

United Nations  Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

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operations, disarmament, fight against poverty, or creation of international laws, has been and should remain essential.

The United Nations has always enjoyed a special relationship with the United States, its largest single contributor covering 22% of the organization's regular budget and over 27% of its budget for peacekeeping operations. Special, but never easy, (ranging from admiration and devotion to reservation or even suspicion). The United States has clashed with the UN on some issues - the Kyoto protocol, the Biological Weapons Convention, Convention on elimination of discrimination against women (CEDAW), or the International Criminal Court. The US' approach towards variety of topics on the UN agenda has resulted in growing perception among many UN Member States that the United States turns away from pursuing multilateralism in international relations in favor of unilateralism. This perception became more acute during the Iraqi crisis.

The divisions within the UN membership are obvious, and there is no point in hiding them. First and foremost, we need to work towards healing the rifts, particularly in the Security Council.

Iraq's post-conflict society is confronted with various problems of instability. These include unresolved issues relating to years of political and religious oppression, violence amongst different clans, dangers stemming from the past totalitarian structures, looting, or abundance of arms in the absence of an effective new local police or security forces. Recent UN experiences elsewhere have clearly demonstrated that a comprehensive strategy to tackle these issues in the immediate post-conflict phase is critical. Furthermore, it has become evident that a strategy for political and economic reforms should be crafted in conjunction with an overall vision for democratization of the Iraqi society.

While it is obvious that the coalition forces are responsible for military and civil administration of Iraq in the current period following the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, I do believe that future substantial involvement of the UN in the transition is inevitable, especially given some of the problems US has to tackle on the ground and the increasing need to internationalise the stabilization forces and to share the burden. The role of the UN in Iraq should not be confined only to an advisory role or reduced to the provision of humanitarian or economic aid, but it has to gradually accept broader responsibilities aimed at promoting democracy in Iraq. I am convinced that an important role for the UN both in the economic reconstruction and in the political transformation is in the interests both of the US and the UN. They together could accelerate the transition towards democratic Iraq governed only by the Iraqis.

For all its shortcomings, real or perceived, the United Nations is still the only forum which has the grass roots experience and personnel to deal with a wide range of crises, whether in the field of humanitarian relief or helping people to rebuild their lives and countries, promoting human rights and the rule of law, in conflict management and post-conflict peace-building. The UN has an extensive experience in post-conflict reconstruction from setting up UN administrations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and, of course here in Timor-Leste, or in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in Sierra Leone and most recently in Afghanistan. The United Nations is prepared to utilize this experience in order to assist the Iraqi people to rebuild their country.

I do believe that it is in the interest of both the United Nations and the US authorities to reach an agreement on mutually complimentary cooperation in that country which will further develop the principles expressed in the UNSC Resolution 1483. Such a cooperation will undoubtedly help to bring about the common aim – a democratic, free, independent and prosperous Iraq.

The past disagreement in the Security Council on the Iraqi crisis has reflected the contemporary international reality. In this respect, the visible disunity on the Iraqi crisis may have even proved to be beneficial to the international community since it focuses the attention on this very issue. As much as we need the idealism of the noble ideas that lead to the establishment of this Organization, we must be also guided by realism in the practical steps.

Although most visible on the question of Iraq, the rift is not only about Iraq. It's also, and foremost, about the functioning international system where one single nation – in this case the United States – possesses an unprecedented military and economic power. A nation so powerful that it can almost afford to ignore the entire international order. Almost, but not entirely. The United States needs the legitimacy and existence of a world order that only the UN can provide – at least in the eyes of the rest of the world. America's dependency on the UN's legitimacy is still

such as arms control, and human rights. In these areas, unilateralism tends to be associated with non-participation in or non-ratification of agreements. It is not clear, however, when a non-universal agreement to cooperate on a particular issue should acquire the same multilateral status as, for example, the United Nations Charter, or whether a state exercising its traditional sovereign right not to sign such a treaty should be branded as unilateralist. With these taxing issues, one can

its endeavour to maintain peace and security, to respect equal rights and promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

Without doubt, the UN is going through a critical phase. At the same time it is necessary to