



Spring 2003

In & Around the UN

Reflections on the run-up to war in Iraq and the fate of the UN

QUONO offices overlook the UN buildings where we've witnessed a growing energy and sense of purpose across the street as the debate regarding Iraq's disarmament and the use of force to achieve that disarmament increasingly dominated the agenda of the Security Council. Toward the final days of deliberation in March prior to the run-up to the US-led war in Iraq, we witnessed traffic jams among the limousines crowding the UN parking areas and media jams at the entrance where seemingly permanently parked TV set-ups awaited every move of the Security Council. In the days and weeks that followed, this all disappeared with a strange fretful calm replacing the frenetic pace of the previous eight months. As the war comes to an end and attention turns to post-war, one senses some momentum returning to the SC and to the UN as the debate of possible UN roles gets underway.

The year and a half since the attacks on the World Trade Towers has challenged the international community to address the on-going global campaign against terrorism. The broad concern for counter-terrorism efforts was largely eclipsed in the months since September 2002 by intense pressure to focus on the disarmament of Iraq and to authorize a US-led war on Iraq to accomplish that purpose. These months of Security Council debate were alternately stimulating, frightening, and at moments bewildering. Arguably, no issue in the history of the United Nations has so consumed the agenda of the Council.

Council deliberation ended in March when the US/UK withdrew their draft resolution rather than face an up or down vote that had been promised in the previous week. The withdrawn resolution declared Iraq in "material breach" of UN resolutions and would have authorized the US and others to forcibly disarm that country.

Did the SC "fail?" Depends on whom you ask. The SC was faced with two vice-like challenges to its "relevance." One ambassador described a "double-problem": first, the UN would likely be perceived as having failed and therefore "irrelevant" if it was seen as incapable of enforcing its own resolutions in disarming Iraq, while on the other hand the Council would be seen as having "failed" if the Council were seen to be the too-willing instrument of one country's

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Small Arms: a real threat on the road to peace and reconstruction

DURING the opening attack on Iraq by US and other coalition forces, media provided startling coverage of the tremendous bombing campaign that struck the country. As many predicted, the air campaign provided a showcase for newly developed missile systems and capabilities. While the media focused much of its attention on the "shock and awe" of the US attack, little mention was made of the flood of small arms and light weapons into the hands of combatants and civilians alike. These weapons have produced huge numbers of casualties and will continue to pose a significant threat to reconstruction efforts after the initial campaign is over.

Iraq provides one example of a country where instability and insecurity have produced an abundance of both legal and illegal small arms. A recent article stated that "there are enough guns in Iraq for at least every person in Iraq to possess one, a level similar to gun ownership in clans in Yemen and Somalia, as well as in the United States."¹ In the case of Iraq, small arms have come into civilian hands through a number of sources: some from government arsenals looted during the 1991 Gulf War; others provided by Iran to support Shia rebels; and finally, the Iraq government distributed arms directly to civilians so that they could fight off rebel groups and, more recently, US forces. The country is now awash with small arms and the abundance of these weapons has greatly increased the insecurity and potential violence facing Iraqis as they strive to rebuild *(continued on page 6)*

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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields

This year, the General Assembly is considering ways in which to move the outcomes of the major UN conferences from two-dimensional resolutions to actualities; this includes the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

A working group of the GA has been established, its work to be completed by May of this year with a resolution to be taken to this summer's ECOSOC session for approval, then to the GA in September for acceptance by the member states.

Integrated and coordinated implementation is a structural and thematic proposal to determine the role of the UN, its member-states and other relevant stakeholders, such as civil society, the Bretton Woods Institutions, the WTO, and the private sector in operationalizing the goals of the major UN conferences for the betterment of the world and all its inhabitants.

In a paper by the Vice-chairmen of the working group, the ambassadors of Ghana and Belgium, four points for work were proposed:

1. The integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of conferences and summits at national, regional and international levels.
2. Integrated and coordinated follow-up of major UN conferences and summits according to General Assembly resolution 57/270.

3. The consideration of the work of the plenary of the General Assembly and its Second and Third Committees relevant to the implementation of and follow-up to major UN conferences and summits, including the modalities of reports presented to the General Assembly.

4. How to best address the review of the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including format and periodicity.

If these sound similar to one another, do not despair; UN language is subtle, and the four points really do cover differing areas.

Point one asks governments to consider the roles of national, regional and international bodies in turning conference goals into reality. Point two concerns the ways in which the UN, and all of its bodies, will work towards integration and coordinated follow-up; this includes potential changes within the UN system. Point three asks the member-states to think about ways in which the Second (development) and Third (human rights) Committees of the GA could work together to enhance decisions that might have been taken by one Committee alone. Point four is designed to develop discussion around the automatic review processes of

major UN Conferences, e.g., Rio +10, the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002.

