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A Changing United Nations

Multilateral Evolution and the Quest for Global Governance

W. Andy Knight

University of Alberta

Foreword by

James S. Sutterlin

Former UN Under Secretary General

palgrave



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To my spouse, Mitra

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Foreword

This is a book about change. The focus is on the United Nations but the field of vision is the larger world that the United Nations serves. There could hardly be a more fitting theme. No doubt most generations have claimed, with excitement or resignation, that they lived in a time of seminal change. Those who witnessed the fall of Constantinople were as justified in their assumption as those of us today who witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall. But only since the founding of the United Nations has there been in place an international organization of global reach dedicated to the promotion of all the elements of a peaceful world – to ensure that change brings peace and not war. To accomplish this task, the United Nations, in the person of its member states, of its constituent peoples and of its leadership, must understand the nature and extent of changes in the global complex. It must meet the challenges that they present. And, if possible, it must prepare for the future challenges that these changes portend.

The end of the Cold War clearly signalled a seismic change in world affairs. The United Nations Secretary-General was among the first to sense already in the 1980s that change was in the air. In his 1987 Annual Report to the General Assembly, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar wrote 'countries of disparate political orientations and economic systems have begun to deal with problems of an interdependent world with a new pragmatism.' 'It is as if,' he continued, 'the sails of the small boat in which all the people of the earth are gathered had caught again, in the midst of a perilous sea, a light, but favorable wind.'¹ The wind, it turned out, was favourable, indeed, but so strong as to blow the United Nations into unknown waters, with a Charter, drafted a half a century earlier, as its principal guide.

The years following the war between Iran and Iraq, which the United Nations did much to end, saw major accomplishments: the independence of Namibia, the successful peace process in Central America, a reborn Cambodia, hopeful mediation on the Western Sahara, the defeat of Iraqi aggression. With it all came the reemergence of United Nations intellectual leadership in defining the means of achieving international security and promoting democratization based on respect for the human rights defined in the UN Charter. Yet in the midst of success, it became apparent that the winds of change were so strong that many feared the

United Nations could not sail safely into the twenty-first century unless it was thoroughly overhauled.

Thus, concomitant with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, there was a widespread call from member states and countless scholarly institutions and non-governmental organizations for reform. The General Assembly formed working groups to debate what should be done. The non-official groups formulated recommendations covering the gamut of UN activities. These are fully described in the present volume and their merits and weaknesses well analysed. The General Assembly Working Groups were mostly unable to agree on significant changes in the structure or functioning of the organization. The more ambitious recommendations of the external groups have been put quietly on the shelf along with their numerous predecessors. Most of the reforms that have taken place since the Fiftieth Anniversary have related to the administration and management of the Secretariat and, to a more limited extent, of the UN system as a whole. They have been taken at the instigation of Secretary-General Kofi Annan in the framework of what he has perhaps too grandly termed a 'culture of reform.'

Yet, as the author of this book helps us to understand, the United Nations as a unique global organization, has changed profoundly in reacting – too often on an *ad hoc* basis – to a world in which the sanctity of state sovereignty must be weighed against the sanctity of human rights. It has been scarcely a decade since the United Nations first agreed – hesitantly – to monitor elections in a member state. Now the practice has become so common as to require a special section in the Secretariat. Only in the face of ongoing internal conflict in Croatia did the United Nations recognize – even more hesitantly – that force should be used as a provisional measure to bring peace and to end humanitarian crises as well as to meet and repel threats of aggression. In a remarkably short time, the Secretary-General and the Security Council learned that while such use of force was necessary, under still ill-defined terms, it could best be applied by external coalitions under the Security Council's authority. In Iraq the United Nations has undertaken to deprive a sovereign state of the right to possess weapons of mass destruction. The present Secretary-General has declared that:

State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined – not least by the forces of globalization and international co-operation. States are now widely understood to be instruments at the service of their peoples, and not vice versa. At the same time individual

sovereignty . . . has been enhanced by a renewed and spreading consciousness of individual rights.²

This has not been said without objections by some states. A decade ago it could hardly have been said by a Secretary-General at all. These are changes of profound significance even if they remain undefined in any guidelines for future action.

While the present volume expresses doubt as to whether the United Nations is yet prepared to meet the challenges of a new century, the final conclusion is that it will survive. The author of this book provides extensive material on the basis of which the reader can judge these views. My sense is that the challenges of the twenty-first century are already upon us. The United Nations is already hard pressed, having had inadequate time to prepare and insufficient support from its members. The burden cannot rest entirely with the United Nations. The governments and the peoples that elect them must change as much, or even more, than the United Nations in response to a world community struggling to preserve an anarchic state structure within global governance regimes of which the United Nations is called upon to be the unifying element. The present book can do much to help both statesmen and students to understand what is required.

James S. Sutterlin
Yale University
16 October 1999

Preface

The analysis here of reflexive adaptation, reform and learning processes in the United Nations is both timely and important, particularly when one considers that epiphenomenal and structural/ideological changes in international society have forced a re-examination of the significance and relevance of this multilateral entity to contemporary world politics. In this study, the problematic facing the UN can be summarized as follows: How has the UN handled organizational change in the past? In which direction have the change efforts, to date, taken the organization? Has the UN system adapted sufficiently to accommodate exogenous and endogenous forces? To what extent is this organization a 'decision frozen in time'? Should UN member states and Secretariat staff adopt more radical or transformative organizational adjustments in light of what appears to be a transition to a post-Westphalian, post-modern era? What ought to be the new role for the UN during this period of transition and beyond? Are there other models of multilateral arrangements that would be more relevant to the demands of international society in the new millennium?

