

their colleagues publicly to make up the gap. French Foreign Minister de Charette told the General Assembly: "It is not acceptable for member states to show such scant respect to the organization by dismissing the legal obligations they have freely accepted". But with the U.S. Congress and Administration locked in a domestic political battle over financing and deficit control, it seems unlikely that the UN will be the beneficiary of U.S. largesse in the coming months. Indeed, Congress' firm position is to limit funding to 25 percent of the total peacekeeping budget for the next year (although the U.S. is now assessed 31.15%). As a result, while the UN's financial quandary is a real (and familiar) problem, it is not likely to improve over the coming years. It may not be "critical" in a life or death sense, but the illness is chronic, arguably with too much creative energy and political credibility wasted on an on-going basis. There already exists a body of literature on alternative financing. Think tanks and "high-level" commissions are increasing their advocacy for such proposals. Slowly but surely, some member countries will begin to examine alternative financing for the United Nations as a way of resolving the incessant wrangling over members' arrears.

Financial Issues and Alternative Financing

Financial crisis within the UN system or not, the issue of independent sources of revenue for the United Nations is not particularly new.

Rather than trying to pump life back into the worn-out policy of year to year decisions by individual governments on how much to appropriate and to whom it should go, what is needed is a flow of funds for development which are generated automatically under international control ... The idea of international taxation (on ships for the use of international waters, on international travel, on passports, on international telecommunications, on ocean fisheries) is a hardy perennial, but we believe it should be treated as an idea whose time has come.²

Of necessity, non-traditional fund-raising for the UN would have to come from activities which are not presently an important source of revenue for member states and which would not have an adverse effect on living standards or rights of those nation states. One of the conclusions from a recent workshop on unconventional approaches to UN financing was: "The key is to find spheres of activity where revenue might be generated and *where states have not already staked out their*

² Aspen Institute Report, "The Planetary Bargain", 1975.