

Introduction

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Two decades ago, the world was swept with a wave of hope. Inspired by the popular movements for peace, freedom, democracy and solidarity, the nations of the world worked together to end the cold war. Yet the opportunities opened up by that historic change are slipping away. The global community is gravely concerned with the resurgent nuclear and conventional arms race, disrespect for international law and the failure of the world's governments to address adequately the challenges of poverty and environmental degradation. A culture of violence is spreading globally, eroding the opportunity to build a culture of peace, advocated by the United Nations.

Alongside the challenges inherited from the past there are new ones, which, if not properly addressed, could cause a clash of civilisations, religions and cultures. The inevitability of such a conflict must be rejected. The recent spate of terrorism in all its forms is an issue that should be pursued with determination. Only by reaffirming our shared ethical values -- respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms -- and by observing democratic principles, within and amongst countries, can terrorism be defeated. We must address the root causes of terrorism -- poverty, ignorance and injustice -- rather than responding to violence with violence.

This book has been compiled in the light of the international situation we face today. In recent times, the United States has become reluctant to use the UN process, and in particular the Security Council, as the primary organ for international peace and security. It would appear to many that it

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will co-operate with the UN only as long as it furthers the US foreign policy agenda and strategic interest.

After the failure to secure a second UN Security Council resolution authorising war, the US-led intervention seriously undermined international law and thus sidelined the United Nations. In his address to the General Assembly in September 2003, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned Member States that the United Nations had reached a fork in the road. It could rise to the challenge of meeting new threats or it could risk erosion in the face of mounting discord between States and unilateral action by them.

A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility

As the legitimacy of the UN was challenged, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, appointed a high-level UN Panel to study global threats and challenges and come up with radical reforms. The report, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* (Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change), explores the possibility of collective responses to our global problems, and generates new ideas and solutions for the 21st century. It recommends far-reaching changes to boost the ability of the UN to deal effectively with future threats caused by poverty and environmental degradation, terrorism, civil war, conflict between states, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and organised crime.

The panel's Chair, former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun of Thailand, says the 95-page report 'puts forward a new vision of collective security, one that addresses all of the major threats to international peace and security felt around the world.' The panel included Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway, and prominent diplomats and politicians as well as former senior UN officials drawn from all regions of the world.

The report affirms the right of States to defend themselves, including pre-

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emptively when an attack is truly imminent, and says that, in cases involving terrorists and WMDs, the Security Council may have to act earlier, more pro-actively, and more decisively than in the past.

The panel also endorses the idea of collective responsibility to protect civilians from genocide, ethnic cleansing and comparable atrocities, saying that the wider international community should intervene - acting preventively where possible - when countries are unwilling or unable to fulfil their responsibility to their citizens. However, if force is needed, it should be used as a last resort and authorised by the Security Council. Experts identify five criteria to guide the Council in its decisions over whether to authorise force:

- the seriousness of the threat;
- proper purpose;
- whether it is a last resort;
- whether proportional means are used; and
- whether military action is likely to have better or worse results than inaction.

The panel also came up with an unambiguous definition of terrorism, encompassing ‘any definition that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purposes of such an action . . . is to intimidate a population [or sway] a government or international organisation.’ If the definition secures agreement, it can be counted as a step forward.

It also urges the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission under the Security Council to identify countries at risk of violent conflicts, organise prevention efforts and sustain international peacebuilding efforts.

The report notes that major changes are needed in UN bodies to make them more effective, efficient and equitable, including universal membership of the Geneva-based Commission on Human Rights. Such a move would

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underscore the commitment of all members to the promotion of human rights, and might help focus attention back on the substantive issues rather than the politicking currently engulfing the Commission.

Also included in the report's 101 recommendations are proposals to strengthen development efforts, public health capacity and the current nuclear non-proliferation regime. The panel says this is a less effective constraint than previously because of lack of compliance, threats to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the changing security environment, and the diffusion of technology. It endorses the idea of collective responsibility to protect civilians from harm, and spurring economic and social development in order to ward off potential problems.

It calls for increasing the credibility and effectiveness of the Security Council by making its composition better reflect today's realities. Two formulas for an enlarged Security Council increase the membership to 24 from the current 15, but differ on allowing more permanent seats. The first provides for six new permanent seats without veto power in addition to the five that currently hold it, and three more two-year rotating seats divided among the UN's regional groupings.

The second plan envisages no new permanent seats but creates a new category of eight four-year renewable-term seats and one new two-year non-permanent, non-renewable seat, all without veto power. Both documents are intended to provide a basis for discussions at the proposed high-level summit in September 2005 before the Assembly's next session, which coincides with the UN's Sixtieth Anniversary.

In its report, the High-level Panel sets out a bold, new vision of collective security for the 21st century. We live in a world of new and evolving threats, threats that could not have been anticipated when the UN was founded in 1945 – threats like nuclear terrorism, and State collapse from the witches' brew of poverty, disease and civil war.

