

**RUSH!**

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## NEEDED AT THE U.N.: MORE SECRETARY, LESS GENERAL

Boutros Boutros-Ghali on June 19 proclaimed his intention to seek a second five-year term as Secretary General of the United Nations, shrugging off the Clinton Administration's indecisive behind-the-scenes efforts to induce him to step down after his term expires on December 31, 1996. A second term for Boutros-Ghali would be a disastrous setback for the cause of U.N. reform. The Secretary General not only has dragged his feet on long-overdue organizational and managerial reforms, but also has sought aggressively to expand both his own power and that of the already overextended U.N. bureaucracy. Now that the Clinton Administration's efforts to dissuade Boutros-Ghali from clinging to power have failed, the Administration should mount a relentless diplomatic campaign to block his plans for a second term and work to find a more suitable successor. The next Secretary General should be someone who will systematically reform the U.N.'s bloated bureaucracy, root out the U.N.'s long-standing bias against free market economic policies, and consolidate U.N. operations to focus on the tasks that the organization was designed to accomplish and is best-equipped to fulfill.

Boutros-Ghali already has squandered his opportunity to put the U.N. on the right footing. In 1993, the Secretary General sought to suppress a report by Under-Secretary General for Administration and Management Richard Thornburgh which concluded that "The United Nations presently is almost totally lacking in effective means to deal with fraud, waste, and abuse by staff members." Boutros-Ghali subsequently established an Inspector General's office, as recommended by the report, but refused to give it the independence it must have to do its job effectively.

Under Boutros-Ghali's leadership, the U.N. has accelerated its slide toward bankruptcy. The U.N. budget has increased 20 percent since 1991. Expanded peacekeeping missions have pushed up peacekeeping costs from \$700 million in 1990 to \$3.5 billion in 1994. But instead of slashing spending, Boutros-Ghali has sought to boost funding. Last January, he proposed that the U.N. acquire the power to levy taxes on fossil fuels, international travel, and currency transactions. Instead of forcing the U.N. to live within its means, he wants to empower the organization to acquire new functions, such as a standing army under his command that could lead to even more costly and dangerous peace-enforcement missions. These power grabs by the empire-building Secretary General are troubling because they set back reform efforts and dilute the U.N.'s accountability to member states. Moreover, they represent an infringement on and usurpation of the sovereignty of those member states. Boutros-Ghali's long-term agenda appears to be to acquire the trappings of sovereignty for the U.N., transforming it from an international organization composed of 185 member governments into a supranational government directed by an increasingly independent and powerful Secretary General.

The U.N. Secretary General is chosen in two steps: The Security Council nominates a candidate to the U.N. General Assembly, and the General Assembly then must approve the selection by majority vote. In practice, the power to select a new Secretary General rests with the Security Council, since the General Assembly has never rejected its nominee. A successful candidate must have the backing of nine of the Security Council's 15 member states, including all five permanent members (Britain, China, France, Russia, and the U.S.). This gives Washington veto power over the selection of the U.N.'s highest official.

Yet, despite Boutros-Ghali's poor record, the Clinton Administration has been dragging its feet on exercising its veto over a second term. Administration officials held off on taking a public position until recently to avoid a confrontation with the Secretary General and the countries that support his plans for a second term. In the absence of a clear signal from Washington, alternative candidates remained reluctant to challenge the incumbent Secretary General openly. He enjoys the strong backing of China, France, and Russia, while Britain has signaled that it will not stand in his way. Only the U.S. can deny Boutros-Ghali another term, given his assiduous cultivation of African and Asian support in the General Assembly, but the Clinton Administration until recently remained asleep at the switch.

Now the Administration must veto another term for Boutros-Ghali and find a suitable successor who will:

- ✓ **Advocate aggressive organizational, personnel, and managerial reform of the U.N.** A dynamic reformer is needed to shake the entrenched U.N. bureaucracy from its lethargy, overcome decades of mismanagement, and end hiring practices based on political criteria and patronage. The top-heavy organizational structure of the U.N. secretariat needs to be streamlined; modern management techniques should be imposed; and a powerful Inspector General independent of the Secretary General should be established to root out waste, fraud, and abuse. The U.S.-backed "unitary U.N." concept should be adopted to enhance coordination among disparate U.N. agencies and eliminate wasteful duplication of effort. The budget process needs to be revamped to make the relationship between cost and functions "transparent."
- ✓ **Support free-market economic reforms.** The U.N. long has been permeated by advocates of discredited statist economic policies that have been tried and discarded by many of its member states. The time has come to lift the dead hand of socialism from the U.N.'s rudder. The next Secretary General should seek to eradicate the U.N.'s hostility to free-market economic policies and forcefully lead U.N. organs to promote entrepreneurial liberty and legal safeguards for property rights as a way to stoke economic growth by unleashing the private sector.
- ✓ **Focus the U.N. on what it was designed to do and is best able to do.** The U.N.'s most important mandate is to help maintain international peace and security through collective measures. But the organization's reach has exceeded its ability to accomplish this task as peacekeeping increasingly has become peace-enforcement, as in Bosnia and Somalia. The U.N. needs to step back from the overly ambitious peacekeeping schemes and the standing army proposed by Boutros-Ghali and focus its efforts on more limited goals. The new Secretary General also must recognize that the U.N. has limited capabilities and move to redirect U.N. efforts toward realistic goals in other areas as well. The U.N. should abandon unreachable utopian goals such as "eradicating poverty" or "health care for all by the year 2000." Instead, its economic and social programs should concentrate on attainable goals and useful activities such as providing disaster relief and assisting refugees in the world's poorest regions. The U.N. should get out of the foreign aid business altogether. Its efforts to promote economic development and nation-building have produced meager results at exorbitant cost.
- ✓ **Stake a claim to leadership by virtue of administrative ability, personal skills, and accomplishments, regardless of national origin.** The Secretary General's primary responsibility is as chief administrator of the U.N. secretariat, which has roughly 10,000 employees. This requires considerable managerial skill, particularly if a radical overhaul of U.N. operations is to be accomplished. The new Secretary General should be chosen without regard to national origin. The current practice of limiting candidates to nonaligned countries is a relic of the Cold War.

The U.N. desperately needs to recruit an energetic reformer as Secretary General to consolidate its operations, overhaul its bureaucracy, resolve its financial crisis, and lead it into the next century. Boutros-Ghali squandered the opportunity to carry out these tasks and would be even less likely to accomplish them in a second term. The U.S. must insist that the next Secretary General be mindful that the U.N. is an international organization, not a supranational government. The U.N. needs more of a secretary and less of a general.

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