

The end result was that a flood of small arms continued to pour into Afghanistan. Alexander Thier, an officer-in-charge for the United Nations humanitarian office in Afghanistan during the mid-1990s, says that weapons have become so pervasive that they've come to play an important economic role in the country. "Other than drugs or basic foodstuffs, arms and ammunition are about the only items that can be sold or traded," he says. "The only way for young men to get a job is to pick up a gun and join one of the factions." Indeed, Afghanistan is so saturated with arms that it has become what Tara Kartha, an arms specialist at the New Delhi-based Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, describes as a "weapons warehouse." Arms from Afghanistan have been traced to the guerrilla groups in Chechnya, Uzbekistan and the Philippines. "Weapons are flowing both into and out of Afghanistan," says Michael Klare, professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College. "If one of the factions is short on cash, it will sell part of its stocks to buyers outside the country."

One of the scarier legacies of the cold war era is the US-supplied Stinger missiles, which the *mujahedeen* used to great effect against Soviet helicopter gunships. Hundreds were left behind in Afghanistan, and they became something of a cult item on the international black market. In recent years, they have turned up in the United Arab Emirates, Somalia, Iraq, Qatar, Zambia and North Korea, among other places. They are also believed to be in the arsenals of antigovernment guerrillas in Turkey and Sri Lanka, as well as those of Hezbollah in Lebanon. The CIA was so worried about the proliferation of Stingers that in the mid-1990s it allocated \$55 million to try to buy them back on the black market.

Despite offering up to \$200,000 each—about six times the original price—the program has met with virtually no success.

Though the various Afghan parties meeting in Bonn reached an agreement on December 4, it's hard to be optimistic about what comes next in Afghanistan, given the number of armed parties now competing for power. Mohammed Ayoob, a professor of international relations at Michigan State University, describes the Afghan warlords as "entrepreneurs" who gain political and economic benefits from continued fighting. Those benefits include their control of the drug trade, their ability to run extortion rackets that force civilians to pay for protection and the subsidies they receive from foreign states. "The warlords don't want to see the fighting end," he says.

Patching together a settlement among the foreign nations that have been arming the Afghan fighters may be as complicated as negotiating an internal settlement among the warlords. Pakistan is determined that the Pashtuns win a large role in the post-Taliban government. Russia and Iran are equally determined to prevent such an outcome, though they are split in regard to which factions they want to see in control of the government.

Much of what happens now will depend on the role played by the United States. Among other things, it must take the lead in halting shipments of arms and pressure other parties to do the same. American officials have suggested that only those groups that agree to disarm will be eligible to receive US aid, but there's a big loophole: The factions will be allowed to keep the majority of their small arms—the cause of most of the death and destruction since 1979. ■

IT'S PROVEN USEFUL OF LATE IN AFGHANISTAN, BUT ANNAN SHOULDN'T EXPECT MIRACLES.

The UN: Bush's Newest Ally?

JOHN G. RUGGIE

On December 10 Secretary General Kofi Annan and the United Nations were awarded the Centennial Nobel Peace Prize. The citation commends Annan for "bringing new life to the organization," and it expresses the hope that the UN will serve "at the forefront" of the world's efforts to achieve peace and to meet its economic, social and environmental challenges. Whether or not it can hinge heavily on Washington, with which relations have been rocky in the recent past.

It is encouraging, therefore, that September 11 and the subsequent war against terrorism have caused the Bush Administration to discover the UN's utility. Annan, the UN Security Council and the General Assembly immediately and unequivocally condemned



the attacks, and the Council adopted an anti-terrorism resolution requiring all countries to report back regularly on their steps to implement its prohibitions against providing active or passive assistance to terrorists. Lakhdar Brahimi, Annan's special envoy for Afghanistan, has led the negotiations among Afghan factions to devise a political formula for governing the country. President Bush has not only encouraged the UN to play an active "nation-building" role in Afghanistan—a concept he disdained as recently as the 2000 electoral campaign—he also convened a White House meeting with Annan and his top team to discuss the many challenges that entails. For its part, the House of Representatives moved quickly after September 11 to release \$582 million in back dues long owed the UN, while the Senate confirmed President Bush's choice of John Negroponte as US ambassador to the UN; both had been held up for months in Congress.

Do these affirmations of the UN, in Oslo and in Washington, mark the beginning of a new era in US/UN relations? At this point,

John G. Ruggie is Kirkpatrick Professor of International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. From 1997 to 2001 he was an Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, serving as Kofi Annan's chief adviser for strategic planning.

few if any close observers have answered with a resounding yes. After all, it wasn't so long ago that the UN proved essential to the United States in the Gulf War and in imposing an unprecedented sanctions and weapons-inspection regime on Iraq. Yet that was followed by some of the worst times ever in the relationship.

