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The UN Security Council

Ineffective but Indispensable

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London, October 2003

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"The UN perfectly embodies in institutional form the tragic paradox of our age; it has become indispensable before it has become effective".[1] Thus wrote Herbert Nicholas in 1962, a time when the organisation was deeply embroiled in an African civil war and was widely thought to be on the verge of collapse. Some forty years later the papers are again filled with doom-laden predictions, if not of the UN's imminent demise, then at least of its permanent marginalisation in the field of international peace and security. This time, the gloom has been occasioned by the profound divisions that emerged among the Permanent Five (P5) members of the Security Council over how best to deal with Iraq's failure to abide by a long line of mandatory resolutions requiring that it comes clean about the true state of its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programme. The failure to overcome Council divisions, followed by the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 *without* explicit Security Council authorisation for the use of force, added further to the sense of foreboding among those anxious for the Council to play its Charter-prescribed role in the field of peace and security. In the run-up to the war, neither key Council members nor senior UN officials did much to discourage the notion that the crisis over Iraq was indeed presenting the Council with its "moment of truth". As Secretary of State Colin Powell told fellow Council members on 5 February, the Council was

placing "itself in danger of irrelevance" if it allowed "Iraq to continue to defy its will without responding effectively and immediately".[2] Nor did the outbreak and aftermath of hostilities result in any immediate attempt to sooth tensions and repair relations, even though many had hoped this could have been achieved by reaching agreement on a central role for the UN in rebuilding and administrating Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein's odious regime.[3]

And yet, for all this, the post-Cold War history of Security Council and, more broadly, that of the UN's involvement in the field of peace and security, point to the continuing validity of Herbert Nicholas' original observation: the UN remains both indispensable and, in certain unavoidable respects, ineffective. Against the backdrop of the long-drawn out crisis over Iraq and focusing in particular on the Security Council and its permanent five veto-wielding members – Britain, France, China, Russia and the United States – this study explores the paradox of indispensability and ineffectiveness in greater detail.

Argument in Brief
By the standards of the post-Cold War period, the amount of bad blood and ill feeling generated by the Council divisions and intramural politics over Iraq – especially in the last three months or so leading up to the war – has been unprecedented. As the continuing tensions,

above all between France and US, make clear, this is bound to affect the workings of the Council in the short to medium term. The proposition, however, that the Council has just failed its "ultimate test of relevance" and that, by implication, the UN is now irreparably damaged, is far less obvious. Indeed, there are good reasons for believing that the disagreements over Iraq have been more damaging in the long run to NATO and to the aspirations for a Common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) than they have to the UN. Whether or not this turns out to be the case is rightly seen by many as hinging on the future attitude of the United States to the UN. Even here, the outlook is less gloomy than it might appear in the immediate aftermath of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, especially if a longer-term perspective is adopted. To see why this is so, this study will seek to answer three, partly overlapping, sets of questions:

- Why, in spite of the Security Council's highly uneven record of performance in the 1990s, have its P5 members continued to see an important role for it in the field of international peace and security?
- What light does the Council's handling of the crisis over Iraq throw on its and, more broadly, the UN's role in the field of international peace and security?
- What is likely to be the long-term impact of the breakdown of consensus over Iraq for the Security Council and, again more broadly, for the UN's role in the field of international peace and security?

To place these questions in a meaningful context, however, it is necessary to revisit, briefly, Nicholas' paradox. Two related considerations help explain the paradox.

Unravelling the Paradox
The first of these relates to the question of what precisely is meant by the UN's "effectiveness" or lack thereof in the field of international security. The great illusion of the late 1980s and early 1990s was that the end of the Cold War would automatically translate into an "effective" UN. It was an illusion that rested crucially on the belief that the Security Council, after years of paralysis, would "finally" be allowed to assume its "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". It was almost as if the removal of East-West ideological divisions would itself ensure that Council members would always see eye to eye on issues of peace and security and, moreover, be prepared to *act* jointly in defence of common interests. To state that this was always a vain and misplaced hope is not to imply that the passing of the Cold War did not have profound consequences for the UN. But as the Council's recent handling of the Iraq inspections crisis made abundantly clear, power politics – within and outside the organisation – is alive and well, and the entirely predictable persistence of conflicts of interest and value among member states means that the Council is, at one level, inescapably doomed to "ineffectiveness". This is true, above all, when the core or vital interests of states are seen to be at stake and when, as in the case of Iraq, issues of coercion are involved. However, assessing effectiveness in relation to an unattainable ideal and a misplaced notion of what "might have been" tells us very little about the Council's

continuing and evident utility to states. Nor does it help us to understand how the UN as an organisation has evolved and adapted, in many cases innovatively, to the changing circumstances of the post-Cold War world. This brings us to the second consideration.

In addition to its formal role, the Security Council has long performed a number of other unacknowledged functions. Three of these merit special mention. First, the UN and its associated organs and agencies can always be relied upon to act as a "scapegoat for the vanities and follies of statesmen" and, especially for its P5 members, they have done so on many more than one occasion.[4] As Conor Cruise O'Brien has regularly reminded us, this function is in fact "one of the things the UN is *about*, and is a large part of utility to national leaders".[5] A second and vital political function of the Council has been to serve as an instrument for collective legitimisation of state action, that is, as a "dispenser of politically significant approval and disapproval of the claims, policies, and actions of states".[6] A third and related cluster of functions has been to provide P5 states with a mechanism through which their separate and distinctive interests can sometimes be more effectively advanced, concessions or *quid pro quos* from other member states secured, and likely international criticism of what are in effect unilateral policies or actions deflected. Post-Cold War examples illustrating each of these functions include: China's repeated use of its Council members to signal and restate its interests *vis-à-vis* Taiwan;[7] Russia's apparently successful effort in 1994 to obtain a "more forthcoming US position on Georgia and Tajikistan" in exchange for supporting a US-sponsored resolution on Haiti;[8] and

France's ability to deflect criticism of its policies in Rwanda before and during the genocide by receiving Security Council endorsement of *Operation Turquoise*, its military-humanitarian and, it should be added, morally ambiguous operation in the country from June to August 1994.[9]

Once these considerations are borne in mind – to wit the persistence of power politics inside and outside the organisation and, intimately related to this, the importance of the Council's unacknowledged functions – it becomes much easier to understand why repeated "crises of credibility" facing the Council in the 1990s did not fatally undermine its perceived utility to states. The paralysing tensions over Bosnia in 1994–95, the shameful inaction over Rwanda in 1994 and the insurmountable divisions that emerged over Kosovo in 1999; to observers at the time these were all seen to be just as life-threatening as the impasse over Iraq appeared to many pundits in early 2003. An underlying question informing the present study is whether the deep divisions exposed over Iraq in 2002–03 have ushered in an altogether different and more serious crisis for the Council and for the UN's role in peace and security than those that occurred in the 1990s.