Richard Bernstein has written that when foundations appear to be cracking and orthodoxies questioned, 'a public space is created in which basic questions about the human condition can be raised anew'.¹ This study attempts to occupy such a public space, at least as it applies to the subject of evolving multilateralism and changing the UN in response to the quest for global governance, global order and global democracy.

W.A.K.

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List of Acronyms

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
ACASTD	Advisory Committee for the Application of Science and Technology for Development
ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
ACUNS	Academic Council on the United Nations System
ANZUS	Australia–New Zealand–US Security Pact
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
CCAQ	Coordinating Committee for Administrative Questions
CCISUA	Coordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the UN System
CCSQ	Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions
CDP	Committee for Development Planning
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CNR	Committee on Natural Resources
CPC	Committee for Programme and Coordination
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSDHA	Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
CSTD	Centre for Science and Technology for Development
CTC	Commission on Transnational Corporations
DAM	Department of Administration and Management
DCS	Department of Conference Services
DDA	Department for Disarmament Affairs
DESD	Department of Economic and Social Development
DG	Director-General
DIEC	Director-General for International Economic Cooperation
DIESA	Department of International Economic and Social Affairs
DOMREP	Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPSCA	Department for Political and Security Council Affairs
DTCD	Department of Technical Cooperation for Development
EC	European Community

ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECDC	Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOMOG	Economic Community (of West African States) Monitoring Group
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEC	European Economic Community
ENMOD	Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques
EPTA	(UN)Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance
ESC	Economic Security Council
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
G-77	Group of 77
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GEMS	Global Environmental Monitoring System
GSTP	Global System of Trade Preferences
HABITAT	United Nations Centre for Human Settlement
IAD	Internal Audit Division
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
IDA	International Development Association
IDDA	Industrial Development Decade for Africa
IDS	International Development Strategy
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMCO	International Maritime Consultative Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization

INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IO	International Organization
IR	International Relations
IRPTC	International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
JAB	United Nations Joint Appeals Board
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
LAS	League of Arab States
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MINURCA	UN Mission in the Central African Republic
MINURSO	UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MONUA	UN Observation Mission in Angola
MSC	Military Staff Committee
MULPOC	Multinational Programming and Operational Centre
MUNS	Programme on Multilateralism and the United Nations System
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NICs	Newly Industrializing Countries
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCS	Office of Conference Services
OD	Organizational Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OERC	Office of Emergency Relief Coordination
OGS	Office of General Service
OHRM	Office of Human Resource Management
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
ONUC	UN Peacekeeping Force in the Congo
ONUCA	UN Observer Group in Central America
ONUMOZ	UN Operations in Mozambique
ONUSAL	UN Observer Mission in El Salvador
ONUVEH	UN Verification Mission in Haiti
ONUVEN	UN Observer Mission for the Verification of Elections in Nicaragua

OOALS	UN Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPO	Office of Peacekeeping Operations
OPPBF	Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance
ORCI	Office of Research and Collection of Information
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSSESM	Office of Secretariat Services for Economic and Social Matters
PCIJ	Permanent Court of International Justice
PPBES	UN Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Evaluative System
SG	Secretary-General
SUNFED	Special UN Fund for Economic Development
SWAPO	South West African People's Organization
TCDC	Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
TNC	Transnational Corporation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMIC	UN Advance Mission in Cambodia
UNA-USA	UN Association of the United States of America
UNAVEM	UN Angola Verification Mission
UNCDF	UN Capital Development Fund
UNCED	UN Conference on the Environment and Development
UNCHS	UN Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT)
UNCIO	UN Conference on International Organization
UNCLOS	UN Conference on the Law of the Sea
UNCSDHA	UN Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
UNCSTD	UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNCTC	UN Centre for Transnational Corporations
UNDOF	UN Disengagement Observer Force
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNDRO	Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNEF	UN Emergency Force in Sinai
UNEF(II)	UN Emergency Force (II) Separating Egypt and Israel
UNEP	UN Environmental Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFDAC	UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control
UNFICYP	UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNFPA	UN Fund for Population Activities

UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNGOMAP	UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan
UNHCR	UN High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization
UNIFIL	UN Interim Force in Lebanon
UNIIMOG	UN Iran–Iraq Military Observer Group
UNIKOM	UN Iraq–Kuwait Observer Mission
UNIPOM	UN India–Pakistan Observer Mission
UNITAR	UN Institute for Training and Research
UNJSPB	UN Joint Staff Pension Board
UNMIBH	UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNMIG	UN Mission in Georgia
UNMIH	UN Mission in Haiti
UNMOGIP	UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNMOP	UN Observer Mission in Croatia
UNMOT	UN Observer Mission in Tajikistan
UNOC	UN Operation in the Congo
UNOG	UN Office at Geneva
UNOGIL	UN Observer Group in Lebanon
UNOMIG	UN Observer Mission in Georgia
UNOMIL	UN Observer Mission in Liberia
UNOMSA	UN Observer Mission in South Africa
UNOMSIL	UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNOMUR	UN Observer Mission in Uganda and Rwanda
UNOSOM	UN Operations in Somalia
UNOV	UN Office at Vienna
UNPAAERD	UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development
UNPROFOR	UN Protection Force in Yugoslavia
UNRISD	UN Research Institute for Social Development
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCEAR	UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation
UNSF	UN Security Force in West Irian
UNTAC	UN Transition Assistance Team in Cambodia
UNTAG	UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia
UNTSO	UN Truce Supervision Organization
UNU	United Nations University
UNYOM	UN Yemen Observer Mission

UPU	Universal Postal Union
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USG	Under-Secretary-General
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WCF	Working Capital Fund
WFC	World Food Council
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WOMP	World Order Model Project
WTO	World Trade Organization