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In today's world, a threat to one is a threat to all. Globalisation means that a major terrorist attack anywhere in the industrial world would have devastating consequences for the well-being of millions in the developing world. Any one of 700 million international airline passengers every year can be an unwitting carrier of a deadly infectious disease. And the erosion of State capacity anywhere in the world weakens the protection of every State against transnational threats such as terrorism and organised crime. Every State requires international co-operation to make it secure.

There are six clusters of threats with which the world must be concerned now and in the decades ahead:

- war between States;
- violence within States, including civil wars, large-scale human rights abuses and genocide;
- poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation;
- nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons;
- terrorism; and
- transnational organised crime.

The good news is that the United Nations and our collective security institutions have shown that they *can* work. More civil wars ended through negotiation in the past 15 years than the previous 200. In the 1960s, many believed that by now 15 to 25 States would possess nuclear weapons; the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has helped prevent this. The World Health Organization (WHO) helped to stop the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) before it killed tens of thousands, perhaps more. But these accomplishments can be reversed. There is a real danger that they will be, unless we act soon to strengthen the United Nations, so that in future it responds effectively to the full range of threats that confront us.

The panel concluded that the threat agenda we faced was not a narrow one limited to international terrorism and to the proliferation of weapons of

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mass destruction, real though these threats certainly are. It is much wider, including the phenomena of the failure of states often leading to major regional instability and conflicts, and a whole range of issues which have not traditionally been considered as part of the peace and security nexus at all - poverty, environmental degradation, pandemic diseases and the spread of organised crime - to mention the most prominent. They reached this conclusion not simply because in many parts of the world, notably in Africa, and Latin America, these so-called 'soft' threats are often seen as even more menacing and imminent than the 'hard' threats of the narrower agenda, but also because they became increasingly aware of the inter-connections and overlap between the different categories of threat which rendered the whole 'hard/soft' categorisation misleading and inadequate.

After all, the greatest terrorist outrage in recent times was launched from a failed state, Afghanistan, and the greatest genocide occurred in another, Rwanda. Organised crime has frequently undermined international efforts at post-conflict peacebuilding. Pandemic diseases like AIDS threaten the stability of many states, in Africa in particular. The correlation between poverty and insecurity leaps at you from the report. All these threats require a universal response if they are to be effectively combated. Only a broad, common agenda provides any hope of mustering such a universal response.

The panel came to examine responses to these threats and challenges and rapidly found themselves at risk of being drawn into something of an ideological, almost a theological, battle - between those who believed in unilateral responses and those who believed in multilateral ones. The fact remains that a collective response is essential for implementing the recommendations made by the panel. No single country, even the world's current single super-power, could mount an adequate response to all the threats it faces on its own.

For instance, in dealing with terrorism or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it is fairly obvious that states, and their intelligence and law enforcement capabilities, are essential to any effective action and

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cannot be replaced by multilateral institutions. But it is just as obvious that the normative capacity of international organisations and their scope for organising co-operation on a wide-ranging basis are essential for dealing with a range of threats and challenges which do not respect national boundaries and which have often seized on globalisation as an ally in the pursuit of their objectives. From this the panel concluded that a collective response was needed to every one of these challenges, but that dealing with each effectively would require a judicious blend between the national and the international when it came to action.

Besides dealing with the harder end of the peace and security agenda, the panel was very conscious that, so far as the rest of the agenda was concerned - poverty, environmental degradation, epidemic disease, organised crime – there exist a broader network of organisations and civil society which is working in unison with the UN. The Secretary-General has recently put forward separately his definitive views on these issues in the context of his review of progress on the Millennium Development Goals. Substantially greater financial resources will be needed to fuel development programmes and to counter AIDS and other epidemic diseases. It is critically important to bring the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations to a conclusion at the latest by 2006. It is high time to start thinking about and negotiating a post-Kyoto set of arrangements which will bring both the United States and the main developing countries within its ambit and provide a more effective response to global warming than what has been attempted so far.

Policies for Prevention

Meeting the challenge of today's threats means getting serious about prevention; the consequences of allowing latent threats to become manifest, or of allowing existing threats to spread, are simply too severe. Development has to be the first line of defence for a collective security system that takes prevention seriously. Combating poverty will not only

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save millions of lives but also strengthen States' capacity to combat terrorism, organised crime and proliferation. Development makes everyone more secure. There is an agreed international framework for how to achieve these goals, set out in the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, but implementation lags.

Biological security must be at the forefront of prevention. International response to HIV/AIDS was shockingly late and shamefully ill-resourced. It is urgent that we halt and roll back this pandemic.

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To meet these challenges, the UN needs its existing institutions to work better. This means revitalising the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to make sure they play the role intended for them, and restoring credibility to the Commission on Human Rights.

