

TOWARD A COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRATIC NATIONS

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The original American conception of the United Nations was of an international body, devoid of politics, united in a dispassionate search for world peace and the good of mankind. We as a nation believed that our example of freedom and human dignity would guide other nations on the path of peace and prosperity. At the most fundamental level, we were resolved that free people do not wage war on their neighbor. Today, the world is not a peaceful place because too many people still are not free.

It is now appropriate to circumspectly ask whether the United Nations has succeeded in its most basic mandate: to expand freedom and peace. No one can deny that high marks are deserved in some areas. The achievements of the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Afghanistan, Vietnam, and Cambodia are actions that stand out as true heirs to the spirit of the U.N. Charter. Other important contributions in various technical areas and by some departments of the World Health Organization also shine as the kind of service to mankind that should make the United Nations proud.

Although some complain that the United Nations has become politicized and even partisan, these concerns pale when we face the reality that the world is far more dangerous today and much less free than it was 40 years ago.

Following the carnage of World War II, the world yearned for lasting peace. As was the case with a feeble Woodrow Wilson who looked beyond the immediate agenda of the Treaty of Versailles, as he sought to grasp the elusive goal of peace on earth through a League of Nations, once again a terminally ill President of the United States of America disregarded the bitter reality of postwar Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Manchuria to seek the long-range goal of lasting peace.

Perhaps this can somehow explain Franklin Roosevelt's idealistic yet incredibly naive explanation to Winston Churchill of his concessions to Joseph Stalin:

"I think," he said of Stalin, "that if I give him everything I possibly can and ask nothing from him in return, noblesse oblige, he won't try to annex anything and will work with me for a world of democracy and peace."

Although Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" speech and the "Declaration of the 26 United Nations" on January 1, 1942, initially laid a firm foundation for the United Nations, Roosevelt did not live to see the founding or the subsequent drift of the organization. He undoubtedly would have shared the initial idealistic fervor of those who hailed its creation.

The United Nations was presented to the Americans in glowing terms — in Dean Acheson's words, "As almost holy writ, with evangelical enthusiasm of a major advertising campaign. It seemed to me," said Acheson, "to raise popular hopes that could only lead to bitter disappointment . . . the General Assembly appeared to be the town meeting of the world."

Several foreboding signposts stand out along the road to the "bitter disappointment" of which Acheson spoke. In 1956, President Eisenhower broke the Anglo-French effort to maintain access through the Suez Canal. When he turned the matter over to the United Nations, [U.N. Secretary General] Dag Hammarskjöld used the occasion to blast European imperialism, and to extol the virtues of the so-called Afro-Asian non-aligned nations. It is instructive to note that his rhetoric and actions were in no way directed against the Soviet Union which had brutally repressed freedom fighters in Hungary under cover of the Suez Crisis.

In 1960, as Belgium began to withdraw from the Congo and civil war broke out, the Belgian government turned to the United Nations for guidance. When none was forthcoming, the Belgian Army moved in to restore order. Then Hammarskjöld condemned the Belgians and raised a United Nations force from the non-aligned nations. The mineral rich Katanga Province had seceded from the chaos to form a separate state under Moïse Tshombe.

In the melee which followed, the United Nations forces turned on the European settlers and Katanga. Can any of us forget the photograph in *Life* magazine showing a bullet-riddled Volkswagen Beetle, a dead woman and a child inside, and a dazed and blood-spattered Belgian settler raising his head to implore his attackers or heaven itself to understand why the United Nations "peacekeeping" forces had just done this terrible thing to him and his family?

From this time on, a new philosophy took over at the United Nations. Right was on the side of the emerging non-aligned nations. Tribal warfare, revolution, dictatorship, terrorism, torture, graft, and murder among these nations were systematically glossed over. The former Western allies and the United States became, in the words of a subsequent non-aligned leader, "The Great Satan."

This emerging morality, now the status quo at the United Nations, is demonstrated by the grotesque travesty that took place on October 1, 1975, when Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, then chairman of the Organization for African Unity, addressed the General Assembly.

When he spoke, he denounced the Zionist-U.S. conspiracy and called not merely for the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations, but for its

“extinction.” The assembly gave him a standing ovation when he arrived, applauded him throughout, and again rose to its feet when he left. The following day, the U.N. Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly gave a public dinner in Amin’s home.

Amin had murdered at least 200,000 of his countrymen, including Anglican Archbishop Luwum. Julius Nyerere of Tanzania said:

Since Amin usurped power, he has murdered more people than Smith in Rhodesia, more than Vorster in South Africa. Yet not once would the United Nations move to censure him or to prevent his rape of the loveliest land in Africa.

Since the early 1970s, in an effort to bolster radical philosophical positions with legal legitimacy, the United Nations has produced resolutions embracing the New International Economic Order and the Charter on the Economic Rights and Duties of States. The thrust is for a world devoid of pluralistic ideological differences, with a built-in poor versus rich bias, with a New World Information Order severely restricting freedom of the press, and a New International Legal Order mandating by fiat world peace as an inalienable right of humanity. In other words, peace at any price — a proposal that has already diminished the moral contributions of liberal democracy under the rubric of statist order and utopian socialism.

It is reasonable to express concern about the future of human rights when we realize that from 1980 to 1984 the U.N. Third Committee concentrated exclusively on human rights violations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Chile. Until the consideration in 1986 of Afghanistan, human rights violations in communist countries had never been placed on the agenda of the General Assembly or any of its committees. Such selectivity typifies an advocacy group with a geopolitical agenda, not a neutral forum where all problems are treated evenhandedly.

