

Session 3: The UN Reform and Global Governance

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Thank you very much Professor Greppi. You really hit the nail on the head and started to explore possibilities. I'm sure Professor Palmer is very interested in listening to you when you pointed in the direction of the regional organizations. Democracy, after all, even in Athens, was not so much how everybody would decide something, but somehow to choose those to decide, and that, of course, is the problem that we have to sort out. So if regional groups find it so easy to sort things out (as we see in the European Union), let them fight it out and bring into the General Assembly the wisdom of their experience. Now I turn to Professor Caffarena please, and give her the floor.

PROF. CAFFARENA

By Ambassador Giacomelli's medical metaphor I should be giving the cure, being the last. Well, I'm not taking that task on myself. Being interested in international organization as part of the wider international political process, I will address just one question: why are states so conservative about the UN? After all they're still committed to the organization and they appear to be well aware of its limits. Why, then, not just reform it so it can be more effective? As Professor Thakur said, a reform is urgent and, as Professor Luck said before, it is also possible.

A recent very good additional reason to reform the UN is that members of the international community have developed a wider conception of threats to security which goes well beyond inter-state war, and that tells us that nothing short of governance will do to make the world more orderly and secure in the years ahead. A tremendous change with respect to the times when the same task was entrusted to the balance of power or nuclear deterrence or even to collective security. Governance, of course, implies more and higher quality inter-state co-operation, not to mention the inclusion of other kinds of actors in the political process. Inter-state processes of this kind can obviously be fostered by a stronger UN.

Governance also means more intrusive action and the UN is still the only body which can grant legitimacy to controversial political and military decisions - and, of course, intrusive action is in principle always controversial in a world of sovereign states, and particularly in a world like ours which is characterized by huge power disparities.

Let me just say one word about governance, since the concept was discussed in its own right yesterday, over and over actually. I would like to mention what it meant to me when I started my studies in International Relations in the early 80s. It meant that inter-state politics could be conceptualized as something different from power politics, it could in fact be conceived as the production of public policies at an international level, in a de-centralized system. To me, this is the feature that distinguishes governance from government and tells me that both are necessary if you want to take decisions at the global level and enforce them.

Even if there are good and urgent reasons to reform the UN, the thesis put forward by the paper Ambassador Giacomelli so generously offered us is that we should not expect much from states as they are bound to a static, inter-governmental, pre-global view of the UN. They are conservative. While governance implies dramatic transformations in inter-state politics, and in such a revolution states are bound to play an active role. It's them who create the

social environment in which their own action takes place. Such norms reflect their values and interests, and depend on their perception of the challenges and opportunities stemming from social life. The main value of the High-level Panel Report, as it has been noted, is that it stresses the system-wide, cross-cutting nature of present challenges and the potential role of the UN, that is of institutionalized multi-lateralism, in facing them effectively. For this reason the High-level Panel Report could turn out to be a lever of change in itself. As we said, states are necessary actors in this process of change, but they are apparently not able yet to work out a wide enough definition of their national interest, given the scope of the problems they face, and embrace a consistent time frame, a long-term one. If they did, multi-lateralism would not just be serving sovereignty, as it basically did in the past, but would become more functional to governance. The EU turned into a security community by co-operating; so will the international community - this is the expectation -, by co-operating in many fields through time.

I'm afraid, though, that unfortunately this is precisely the reason why states are so little keen on reforming the UN. What has been defined by a distinguished colleague as a "necessary but impossible reform" would in fact imply transcending the fundamental institutions of our modern inter-state system, the Westphalian model. In some ways, in defending the UN as it is, states appear to be defending themselves as sovereigns.

Since its founding the UN has embodied two contrasting sets of principles: those that were meant to serve the modern inter-state system based on power politics, i.e. sovereign equality, non-interference, non-intervention, and those rooted in liberal internationalism which promoted the protection of human rights - which of course implied some form of interference. The two sets of principles were bound to clash and if they did not it was because the international community decided very pragmatically which set should prevail in the different circumstances - and it was sovereignty most of the time. States did not believe they had duties beyond borders, nor have they fully accepted this responsibility now.

But today the nature of new threats is such that the protection and promotion of human rights - doesn't governance amount to that? - and security apparently can no longer be considered two options independent from each other: linked to morality the first, and to realistic calculations of power the second. The protection of human rights, the rule of law, democracy *in the domestic domain* are now functional to security. This wider definition of security implies, as I suggested, a thorough change in the fundamental institution of modern inter-state politics. In order to enhance security, states are somehow bound to transcend themselves. Actually I see myself this process as part of the unfolding of the normative project of the UN, as Professor Thakur noted.

It's absolutely true that in real life, in the world out there, those changes are well under way and not even the power of the most powerful state can stop them, but apparently this makes the process of UN reform more difficult, not easier. States, powerful and powerless alike, albeit for different reasons, seem to nurture the illusion they can neutralize the passing of time (and change), just by deciding they like the UN as it is; and make of it a sort of world apart in which they can go on playing the old game, the one which they know best, the one that confirms their identity as sovereigns in a world where sovereignty is being challenged. Part of the battle around the reform of the Security Council, I would say, is a case in point.

States' attitudes towards the UN should therefore be considered more than a disappointing and annoying feature of the present situation. They're part of a specific reading of the international relations of our times which will have to be surmounted if we want global processes to be governed in a global political space. The alternative might be a fight for global hegemony, as Mearsheimer foresees, from a realistic point of view, and perhaps an imperial order at the end of this process, the sustainability of which though is questionable.

What (or who) can force states to free themselves from this Westphalian cage and help them to provide the sort of institutionalized co-operation which is needed to manage global problems? Well, many global processes that states are resisting are in a sense teaching them a lot, as well as asking a lot from them. Regionalization, too, is a crucial occasion of complex learning.

Empirical observation tells us that states actually spend more time in defining their national interests than in defending them, and this can be encouraging. Certainly, as we approach - and we will do so this afternoon - the issue of civil society, it's worth noting how the concern for global problems is growing. Such concern is usually channelled by NGOs, but if it were to influence more the voting behaviour of citizens, states would have dramatically different incentives in working out their foreign policy.