



# SEATINI

## SEATINI BULLETIN

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#### **Transcript of Press Conference by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at United Nations headquarters, New York, on 18 December 2003**

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am glad to see you all before the holidays. It has been a rather hard year. I have no doubt that you will have lots of questions about Iraq. But before you get on to that, there are a few things I would want to say.

All of us — leaders, politicians, diplomats and journalists — have been very focused on Iraq this year. We simply haven't paid enough attention to the many other pressing challenges facing us. Yes, Iraq is critical to the future of the region and the world.

Yes, we have to halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction and fight terrorism. Yes, we face new threats and

new challenges, and we have to change to meet them.

That's why I've appointed a High-Level Panel, and why I am calling on Member States to take up the task of renewing the United Nations.

But there are plenty of other important issues too. Poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy continue to afflict the daily lives of billions. In 2004, the world needs to focus on these challenges with renewed determination. Above all, we have to rebuild momentum towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

If we don't, the Millennium Development Goals will not be met in dozens of countries — particularly in the poorest countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the Andes and Central Asia. And if the Goals are not met, we will all be poorer, and less secure.

We need more donors to increase official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of their gross national product. We must give poor nations free and fair access to global markets. We must reduce the crippling debt burden of many countries.

We must get 3 million people with HIV/AIDS on antiretroviral treatment by 2005. We must get the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria fully funded.

We must increase investments in education, health, and water and sanitation. We must do more to empower women and to fight corruption. We've made promises in all these areas, and in many others too.

In 2004, I'll be doing all that I can to get world leaders to work harder to meet the promises that have been made.

And I beseech all of you, who cover the work of the United Nations, to give the development agenda in 2004 the prominence it deserves. Even in the realm of peace and security, there is plenty beyond Iraq that needs urgent attention.

We simply must make progress in bringing peace to the Middle East. The job in Afghanistan is only half done and will be no easier in the year ahead. Latin America needs more attention and more support. And in Africa, 2003 was an important year, but 2004 will be even more crucial.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Let's get our priorities right in 2004. Let's make 2004 the year of kept promises. I think I'll stop here and take your questions.

**Question:** Welcome, Mr. Secretary-General, on behalf of the United Nations Correspondents Association. I will abuse this privilege and go right to Iraq. You seem to indicate in comments that you have been making during the week that the handover process may not be completed, because it is complicated, by June. In that connection, you appear to be telling Ayatollah al-Sistani, who had requested

some kind of United Nations intervention, that you would go along with the caucuses and not a full election providing they are open and complete. How would they be open? How would they be complete? Who would that include? And are you talking about caucuses rather than elections in the comments you made to the Council?

**The Secretary-General:** I think we all agree that the establishment of a provisional government and the handover of power to Iraqis is urgent. If we are going to do it by the end of June, I do not believe we have enough time to organise fair and credible elections, given the situation on the ground in Iraq. That having been said, I also believe that the alternative that has been put forth – the process of selection and caucusing – has to be inclusive and transparent and be seen as fair by Iraqis - and for the Iraqis to feel it is a process they have ownership over. I think if that is done, the outcome will be accepted and it will be credible within Iraq, in the region and beyond. So, I consider it a viable alternative, but it has to be handled carefully.

**Question:** Will it be done by 1 July?

**The Secretary-General:** You mean the selection process? I think that could be done: the selections. Actual full-fledged elections are not possible to be done by June. But the other process, properly handled, is possible.

**Question:** Are there any conditions under which you would return operations fully to Iraq – United Nations operations moving back from Cyprus and Jordan -- before the occupation legally ends, before 30 June? Or have you ruled that out? And also, by what sort of measurements are you going to be making that decision? How are you going to objectively decide when the time is right and when the circumstances permit?

**The Secretary-General:** I think we will return to Iraq when a secure environment has been created. I think the Council recognised this when it said we should return when the circumstances permit. That does not mean that we have ruled out going to Iraq during the occupation and that we will go back to Iraq only after the occupation. I think we should be clear

that the United Nations has been involved in Iraq throughout. Even as we speak, we have a presence in Iraq, both international in limited numbers and several hundred Iraqis working for us.