As one might imagine, this work calls into question many long-standing dilemmas within the UN system, including what are the responsibilities of the national governments of developing countries vs. the responsibilities of developed countries, who will pay for implementation, what should be measured in terms of evaluating outcomes and who will decide on the measurement criteria. There are, however, some positive signs in the current debate. There is agreement that long-range agenda planning for the discussion of cross-cutting conference goals be developed for annual sessions of ECOSOC. There is also agreement that civil society, including NGOs and the private sector, should be included at the national as well as the international levels.

Given that this work will be completed in time for the upcoming GA, a report on outcomes of the working group will be written for the September/October issue of the QUNO-NY newsletter.

For more information, please go to <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/wgga/vicechairsummary.pdf> ❖

Action plan for gender mainstreaming launched

On April 15th, the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs (DDA) launched a "Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan" at an event that featured a panel discussion from experts on disarmament. The panelists included Ambassador Maiolini, the Chair of the UN Disarmament Commission, Angela King, Special Adviser of the Secretary General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and Jayantha Dhanapala, UN Under

Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs.

The Gender Action Plan goes a long way toward addressing salient issues that have not adequately been addressed in the disarmament discourse. The DDA hopes that the Action plan will successfully reinforce disarmament dialogue through incorporating a gender perspective in its daily work. The plan aims at strengthening disarmament through infusion of gender perspectives in disarmament

debates, decision-making, actions, and more equitable participation by women in decision-making. The Action Plan has taken into consideration conclusions and recommendations of prior UN reports, resolutions and conferences addressing women, development, security and peace issues. ❖

You can access the full text version of the Action Plan at this website: <http://disarmament.un.org/gender/gmap.pdf>

Kyoto: Keeping water on the map

In March, QUNO sent a representative to Kyoto, Japan for the 3rd World Water Forum. The forum brought some 24,000 people together from around the world to increase global awareness about water concerns, continue policy debates, and motivate actions. The need for focused strategies, commitments and actions related to water issues is evident: over a billion people in the world lack access to safe drinking water and nearly 2.5 billion don't have adequate sanitation. This article provides an overview of the forum format, overarching themes, and outcomes.

While the Water Forums are not United Nations meetings, UN events during the past decade laid the groundwork for Kyoto. Most notably, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015 (UN Summit, 2000) established a number of time-bound targets aiming to eradicate poverty. Many of these MDGs relate closely to water: halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water; halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger; reduce maternal mortality by three quarters and under-five mortality by two thirds. At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, another target was added: halve the proportion of people without access to sanitation.

The 3rd World Water Forum organized around interlocking themes ranging from "water and climate" to "water and poverty." The expansive program brought a wide spectrum of participants: local, regional, and international NGOs, private-sector representatives, UN staff, diplomats, and local, state, and national government officials. While some NGOs focused on including water in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, others

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discussed the costs/benefits of large-scale dams on human and ecological systems. Some groups galvanized around such controversial topics as privatization of water and water services, and others outlined mechanisms for water and sanitation knowledge-sharing in developing countries. QUNO focused primarily on issues related to governance, as well as water and peace.

Amidst the topics addressed in Kyoto, two cross-cutting themes emerged as fundamental to meeting water-related MDGs: effective governance and increased funding. First, effective governance gained ample attention. Governance is not "govern-

ment," per se, but covers the manner in which power is balanced in the administration of a country. In order to meet important water goals like the MDGs, systems must be established to ensure effective governance at all levels, including transparency, accountability, and public participation.

Second, a significant financial boost is essential to meet the MDGs. Some project that an increase of \$100 billion per year until 2015 is needed to fulfill the drinking water and sanitation goals.

The outcomes of the 3rd World Water Forum are a mixture of the concrete and the intangible. A Ministerial Declaration, which arose from high-level meetings, carries the political weight of the

forum and builds upon the outcome documents of WSSD and previous World Water Forums. Also, a "Portfolio of Water Actions" involves a collection of 422 actions submitted by 36 countries and 16 international organizations. Many of these actions focus on water resources management, benefits-sharing, and supplying safe drinking water and sanitation. While more difficult to quantify, the forum created valuable networking space for people from around the world to engage in dialogue, debate, and problem solving. As with so many international events, implementation will be the true test of success. ❖

Quaker United Nations Office

The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), located in Geneva and New York, represents Quakers through Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), an international non-governmental organization with consultative status at the UN. QUNO works to promote the peace and justice concerns of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) from around the world at the United Nations and other global institutions. It is supported by the American Friends Service Committee, Britain Yearly Meeting, the worldwide community of Friends, other groups, and individuals.