The Uses and Utility of the Security Council to its Five Permanent Members

Throughout the post-Cold War period, the general presumption that matters of international peace and security ought, if at all possible, to be referred to the Security Council has proved resilient. In particular, all five permanent members, though for different reasons, have retained a strong interest in ensuring that the Council does not become marginalised, notwithstanding its many real and

apparent failures. The Council is quite simply the only forum of its kind; that is, a forum able to address, if not resolve, security challenges of international concern and, crucially, to confer near-universal legitimacy on the actions of states or groups of states in a way that no alternative candidate or agency, real or proposed, has been able to do. It is, in this context, striking though telling just how problematic and, on the whole, unsuccessful have been the attempts – explicitly called for in the *Agenda for Peace* in 1992 – to breath life into Charter provisions encouraging "regional arrangements and agencies" to deal with issues of peace and security.[10] The evident difficulties of doing so – as the experience of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia in the 1990s suggests – have stemmed not from questionable legality (after all ECOWAS action was authorised by the Security Council) but rather from ECOWAS' perceived lack of legitimacy. The intense diplomatic effort by Britain and the US to secure an explicit authorisation for the use of force in early 2003, however unsuccessful and flawed the diplomacy, is itself testimony to the importance attached to the Council's legitimising role. Not only that, but both the US and the UK, in justifying the resort to force and explaining the need for military action, have continued to rely heavily on UN Security Council resolutions, a fact that only reinforces the sense that neither country felt they could dispense with some kind of UN sanction for its chosen course of action.[11] This esteem in which the Council continues to be held derives in large part from its custodial role as protector of principles and rules seen by the vast majority of member states still as

foundational to international order: above all, the principle of sovereign equality of states and its corollary the rule of non-intervention by states in the affairs of other states. To the extent that military action in Iraq has been viewed, in many parts of the world, as a challenge to these principles, one may expect to see a *renewed* commitment to the UN by the membership at large.[12] This, in turn is unlikely to diminish the need for major powers to work through the UN in order to secure legitimacy for its actions.

More positively, however, and as indicated above, the P5 members also have their own compelling reasons for ensuring that the Council's role, status and authority in international affairs are not irreparably weakened. In setting out and explaining their policies or courses of action, member states do of course invariably emphasise the degree to which these conform to the principles and intentions of the Charter. The near-ritualistic character of the language used on such occasions is an important part of what gives the UN its quality of theatre and "sacred drama", qualities that were much in evidence in the run-up to war.[13] While principles clearly do play a role and should not be dismissed outright, the post-Cold War history of the UN also points to other powerful reasons why all of the P5 members – though, especially, Britain, France and Russia – are likely to remain committed to using the Security Council.

The United Kingdom and France
The commitment of the United Kingdom and France to keeping the Security Council at the centre of considerations relating to international peace and security is the easiest to explain. The fact is that their permanent position on the Council with a

right of veto reflects the realities of a different era (and some would say even that is questionable), and it gives them a prominence out of proportion to their actual ability to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. "Warrior nations" and original members of the nuclear club they may well be, but their actual power projection capabilities are limited and easily, as the latter half of the 1990s showed, overstretched. If other indices are used – such as economic might or size of population – their claim to privileged status is even more tenuous. These are the reasons why *The Economist* , with characteristic bluntness, stated that both countries "know their membership is the main reason anyone takes them at all seriously on the world stage".[14] This, of course, is not entirely fair, partly because both countries have sought to compensate for their weakness by often assuming leadership on key issues and by making a disproportionate contribution to UN activities in the security field. The effort to "compensate" is also reflected in the consistently high quality of its representatives in New York and the high level of activism they display (often in marked contrast to those countries whose Great Power, or indeed Superpower, credentials are uncontested). Still, the statement does contain a large element of truth and explains why both countries are anxious to preserve the primacy of the Council. It often also helps explain their behaviour on the international scene. For example, when, in 1992, Prime Minister John Major and his Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd, persuaded a reluctant Cabinet and a sceptical UK Chiefs of Staff about the need for Britain to deploy military forces in Bosnia, a key argument

was that the UK, as permanent member of the Council, could ill afford to remain passive, especially at a time when there was much talk about the "legitimacy" of the Council's composition.

Although central to both countries, the status conferred by Council membership appears, at times, even more important to France. When pressed, British officials might just about accept the reality of being a "middle-range power" albeit one which "can punch above its weight". Not so for France, which remains deeply wedded to the belief that it has a unique and a distinctive role to play in international affairs. Whether it is played out within Europe, in Africa or, as over Iraq, in its self-identification as the focus of resistance to US assertions of hegemony, France instinctively behaves and sees itself as a "Great Power", with the duties and prerogatives that go with it. The psychology of this was clearly manifested by style and manner of France's public diplomacy during the Iraq crisis. Council membership is a critical factor enabling France to assert its role, and France's insistence that the UN should play a "central role" in post-War Iraq was therefore entirely to be expected.

In short, France and Britain will continue to stress the indispensability of the UN and the Security Council in international affairs, as indeed has nearly every official statement made by the two governments since the end of the war. France, in particular, has been adamant on this score with President Chirac making clear his position that "it is up to the United Nations – and it alone – to take on the political, economic, humanitarian and administrative reconstruction of Iraq".[15]

Russia and China

Like Britain and France, Russia recognises that permanent membership of the Council has become an essential element in its claim to Great Power status. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the loss of superpower status and Empire were, although peaceful, deeply traumatic for the Russian foreign policy elite and induced within it a strong concern about Russia's international standing alongside other Council members. The influence on policy resulting from this consciousness of unaccustomed weakness was particularly striking during the tenure of President Yeltsin. With respect to the war in Bosnia in 1992–95, for example, Moscow's actions and initiatives were primarily driven, as Christina von Siemens has persuasively shown, by a desire to enhance its prestige and demonstrate that "Russia was still an important player whose cooperation and input were necessary for the solution of international problems".[16] While the sense of weakness is less acute today, the desire to prove that Russia is "the diplomatic successor to the USSR not just in name but also in might and importance" persists and provides a vital backdrop to Moscow's solemn and oft-stated commitment to the UN and the Security Council.[17] As indicated above, P5 membership has also enabled Russia to elicit concessions from other major powers, notably the US, as the aforementioned case of Haiti in 1994 shows. Against this, it is hardly surprising that Foreign Minister Ivanov and President Putin, like Chirac, have unequivocally and repeatedly stressed the need for the UN to assume an early and central role in post-war Iraq, including the task of "political reconstruction" and a continuing role for UNMOVIC.[18]

