

Afterword

Concluding his final book, *Challenges to the United Nations: Building a Safer World* (CIIR/St Martin's Press, 1994) Erskine Childers wrote that:

It is time, indeed it is overtime, to empower those whom the Charter proclaims to be the first authors of the United Nations – ‘We the Peoples’. In addition to the needed strengthening of NGO roles and access, we must press our governments now to do what even in 1945 [UK] Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin (no ‘dreamer’) called a necessary ‘completion’ of the architecture of San Francisco.

We need a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, where our directly elected representatives can monitor and contribute to the performance of executive governments. They do need help. Those who have been practising double standards need the realisation that the representatives of the citizens of this planet are close by, watching, and alert to expose all unethical international behaviour. Executive governments that wish to follow the Charter and to advance all of its democratic goals need the additional courage that they would derive from such an assembly in session next door to theirs. Creating such an assembly will, of course, be an enormous task, but so have been many of the advances we have managed to make in international relations in the last 50 years.

Despite all the UN System's constraints to date, its research and deliberations have brought us to the point where we know the whole of our world for the first time in human history. We have deprived ourselves of the last excuse, of ignorance of how most of our sisters and brothers have to live out their days. Now, we have to go forward in the giant undertaking of building a democratic United Nations to make the real world safe, just and sustainable, for all its children.

The UN and its Future in the 21st Century

The contributions to this book show that the need for a vibrant UN is greater than ever, and, despite the difficulties, they together outline how it can be achieved. We hope that, in the UN's sixtieth year, these lectures and commentaries will inspire 'We the Peoples' to bring it to pass.

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