

Part 2

Reform of the United Nations

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The United States continued to press in 1997 for comprehensive reform in the United Nations and the specialized agencies, emphasizing consolidation of overlapping functions, cuts in staffing, priority-setting and budgetary discipline. Secretary General Annan undertook major initiatives with his Track One and Track Two proposals, announced in March and July respectively, encompassing a wide range of administrative, operational and institutional reforms in the UN Secretariat. The General Assembly's adoption of most of the proposals in two consensus resolutions marked a significant milestone for the UN and U.S. 3-year campaign for structural and institutional reforms. While the United States had concerns about some specific measures, it considered General Assembly endorsement of the proposals as a package as essential to the reform effort and supported Irish and Botswanan leadership in negotiations on that issue. (These reforms are discussed in greater detail below.)

The Open-Ended High-Level Working Group on Strengthening the UN System, informally known as the Essy Group, completed its work on reform in the economic, social and administrative areas in July. While it produced more than 100 proposals to improve the working of the General Assembly, its subsidiary bodies and the Secretariat, they were unexceptional and noncontroversial. On controversial issues, the United States successfully overcame attempts in the Group to have NGOs and the General Assembly play larger roles, such as NGO participation in UN deliberations and whether the General Assembly should have a role in selecting the Secretary General.

Budgetary Reform. Consistent with U.S. objectives, the UN General Assembly, in December, approved the UN regular budget for the 1998–1999 biennium at a level slightly below \$2.533 billion. The budget takes account of various reform measures proposed by the Secretary General, including a reduction in the number of established posts in the UN Secretariat, resources for the new development account and resources for the newly created position of Deputy Secretary General. The budget also reflects the new net-budgeting concept proposed by the Secretary General to enable greater transparency in the presentation of certain UN costs that

are jointly financed with other UN entities. On a related matter, the General Assembly approved the UN scale of assessments for the 3-year period covering 1998–2000. The new scale maintains the current ceiling rate of 25 percent, but allows the possibility of revising the scale elements, including the ceiling rate, for the years 1999 and 2000. The United States is seeking to lower the ceiling rate to 22 percent, effective in 1999, and to establish a 25 percent maximum rate for UN peacekeeping operations. Although the United States currently is assessed over 30 percent for peacekeeping, U.S. domestic law prohibits payment of more than 25 percent toward these costs.

Oversight. The UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) was established in 1994 to assist the Secretary General in fulfilling his oversight responsibilities regarding the resources and staff of the United Nations. It is perceived as a professional and increasingly effective mechanism in uncovering, reporting on and deterring waste, fraud and mismanagement at the United Nations.

During 1997 the United States continued to press for a strong and transparent OIOS. In an effort to address U.S. concerns regarding the lack of OIOS external reporting to member states, the Office refined its reporting procedures. For the first time, Under Secretary General Paschke listed in his annual report all of the reports his office had produced and offered to brief member states on any report, upon request. U.S. officials have participated in a number of OIOS briefings, including several related to peacekeeping operations.

The UN General Assembly did not adopt a resolution on OIOS in 1997. This was primarily because of the failure of the Fifth Committee to reach consensus regarding the role of the General Assembly in formally endorsing OIOS recommendations before they are implemented, particularly with respect to recommendations relating to separately administered organs, such as UNDP and UNICEF. Despite the UN Legal Counsel's reaffirmation of OIOS's legal authority over all UN resources and staff, including the funds and programs, member states' disparate views on the issue did not change.

Personnel. It has been and remains U.S. policy to urge the United Nations and the specialized agencies to reduce staffing levels wherever possible in the interest of cutting costs and streamlining operations. The 1998–1999 UN budget, approved in December, includes significant reductions in the number of established posts. Over 900 posts are to be eliminated in the 1998–1999 budget, perhaps the largest decrease for any UN budget.

Secretary General's Reform Initiatives

The Secretary General's reform initiatives made significant structural improvements in the UN organization. Making the United Nations more efficient and effective benefits all member states, as the resources gained

from reduced administrative expenses can be redirected toward priorities in sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, human rights and peacekeeping.

On March 17 the Secretary General announced 10 administrative and managerial reforms (Track One), which he could implement on his own authority. These included reducing the 1998–1999 UN regular budget by \$123 million, cutting administrative costs by one-third, merging three Secretariat economic departments into a new Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), eliminating nearly 1,000 personnel slots and applying a code of conduct on senior UN officials. The Secretary General's July 16 reform initiatives (Track Two), some subject to General Assembly approval (recommendations) and some not (actions which the Secretary General could already take), covered a wider range of topics. The United States agreed with most of the measures, especially those on development activities, humanitarian relief and human rights. The United States had reservations about specific proposals on proposed new financing mechanisms and the proposed restructuring of the Trusteeship Council.

On November 12 the General Assembly reached consensus on draft resolution A/52/L.17, "Renewing the United Nations: A Program for Reform," which endorsed the Track Two actions (Resolution 52/12 A). Although the Secretary General could implement the actions on his own authority without approval from the General Assembly, the resolution had symbolic importance since it illustrated that the measures have broad support.

Track Two actions that the United States supported include rationalizing the work of the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD; bringing together development activities in a UN Development Group; abolishing the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and transferring its core functions to a new Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC); and consolidating the Center for Human Rights into the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The U.S. Government opposed completely phasing out the use of gratis personnel, seconded personnel who provide needed expertise for core functions such as peacekeeping or technical help for international tribunals.