China is far more relaxed about its Great Power status: it has never doubted that it is one. Still, it has always found its Security Council membership a crucial instrument through which it can make clear what it is *against*: basically anything that can be construed as undermining the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states and, even more importantly to the communist party leadership, anything that can be seen as lending support for Taiwan's claim to full independence. China's voting behaviour in the Security Council is easily explained in terms of these two objectives. Through a series of abstentions in the 1990s, China registered its disquiet with the UN's growing involvement in the internal affairs of member states and, in particular, with what appeared to be an increased readiness to invoke Chapter VII in respect of humanitarian emergencies and "massive" human rights violations.[19] Vetoes have been used much more sparingly to punish anyone dealing with Taiwan.

Throughout the crisis over Iraq, China's overriding priority has been to avoid long-term damage to its relations with the US and far less concern has been exhibited about the possible damage of the crisis for the UN. As Chesterman and Einsiedel observed, throughout the process of negotiating 1441, China "stayed at the sidelines..." making it clear that "it would not stand in the way of a tough UN resolution against Iraq".[20] Since the end of the war, it has also been much less insistent on the need for the UN's early return, confining itself – predictably in light of the above – to stressing the importance of preserving Iraq's territorial integrity.

The United States

On the face of it, the value and the utility of the Security Council is much less obvious to the US than it is to its veto-wielding colleagues on the Council. Set against the resources and capabilities of fellow Council members (let alone the UN membership at large), the overwhelming nature of America's military, economic and political might has long encouraged a constituency within the US to argue that it simply "does not need the UN". At best, so the argument runs, the Council can endorse US actions; more likely, it will only complicate and shackle its exercise of leadership in the international system. And yet, the US has repeatedly been drawn back to the UN, finding that the legitimacy it confers on its actions, if not indispensable to taking action, is extremely costly to ignore. The very decision by President Bush to confront the issue of Iraq's non-compliance through the UN is testimony to this fact, even though reaching that decision required all the persuasive powers of his Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Nevertheless, it is undeniable and hardly surprising that the attitudes to the UN, historically as well as in the "post-9/11 world", are more ambiguous and complex than those of the other four permanent members. The question it raises is whether the experience of "going down the UN route" in relation to Iraq has permanently damaged US-UN relations and tipped the balance in favour of those always inclined to avoid that route.

UN Security Council and the Crisis over Iraq

The Security Council and Iraq, 1991–2001

Iraq's invasion and wholesale annexation of Kuwait in early August 1990 represented an unusually clear-cut violation of fundamental Charter principles; a fact which greatly eased the task of securing Security Council authorisation for military action to reverse Iraqi aggression. Such authorisation was provided by the now famous wording of Resolution 678 adopted on 29 November 1990 and calling on member states co-operating with Kuwait to "use all necessary means to uphold and implement Resolution 660 and all subsequent resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area".[21] Before that, Council members had also agreed on other measures, most notably the imposition of comprehensive economic sanctions against Iraq, a decision taken four days after the invasion with only two abstentions (Cuba and Yemen).[22] Great power unity persisted into the post-hostilities phase with the so-called ceasefire resolution, UNSC 687, demanding of Iraq that it eliminate its weapons of mass destruction and, to this end, authorising the creation of a UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) to ensure compliance with non-nuclear (that is, chemical and biological) disarmament provisions and to assist the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the nuclear area.[23] It was against this backdrop of unaccustomed Council unity and sense of purpose – felt all the more keenly so soon after the end of the Cold War – that President George H. Bush saw fit to declare a "New World Order" in which the UN, no longer shackled by Cold War divisions, would play a central role in

international peace and security.

The initial consensus on Iraq among the P5, however, was short-lived. Differences regarding the implementation of both the sanctions and the inspection regime soon emerged between the US and Britain on the one hand and France and Russia on the other, with China "somewhere in the middle".[24] As early as in 1994, Russia and France began to call for a "road map" to the lifting of sanctions and, in late 1998, the withdrawal of UNSCOM from Iraq followed by a US-UK military campaign (*Operation Desert Fox*) launched without explicit Security Council authorisation, marked the definitive break-up of the Gulf War alliance. The US and the UK continued to patrol the no-fly zones – set up without explicit Council authorisation in 1991 and 1992 – and the "oil for food" programme offered a messy compromise on the sanctions issue.

Not surprisingly, the divisions among key Council members reflected an admixture of motives, principles and interest, not always easy to disentangle. Concerns about the wider humanitarian consequences of sanctions on the Iraqi people, frequently evoked by France as an argument for lifting or modifying the sanctions regime, overlapped with commercial and business interests, held also by Russia and China. As the consensus broke down, the Security Council – as in other instances where its key members have deemed their vital interests to be engaged – came to provide *the* forum through which competing interests could be managed and, to the extent possible, policies reconciled. The policy differences themselves, however, never disappeared.

Iraq, 11 September 2001 and the "Neo-conservative" moment

Briefing the Council on 5 February 2003, Colin Powel informed his colleagues that "leaving Saddam Hussein in possession of weapons of mass destruction for a few more months or years is not an option, not in a post-September 11th world." The last part of that statement provides the critical backdrop to understanding Council politics between September 2002 and March 2003, and it gives to the diplomacy of those months, however incompetently executed, a certain inevitable trajectory. For the US, the "post-Cold War era" came to an end on 11 September 2001, ensuring in the process that Iraq would sooner rather than later re-emerge as a major source of tension among the P5. Not unlike the launch by of *Sputnik* by the Soviet Union in October 1957, the strategic significance of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington DC was to expose the vulnerability of the US continent to direct strategic attack. The analogy with *Sputnik* – a small satellite about the size of a football – is even more apt in terms of its psychological impact; a fact which many Europeans, used to the threat of terrorism and with a long and unenviable history of wars to show for, have yet to appreciate fully. Whether or not Iraq had links with terrorist groups and whatever the true state of its WMD programme, in Powell's "post-September 11th world" such considerations were close to immaterial since "the bulk of informed opinion coalesced not around probabilities, but consequences".[25] This newfound sense of urgency and vulnerability to emerging threats permeating all US thinking on issues of international peace and security could not but inflame pre-existing divisions on the Council.