The US Congress, with the acquiescence of successive administrations, has held US/UN relations hostage to domestic political fights over abortion and in order to placate the paranoia of the right about "world government." President Clinton saw in the UN a useful tool to avoid or limit US engagement abroad that might pose domestic political risks, and a handy scapegoat when those efforts failed. President George W. Bush's eight-month rejectionist streak prior to September 11 was an even worse omen for the future—simply saying no to the Kyoto Protocol limiting greenhouse gas emissions, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the International Criminal Court, the enforcement provisions of the biological weapons treaty and modest steps to curtail the worldwide proliferation of small arms, which has become so intense that an AK-47 rifle can be had in most Third World conflict zones for the price of a chicken.

Did this history simply evaporate after September 11? Are we witnessing love at second sight? To get a better grip on what the future might bring we need to understand how the US/UN relationship came unglued in the first place, and what would have to change to alter it permanently. Here, in brief, is the story line.

The first chapter unfolds in the 1970s, with the UN systematically alienating supportive US constituencies in ill-considered acts led by the developing countries, feeling newly empowered by OPEC's success and abetted by the Soviet Union. The American Jewish community was traditionally pro-UN. The General Assembly had voted in 1947 to establish the state of Israel. But a 1975 resolution branded Zionism as racism—and there went that relationship. The internationally oriented segment of American business had been generally supportive of the UN. Its International Chamber of Commerce was one of the first NGOs granted consultative status at the UN. But in the mid-1970s the General Assembly pushed for a so-called New International Economic Order, geared toward regulating multinational corporations and redistributing the world's wealth—so business turned hostile. The liberal media, traditionally favorably disposed to the UN, was lost when UNESCO, created to promote the free flow of information, proposed what many saw as an Orwellian New International Information Order making journalists more responsive to societal needs as interpreted by governments.

Because the external world turned out to be more resistant to these assaults than the UN itself, the Secretariat and its programs, already severely constrained by the cold war, became the battleground instead. And poking America in the eye while giving the Soviets a freer ride became a recreational sport in the General Assembly. This neutralized policy analysts, for whom effective multilateral institutions were a necessary instrument in managing increased interdependence, and of course it disaffected the general public. The UN's domestic US political support went into free fall.

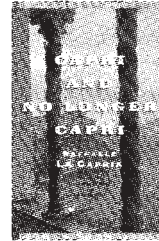
In the second chapter, a combination of outraged and opportunistic politicians took aim at the UN. Financial withholding began, first as a focused trickle, often related to Palestinian issues,

Holiday Gift Ideas from Nation Books



All for Love Ved Mehta

A hair-raising memoir of four beautiful women who drove the author to despair



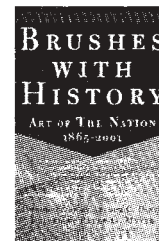
Capri and No Longer Capri Raffaele La Capria

A cult travel guide and memoir in Italy, now available in English

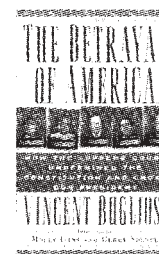


The Zapatista Reader Edited by Tom Hayden

Eduardo Galeano, Naomi Klein, José Saramago, García Márquez, Paz, Marcos and others



Brushes with History Art of *The Nation*, 1865-2001 Edited by Peter G. Meyer Introduction by Arthur C. Danto



New York Times Bestseller The Betrayal of America Vincent Bugliosi

And now in paperback, Ring Lardner, Jr.'s memoir *I'd Hate Myself in the Morning*

WWW.NATIONBOOKS.ORG



then a flood. Conditions for repayment mounted, and when the UN met them new ones were added. Boutros-baiting—ridiculing the name of then-UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali—became a staple in the 1996 Republican presidential primaries, while President Clinton was accused, in the words of that party's 1994 Contract With America, of "saluting the day when American men and women will fight, and die, 'in the service' of the United Nations." Attacking the UN became a one-way bet, like investing in the NASDAQ before its recent crash: You could only win.

Peacekeeping in the 1990s comprises another chapter. For Boutros-Ghali the end of the cold war promised a UN revival, but he was right only up to a point: Most of the world's conflicts ended up on his desk, to be sure, but no one, including the Clinton Administration, was prepared to pay the price of providing the UN with the capacity needed to deal with them effectively. Even so, the UN did a credible job in Cambodia, Mozambique and the Central American peace processes.