**Question:** From the initial discussions you had, what role, if any, will the United Nations play in the tribunal of Saddam Hussein, and what are your views about the trial of an elected President -- albeit through a bogus election -- by a body other than the ICC?

**The Secretary-General:** We have not been approached about the trial of Saddam Hussein, either by the Coalition or the Governing Council. I have indicated that whatever trial is put up has to be open, and it must meet international norms and standards. So I don't know what is going to happen as to whether we will be approached, but we have not been approached.

As to the second part of your question, regarding whether this is not something for the ICC, the ICC's statutes and mandate are prospective, not retrospective, and quite a lot of the crimes Saddam Hussein is accused of were committed before the Court was set up. Obviously, the lawyers will have something to say about this, so I don't think that they will have jurisdiction over crimes committed before they themselves were set up.

**Question:** You said earlier this year that events have shaken the foundations of collective security, and we assume you were talking mostly about the Iraq debate. I know you have appointed a commission to look into that, but we're seeking clarity today from you. What is the role of the Secretary-General in repairing that foundation, and is your role to take a stand for the United Nations in what it can do in clear terms or to wait to be told?

**The Secretary-General:** You are asking me whether I'm going to be Secretary or General; I'll be both. No, I think from what you've seen, I have not sat on my hands waiting to be told. I have taken initiatives; I have tried to bring the membership together; I have tried to work with the Members to find ways of improving our Organization to make it more effective, and in fact also of trying to

develop international law, because some of the questions that the panel will have to deal with touch on not just structures and process of the United Nations, but how the international community organises to cooperate and organises itself to ensure that we maintain peace and security. And it really is pushing the development of international law where they will have to discuss questions of when preventive war is acceptable, under what rules and who approves; and when humanitarian intervention is legitimate, hopefully building on my own statement in 1999 and the Canadian report titled *The responsibility to protect*.

**Question:** Regarding Iraq, Mr. Secretary-General, according to the interview that President Bush gave recently, it seems like the United States Government sees WMD as a non-issue at this point. I am wondering if the United Nations still cares if there are WMDs in Iraq, and how will the United Nations handle this issue later on?

**The Secretary-General:** I think that is an issue for the Security Council to determine. I know that Council members are concerned about this and will have to find some way of dealing with the issue and bringing it to closure. We still have inspectors in the building who are concluding some of their work, and if there is a need for them to take additional assignments, I am sure that they will be prepared to do it. But this is something that the Council will have to take up, and I suspect they will probably come to it sometime in the new year.

**Question:** Mr. Secretary-General, just as a quick follow-up to your comments about this meeting on January 15, have you gotten confirmation from both the Governing Council and from the Coalition that they would be prepared to attend this meeting? And my real question is that this has been a very difficult year for the United Nations' relations with the United States particularly, and I was wondering how, as we head into the new year, you see the United Nations' relationship with the United States, and particularly addressing the issue of multilateral versus unilateral action.

**The Secretary-General:** On the question of the invitation, I am certain that the Governing Council delegation would come. With regard to the Coalition, we have just started preliminary consultations. We have not agreed on dates yet and on who will be here, but I hope it can be resolved, because it is in everyone's interest that we sit down together and clarify rather than make statements to each other through the press. I know it is important for you, I am not trying to cut you out, but I think that it is very good that we sit across the table.

On the question of United Nations-United States relationship, you are right, it has been a difficult year -- a difficult year that has seen major divisions among our members, but I hope that, as we move into the new year, we are going to find a way of resolving these divisions.

First of all, I am happy to say that all Member States have supported the idea of a panel -- a panel that is going to look into some of the issues that divided the Member States. We have a prominent American on it, Mr Brent Scowcroft, and we have others. I hope that their report will also give us an opportunity to sit back and discuss in a reflective manner how we create -- I was going to say, we set up a system or adapt our system and structures of peace and security to be able to deal with the kind of problem that confronted us on Iraq.