But the revival of internecine Council politics and the diplomatic debacle in New York – and, indeed, the continuing uncertainty surrounding US-UN relations – are also linked in a more indirect, though just as important, way to the events of September 11 and their aftermath. Specifically, they have raised the salience and influence of a group of officials, inside and outside the administration, now commonly, though not very edifyingly, referred to as "neo-conservatives" or "neo-cons" for short. Within the administration, Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defence, is usually considered the most prominent among them, though the broad thrust of his position on the nature of the challenge facing US foreign and defence policy is shared by his immediate superior, Donald Rumsfeld, as well as with Vice President Dick Cheney. Closely associated with the group and seen by some as having furnished it with its philosophical or intellectual underpinnings, are Richard Perle, until recently head of the Defence Advisory Board, and William Kristol, editor of *The Weekly Standard* and chairman of "The Project for the New American Century". In reality, of course, the group is much less homogenous than many, especially critics in Europe, would make out. Moreover, the views espoused by those seen as belonging to the group are frequently caricatured, often hard to pin down on details, and not always convergent (the most striking bond between many of them appears to be an intense, almost visceral, antipathy to former President Clinton and his administration). Nor, finally, is the precise impact of their ideas, though clearly in the ascendant since 9/11, on the President's own views and decisions entirely clear-cut or as easily traceable as is sometimes suggested.

Nevertheless, and in the context of the present argument, neo-conservatives can fairly be said to share two broad views. The first of these is that the US has been "too timid in its exercise of global leadership" (a favourite phrase) and, seen as a corollary to this, insufficiently prepared to consider the use of military force in a "preventive" and "pre-emptive" capacity.[26] Secondly, neo-cons are instinctively sceptical of multilateral institutions, including, perhaps above all, the UN. It is in the confluence and apparently growing influence of these views within the current US administration that the underlying and mostly unspoken tensions within the Council in the run up to the war, as well as the lingering unease felt by so many member states about the future of US attitudes to the UN, must be sought.

With respect to the use of force, a growing unhappiness with the basic idea of deterrence was evident, not just in neo-conservative circles, well before the events of 11 September 2001. The attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon did, however, immeasurably strengthen a generalised sentiment about the central inadequacy of deterrence as a means of countering the emerging threats of mass-casualty terrorism and WMD proliferation. For neo-conservative thinkers in particular, the attacks underlined the arguments in favour of preventive and, when necessary and if possible, pre-emptive action. The US *National Security Strategy* (NSS) document of September 2002 – stating that the US "will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively" – was seen to reflect the influence of that view.[27] That document in turn has come to be viewed as a more detailed expression of an

emerging "Bush Doctrine", the key elements of which William Kristol (in vague and no doubt alarming terms to outsiders) listed as "the focus on regime change, the focus on democracy promotion, possibly the pre-emption, in this new post-Cold War world, of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."[28] On the Security Council, France, in particular, saw the US determination to face down Iraq as the first attempt to implement the policy of pre-emption. And certainly for the neo-cons, finally confronting the issue of Iraq was always about "regime change", an aim which UN involvement was only likely to muddy or even endanger.[29] The US decision to take the matter to the UN with the President's speech to the General Assembly in September 2002 (and thereafter downplaying, at least in public, references to "regime change") was seen, not only by France, as a tactical victory for those administration officials like Colin Powell anxious to internationalise the issue and avoid isolation in the more than likely event of war.[30] France's readiness to risk the opprobrium of the US by threatening to veto a follow-up resolution to UNSC 1441 – until very late in the day it was assumed that France would back off – only shows the extent to which the issue at stake was not the role of the UN and the Security Council, or even Iraq, but about the uses of American power in the post-11 September world.

The second issue on which neo-cons and others within the administration do appear to see eye-to-eye is on the UN as "a dangerous place", to borrow the title of Daniel Moynihan's colourful reflections on his time as US Permanent Representative at the United Nations in New York.[31] Moynihan, although deeply and rightly disillusioned with what he saw of the UN in the 1970s, nevertheless appreciated that supporting and working through the organisation was not *necessarily* antithetical to US interests. The neo-conservative view of the UN belongs to a different tradition. It is a long-standing, ideologically driven and intellectually undistinguished tradition on the right of American politics – from William Knowland, Senate Majority leader under President Eisenhower in the 1950s to Trent Lott, a much more recent Leader of the Senate – which views any association with the UN as carrying a very high risk (to put it as mildly as possible) of damaging and frustrating American interests and objectives in the international arena. While Knowland warned his countrymen about being "unequally yoked together with unbelievers",[32] Lott deplored the Clinton administration for having "sub-contracted" its foreign policy to the UN. It is an intellectually undistinguished tradition – not because the UN as an institution does not deserve criticism; it quite clearly often does – but because it rests upon a radical failure to appreciate how, as a political institution, the UN actually works, what it can do and what it cannot do. It is a failure that is shared, of course, by a parallel tradition at the other end of the political spectrum; one that has chosen to treat the UN as a kind of embryonic world government-in-waiting, held back only by the outdated practices of power politics and "false consciousness" among its member states (that is, by their failure to recognise the "underlying harmony of real interests" among all states). As such the traditions feed on each other. In the present context, the point that needs making is that what may, simplistically, be called the Knowland-Lott tradition is vying for

influence with a more pragmatic, ideologically neutral and more interest-based approach to the UN, located principally within the State Department. That approach to the UN, as several observes have noted, corresponds more closely with that taken by the administration of George H. Bush (himself a permanent representative at the UN in the early 1970s) than it does with what is the dominant administration view in the immediate aftermath of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.[33]

While not directly related to the conflict and the tensions over Iraq, these considerations do have a very real bearing on the long-term consequences of the crisis for the UN and the Security Council.

Assessing the Consequences of the Iraq Crisis for the Security Council and the UN

The lingering effects of the crisis over Iraq and the acrimonious divisions it exposed in the Security Council should not be belittled. Certainly, in the short term, the tensions generated in the run-up to war are bound to impact on the workings of the Council and its handling of the many urgent issues on its agenda. This is true, above all, as far as relations between France and US are concerned (US relations with Russia and China appear, interestingly, to have emerged comparatively unscathed from the crisis).[34]

It is also needs to be stressed that in one crucial respect the current crisis is of a different order than those with which the Council was confronted in the 1990s: its post-9/11 setting. It is the sense of urgency and vulnerability to emerging threats within US which, above all, has been driving the administration's policy over Iraq. While one may or may not share that sense of urgency (and clearly many

Europeans do not), the continuing reality of its impact on US thinking and, by extension, on the value which the US is likely to place on the UN, cannot be denied. This fact, along with America's special dispensation as the sole superpower, suggests that any attempt to examine the impact of the crisis over Iraq for the UN requires a distinction to be drawn between the P4 (Britain, China, France and Russia) and the wider UN membership, on the one hand, and the US on the other. With respect to the former the grounds for optimism are considerable; with respect to the US they are clearly more uncertain but not perhaps as gloomy as widely reported.