Current staff at QUNO New York: Jack Patterson (conflict prevention and peacemaking); Lori Heninger (financing for development and racism/human rights); Sarah Clarke (small arms and fundraising). QUNO's administrator is Susan Lawless. Program Assistants for 2002-2003 are Anna Brown and Peter Idwasi.

Iraq

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foreign policy goals. For many months, the majority of Council members struggled to find a way through the dilemma by actively disarming Iraq even as it prevented a war few thought necessary or desirable.

The US described the Council as having failed to reach unity on a resolution to disarm Iraq and therefore as having forfeited its role as guarantor of international peace and security. A role the US asserted it would undertake in the void left by UN irresponsibility. Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed the view of many in the moments following the vote-that-wasn't when he described the inability to reach unity on Iraq as a "sad day" for the UN and the Council. Where some saw failure, others diplomats expressed the view that the Council had largely succeeded in the role assigned to it by the UN Charter to deliberate issues of war and peace for over seven months, even as they failed to prevent a transparently unilateral decision by the US and others to abandon the inspections process for an unauthorized war against Iraq. Still, up until the inconclusive final act, the Council had served as the arbitrator and decision maker. Nations large and small, often in open debate, were seen to search for consensus on the issue of the use of force in disarming Iraq. Not since the end of the Cold War, had the Security Council taken on such a sober task with such seriousness and resolve.

At the end of the day, the Council remained split roughly along the same lines that had existed at the beginning, with four in favor of authorizing the use of force and eleven unper-suaded that the case for war had been convincingly demonstrated.

One ambassador described the

shift that had occurred towards the end as one in which Iraqi disarmament and return of inspectors was displaced by a focus on preventing the US from initiating a war few wanted. For many at the end, the US had become the larger issue with Iraq receding into the background.



Hans Blix (right), Executive Chairman of the Un Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and Mohamed Elbaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), on their way to their meeting with Secretary-General Kofi Annan. March 7, 2003

How did this come to pass?

Perhaps the most confounding element in the debate concerned goals and the implicit distrust each side in the debate came to have of the other. Corrosive charges were made in the hallways and eventually in formal debate. The French, Russians, and others were believed to block the use of force for economic reasons, e.g., to protect contracts with Iraq and recover debt Iraq owed, while it was, and is, widely believed that the US had made the decision to go to war perhaps as much as a year before and that the whole SC process was "window dressing" to help UK PM Blair with a recalcitrant public at home and US Secretary of State Powell in his desire to obtain international legiti-

macy for US actions. Many assumed the UN process was necessary for both and that their needs would be best met by achieving Iraqi disarmament without war.

At the end, the ground for compromise on a way forward to disarm Iraq through continued inspections fell away under the pressure to authorize the use of force in a unilateral war against a member state. Had the two sides focused on their common ground to disarm Iraq through inspection until all options had been exhausted, they might have found the "unity" each declared it wished to have — and the US may have eventually gotten the authorization it sought. Some members believed that by focusing on the use of force and forcing the issue before inspections had been completed, the common ground disappeared under their feet.

While the US and the UK blamed the French veto threat for the failure of the SC to pass a second Resolution authorizing force, most diplomats believe the US/UK have simply failed to get the minimum number of votes they needed for even a "moral majority." The majority clearly supported seeing the UNMOVIC inspections

process through and felt all alternatives to war had not been exhausted. Within days the war was underway with the UN in effect elbowed aside.

Impact on the UN?

It's too soon to speak about the impact of this run-up to war until we see how the post-war issues play out in coming months. Has the deep split in the Council been bridged in allocating post-war roles for the UN and other multilateral organizations or have they all been sidelined as the US and others organize as best they can the structures for governance and the redevelopment of Iraq's oil resources? If the split is narrowed and some genuine consensus emerges for post war roles, it may be possible once again for the Council to

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Iraq

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achieve sufficient unity to begin to heal some of the open wounds created in the run-up. If not, the US may have inadvertently given rise to a new countervailing bloc within the SC (France, Russia, Germany, and China) that may find grounds to continue their collaboration on other issues in the future. The standing of the Council has been affected in the short term in uncertain ways. The next such crisis will test whether the Council will play a central role again in deliberations or whether it will be avoided altogether.

Debate of post-war issues could provide the initial testing ground that will determine the longer-term stature of the UN in the lead-up to the next crisis. These include:

1. oversight of humanitarian relief
2. the legitimacy of an emergency or interim administration
3. the creation of an acceptable permanent governing authority
4. long-term reconstruction, and
5. oversight and control of Iraq's oil resources (currently under the authority of the UN Oil for Food Program)

Behind the debate will remain lingering questions of the legitimacy of the war itself. Winning the peace will, all agree, be as important and more difficult than winning the war. Much will

depend on whether the US is persuaded that its occupation of Iraq comes under international law and how, then, it proceeds with the issues listed above.