For the American public three failures mattered most: Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia. But the UN hardly bore sole responsibility. In the case of Somalia, the disastrous operation in which eighteen American soldiers were killed was entirely US-run; the American military didn't so much as give the UN advance notice of it. That didn't stop President Clinton, however, from blaming the UN and scolding it for being unable to say no. In Rwanda, much of the criticism of the UN has focused on a January 1994 cable reporting suspicions of imminent bloodletting, which UN headquarters discounted. But when the genocide actually began in April the Clinton team, haunted by the specter of Somalia, did everything possible to prevent the UN from taking action, and to draw down the few UN troops there. Indeed, Madeleine Albright, UN ambassador at the time, fought to prevent officials from using the term "genocide," fearing that it might force the United States to get involved.

In the case of Bosnia, the United States and its European allies first dithered when Serbian aggression might still have been contained, and then failed to cobble together a strategy of combining ground forces, provided by Europe but not the United States, with American air power. Bosnia also reflected more directly deficiencies in the UN's own institutional culture. The fact that key officials equated impartiality with neutrality toward victim and aggressor, and exhibited an aversion to the use of force even when events demanded its sustained use, constituted appeasement of the Serbs and, in the most tragic instance, led to the slaughter of several thousand Muslims at Srebrenica, which the UN had designated as a "safe area."

After President Clinton inflicted grave political damage on an already deeply wounded UN by blaming it for the Somalia debacle, he sought to "triangulate" his way out of the inevitable political consequences by issuing a presidential decision directive giving Congress a greater say in deciding which future UN peacekeeping missions the United States would support. Congress pocketed the concession, refused to pay for parts of the Bosnia operation and unilaterally cut the US share of the UN peacekeeping budget, further ballooning the amount of US dues

owed. Largely to prevent the UN from becoming an issue in his own 1996 re-election campaign, President Clinton unceremoniously pulled the plug on Boutros-Ghali, thereby paving the way for Kofi Annan's election as secretary general.

That was the state of US/UN relations that Annan inherited when he took office in January 1997. He wasted no time in launching his "quiet revolution"—his term for reforming and repositioning the UN. So successful was the effort that the membership re-elected him to a second five-year term by acclamation in the summer of 2001, six months before his first term expired. News accounts of the Nobel Prize selection reported no competitors there either. "Kofi restored the UN," says Richard Holbrooke, President Clinton's last UN ambassador, whose own indefatigable efforts in Washington and New York brokered the deal that finally resolved the back-dues issue.

The first step was management reform. In May 2000, the US General Accounting Office surprised Senator Jesse Helms, whose Foreign Relations Committee had requested an assessment, by reporting "substantial" progress in areas controlled by the secretary general. In peacekeeping, Annan not only encouraged searing self-criticism of the UN's role in Srebrenica and

Rwanda but also turned it into detailed proposals for improvement, while the lessons from past mistakes are being applied to nation-building efforts in Kosovo and East

Timor. To establish clearer and more focused objectives for the UN, Annan convened 159 heads of state and government at a special Millennium Summit in September 2000, and got them to endorse a set of people-centered priorities, including specific targets for global poverty reduction. To supplement the UN's own limited resources and to embed it more firmly in the emerging global civic order, Annan has enlisted the business community and NGOs in promoting UN goals, creating new alliances in the battle against HIV/AIDS and for greater corporate social responsibility. All the while he has kept the UN on a zero-growth budget.

Annan's broader public appeal also reflects his ability to express, and to shape, the prevailing moral sentiments of our times. He has advocated universal human rights and enunciated the "doctrine" that sovereignty must not be allowed to serve as a shield behind which states butcher their own people. Long before September 11 he stressed that no country, no matter how powerful, is immune to what he calls problems without passports, and that most have root causes in bad governance, lack of economic prospects and insufficient global solidarity. He has championed the cause of poor countries while stressing that most suffer not from too much globalization, but from too little or the wrong kind. He has an uncanny ability in the face of conflicting interests and voices to avoid degenerating to the lowest common denominator or simply splitting the difference, as many of his predecessors did, striving instead to upgrade the collective interest.