**Question:** The capture of Saddam Hussein has been welcomed by a lot of people around the world, including in the Arab and Muslim worlds, but it has also -- especially the manner in which the capture was portrayed on American television -- caused a lot of consternation and humiliation in the Muslim world. Do you have any concerns on the repercussions of those pictures on future United States-Muslim relations, and, more concretely, do those pictures, in your point of view, pose a problem of any nature from the point of view of international law?

**The Secretary-General:** I think that one area international law demands is when people are arrested and caught up in war situations, they should be treated

humanely. There have been assurances from senior Administration officials that Saddam Hussein will be treated humanely, and I hope - not just Saddam Hussein, but all the others in captivity will be treated humanely. The pictures which you refer to I am aware were disturbing to many, including even some in the Vatican, but I hope that it is not going to be repeated, and I do not think that we have seen any of it since the weekend, when it happened.

**Question:** You said that the Iraqi question this year has meant that other problems have not been given as much attention. What do you intend to do in the course of next year to rectify that?

**The Secretary-General:** Well, it's not as simple as that. It's not that the United Nations let itself get into that kind of situation. It was Member States that may have forgotten other problems a bit. Everyone was so preoccupied by Iraq. So I hope that next year -- at least, I personally will try to push the development issues, the fight against HIV/AIDS, questions of good governance and justice. I think we will be encouraging the other heads of State to focus on those crucial problems. Yes, Iraq is important, but the world is much bigger than Iraq.

*\*This is an abridged transcript of the Press Conference by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at United Nations headquarters, New York, on 18 December 2003.*

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## **Bush on Middle East "democracy" and "ending occupation" in Iraq**

Phyllis Bennis

Facing the most serious escalation in US casualties in Iraq, with the *New York Times* proclaiming "Iraq Policy in Crisis," and with the spectre of Viet Nam-style quagmire hovering over the 2004 elections, the Bush administration has issued two major policy pronouncements. One was the November 6 speech on democracy in the Middle East, the other a high-profile timetable for ostensibly turning some authority over to Iraqis.

Both statements are critical. The first lays out the administration's official new

rationale for the Iraq war - designed to public divert attention from the lies regarding weapons of mass destruction. The second is primarily the Bush campaign effort to convince Americans the US will not be bogged down in Iraq by July 2004, just five months before the elections. The effect of the shift will be to abandon even the current claim of "democratisation" in Iraq in favour of embracing the Iraqisation of the US war.

Bush's speech on November 6 called for a "forward strategy of freedom," placing his claimed commitment to democratisation in the Middle East on par with Reagan's Cold War call for democratisation in Eastern Europe. He acknowledged that earlier US policies of accommodating repressive regimes in the region "did nothing to make us safe," but offered no indication of an actual new approach.

Bush's speech on democracy in the Middle East is thoroughly hypocritical. While acknowledging "sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East," Bush's "forward strategy of freedom" proposed nothing to actually change the lack of freedom. While repeating the usual threats towards Syria, Iran, and Palestine, Bush praised the King of Morocco and the Gulf petro-states for their small, and in many cases largely cosmetic steps towards democracy. He lauded close US allies Saudi Arabia and Egypt for initial and potential democratic openings, but assured them that "working democracies always need time to develop," thus alleviating any fear of serious pressure on Riyadh or Cairo.

In a particularly cynical note, Bush quoted from the UN Arab Development Report's assessment that "the global wave of democracy has "barely reached the Arab states'." But he credited it only as "a recent report by Arab scholars," refusing even to acknowledge the United Nations contribution.

The speech, and the announcement of a new "forward strategy for freedom" was designed to give a popular cover to what

has emerged as a permanent war - framing Bush's preventive "war on terrorism" as a "war for liberty." It was designed to imply that the current war in Iraq was also waged "for liberty," to distract the American people from the sham reasons actually given for the war: the embarrassingly missing WMDs, the non-existent "imminent danger," and the false claims of Iraq's links with al-Qaeda.