The P4 and the UN Membership at Large
In considering the positions of Britain, France, China and Russia, it has already been observed that their traditionally strong support for "the principles of the Charter and the primacy of the Council" cannot easily be separated from more prosaic and hard-headed considerations of interest, prestige and honour. Indeed, with respect to all four countries, principle and calculations of interest reinforce each other and point to a continuing commitment to working through the organisation and, in particular, to using the Security Council as a means of promoting its interests in the world. Put more simply, all of them stand to lose from a weakening or marginalisation of the Council's role in international diplomacy. The crisis over Iraq, the war and its aftermath have only brought this reality home more clearly. It is worth noting, for example, that the Council's handling of Iraq between President Bush's speech to the General Assembly in September 2002 and the outbreak of war in March 2003 – though divisive, painful and bruising – also

revealed the extent to which the P5 does indeed form an exclusive and privileged club, which Britain, France and Russia in particular would be loath to see undermined. In the negotiations over Resolution 1441, the non-permanent or elected members of the Council (the "E10") were, in effect, entirely excluded from detailed consultations over various drafts, to the point where some draft resolutions appeared in the *New York Times* before they were seen by the E10. This was in sharp contrast, of course, to the unseemly, though by historical standards neither unusual nor unexpected, scramble for votes in an effort to secure support for a second resolution. To one observer, that scramble was a "diplomatic opera of odd courtships, arm-twisting, compromises and back-room deal-making";[35] as such it was also a perfect illustration of power politics at work within the UN.

If the "indispensability" of UN is recognised by the privileged members of the club, the war with Iraq has also increased that sense to its wider membership. This is particularly evident in respect of the Non-Aligned Group (NAM); a far from cohesive group, often derided and frequently ignored but which nevertheless comprises some 117 states. The simple reason for this is that the US-led war has come to be regarded – rightly or wrongly and international lawyers will continue to argue over this – as "an unwarranted, illegal, and unjustified assault on the sovereignty of an independent nation".[36] To the majority of the UN's member states, the perception of *Operation Iraqi Freedom* as a test case of the "Bush doctrine" on pre-emption – a perception greatly aided by the confusion over war aims and the shifting rationales for war emanating from Washington – has

only reinforced the importance of the UN's custodial role as protector of key Charter principles.

The US and the UN after Iraq
The scars left by the experience of going down the UN route, the strength of unilateralist impulses and neo-con views on the "inherent dangers of multilateralism", and, not least, the sheer and overwhelming power of the US; all these raise questions about the future of US-UN relations, especially under the current administration. Against these factors, however, important countervailing trends point to US re-engagement with the UN. Three considerations stand out and merit special attention. The first of these relates to domestic pressures and influences within the US. The second concerns the continuing need for the US to secure international legitimacy for its actions, not just in the difficult task of rebuilding Iraq, but also, crucially, in the "war on terror", which, after all, the administration has identified as its overriding priority and policy preoccupation. While there is evidence suggesting that members of the administration are already appreciating the potential value of the UN's legitimising role, the third reason why the US may turn to the UN is more uncertain and likely to remain contested. This is because it would involve recognising that the UN as an *actor*, for all its faults and well-documented weakness, has also developed areas of competence and expertise whose utilisation would serve US interests, and indeed those of the wider international community, in post-war Iraq and elsewhere.

US Domestic Politics and the UN. Two points are worth making about US domestic politics and attitudes towards the UN. First, although polls should always be

treated with caution, US public opinion surveys consistently show large majorities in favour of US engagement with multilateral institutions in general and the UN in particular. Moreover, multilateral endorsement for US policies and initiatives are considered particularly important if the risks and potential costs of action are deemed to be high. This was clearly the case in the run-up to the war with Iraq and as a general sentiment it appears to have survived, perhaps surprisingly, both the breakdown of relations among Council members and the outbreak of war.[37] A nationwide poll conducted after the start of hostilities found a "very strong majority" believing that the importance of the UN had not been diminished as a result of its failure to approve action over Iraq.[38] Such attitudes cannot be entirely ignored by decision-makers.[39] Second, the strength of the ideologically driven current of UN-scepticism now at the centre of the administration is historically unusual and is unlikely to remain unchallenged. As a tradition that sees engagement with the UN as *necessarily* at odds with US interests in the world, it has rarely shaped policy in decisive fashion for the simple reason that more pragmatically oriented and interest-based considerations have tended to win out.[40] The likelihood of this happening again is related to the second set of factors alluded to above.

The Quest for Legitimacy and Allies in post-war Iraq and in the "War on Terror". It has already been observed that, if evidence was ever needed, Council politics in the run-up to the war with Iraq showed "power politics" to be alive and well, at the UN and in the wider international system of which the UN is necessarily a reflection. Yet, that observation also requires an important qualification, one

directly relevant to the debate about the future of US relations with the UN. The failure to obtain even a "moral majority" for war in the Security Council in March 2003 served to highlight not just the limits of US power but also a deeper problem related to its exercise.[41] For, as Inis Claude, writing about the UN's role as an agency for collective legitimisation of state action, perceptively observed, "politics is not merely a struggle for power but also a contest over legitimacy, a competition in which the conferment of denial, the confirmation or revocation, of legitimacy is an important stake".[42] This insight informed Colin Powell's successful effort to persuade the President in the summer 2002 that bringing the issue of Iraq before the Council would, if properly handled, strengthen rather than weaken America's hand. By contrast, those, like Cheney, Rumsfeldt and neo-conservative commentators who saw the "UN as a trap", considered the very demonstration of US resolve more important than any legitimacy that might accrue from UN endorsement. Others, like Richard Perle, recognise the importance of legitimacy but, no doubt frustrated with the failure to persuade fellow Council members to follow the US-UK lead on Iraq, have argued that it need not derive from the UN. Instead, so the argument runs, it might be conferred by a "willing coalition of liberal democracies".[43] Quite apart from the fact that the events of early 2003 suggest that consensus on questions relating to the use of force will not necessarily be any easier to achieve among liberal democracies, the UN as shown above retains distinct advantages in this area.