Annan's accomplishments and attributes have paid dividends in US/UN relations. A public information campaign, funded by media mogul Ted Turner, has promoted the UN's work. Public approval has reached new highs. The press is enamored with

*Annan's accomplishments have paid off.
Even Jesse Helms confessed, 'Let there be no
mistake about it, Mr. Secretary, I like you.'*

him. Business groups took out full-page ads in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* urging Congress to pay the arrears. Israel and the American Jewish community have been nearly as receptive as the Palestinians to having Annan involved in the peace process. Academic interest in the UN is the strongest in a generation. Even Jesse Helms confessed at a meeting with Annan, at which the Senator's granddaughter poured tea, "Let there be no mistake about it, Mr. Secretary, I like you."


So why hesitate to proclaim a new era in US/UN relations? One obvious answer is that though the instrumental cooperation we see today may well continue, it could also be easily reversed. A lot more things can go wrong in Afghanistan than are likely to go just right. And the next phase in the war against terrorism—especially if it involves a military attack against Iraq—will put strains on the American-led coalition, which are bound to reverberate in the UN.

But even if all goes well, the deeper problem is that the UN suffers from a lack of systematic engagement by the United States to help build the kind of UN that could live up to the aspirations expressed in the Nobel citation—which the UN cannot do today. In peacekeeping, for example, governments voluntarily supply troops, or not, once the Security Council adopts a mission. The different national contingents that show up in the field have never trained together. Their officers have never even met. The equipment they arrive with varies enormously in quantity and quality, and is typically incompatible. The UN also lacks the resources to do serious contingency planning before a mission begins, and the staff lacks the resources to fully support difficult military missions once they are launched. The US Congress has been a main impediment to even moderate efforts at rationalizing this state of affairs. For that to change would require a major shift in Washington.

Although public opinion now strongly and consistently supports the UN, including more robust peacekeeping, it has little bite because it lacks electoral consequences. Voters do not cast ballots based on their own or on candidates' views about the UN. As a result, a powerful anti-UN cohort in Congress, made up mainly of conservative Republicans, especially in the House, neither feels nor fears any push to alter its ideological antipathy toward the UN—an extension of their deep-seated antigovernment and anti-internationalist posture. On the contrary, among their political base back home that script still plays well.

In the long term, the national sense of vulnerability engendered by September 11 and the public's rediscovered appreciation of government, together with the widely acknowledged need for cooperative approaches to rooting out terrorism and the conditions in which it breeds, eventually may produce a different political configuration in Congress.

But in the short run, one of two things would have to happen to transform the political status quo. Either the House leadership would have to rise above its own predispositions for the sake of broader foreign policy goals—a sacrifice for which it has shown no enthusiasm—or President Bush would have to lean harder on House members to change their ways. Though he successfully resisted House pressure to add new conditions on repaying the arrears well after the deal was struck, the President has been exceedingly averse to crossing the right wing of his

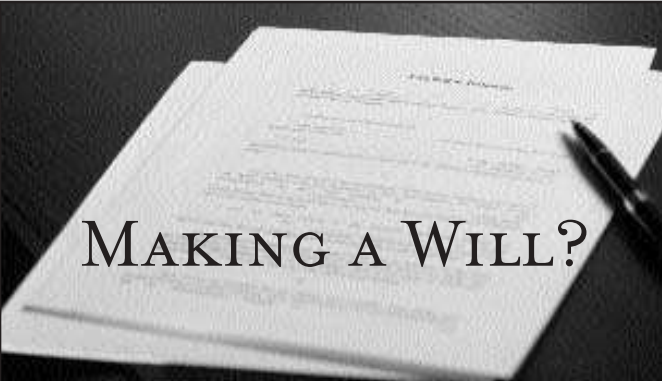


LABYRINTH BOOKS
Intellectual, Literary, and Aesthetic Books
 536 W 112th St. NYC, NY 10025
 Bet. Broadway & Amsterdam
 212-865-1588

**ANNUAL DECEMBER
 BOOK SALE**
 Through December 25

20% Off New Releases
25% Off Sale Books & Remainders

Telephone & online orders welcome (discounts apply).
www.labyrinthbooks.com
 Weekdays 9am-10pm, Sat 10-8, Sun 11-7



MAKING A WILL?

It's important for you. And important for us that you consider making *The Nation* part of your legacy. By making a provision for *The Nation* now, you help ensure that both the principles we stand for, and the forum in which we fight for them, will be around for generations to come. Your legacy can take the form of a will, a trust, or various other means. It can go to *The Nation* or to *The Nation Institute*, a tax exempt charitable organization. And of course it can be — and will be appreciated — in whatever amount you can make it, large or small. It's spelled out in what we call our Legacy Group brochure. If you're at an estate-planning point in your life, or feel you'd like to know more about your options in general, call us for a copy.