### **What does the new Iraq timetable call for?**

*End of Feb 2004:*

Iraqi army and security forces to be placed under Iraqi civilian control - Maybe. In fact Pentagon officials are already angling to retain US control of the Iraqi military. (The US military will remain in Iraq under full US command.)

*End of June 2004:*

"Sovereign" provisional government to be established - based on regional assemblies chosen largely by the Governing Council and vetted by the US. US dissolves Coalition Provisional Authority - but does not remove US troops, end US control over the \$20 billion in reconstruction funds, or potentially even end the presence and role of Bremer and his team (only the title would change).

*End of 2005:*

New constitution by committee chosen by the US-vetted national assembly. New government elected according to that constitution.

### **Why change policy now?**

The new strategy announced by the Bush administration reflects the abject failure of the US occupation of Iraq and their desperation for new approaches. US casualties continue to escalate, particularly with the increase in helicopters being shot down, with dozens of US soldiers killed. More than 400 US soldiers have been killed in Iraq. Iraq remains unstable and dangerous, with unknown thousands of Iraqi civilian casualties.

Two new Iraqi polls, one by the State Department's intelligence office, the other by Gallup, confirm that Iraqis do not

support the US occupation. According to Gallup, only 5% of Iraqis believe the US invaded Iraq "to assist the Iraqi people," and 4% believe it was to destroy WMDs. Only 1% believe it was to establish democracy, while 43% said the US-UK invasion was "to rob Iraq's oil." The State Dept. poll, included within the top-secret CIA report of Nov. 10, showed that a majority of Iraqis view the US troops as occupiers, not liberators. Three-quarters believe the decisions of the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council are "mostly determined by the [US] coalition," and they do not believe the appointed Council is capable of governing or planning elections.

Iraqi resistance to the original US timetable was on the rise. It called for appointing the Governing Council, then appointing a constitutional committee, then drafting a constitution, then holding elections. Demands for early elections increased, particularly from the Shia's majority and especially from the influential Shia's leader Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. The US-appointed Governing Council, still without legitimacy, essentially stalled, and indeed some Council members began to challenge the US timetable.

The US-imposed privatisation scheme is increasingly recognised as illegal, since it was imposed by the US and not adopted by a legitimate Iraqi government. Under international law, an occupying power is extremely limited in how it benefits from the economy of the occupied territory. (The analogy is to a house-sitter - who is allowed to eat the food in the refrigerator, but not to put the house on the market and sell it for condominiums.) International business insurance companies are refusing to provide insurance for purchases of Iraqi infrastructure put on the market by Bremer and the US occupation forces. US agencies, including the Ex-Im Bank, appear ready to pick up the slack, but the danger remains that a future truly independent government in Iraq might reject earlier contracts, deeming them null and void because they were not signed by a legitimate government. (That would

mean, of course, that US taxpayers would have to foot the bill to bail out those corporations who lose their assets in any re-nationalisation scheme.) Some in the Governing Council and in the US occupation forces seem to believe that creating something called a "government," even if interim, might stave off the taint of illegitimacy that currently hovers over all the US-imposed economic policies.

International allies are still refusing to send troops or significant funds to back the US occupation. Even countries that had agreed to send token troops deployments (Japan, South Korea) are reneging on those commitments; Italy and perhaps others with troops in Iraq now will soon be under significant domestic pressure to withdraw.

US election timetables remain a critical factor. Bush's advisers are certainly increasingly worried about the impact of US casualties, the bad press over Iraq policy generally, and the vision of quagmire now on the front pages.

### **What won't change?**

According to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, US troops will remain in Iraq. This will still be a US occupation, but that reality will be denied and identified instead as "US troops present at the request of the sovereign Iraqi government."

Military opposition and thus US casualties will continue unabated since there will be little change in the presence of US occupation troops throughout Iraq.

The billions in reconstruction funds will remain under full US control. Control of the reconstruction and privatisation contracts will presumably remain in US hands.

The UN will remain largely marginalized; whatever participation it is allowed will be under the domination of US control.