It is now clear that the diplomatic costs associated with the failure to secure a second resolution, the reaction to US

military actions in many parts of the world, as well as the growing realisation that securing the peace was always going to be more difficult than winning the war, have all increased the UN's potential value to the US. Not surprisingly, recognition of this fact within the administration, however hesitant and hedged with qualifications, has been voiced by Colin Powell who appears to have accepted the view that a "UN role might help lend legitimacy to a post-war Iraq occupation and reduce hostility toward it in the region and around the world".[44] The precise nature of UN involvement in Iraq is a continuing subject of debate within the administration, one that reflects the aforementioned tensions between a pragmatic, interest-based approach to UN involvement and the more ideologically driven wing of the administration. Partly because the debate is ideologically driven, it is unlikely to be resolved in the abstract.

Far more likely to shift the debate internally and to influence attitudes to the UN will be events on the ground in Iraq, and the need for the US to avoid isolation, deflect anger and secure cooperation (active and passive) in its "war on terror". With respect to Iraq, evidence of the naivety of the "kick-in-the-door-and-democracy-will-flourish" school to post-war planning has been mounting for some time, and not the least of the problems facing the US is that of limited legitimacy in the eyes of the local population and neighbouring states.[45] A multinational stabilisation force may address this to some extent, but it is not a simple alternative to UN authority. As for the "war on terror", Steven Miller perceptively warned before the war that a US-led attack in Iraq might harm:

...America's international standing, damage or complicate relations with overseas friends and allies, and – most importantly – undercut or inhibit the international cooperation thought crucial to the effective prosecution of the war on terror.[46]

None of this suggests an immediate improvement in US-UN relations, though it surely strengthens the hand of those within the administration more pragmatically disposed towards the organisation. If a rapprochement does take place, the degree to which the US makes use of the UN will, naturally, depend on the organisation's ability to deliver.

The UN as an Actor. When discussing the UN's role as a source of legitimacy, one is talking about the UN as a near-universal collectivity of legally equal member states bound together, in theory at any rate, by a set of common principles, norms and rules of conduct. But the UN is also a corporate body and a service agency for its members, consisting of a Secretariat in New York with regional offices around the world, a series of specialised agencies and an international staff headed by a Secretary-General.[47] To convey more accurately these different meanings of "the UN", a distinction is sometimes drawn between the UN as an "actor" and as an "arena". Whilst useful, it is also a distinction, which, if overdone, can easily conceal the degree of mutual interaction and dependence between member states on the one hand, and the international bureaucracy set up to support them on the other. This fact has always complicated debates about the UN's performance in the field of peace and security, especially in the US where discussion about the functioning of the UN has, for reasons alluded to above, often tended to become highly polarised. Indeed, in Conor Cruise O'Brien's memorable description, it is a discussion distinguished by being "almost all on ... a quasi-supernatural plane, whether in terms of a

'strengthened' Platonic UN, or in terms of a UN of evil enchantment".[48] Inevitably, such a charged context makes difficult any attempt to assess "objectively" the record and possible utility of the UN as an actor. For those disposed to reject the services it might offer, the organisation's inability to learn from past mistakes, its history of stalled reforms, its inability to coordinate its specialised agencies, and, not least, its association with large-scale failure and tragedy in the 1990s are symptomatic of a deeper malaise. Countering this, those inclined to support of the organisation will point to its limited resources, the many constraints under which it operates and, above all, the fickleness of political support from member states. Clearly, there are elements of truth on both sides of this argument. But this only reinforces the point that what is urgently needed is for the Bush administration to engage in a more systematic, open-minded and pragmatic effort to identify those areas where the UN as an actor can make a contribution, in this particular case, to the US's declared objective of "rebuilding Iraq and returning it to its people".[49]

In doing so, the basic starting point is to recognise – and on this there is of course no controversy – that the UN is both structurally ill equipped and unlikely ever to obtain the requisite political support to undertake – that is, to plan, mount, direct and sustain – enforcement operations. This is perhaps the chief lesson from the UN's field operations in the 1990s. It does not follow from this, however, that the organisation is without a security role, nor that it is *inherently* incapable of adapting functionally to changing circumstances and new challenges. In the particular context of post-war Iraq and the multiple challenges now facing the US and agencies on the

ground, the UN can, if properly resourced and supported, undoubtedly make a vital contribution. In politically uncontroversial areas (relatively speaking), that contribution has already been welcomed. Specifically, the UN's specialised agencies – including the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the UNHCR and the UNDP – are repositories of technical expertise on which it would be foolhardy not to draw. Through its field operations, the UN has also acquired experience and specialised competence in more complex and politically sensitive areas. In particular, over the past decade or so, the UN has become deeply involved in the international administration of war-torn societies, often assuming control, on a temporary basis, of a wide range of critical governance functions (pertaining, *inter alia*, to law and order, economic reconstruction and human rights). The precise nature of its involvement, ranging from Cambodia to East Timor and Kosovo, has varied greatly, and the record of achievement is uneven. Nevertheless, the UN has without question acquired technical expertise and a keen sense of the political nature of the challenges involved. Three additional areas of growing UN involvement ought also to be of special interest:

- The demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of both regular and irregular forces in the aftermath of conflict;
- The carrying out of complex monitoring tasks, including in the areas of human rights and WMD;
- Local mediation in internal conflicts, usually involving several parties and reflecting complex patterns of communal, ethnic and religious tensions.

The record of achievement and the quality of the UN's performance in each of these areas is uneven – at times, both ineffective and eminently dispensable. But then so is the record of governments acting on their own, as well as that of other potential service providers such as regional organisations and private companies (in the latter case one need only recall the distinctly ambiguous record of such outfits as the MPRI and Executive Outcomes).

There is yet another way in which the UN's resources and accumulated expertise can be mobilised and it is one that has been brought into sharp relief by the initial experience of US military-cum-civilian administrators in post-war Iraq. In the course of its extensive involvement in internal conflict, the UN has produced individual heads of mission and mediators whose richness of experience, demonstrated competence and political savvy one is bound too feel has been lacking on the ground in Iraq. One such individual was Sergio Vieiro de Mello whose tragic death in the attack on the UN compound in Baghdad on 19 August robbed the UN of one its most experienced and competent senior officials. Others include Alvaro de Soto, who brought the parties in the Cyprus dispute closer to settlement than at any time in the island's troubled history and who also played a key role in the Central American peace process in the early 1990s, and Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Algerian diplomat with a distinguished record of experience from Haiti and Afghanistan. It is only to be expected that their performance in each of these theatres should have been closely scrutinised and at times criticised, but there can be no doubt that they offer a pool of unique and impressive expertise.

