

WHAT KIND OF WORLD AND WHOSE ORDER?

The meaning of "new world order," and what part the UN will play in it, depends on who you talk to.

ROUNDTABLE

*This roundtable is based on a discussion held on 23 January in New York. The moderator was **Bernard Wood**, Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security.*

Bernard Wood: Without plunging into today's events I want to take one step back and look at the changed role the Security Council and UN have taken on in relation to peace and security. How close is what the UN is now doing to what the Charter writers intended, and should we be thinking of putting in place the other machinery in support of the Security Council that was envisaged in the Charter? Should we have a military staff committee as a fully operating entity, and should we be putting in place standby forces so that in another crisis, where aggression is as clear-cut as in the recent one, you could follow the Charter provision-by-provision because all the machinery would be there?

Brian Urquhart: Though there is a great deal of talk about the renaissance of the United Nations, the truth of the matter is that a lot of machinery of the United Nations has been frozen stiff for forty years. And far less attention has been paid to Chapter VII of the Charter, and the preparations you are supposed to make for it, than I think to any other chapter of the Charter. It has become extremely clear in this particular crisis. When we get through the Gulf crisis it will be terribly important for the Security Council to try to see itself as a systematic mechanism for the maintenance of international peace and security, rather than a last resort and safety net it has tended to be.

C. R. Gharekhan: I think we must all acknowledge that the reactivation of the Security

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reference to the Gulf crisis, but even before that, when cooperation between the two started. You will recall that many of us in the non-aligned world were not exactly looking forward to the two superpowers coming together. You know the famous anecdote about the two elephants making love or making war, the results being the same in either case. I was one of those skeptics about the coming together of the two, but I confess that the results have so far been very positive.

Now having said that, I should like to add that good times like bad times do not last forever. This convergence of interest among the two is not going to last very long. It means that in practical terms we must make the best of the situation now. We must seize this opportunity to solve as many regional problems, and regional crises in the world as possible.

We should acknowledge one fact: the Council has functioned the way it has primarily because of the efforts of the United States. It is the US that has mobilized the Council and the international community. And there is a perception that the US is building an influence disproportionate to its economic power. But the US is the only country that has the military capability to launch the operations that the international community has launched in the Gulf. So while you may think about bringing about some institutional changes for reforms in the Security Council, I doubt if we can really tinker with the Charter, because any proposal which would amount to an amendment to the Charter will open up Pandora's box.

Amre Moussa: I don't think that it is too early in the morning to be the Devil's Advocate. I will be the Devil's Advocate now. I believe that the UN renaissance is a false renaissance. What

Council has become possible because of the convergence of interests of the US and the permanent members – especially the two most important of them. And this is not only with