### **What are the new problems?**

US declarations of a "sovereign government" in Iraq do not provide legitimacy. There will still be a US occupation in place, but it will not be acknowledged. The so-called "sovereign government" will still be illegitimate - having been chosen through a process flawed from the beginning by its control by the US and US-appointed Council members. When that illegitimate government begins the process of drafting a constitution, that process will be flawed as well.

The US may intend to involve NATO in Iraq, according to European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana. This would pressure Washington's European allies to send troops, and NATO would provide a veneer of international credibility while remaining under Washington's domination. Such a move would require unanimous agreement in NATO, including France and Germany, who might insist on a larger political role for the UN in return. Solana may be making this statement to pressure Washington towards increasing NATO's role; his claim may reflect Colin Powell's view, it is unlikely to represent the Bush administration's position as a whole.

The US will not allow the United Nations a truly independent role. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer urged greater UN participation in order "to give the process wider legitimacy." US pressure in the Security Council could lead to exactly that result. UN member states might also be pressured by Washington to acquiesce to or even endorse NATO's role to provide international approval.

### **So what do we call for?**

The US occupation remains illegal. Neither an "invitation" from a US-created "government" nor a US-controlled NATO deployment will make this occupation legal. We call for an end to the US military occupation of Iraq.

The withdrawal of the US military should be paralleled by the entry to Iraq of an independent UN mission, backed by the

Arab League, to provide political assistance in arranging elections, humanitarian assistance, and a peacekeeping contingent to maintain stability while Iraq is reclaiming its sovereignty. While the election process is underway, UN and Arab League troops should immediately work to restore the capacity of the Iraqi security forces to provide security under the authority of the new legitimate government as it comes into existence.

The UN should refuse to play a role in Iraq while the US occupation continues. It should defy Washington's efforts to use the global institution to give an international or legal façade to the US war. The UN should reject any US campaign to endorse a NATO deployment.

The US should end its control of all reconstruction funds in Iraq. That money, whether donated by the US or by other countries, should be turned over to the United Nations for distribution to a truly sovereign Iraqi government as it comes into existence, on the same basis as UN projects elsewhere in the world.

The US-imposed privatisation of Iraq should be declared null and void. Only after a legitimate sovereign government has been created should any reworking of Iraq's economy be undertaken, and then only as determined by that new government.

*\*Phyllis Bennis is a fellow of both the Transnational Institute and the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington DC. She is a journalist specialising in Middle East and United Nations issues.*

### **Declaration on Civil Society Participation in the United Nations System**

We, of African civil society organisations that were invited to the "African Regional Consultations on UN-Civil Society Relationships" (Cardoso Panel) in Johannesburg, 25-26 November 2003, wish to thank the UN Secretary-General

for this initiative to dialogue with us. We deliberated on the issue on the agenda for two days and have made our suggestions. However, the dialogue and our participation are meaningful only in the context of the reform of the UN system. Accordingly, in addition to the suggestions we have made on UN-civil society relations, we feel that our views on the reform of the UN system should also be considered, and we are pleased to record that the Panel reporting to the Secretary-General have agreed to attach this declaration as appendix to their report. The concerns expressed below do not exhaust our ideas about the reform of the UN system, and we do understand that they are not achievable in the short run, but we would urge that this is the general direction in which the UN should move.

1. Noting that the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), and its other manifestations such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) pressed by the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs), have misled our governments towards adopting economic strategies that have failed to work over the last twenty-five years, and that have been one of the principal reasons for the increasing impoverishment of the people of Africa, we urge the Secretary-General not to give the moral authority of his office to these policies, and ask him to advocate coherence of BWIs policies to a human rights oriented genuine development of our people.

2. Recognising that the UN system has itself weakened in the contemporary unipolar world, and that the UN Charter is often torn apart by the unilateral action of some powers, we welcome the efforts of the SG towards multilateralism, and urge him to vigorously defend the Charter and international law, and maintain the high moral authority of his office.