Conclusion

The study has argued that while the context in which the Iraq crisis has and is still being played out differs from the 1990s when the Security Council was also repeatedly faced with supposedly "defining moments", the organisation is not facing the ultimate test of its "relevance" or "credibility". The changing context is a function, above all, of the prism through which the United States views threats to its own and international security after 11 September 2001. Neither those threats, which are real and need to be taken seriously, nor the stormy politics of Iraq at the Security Council in 2002 and 2003, should lead to the conclusion that the UN is destined to become little more than a "glorified humanitarian agency". That view, though widespread among journalists and public opinion at present, rests upon a basic misunderstanding of the UN's role in international peace and security. As the realities of rebuilding Iraq become ever more apparent, as the long-term costs of the diplomatic debacle in New York in early 2003 filter through, and as the challenges posed by terrorism and the proliferation of WMD remain, interest-based calculations and principle both point to a return to UN, one based, hopefully, on a better recognition of the UN's strengths as well as its weaknesses.

Postscript: October 2003

Six months after the formal end of major combat operations, Iraq is firmly back on the Security Council agenda. Far from being relegated to the sidelines, the Council is providing a vital forum for the "international community" to work out how to ensure that stability is brought to post-war Iraq. To this end, President Bush,

on 23 September 2003, urged fellow member states to give the UN a higher profile in post-war Iraq, even though he stopped well short of offering to cede command and control of military operations.[50] The US administration is clearly hoping that by giving the UN a more central role – say, by assisting in developing a constitution and organising elections – it will become possible for more non-US troops to be deployed on the ground and for the financial burdens of reconstruction to be shared more evenly. Above all, the administration is hoping that UN involvement will confer greater legitimacy on its activities in Iraq. Without legitimacy, the perception that the US-led coalition is no more than an alien occupying force – as opposed to an instrument to facilitate and ease the transition to genuine self-rule – is likely to intensify further among Iraqis. In a paradoxical twist, the UN Secretariat, following the devastating and unprecedented attack on its compound in Baghdad on 19 August, is now showing (albeit in private) greater reservations about deepening its involvement than some US officials.

Iraq is, however, far from being the only item on the Council's agenda, and it is by looking at its decisions elsewhere since May 2003 that one can more fully appreciate the reality of its continuing role in the field of peace and security.

On 19 September, a few days before President Bush's appearance before the General Assembly, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1509 on Liberia. It almost escaped media attention. And yet, the resolution established a 15,000-strong UN force for Liberia (UNMIL) under Chapter VII of the Charter for an initial period of 12 months.[51]

UNMIL's mission is to bring peace and stability to a country ravaged by civil war and is far from being a simple or "traditional" peacekeeping operation, involving as it does the deployment of civilian police officers and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants. The creation of UNMIL comes in addition to two other missions authorised by the Council. On 13 May 2003 – a little less than two weeks after the formal end of hostilities in Iraq – the Council authorised the establishment of the UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (MINUCI). A few weeks later, on 30 May, it authorised the deployment of a French-led Interim Emergency Multinational Force to Eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In both these cases, the US and the French had no difficulties reaching agreement. In addition to all of this, the UN Secretariat is also planning and preparing for a large-scale mission to Sudan. Once the UN force to Liberia is fully deployed, the total number of troops and civilians deployed on operations will be close to 50,000, which by historical standards is very a high figure. The UN Secretariat has rarely been so busy.

None of this, of course, is to suggest that there are no limits to what the organisation can take on. Indeed, in none of the operations listed above is the UN charged with a combat or strict enforcement role. Nevertheless, the level and the types of activity displayed show that the UN has gradually taken on a wider range of tasks. Events in Iraq are likely to reenforce the value of developing the UN"s ability to perform these tasks more effectively.

Notes

[1] Herbert Nicholas, "United Nations?", *Encounter*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, February 1962, p. 3.

[2] US Secretary of State Colin Powell Addresses UN Security Council, 5 February 2003 (http:// www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/ 20030205-1.html).

[3] "Bush Sees Limited Role for UN in Post-war Iraq", *The New York Times*, 8 April 2003.

[4] Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Faithful Scapegoat to the World", *The Independent*, 1 October 1993.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Inis J. Claude, Jr. "Collective Legitimization as a Political Function of the United Nations", *International Organization*, Vol. XX, No. 3, Summer 1966, p. 368. Claude's article, looking especially though not exclusively at the role of General Assembly, is the classic treatment of this subject.

[7] The two vetoes cast by China in the post-Cold War period, in 1997 and 1999, were both determined by China's policy of punishing anyone strengthening its bilateral ties – financially, diplomatically or otherwise – with the island. In the first instance, the actual effect of the veto was to undermine the UN's verification mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA). The second veto led to the termination of what had been widely regarded as a successful UN operation in Macedonia (UNPREDEP). See Sally Morphet, "China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 31, No. 2, June 2000, p. 164.

[8] David Malone, *Decision-Making in The UN Security Council: The Case of Haiti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 107.

[9] For the morally ambiguous character of the operation, see Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda* (London: Picador, 1998), especially pp. 154–160.

[10] "An Agenda for Peace", paragraphs 60–65, Report of the Secretary-General, 3 January 1992, UN Document.

[11] See, for example, Colin Powell's interview with Abu Dhabi Television on 26 March where he stressed that the war was being "conducted under the authority of UN Resolution 1441 and earlier resolutions 678 and 687". These are also the key resolutions on which the UK's legal case for the use of force has been based, as was made clear by Lord Goldsmith's (The Attorney General) answer to a parliamentary question on 18 March 2003. See "Powell Says Iraq War Conducted With International Authority", transcript posted on (http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/ja1/ wwwh20030327a9.html) and "Statement by the Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, in answer to Question by Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale, Tuesday 18 March 2003".

[12] To see why this might be the case one needs only to look at the speeches and statements made by delegates to the XIII Summit Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Kuala Lumpur on 24 and 25 February 2003.

[13] On life at the UN as a form of "sacred drama", see the classic work by Conor Cruise O'Brien and Feliks Topolski, *The United Nations: Sacred Drama* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968).

[14] "Irrelevant, illegitimate or indispensable?", *The Economist*, 22 February 2003, p. 26.

[15] Quoted in "Eyeing post-war Iraq, Chirac to meet with Putin and Schroder", *The New York Times*, 8 April 2003; see also, "Powell tries to heal policy rift with Europe over Iraq", *Financial Times*, 4 April 2003.

