

A MORE EFFICIENT UNITED NATIONS: THE EU'S CONTRIBUTION?

Introductory speech to the Panel

The United Nations are accorded a central role in the strategy document that the High Representative, Mr. Javier Solana, presented to the European Council in June, 'A Secure Europe in a Better World'. This follows from one of the strategic objectives that Mr. Solana outlined: establishing an effective multilateral system. The most important strategic objective, in my view, because it concerns world order itself, the global, all-embracing framework for the whole of EU external action.

This choice for multilateralism is, I believe, a matter of principle for the EU. We seek cooperation with partners rather than confrontation. But it is also for reasons of effectiveness and legitimacy that institutionalised, rule-based multilateralism is the only way through which we can aspire to tackle global issues with some degree of success.

Thus we come to the UN, 'the fundamental framework for international relations', as Mr. Solana puts it, through which the EU will have to operate and which we will have to strengthen in order to achieve effective multilateralism. Strengthen, for although the UN have achieved much, it is clear that there are a number of flaws in the system, as was recognized by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan himself in his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and in his very frank opening speech to the UN General Assembly last September. Up to the member states to make the effort...

A first crucial issue is the reform of the UN Security Council. If the EU in its security strategy proclaims the primacy of collective security and the UN Charter, in others words the need for the Security Council to mandate all forms of coercive military action other than self-defence *after* an armed attack – and I feel we should say so much more explicitly, because of the exemplary function of the EU – if we want the Security Council to be 'the final arbiter on the consequences of non-compliance', as it is stated in the 'Basic Principles for an EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction', then we must make sure that the Security Council can act effectively, that it can deliver. Otherwise, more unilateralist initiatives will follow. If we criticize unilateral action, we must also acknowledge that the multilateral system does not always work and take action to mend it. The necessary reforms include curtailing the application of veto powers and amending the composition of the Security Council, to render it more representative and thus more *legitimate* – a necessary prerequisite for the success of the collective security system. With two member states having a permanent seat, the EU holds a large part of the key here. If we can muster the will to replace these by a single EU seat, it will give *us* the legitimacy to demand further reforms.

Reform further means defining common criteria, adapted to today's security environment, for the use of coercive measures, military and other, in order to provide an answer to states that do not live up to their commitments, with regard to the international community as well as their own population, and in order to counter threats at an early stage. In this regard the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty has done ground-breaking work, assessing the circumstances under which the principle of non-intervention must yield to

the international community's responsibility to protect. The Secretary-General has already announced the establishment of a High-Level Panel to formulate recommendations on these issues. Whereas admittedly reforming the Security Council will be very difficult, for both legal and political reasons, adopting a clear framework allowing for more pro-active Security Council action is a much more realistic objective.

Improving the decision-making capacity of the Security Council will not be enough though. It must then also have the instruments and means to implement its decisions. While it has, I believe, a specific responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in its neighbourhood, the EU must also assume its part of the responsibility for global peace and security. It should therefore be prepared to contribute substantial forces to UN operations. If the Security Council resolves that military action must be taken, the EU should show no hesitation to act. The ongoing development of the European Security and Defence Policy, which entails increasing the performance of our armed forces and creating the mechanisms to deploy them in an EU framework, would enable the EU to provide the UN with a minimum of standing forces. Just two weeks ago, on 24 September, the EU and the UN signed a joint declaration on cooperation in crisis management, aiming to establish information and consultation mechanisms.

A close partnership has already been established between the EU and the UN in the field of conflict prevention and early warning, the important stage that comes *before* crisis management, and thought is already being given to further enhance it, as witnessed by the communication on that subject which the Commission issued on 10 September.

A word of caution does indeed seem to be in order. The current predominance of politico-military security concerns should not blind us to the broader picture. Coming back to what I said at the beginning, effective multilateralism for me is the overall objective of the whole of EU external action. In the comprehensive view of security that emerges from the Solana document – and that is in fact apparent in many current EU policies, such as the Stabilisation process on the Balkans and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – the politico-military is just one dimension. Effective multilateralism for me means a system of global governance that is capable of providing at the global level the core public goods that the state provides for its citizens at the national level: peace and security, an open and inclusive economic order, an enforceable legal order, global welfare and resolution of conflicts. Excessive inequality as regards access to these 'global public goods' threatens world order itself. It is therefore the ultimate systemic threat to international peace and stability.

It is because of this interconnection between security and global governance that at the end of last year the Royal Institute for International Relations started work almost simultaneously on drafting two concept papers: one on European security – the final document was transferred to Mr. Solana's Policy Unit by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as a Belgian contribution to the debate on the security strategy and will soon be published – and one on global governance, to serve as guideline for Belgian multilateral diplomacy.

UN institutions must therefore be strengthened so as to enable effective governance in all fields relating to the core public goods. Our comprehensive view of security requires a comprehensive view of UN reform as well. Providing the International Criminal Court with sufficient operational powers; rethinking the financial architecture with a view to it regaining its former stability; creating a Social and Economic Security Council for the purpose of both long-term governance and 'economic crisis management'; implementing the Millennium

Development Goals – in all these fields the EU can adopt a leading role within the UN framework, in terms of agenda-setting, contributing with means and integrating UN actions in its own policies. The EU can also serve as an example of successful multi-layered governance.

This is what the Commission deems the ‘front-runner role’ that the EU should play in the United Nations.

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