3. Noting that many of the specialised agencies of the UN, such as the UNCTAD, the ECA and the UNDP, have also weakened and are being overshadowed by the BWIs and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), we

recommend that they be strengthened and made responsive to the developmental needs of the developing countries. For example, UNCTAD should resume its original mandate as conceived by Raul Prebisch, especially in the areas of commodity price stabilisation, technology transfer, and the monitoring of the Transnational Corporations; and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the UNDP offices in our countries should open space for a meaningful dialogue with African civil society for alternatives to Africa's development other than through SAPs, uncritical market liberalisation, privatisation, and deregulation. In this context we strongly urge that these agencies and their activities be adequately funded from the regular budget of the UN, and not be made hostage to ad hoc programme funding by donors.

4. We have always welcomed the efforts of the UN system to create space for civil society in UN Conferences such as on Sustainable Development and Finance for Development. We wish to record, however, that our participation has often been co-opted by the UN system to legitimise predetermined processes and outcomes, and our recommendations are seldom taken seriously, whilst creating the impression that the civil society has been consulted in the building of "consensus".

Once again, we do understand that the realities of power politics at the global level may not allow some of the above recommendations to be implemented immediately. However, we hope that the Secretary General will give his moral weight and authority to moving generally in the direction indicated above, and on our side, the civil society organisations in Africa undertake to give our support to the UN and the Secretary General to the realisation of the above objectives.

*(Editor: Several peoples' movements, Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations and individuals have already endorsed and signed the above Declaration. If you wish to add your*

*name to the list please send an email to [libert.kanojerera@undp.org](mailto:libert.kanojerera@undp.org)*

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### **United Nations should reclaim leadership**

Percy Makombe

Almost 59 years ago, representatives from 50 countries gathered in San Francisco to create a constitution that later gave birth to what we now know as the United Nations (UN). Key to the aims of the UN is world peace. An earlier attempt at promoting world peace through the League of Nations failed because member States had not given the League sufficient teeth to help in establishing peace. The UN, coming against the background of World War I where more than nine million people lost their lives and World War II which claimed 55 million people was formed with the dream of a better and peaceful world. The preamble of the UN Charter proudly proclaims “We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ...”

There is no doubt that if the UN did not exist, there would be need to create it. In spite of its noble aims, the UN has taken a battering for what is perceived to be its lack of teeth and decisiveness when dealing with US domineering actions. It has been argued that the UN seems to act only when the US permits it to act. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US has been moving with speed not merely to hold back its rivals, but to establish its global dominance.

The power of the US in international relations has been so overwhelming that in many cases it has chosen to abandon a multilateral approach to pressing issues. America has thrashed the International Criminal Court, shown no respect for the Kyoto Protocol on global warming and disregarded the United Nations opposition to the occupation in Iraq. After its aims of opening up more markets in the developing countries came unstuck in the multilateral trade talks in Cancun, Mexico,

Washington has said that if need be, it will embark on bilateral trade negotiations.

The war in Iraq brought Washington’s arrogance to new levels. The UN was ignored as the US went into Iraq guns blazing ostensibly to find weapons of mass destruction. To date no such weapons have been found. Despite the fact that the UN did not endorse the occupation of Iraq it has suffered casualties. The bombing of the UN Baghdad headquarters on 19 August 2003 claimed UN’s top diplomat Sergio de Mello along with 22 others.

The innocent lives that continue to be lost in Iraq are too high a price to pay for the occupation. On average two Americans are killed daily by those opposed to US presence in Iraq. US troops are responsible for the death of more than 500 Iraqis per month. Iraq’s population of 23 million has to cope with erratic and inadequate supplies of food and water. The health services sector is also under strain as it struggles to provide health care for millions of people whose houses were reduced to rubble by the bombing of the US and UK forces.

There is no denying that the war and occupation of Iraq was waged on the false pretence of “war on terrorism” and the naked lies of searching for weapons of mass destruction. One effect of the war has been to undermine the people’s confidence in the UN especially when an undisputed superpower like the US uses its might and ignores completely opposition from the international community.

With the capture of Saddam Hussein, the President of Iraq, some believe that the war in Iraq is over. This cannot be more further from the truth.