Such advocacy has found a home in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at U.N. headquarters. Under the heading “aggression,” only South Africa is listed; under “censorship,” South Africa and Israel. The library maintains a file titled “Territories Occupied by Israel,” with over 75 entries. There is no corresponding entry for “Territories Occupied by the Soviet Union.” Similarly, the U.N. Department of Public Information was found by the U.S. General Accounting Office to be biased and anti-American. The American Federal Bureau of Investigation has characterized the U.N. Department of Conference Services as a “clearinghouse for Soviet activities at the U.N.” These behavioral trends of the U.N. agencies are disproportionately partisan, lacking the elementary characteristics of open debate and dialogue.

The results are not altogether surprising. The non-aligned nations, comprising a majority of U.N. members, vote with the USSR an average of about 85 percent of the time in the General Assembly.

From a business standpoint, fiscal inequity and mismanagement of the United Nations exacerbates the forum's penchant for bias. The poorest countries each contribute less than one-hundredth of one percent of the U.N. budget. Together, 80 of these countries, comprising a numerical voting majority of the General Assembly, contribute less than one percent of the U.N. budget.

On the other hand, the United States pays 25 percent of the United Nations assessed budget, and an even larger percentage of the cost of some agencies. In 1983, the total United States contribution to the United Nations was \$1.2 billion, \$672 million for assessed and peacekeeping obligations and \$530 million in voluntary programs. And yet the United States has shown restraint, never yielding to the temptation to abuse its monetary contribution.

Yet the U.S. share of U.N. secretarial personnel amounts to one-sixth, and among agency professional posts about 12.6 percent. In the 1984-1985 fiscal year, the United Nations funded 2.2 billion pages of documents. It employed at the secretariat alone 52,000 civil servants, who are paid 32 percent more than their American counterparts. Those with rank of Under-Secretary or above will depart after 30 years service with a \$310,000 tax-free farewell bonus plus a generous pension. Even the careers of the employees seem to have supplanted the original purpose of the peacekeeping body.

Dean Acheson's warning has proved correct. The United Nations has become a "bitter disappointment." Perhaps we should have known what the United States' future would be, when at the beginning we tolerated the Soviet Union's refusal to withdraw from Eastern Europe, and we overlooked their broken commitments at Yalta for free elections in the Balkans and in Poland. The United Nations has had minimal success at preserving peace, and it assuredly has not served as a dispassionate forum for the benefit of all mankind.

I believe it is time to form a new organization of nations; one that is based not on failed utopian idealism, but on the historic realities of success among the world's democratic states. We should bring together the states that have founded themselves on the bedrock of time-honored principles of constitutional government, free elections, and individual rights. Now is the time to unearth the "ancient landmarks" of our fathers, which have for too long been trespassed upon by the enemies of democracy.

A community of sovereign nations whose governments maintain democratic institutions, representative government, and respect for the rule of law have much to contribute to developing states. They have endured the tests of time, economic upheaval, and even war. These nations neither use terrorism against other nations, nor do they torture and terrorize their own citizens. They cannot, because their citizens demand that statecraft be based on the consent of the governed.

I call for a new "*Community of Democratic Nations*," which would be open to all nations whose governments have achieved legitimacy because they embrace

the democratic idea. To qualify for membership, developing states would be required to abandon totalitarianism or dictatorship and to practice democracy for a specified period of time. Only then would they be eligible for membership in the Community of Democratic Nations.

With a new Community of Nations, the artificial partisanship typified by the categories first, second, and third world and nurtured by U.N. politics would be supplanted by genuine state-to-state relations. The politics of envy which set East against West would be exposed by the clarion call of democratic states speaking in concert. The international institutional dynamics flowing from the anti-colonial period would be superceded by the new reality of the emerging democracies of the 21st century.

The democratic states have proven the idea that people in a free society produce more economically. Thus, a Community of Democratic Nations would be able to share that experience constructively for genuine development of market opportunities. Furthermore, in matters of trade, loans and credits, and economic development, the Community of Democratic Nations could use its influence to assist those governments which understand that only when the human spirit is free, and personal incentive is safe, is there opportunity for all citizens to prosper.

Cooperation on strategy and security matters is dangerously low among democratic states. Last winter, the threat of terrorist retaliation prevented three allies (Germany, France, and the United States) from meeting to discuss terrorist interdiction. A Community of Democratic Nations could provide the moral resolve to form a united front against terrorism. Moreover, this forum could confront the challenging question of nuclear or conventional deterrence in Europe. Similarly, should world politics call for the use of Western economic power against Soviet bloc aggression, democratic states could avoid the ad hocism of the past and could act to effect meaningful results.

I would propose that the United States reduce its funding to the United Nations by at least 25 percent and use that sum for a number of years as seed money for the new Community of Democratic Nations. Over the years, the present United Nations could concentrate more and more on things it does best, such as refugee assistance, while it continued to serve as a place for discussion between representatives of opposing camps.

By forming a Community of Democratic Nations, the world will have moved in its quest for lasting peace from an arena of failed idealism, the rhetoric of partisanship and bitter disappointment to a new realism which truly reflects that the global struggle for freedom against totalitarian tyranny is the foundation upon which the walls of peace are erected.