While some are determined not to give the Coalition legitimacy for war after the fact, many are prepared to work together in finding a joint way forward to heal the wounds of that war and lay the groundwork to prevent future such occurrences, i.e., by strengthening the capacities of the UN and international community to respond in preventing the need for violent conflict to resolve world problems. More to the point, if a quagmire results on the ground in Iraq, and well it may, the US may find a fresh need to invite the UN and other bodies to undertake "burden sharing."

Conversely, the Coalition may wish to keep the UN from playing any significant roles that in turn may result in new deadlocks and the further fractioning of consensus in the Council. Some members are cautioning the UN not to accept roles offered prematurely, fearing the UN may be drawn in to provide cover and legitimacy for actions it has little control over, may have insufficient resources to succeed in, or handed responsibilities that blur the obligations of the Coalition occupying powers. Thus set up to fail.

In this regard, readers are encour-

aged to read the report published in April by Amnesty International called "Report on the Obligations of Occupying Powers"

(www.amnestyusa.org) which outlines humanitarian law. The report argues the legal necessity for the Coalition to observe international law to:

1. restore order and leave for international peacekeeping
2. provide emergency relief: food, water, health care
3. insure impartial access to humanitarian relief for long-term assistance
4. pay for restoring what has been destroyed by war (i.e., not use oil revenues)
5. and most emphatically, aside from a transitional administration, it is not to oversee the establishment of new and permanent governance.

Many will watch to see whether and to what extent the post-war occupation abides by binding international law. Amnesty asserts these responsibilities do not exist in an environment of "legal ambiguity" that can be easily unilaterally redefined by belligerent nations, but are binding on all.

Friends generally will believe that "war is (still) not the answer" and continue to both oppose war and support the construction of the arrangements, structures, capacities, and political will needed to prevent the "occasion" of war — now and in the future. ❖

Working from home

Over recent months Quaker House has seen a steady flow of visitors through its door. The house continues to provide a home for peace in the UN community. A wide range of meetings and gatherings have taken place at the house on a variety of topics, all giving voice to determined calls for peaceful alternatives to violent conflict.

A number of informal meetings have been held between NGOs and members of the UN Security Council over recent months, during what has been an extremely tense period of time. Also, Quaker House hosted its first luncheon meeting on Water as a Source of Cooperation, drawing the attention of an unprecedented number of UN missions, agencies, Secretariat staff and NGOs. Preparations for a UN meeting in July on small arms and light weapons have been discussed at the house, as has the issue of implementation and coordinated follow-up to UN conferences.

Finally, we have received visits from a number of school groups, including Wilmington Friends School and the Tandem Friends School. These are always valuable opportunities to meet with young people and share our work in the environment where it takes place.

While Quaker House continues to provide a space and a source of support for those seeking peaceful solutions, we continue to seek support in building the Quaker House endowment. To join in this effort and help ensure the future of Quaker House as a home for peace, please send contributions to the Fund for Quaker House, c/o QUNO, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017. Thank you! ❖

Small Arms

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their communities and their lives.

At a time when situations such as these affect Iraq and other nations, governments are preparing for the first follow-up meeting to the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. The meeting will take place in New York from July 7 – 11, 2003 and will provide member states with an opportunity to review implementation of the Programme of Action adopted during the 2001 Conference. Under the Programme of Action, governments agreed to undertake measures at the national, regional, and international level that would restrict the availability of illicit small arms. At the July meeting, member states will report on progress made in implementation and are being urged

to share information on challenges and lessons learned in the process.

NGOs, working through the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), have begun to

There are enough guns in Iraq for at least every person in Iraq to possess one, a level similar to gun ownership in clans in Yemen and Somalia, as well as in the United States... Small arms have come into civilian hands through a number of sources: some from government arsenals looted during the 1991 Gulf War; others provided by Iran to support Shia rebels; and finally, the Iraq government distributed arms directly to civilians so that they could fight off rebel groups and, more recently, US forces.

prepare their own input into the 2003 review session. NGOs offer their own expertise in dealing with small arms in affected communities and they provide an alternative source of monitoring and reporting on government activities. At the July meeting, NGOs will face the challenge of working within the parameters established in

the Programme of Action, while striving to broaden the scope of issues being addressed.

The UN process on small arms and light weapons provides a first crucial step for governments, NGOs and communities in their struggle with the real threat that these weapons pose on the ground. Many hope that the July meeting will help to refocus world attention on this ever-present danger. The current threat that small arms pose to the people of Iraq demonstrates the urgent need for greater international cooperation and commitment to addressing this issue. ❖

¹ See article by Rachel Stohl "Small Arms are Continuing Threat in Iraq," March 24, 2003, Center for Defense Information. This article is available online at <http://www.cdi.org/iraq/small-arms.cfm>

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