The United States worked to ensure that the new Department of Disarmament Affairs does not duplicate or interfere with the existing Conference on Disarmament. It also worked to ensure that the new common managerial structure for drug control and crime prevention activities based in Vienna builds on existing synergies, eliminates duplication, and allows for continued specialized expertise to be brought to bear on these programs. Broad-based opposition to this proposal by many member states put this proposal on the sidelines, pending further evaluation.

On December 19 the General Assembly passed a second consensus draft resolution, A/52/L.72/Rev. 1, "Renewing the United Nations: A Pro-

gram for Reform,” granting intergovernmental approval to most of the recommendations. (Resolution 52/12 B.)

The recommendations adopted that the United States favored include: establishing the post of Deputy Secretary General; abolishing the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development, now that arrangements are in place for inputs from civil society in UN deliberations on sustainable development; promoting enhancement of peacekeeping operations, especially rapid deployment capabilities; and setting up an account to reprogram savings from reduced administrative expenses into development-related programs.

The resolution referred the Secretary General’s recommendations on the ECOSOC subsidiaries to ECOSOC for review, and requested that the Secretary General elaborate on several of his proposals. The U.S. Government opposed two of these recommendations, one for a revolving credit fund that the Secretary General would use to cover cash flow problems when member states are late in paying their dues, and another for UN retention of budget surpluses. The United States maintained that instilling better management procedures and budgetary restraint is a better way to improve the UN’s financial situation. The U.S. Government strongly supported the recommendations to institute results-based budgeting and sunset provisions for UN programs, which were remanded for further clarification for the General Assembly’s consideration in 1998.

ECOSOC Reform

ECOSOC reform is aimed at strengthening its role in the coordination of the full range of UN economic, social and related administrative activities. The United States worked towards this by supporting enhanced ECOSOC coordination of followup to UN conferences in decision 1997/302.

In its December 19 resolution 52/12 B, the General Assembly requested that ECOSOC review the Secretary General’s recommendations on ECOSOC subsidiaries contained in his July 16 Track Two reform package. As part of its review of the roles and mandates of its subsidiary bodies, ECOSOC will consider and possibly make decisions on these recommendations in 1998.

The Secretary General called for consolidating the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development (CNRSEED) and the Committee on Natural Resources (CNR) into the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD); making the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) an UNCTAD subsidiary; and replacing the Committee for Development Planning (CDP) with an *ad hoc* panel of experts to address specific subjects related to development. The United States supports the suggestions on the CNRSEED, CNR and CDP. The United States prefers incorporating the CSTD into the work

of UNCTAD itself, but not as an additional commission under the Trade and Development Board.

The Secretary General recommended consolidating the functions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs into a single commission. The International Narcotics Control Board would report to the new commission. In general, the United States supports this, provided that the merger would strengthen the functions of both bodies by building on existing synergies and eliminating duplication of effort. The United States has also stressed that the merger must not jeopardize the funding levels for narcotics in favor of more generalized crime prevention programs, and specialized expertise must continue to be provided to both the crime and narcotics programs. Broad-based opposition to this proposal by many member states has put this proposal on the sidelines, pending further evaluation.

The United States strongly supports the Secretary General's proposal, now in place, to combine the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Human Rights Center, thereby strengthening the High Commissioner's ability to better coordinate with other parts of the UN system.

Peacekeeping Reform

Presidential Decision Directive 25 continues to be the blueprint for U.S. efforts to encourage further reform of UN peacekeeping. During 1997 the United Nations made significant progress toward improving its ability to plan and manage operations.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) continued to refine its structure. The DPKO staff was reduced in 1997 to 355 persons from 398 in 1996. At U.S. urging, DPKO transferred 26 core positions funded through the Peacekeeping Support Account to the regular budget. The Standby Arrangements Initiative, enabling the United Nations to identify possible contributors to operations based on member states' own designation of potentially available units, continues to grow. To date, 67 nations have signed on. The Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters (RDMHQ) program is progressing. The RDMHQ will provide the United Nations the capability to establish field control of a new peacekeeping operation quickly, while the United Nations identifies the Force Commander and contributor states. The United States made a contribution of \$200,000 with year-end funds to the RDMHQ trust fund in September 1997. However, the United Nations remains considerably short of the estimated \$3.2 million required to make the RDMHQ fully operational.

The Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG), a Danish-led initiative, is moving forward. A derivative of the Standby Arrangements program, the SHIRBRIG will provide the United Nations rapidly available forces to respond to a crisis for a limited period to give the United Nations time to locate and designate long-term contributor states. In September

1997 the core brigade staff was established and the commander identified. This multinational force is projected to be operational by August 1999.

Recognizing the importance of civilian police operations to fill the public security gap during peacekeeping operations, the U.S. Government has urged DPKO to give further study to civilian police (CIVPOL) issues and implement changes to enhance its capacity for planning and managing CIVPOL operations. The United Nations will host a CIVPOL seminar in March 1998 to consider lessons learned from previous operations and gather ideas for future reforms.

Security Council Reform

The United States supports an expanded Security Council, including permanent seats for Germany and Japan. The United States is also willing to consider three new permanent seats from the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, up to a maximum of 20–21 members. The Council's composition should continue to reflect political, economic and security realities. There should be no change in the status or privileges of the existing permanent members, and the integrity of the veto must remain intact.

During 1997 the General Assembly debated the reform and expansion of the Security Council extensively. The Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (OEWG) met for the fourth consecutive year. Numerous nations spoke in favor of Security Council reform and expansion during 1997. However, there was insufficient agreement on the size and membership of an expanded Council to pass a substantive resolution on the subject. One draft resolution (A/52/L.7) on the subject was introduced, but a vote was deferred due to the lack of agreement. The General Assembly and the OEWG will debate the issue again in 1998.