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**THE UNITED NATIONS: LOOKING AHEAD – A US PERSPECTIVE**

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It is wonderful to be back in Lisbon. Portugal and the United States share a common Atlantic heritage. New England, where I come from, is enriched by a creative population of Portuguese descent. In Europe, Portugal is an example of transition to democracy, a path followed by other countries in East Central Europe.

I want to salute in particular Senhor Diogo Freitas do Amaral. He is one of those many Portuguese who, following tradition, have spread Portugal's skills and influence in the world. In New York, he presides over us at the fiftieth United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). He is a man of unbelievable skills, managing to restrict 140 heads of state and government to speeches less than five minutes each at the anniversary session.

My role here is to represent our UN Ambassador, Madeleine Albright. She has been a staunch advocate of the proposition that progress for America in these times is not possible unless we work with others – bilaterally, through alliances, in regional and global arrangements, and at the UN. Her many duties, including service as a member of President Clinton's Cabinet, prevent her participation. She has asked me to convey to the participants of this conference her warm wishes for success.

## II

Last month, leaders of the world converged on New York. In doing so, they voted with their feet. One after another, they underlined the importance of the UN, and declared its necessity. Earlier Pope John Paul voiced his strong support of the UN in the hall of the General Assembly. President Clinton affirmed that America still needs the UN and that for the next 50 years "you can count the US in."

In our increasingly interdependent world, most issues transcend boundaries. They require international cooperation. This is what the UN system was created to do, through the Specialized Agencies and the organs of the UN itself:

The WHO for health

The ITU for telecommunications

The ILO for labor standards

WIPO for the protection of intellectual property

The IMF for international monetary policy

UNEP for the environment

The UPU for the international mails

The IAEA for nuclear non-proliferation

The UNHRC for human rights

UNHCR for refugees

The Security Council for the maintenance of peace.

When we speak of the UN, we speak of all these issues, all these activities, and all these organizations. And we must keep in mind that what these organizations do – each under their own charter, their rules of procedure, and their own budgets – is governed by their respective members, who ultimately decide on the programs of these different parts of the UN system. Thus, the UN is not something apart from each of its members. It is us.

We should explicitly recognize another characteristic of the UN. It is the combination in one vast enterprise – and the contrast – of ideals and programs. The Charter sets out mankind's highest aspirations: Peace, prosperity, justice, self-determination and human rights. These aspirations have been given expression and shape in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a growing number of international conventions negotiated and concluded within the UN system. At the same time, the UN is a system of programs and resources – including budgets and personnel – designed to turn those aspirations into reality. This second element, like all human enterprise, is subject to imperfect reality. Thus, the invocation of the term UN highlights the gap between aspiration and achievement. The awareness of this gap easily leads to a sense of disappointment.

It is right, therefore, to recall that at fifty, the UN has enormous achievements to its credit:

It has made the world more free by dismantling colonialism and by helping people to move toward democracy and peace in Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique, and Namibia, and now in Haiti.

It has made the world more humane by eradicating disease, by saving millions from starvation, and by resolute and courageous – though often underfunded – efforts to help refugees.

It has made the world more just by cultivating agreement that when it comes to human rights, states can no longer hide behind Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter. UN rhetoric and practice now demonstrate that the world community, as embodied in the UN, has a legitimate and urgent claim that citizens everywhere must be treated by their

national authorities according to generally accepted international standards of behavior.

It has made the world safer, thanks to countless efforts of good offices and mediation by successive Secretaries General, and by efforts organized in the Security Council to keep the peace, such as in Cyprus and Salvador, in the Congo and Cambodia.

### III

These major achievements notwithstanding, the UN is in need of change and reform. The world has changed in fifty years. The next fifty years will present new challenges. The methods and habits of the past are no longer sufficient.