Professor Yash Tandon’s three levels of analysis namely, the imperial factor (IF), democratic factor (DF) and the social factor (SF) can be used to interrogate problems emerging in Iraq,

The imperial factor creates the global functions and it is responsible for the powerful empire. It stifles nations in their

bid to achieve self-determination leading to loss of self-autonomy. This factor has often been ignored as the tendency has been to focus on issues like lack of democracy, abuse of human rights and corruption as the only contributing factors to the crises in the developing countries. The democratic factor has to do with the relationship between the government and the people. This can also be called the governance factor as it basically refers to the way a country is governed. When this factor is lacking autocracy -- a political system favouring unlimited authority by a single individual is the likely result. This can lead to subversion and eventually violent conflict.

The social factor has to do with creating peace and harmony in the community. It also means granting space and respect to alternative voices. It has to do with the participation of all groups in society in particular vulnerable ones like women, the youth and the disabled.

There is need to strike a balance as all these factors are critical in interrogating the challenges confronting developing nations. Failure to take note of any one of them will derail development, peace and progress.

Justice does not exist in a vacuum. Justice means balancing the democratic and social factors and eliminating or minimising the effect of the imperial factor. Justice means allowing the democratic voice of the people (DF), plus full recognition of the rights and obligations of the various social groups and classes in society, especially the more vulnerable among them (SF), minus the imperial factor (IF). Therefore  $Justice = DF + SF - IF$ .

Iraq today is under an occupying force. Paul Bremer the US proconsul has been announcing with glee the privatisation of Iraq's economy. Under occupation, and with the total opening up of Iraq's economy the locals will lose their right to self-autonomy. This is the imperial factor that should not be swept under the carpet if things are to be set right in Iraq.

There is no denying that some among the Iraq population heaved a collective sigh of relief when Saddam Hussein was deposed. Saddam's ruthlessness when dealing with political opponents cannot be overemphasized. Besides US firepower, Saddam's regime was easy to depose because it was despised by a lot of people even among its own population. The mass graves that continue to be found in Iraq are a clear testimony to the kind of rule that Saddam exercised. He was not able to deal with the democratic and social factors. However, getting rid of a tyrant and replacing him with a puppet hardly solves any problems. The people of Iraq must be given their country back and only helped with the resources to build it.

### **What is to be done?**

The occupying force in Iraq does not have the right to privatise resources. This is a right that can only be exercised by a legitimate future government of Iraq. As Phyllis Bennis argues in this Bulletin: "The withdrawal of the US military should be paralleled by the entry to Iraq of an independent UN mission, backed by the Arab League, to provide political assistance in arranging elections, humanitarian assistance, and a peacekeeping contingent to maintain stability while Iraq is reclaiming its sovereignty." The UK and the US must pay for the reconstruction of Iraq.

The UN needs to call for an end to the US occupation of Iraq. True what is needed is a greater role for the UN in Iraq, but this cannot take place while the US is calling the shots and basically running everything. The UN should not allow itself to be used to send peace-keeping forces in Iraq that are going to be operating under US command.

It is pleasing to note that UN Secretary General Kofi Annan is talking about reforming the UN, that is as it should be. The UN General Assembly must be given more teeth. Members of the Security Council must be increased.

Most agencies of the UN have been disempowered, it is important that they be

given their power back and provided with adequate funding from the UN coffers. As the declaration in this *Bulletin* by civil society states:

“Noting that many of the specialised agencies of the UN, such as the UNCTAD, the ECA and the UNDP, have also weakened and are being overshadowed by the BWIs and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), we recommend that they be strengthened and made responsive to the developmental needs of the developing countries. For example, UNCTAD should resume its original mandate as conceived by Raul Prebisch, especially in the areas of commodity price stabilisation, technology transfer, and the monitoring of the Transnational Corporations...”

Kofi Annan’s efforts in promoting development and peace and in dealing with the crisis posed by HIV/Aids are laudable. But these efforts will come to nothing if the UN maintains a deafening silence in dealing with the imperial factor in developing nations.

*\*Percy Makombe is the Assistant Editor of the SEATINI Bulletin.*

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