undertaken the kind of strenuous efforts both in terms of our own representation and in terms of reforms at the United Nations over the last several years. I sense, however, in a lot of what I hear as criticism--some of it at the legal level that Ambassador Koh alluded to toward the end of his statement--I sense a certain distrust of U.S. motives in all of this.

A final comment on that distrust. I find it rather strange because as I have looked around the U.N. system you can list the kind of organizations, projects and programs, the results that have been accounted to be the symbols of what international cooperation can achieve. And for all of them you will find the United States present at the creation. You will find us there at the beginning; you will find us with the energy, with the idealism, with the commitment. The thing that we contributed most to the United Nations was not our money; it was precisely the fact that of all the countries in the world, I would be willing to say that we were the only ones who truly believed and who truly believe today.

It is precisely because of that belief that we are disturbed at the betrayal of some of the basic principles and at the failure to live up to some of the basic ideals. And that we are willing to take political risks and maybe step outside a little bit of the ordinary course of action in order to try to bring the organization back to what we know in our hearts it can be. And we not only know it in our hearts, we know it in our land because we have seen something like

that international cooperation under the rule of law with reciprocal respect for the rights and obligations of all. We have seen it work. It works every day in our own country. And that being the case, our commitment is not just abstaction; it is a practical fact. It is that practical fact which leads us to take the steps that we have taken to try to create a sense of tremendous urgency about the need to make the United Nations into something that will once again work.

It is for that, given the record, we are going to be consistently distrusted in terms of our motives. Well I think that is just ignoring what we are, what we have been, and also what we hope the international community may one day be again.

AMBASSADOR LICHENSTEIN: Thank you very much, Alan. And thank you, Ambassadors, and ladies and gentlemen.

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