Even before the recent political realignment of the world, the UN has been changing. Over five decades, its membership grew three-fold, from 52 in 1945 to 185 in 1995. Japan and Germany, former "enemy states", are now the second and third largest contributors to the regular budget. Moreover, the end of the cold war has profoundly altered the nature of the debate within the UN. East no longer confronts west. Instead, issues such as Security Council enlargement and the future of the Committee of Twenty-Four are debated more in north-south terms. Furthermore, the Council is no longer shackled by frequent use of the veto. In the past few years, the Council has been the hub of decision-making on peacekeeping. The General Assembly, in contrast, is seen as having lost some significance. This evolution has accentuated the sense of division between large countries – in particular the Permanent Members of the Security Council – and others, whose opportunities to serve at the center of UN power remain limited if not virtually non-existent.

Like any other large organization, the UN needs to consider how further to change the way it works, so as to carry out its purposes in a cost-effective way in new circumstances. The call for UN reform produced a resonant echo at the fiftieth anniversary last month. Reform must be consequential and visible. Piecemeal reform is insufficient. In the words of Secretary of State Warren Christopher, we must shape the UN's agenda as if we were creating the institution anew.

Some of the reform must come from within the organization, and can be set in motion by the Secretary General and the heads of the Specialized Agencies. Other reform must come from the member states themselves. The reform agenda, however, is far from easy.

Let me take one example. It is widely recognized that the Security Council should be enlarged beyond its current size of fifteen. There is also broad, but not universal, support for permanent membership of Japan and Germany. In addition, there is general agreement that the Council should be further enlarged. But this is where the agreement ends. An enlarged Council of, say, twenty members would be seen by many UN members as still not offering a wider opportunity to be represented. Many smaller countries, moreover, have noted that new additions should not be regarded as in any way representing their regions. Moreover, they have spoken out against any pattern in which large countries appear to have a stronger claim on Council membership than they do. They have been vociferous in asserting that even the smallest countries should have a fair shot at Council participation, even though their political, economic or military capacity may be limited. There is one further issue. It relates to the right of veto. Should new permanent members also have this right? Or only some? And by what rationale should some have the veto and others not? How would the new voting formula look in an enlarged Council? How do arrangements for equitable geographic representation have to be recast? These are tough issues. Instinctively, UN members will each evaluate any proposed scheme for Council enlargement in terms of whether, in their view, it enhances or reduces their prospects of serving as member or otherwise having their views taken into account. It will take time, I submit, to develop the consensus required for Security Council enlargement.

Let me look at one other example, namely peacekeeping. Recently, the UN has been involved in up to seventeen simultaneous peacekeeping operations, involving up to 70,000 troops at an annual cost of \$3.5 billion. The UN – that is to say the Secretary General and the members of the Security Council – have learned some important lessons.

As Ambassador Albright has observed, the UN can keep a peace and is well structured to give parties who want peace the confidence to keep it.

Bosnia showed the difficulty of melding peacekeeping by UNPROFOR on the ground with peace enforcement operations by NATO in the air and at sea. Many lives have been saved, but the effort is unlikely to be repeated.

The UN is not equipped to conduct robust military operations. It does not have an army or a commander-in-chief.

Peacekeeping is costly and the burden is distributed unevenly. Until this fall, the US has been assessed a third of the cost. Washington has taken steps – unilaterally – to reduce this to 25 per cent effective October 1. We look forward to rebalancing the

peacekeeping scale of assessment. My country has warmly welcomed Portugal's recent decision voluntarily to increase its contribution.

There will be times when, as in operation Desert Storm, the Security Council has to rely on the US or another power to lead a coalition of willing states in defense of international security and peace.

We have learned, above all, that before we begin a new operation, we need to have answers to key questions of mandate, rule of engagement, line of command, duration, and cost. And we have learned that there are limits to the ability of the UN to maintain peace and security. These UN limits are also our limits. For without the willingness of the members of the UN – and in particular the members of the Security Council – to use force pursuant to the UN Charter, the UN cannot act under Chapter VII.

#### IV

Reform is closely tied to cost. In this area, the UN faces a major budget problem, the solution to which is not yet in sight.