THE NATION LEGACY GROUP
 (212) 209-5428
 The Nation, 33 IRVING PLACE, NEW YORK, NY 10003-2332

own party. Besides, his Administration has given no indication yet of having any wider UN agenda.

And so, for the immediate future a strictly à la carte multilateralism, to use State Department policy planning chief Richard

Haass's term, is probably the most that Kofi Annan should expect from the US government. Which also means that significant progress in realizing the Nobel's noble aims will remain slow and modest. ■

CHINA IS TAKING AWAY MEXICO'S JOBS, AS GLOBALIZATION ENTERS A FATEFUL NEW STAGE.

A New Giant Sucking Sound

WILLIAM GREIDER

The "giant sucking sound" Ross Perot used to talk about is back, only this time it is not Mexico sucking away American jobs. It is China sucking away Mexico's jobs. And jobs from Taiwan and South Korea, Singapore and Thailand, Central and South America, and even from Japan. Globalization is entering a fateful new stage, in which the competitive perils intensify for the low-wage developing countries much like the continuing pressures on high-wage manufacturing workers in the United States and other advanced economies. In the "race to the bottom," China is defining the new bottom.

This turn of events is difficult to see against the gathering threat of global recession, but in the long run it will be more meaningful. As one economy after another sinks into contraction, output subsidies nearly everywhere—more layoffs and closed factories, more unsold goods. So the migration of production to China will not become fully apparent until after the recovery, when some of the closed factories never reopen. While it is impossible to know the full dimensions at this point, the downdraft on wages and competing economies induced by China's ascendancy may produce a terrible reckoning. For many poor nations that thought they had gained a foothold on the ladder, the reversal will be quite ugly.

This is the "treadmill" that ensnares developing countries—writ large. If they attempt to boost wages or allow workers to organize unions or begin to deal with social concerns like health or the environment, the system punishes them. The factories move to some other country where those costs of production do not exist.

In Mexico, the manufacturing wage level rose a bit in the last couple of years and is now around \$1.50 an hour. In China, it is 20–25 cents an hour. After NAFTA, Mexico's manufacturing base expanded robustly year after year—except that most new factories are located in the maquiladora export zones along the US border and in the interior, essentially separate from the Mexican economy and largely producing components for US multinationals. Yet Mexico may already have peaked as an emerging player in global manufacturing. Its manufacturing base is now shrinking, due first to the US recession but also because the factories are leaving. American companies that were cheerleaders for NAFTA back in 1993 are shutting down and moving to greener—that is, cheaper—pastures. An American source in multinational



business explained the trend: "When you consider the wage difference, moving the factory, which was usually leased anyway, or moving the more value-added product lines is a veritable no-brainer, if you want to increase profits. I expect this to intensify over the next few years, leaving considerable excess capacity and unemployment, particularly in northern Mexico but also in Central and South America, and the Caribbean."

During the past year, employment in the maquiladora industries fell by 12 percent, more than 170,000 jobs from the peak. The number seems modest by American standards, but those jobs have been the core of positive growth. The maquiladora sector produces about one-third of the nation's hard-currency income from abroad—the dollars that support its foreign borrowing—and so its loss could contribute to yet another currency crisis. The export-zone wages may seem pitiful to Americans (and to many Mexicans), but they are virtually the only bright spot in job development.

Poignant evidence of Mexico's dilemma is the fact that the government has slapped antidumping duties of 189 percent on electronics imports from China. Electronics was supposed to be one of Mexico's bright spots, remember, but Mexico now claims China is exporting its surplus output at a price below what it costs in China. Guadalajara, a production center for dozens of US technology companies, was down 16 percent in exports and lost 15,000 jobs in the first half of the year, according to *Business Week*. When US steel companies pursue anti-dumping remedies, the free-trade orthodoxy disparages them as backward protectionists, blocking the future for poorer countries. But Mexico is still very poor itself and feeling the same squeeze. Mexico's top three steel producers, incidentally, are all in grave financial trouble, like the American companies, and for the same reason. Worldwide overcapacity drives down steel prices and rewards the lowest-wage producer—China.

In Mexico, other shrinking sectors include shoes, tires, apparel and auto parts. The Big Three are moving auto components to China from both Mexico and the United States. General Electric, which over the years has moved a lot of US jobs to Mexico, is now moving production of mini-bar refrigerators from there to China. An executive of SCI Systems, which employs 10,000 in Guadalajara, told *Business Week*: "I'm an absolute believer in this country, but anything that is really price-

Copyright of Nation is the property of Nation Company, Inc.. The copyright in an individual article may be maintained by the author in certain cases. Content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.