Outside the UN, a forum bringing together the heads of the 20 largest economies, developed and developing, would help the coherent management of international monetary, financial, trade and development policy. Better collaboration with regional organisations is also crucial, and the report sets out a series of principles that govern a more structured partnership between them and the UN.

The report recommends strengthening the Secretary-General's critical role in peace and security. To be more effective, the Secretary-General should be given substantially more latitude to manage the Secretariat, and be held accountable. He also needs better support for his mediation role, and new capacities to develop effective peacebuilding strategy. He currently has one Deputy Secretary-General; with a second, responsible for peace and security, he would have the capacity to ensure oversight of both the social, economic and development functions of the UN, and its many peace and security functions.

We the Peoples: Civil Society, the UN and Global Governance

A second report has been released which looked at the importance of civil society *vis-à-vis* the United Nations, called *We the Peoples: Civil Society, the UN and Global Governance* (Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relationships). The report made some key recommendations that are instrumental for the efficient functioning of the United Nations.

The panel's report presents 30 proposals for reform, some of which the Secretary-General himself would have authority to act on, while others would require intergovernmental debate and decision. These proposals largely stem from four underlying priorities or principles for the UN that the panel identified over the course of its deliberations:

- the UN must become an outward looking organisation: giving more emphasis to convening and facilitating rather than 'doing;' putting the needs, not the institution, at the centre;
- the UN must embrace a plurality of constituencies: many actors may be relevant to an issue;
- the UN must connect the local with the global: putting countries first by starting engagement at the country level for both operational and deliberative processes. Global norms should drive the operations, and country realities should mould those norms; civil society is vital for both;
- the UN must help re-shape democracy for the 21st century, accepting a more explicit role in strengthening global governance and tackling the democratic deficits it is prone to, emphasising participatory democracy and deeper accountability of institutions to the global public.

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The report points out that the UN is not starting from scratch: ‘There is much to be proud of in its existing strategies and recent measures to enhance engagement. These proposals are largely intended to expand, deepen and protect them, not replace them’. Similarly, it recognises that the UN’s main civil society partners ‘have already done a great deal to help strengthen the outward orientation of the UN and would be invaluable allies in helping to implement the suggested strategy’.

A Time to Change and the Way Forward

The publication of this book is well-timed as the UN is going through a crucial period of self examination and needs reforming to make itself more relevant to the challenges of the 21st century. It coincides with the recent UN High-level Panel Report discussed above. These cannot be confronted without reform, which makes the report and its recommendations even more pertinent.

The report is the start, not the end, of a process. The United Nations 60th anniversary in 2005 will be a crucial opportunity for Member States to discuss and build on the recommendations in the report, some of which will be considered by a summit of Heads of State. But building a more secure world takes much more than a report or a summit. It will take resources commensurate with the scale of the challenges ahead; commitments that are long-term and sustained; and, most of all, it will take leadership – from within States, and between them.

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The challenges of security, poverty and environmental crisis can only be met successfully through multilateral efforts based on the rule of law. All nations must strictly fulfil their treaty obligations and reaffirm the indispensable role of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council for maintaining peace.

To benefit from humankind's new, unprecedented opportunities and to counter the dangers confronting us there is a need for better global governance. Therefore, the United Nations and its institutions need strengthening and reforming

The United Nations is clearly at a pivotal moment in its history. As it faces the emerging challenges of global terrorism and nuclear proliferation, member-states must decide whether to adhere to the UN processes to solve their common problems or face the consequences.

If the recommendations of the report are taken up in earnest, we can have a new and revitalised United Nations and Security Council. It will heal some of the North-South divide. On the other hand, if the report is thought of as a scripture and away from the realities on the ground, then it will simply gather dust like countless other UN reports. After the report was published, Kofi Annan said:

In his last annual address to Congress in January 1945, Franklin Roosevelt, then America's president, alluded to his plans to create a new collective security institution, the United Nations, and gave warning that: 'In our disillusionment after the last war, we gave up the hope of achieving a better peace because we had not the courage to fulfil our responsibilities in an admittedly imperfect world.'

Almost exactly 60 years later, we once again find ourselves mired in disillusionment, in an all too imperfect world. It is easy to stand at the sidelines and criticise, we could talk endlessly about UN reform. But our

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world no longer has that luxury. The time has come to adapt our collective security system, so that it works efficiently, effectively and equitably.

In 2005, UN member states will be reviewing progress in implementing the 2000 Millennium Declaration, culminating in a summit of world leaders in New York in September. This will be an appropriate moment for them to act on some of the most important recommendations in the panel's report, which require decisions at the highest levels of government.

I hope that world leaders will rise to this challenge. In the past three years we have all lived through a period of deep division and sombre reflection. We must make 2005 a year of bold decision. As the panel puts it: 'We all share responsibility for each other's security.' Let us summon the courage to fulfil that responsibility.