Right now the UN faces a cash crisis. As of October 31, arrears in the payments toward the UN regular budget and the peacekeeping budget amounted, respectively, to \$663 million and \$2.15 billion, for a total of \$2.81 billion. The US share amounts to \$1.2 billion.

President Clinton has pledged continued substantial contributions to UN financing. He is working with Congress to fully meet American obligations. When assessing US arrears, it should be kept in mind that the US has historically been the largest contributor to the UN. Over the past 12 months, we contributed over \$1.3 billion.

Americans are now seeking a way toward a balanced budget within the next several years. I can therefore foresee growing pressure on financial resources available for participation in international organizations to which the US belongs, including the UN and the Specialized Agencies. President Clinton's goal to get sufficient funds from the Congress to meet our legally due obligations in full has, so far, not been met. The issue has been eclipsed by the budget battle on Capitol Hill and the forced furlough of the Executive branch of the government that took effect on November 13. Ultimately, we may be looking at an arrangement under which incremental UN reform and staggered payments of arrears are somehow linked in Washington. Meanwhile, in New York, there would be resistance to any such explicit linkage. Members will feel that, even as the issue of US arrears affects them as it does the UN organization, solving the

problem is an American responsibility, not theirs. Right now, the US is seeking zero nominal growth in the UN budget and a ceiling of \$2.51 billion for the 1996-97 biennium.

## V

The US faces these reform and budget issues together with other members of the UN, and in particular our European colleagues and friends. Throughout the history of the UN, Western European countries, the US, and others have been together in advancing the fundamental values and purposes of the UN – peace, freedom, democracy, development, and human rights. Of course, our approaches have at times been at variance with – or even opposed to – one another. Let me give you some fresh illustrations.

The attempt by Cuba to seek at this General Assembly – as in past years – a resolution calling for the end of the US trade embargo, produced a broad spread of views. The US voted against. Britain, Germany and the Netherlands abstained. The rest of the EU countries voted in favor. On the other hand, voting on the report of the Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization saw all those countries together, supported by Russia and the CIS.

In my capacity as Senior Regional Advisor for Europe and Canada, I have watched with interest how the EU members and the US interact. My assessment is that the Gymnich formula does not work well in New York. In Europe, this formula involves an established process that gives the US an opportunity to comment, through the Chairman EU country, on issues involving European political cooperation. In New York, however, the nature of the parliamentary process in the General Assembly and the consultation methods of the EU do not lend themselves to a timely and effective US input. This element of the Europe-US relationship can stand improvement. This conclusion holds for the General Assembly, particularly on issues of economic and budgetary significance. I suspect that it also holds for the Security Council, though it is my impression that the EU element is less a factor in the interface between the European members of the Council and the US.

## VI

I should not conclude without saying a word about NATO. In Bosnia, we have seen an unsteady cooperation between the UN and NATO. Little did it matter that key members of NATO are also permanent members of the Security Council. The fact, however, is that too long and too often neither the UN nor NATO seemed up to constantly changing

challenges. Bosnia brought the UN-NATO dual key arrangements into disrepute. These arrangements underlined UN impotence, with UNPROFOR contingents hostage to local forces.

Bosnia has taught us strong lessons. Its experience is not likely to be repeated. Yet there will be a continuing need to work out effective liaison between the UN and NATO, as the latter organization stands poised to take on a genuine peacekeeping role, and the UN undertakes to take charge of reconstruction and the resettlement of refugees.

## VII

What conclusions do I reach from this assessment?

In the words of Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, the world has become global.

The pursuit of economic and social development requires complex but achievable tradeoffs.

The issue of political balance between majorities and minorities, and of individual human rights, is as challenging as ever.

In many parts of the world, trust in one's neighbors remains in short supply. The international community has the task to add to that supply when it can.

These issues require the attention and democratic engagement of all states and peoples.

We have a UN system in place. There is every reason to shape it to do a better job.

This system should continue to hold before us, as it has in the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other normative instruments, the high aspirations of mankind.

These objectives should, and in my opinion will, continue to enjoy strong American support.

Thank you very much for your attention.