[16] Christina von Siemens, "Russia's Policy Towards the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992–95)", M. Phil. Dissertation, University of Oxford, April 2001, p. 1.

[17] Ibid., p. 33.

[18] "Anti-war camp seeks alliance for UN", *The Financial Times*, 5–6 April 2003.

[19] China did, for example, abstain on UNSC Resolution 678 in 1990, which came to provide the basis for military action against Iraq in 1991.

[20] Simon Chesterman and Sebastian Einsiedel, "Dual Containment: The United States, Iraq and the United Security Council", p. 6. (Originally published as "Doppelte Eindämmung: Die USA, der Irak und der UN Sicherheitsrat", *Vereinte Nationen*, No. 2, 2003.)

[21] UNSC Resolution 678, 29 November 1990. While China abstained on Resolution 678, Cuba and Yemen voted against. Resolution 660, passed on 2 August 1990, the day of Iraq's invasion of

Kuwait, condemned Iraq's invasion as a breach of international peace and security and called for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraq. It was adopted 14 to none, with Yemen not participating in the vote.

[22] UNSC Resolution 661, 6 August 1990.

[23] UNSC Resolution 687, 3 April 1991. Paragraphs 7–13 spell out UNSCOM's mandate.

[24] Chesterman and Einsiedel, "Dual Containment", p. 3.

[25] Toby Dodge and Steven Simon (eds), "Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change", Adelphi Paper 354 (Oxford: OUP/IISS, 2003), p. 14.

[26] For an excellent discussion of the evolution of US thinking on pre-emption (and the distinction between *prevention* and *pre-emption*), see Robert S. Litwak, "The New Calculus of Pre-Emption", *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 4, Winter 2002–03.

[27] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, The White House, September 2002.

[28] PBS "Frontline" interview with William Kristol, 14 January 2003. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/interviews/kristol.html.

[29] See William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "The UN Trap?", *The Weekly Standard*, 18 November 2002.

[30] It was not an inaccurate reading of things, as many reports since seem to confirm. See, for example, Nicholas Lemann, "How it Came to War", *The New Yorker*, 31 March 2003.

[31] Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place* (New York: Berkley Books, 1980).

[32] Quoted in Cruise O'Brien and Topolski, *Sacred Drama*, p. 16.

[33] "Growing divide between the Bushes", *The Financial Times*, 20 March 2003.

[34] "US, Angry at France Stance on War, Considers Punishment", *The New York Times*, 24 April 2003.

[35] Tom Zeller, "How To Win Friends and Influence Small Countries", *New York Times*, 16 March 2003.

[36] Steven Miller, "Gambling on War: Force, Order, and the Implications of Attacking Iraq", in *War with Iraq: Costs, Consequences, and Alternative* ed., by Carl Kaysen et al., American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2002), p. 26.

[37] See "Americans on Iraq War and the UN Inspections II", 21 February 2003, The Program on International Policy Attitudes and Knowledge Networks.

[38] See "Americans on the Iraq War and the Future of the United Nations", 31 March 2003, The Program on International Policy Attitudes and Knowledge Networks. For other surveys showing strong support see, "1998 Wirthlin Worldwide Survey on the United Nations Poll Results" whose findings were published by the UN Association of the US (http://www.unausa.org).

[39] In a poll prepared for the Foreign Policy Association and released on 19 September 2003, Americans, by a margin of 60 per cent to 34 per cent, agreed with the suggestion that the UN "is needed now more than ever in world affairs". See, (www.fpa.org/topics_info2412/topics_info_show.htm?doc_id=194370).

[40] It is worth pointing out, lest one forgets, that historically speaking the US has been a strong and consistent supporter of the UN, not just in financial terms.

[41] According to William Pfaff, the "inability to persuade (or even intimidate or bribe) friendly countries on a matter so vital to the US government is unprecedented in post-war history". William Pfaff, "Diplomatic Blunders Led to War", *The International Herald Tribune*, 20 March 2003.

[42] Inis J. Claude, Jr. "Collective Legitimization as a Political Function of the United Nations", *International Organization*, Vol.XX, No. 3, Summer 1966, p. 368.

[43] Richard Perle, "United They Fall", *The Spectator*, 22 March 2003. See also Perle's interview with PBS "Frontline" programme on 25 January 2003 in which he spoke similarly of "a core of liberal democracies, Western industrial nations" that "ought to band together to protect their common interests, which happen to reflect the best interests of mankind". For transcript see: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/interveiws/perle/html.

[44] "US and Europe agree on UN role in Iraq, but split on scope", *The New York Times*, April 3 2003.

[45] On post-war challenges taking key officials by surprise, see Michael Gordon and John Kifner, "US

Warns Iraqis against claiming authority in void",
The New York Times, 24 April 2003. On warnings
of trouble ahead, see also article by James Fallows,
"The Fifty-first State?", *The Atlantic Monthly*,
November 2002.

[46] Steven Miller, "Gambling on War: Force, Order,
and the Implications of Attacking Iraq", in *War
with Iraq: Costs, Consequences, and Alternative*
ed., by Carl Kaysen et al American Academy of
Arts and Sciences (2002), p. 26.

[47] For an excellent and typically incisive discussion
of the importance of distinguishing between
"different UNs", see Inis L. Claude Jr.,
"Prospective Roles for the Two UN's", *Global
Governance*, Vol. 2, Number 3, Sept.-Dec. 1996.

[48] Conor Cruise O'Brien and Feliks Topolski,
Sacred Drama (New York: Simon & Schuster,
1968), p. 17.

[49] For an incisive effort along those lines, see Karin
von Hippel, "American Occupational Hazards",
Open Democracy, 10 April 2003
(www.opendemocracy.net).

[50] See the speech by President George Bush at the
opening of the General Assembly on 23 September
2003 (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/
2003/09/20030923-4.html).

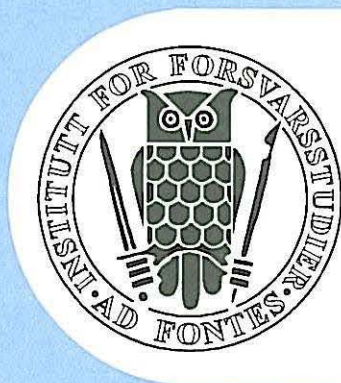[51] UNSC Resolution 1509 (2003), 19 September
2003.

Mats Berdal

The UN Security Council

Ineffective but Indispensable

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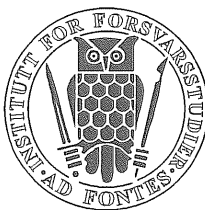Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies

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