

The United Nations and the Elusive Quest for Peace

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Ambassador Dhanapala, Rector van Ginkel, Minister Pronk, dear friends and colleagues, today is the first day in nine years that I do not have the burden or privilege, as the case may be, of being a UN official. I am deeply grateful to Luc Soete for having organized this wonderful send-off, and just as deeply touched by the warmth of the rest of you in having agreed to join in the occasion. Of course, whether you are celebrating my achievements or simply the fact that I am indeed leaving you, is for me to wonder but for you to know.

A cynic comments that the United Nations exists so that nations, who are unable to do anything individually, can get together to decide that nothing can be done collectively. Among my more precious memories as a UN official is being asked by a young student, after a lecture at the University of Madras – Dr Prasad should remember this – how long I had been an optimist. Optimism is part of the job description for a UN official – you have to believe in the possibility of progress, of change for the better, or else you would not be working for this organisation. Yet retaining one's optimism is no easy task in the midst of prevailing scepticism, if not downright cynicism. We have just had a very good presentation from Jan Pronk to explain why there is such widespread scepticism-cum-cynicism and why indeed much of it is justified. Still, as someone said of Richard Wagner, the interesting thing about his music is how it ain't as bad as it sounds.

The same is true of the UN. It may not be a perfect organisation, yet there are many good people who are devoted to it, still. It seeks to replace the balance of power with a community of power and represents the dream of a world ruled by reason. I believe fervently that the world is a better place because it exists, because of what it does, and because of how it does them.

Looking at Iraq since 2003, Lebanon last year and perhaps Iran this year or the next: how do we impress on conflict-inflamed consciousness the gulf between the goals sought, the price paid and the results gained? Violence is endemic in nature and human society. Wars between states has been an enduring but far from an endearing feature. It is an affront to modern sensibility. Historically, peace was maintained by the great powers. The breakdown of the Concert of Europe system in 1914 and 1939 discredited the old balance-of-power system.

Both with the League and the United Nations, people horrified by the destructiveness of modern wars decided to create institutions for avoiding a repetition of such catastrophes. An important step in the development of the antiwar norm was the Pact of Paris of 1928 which declared war to be illegal. The UN's establishment was the next important milestone on the journey to tame the use of force as a means of settling international quarrels.

The League began as the embodiment of humanity's aspirations for a better and safer world. The UN was closely modelled on the League, testimony to the fact that while the League had failed, people still had faith in the *idea* of an international organisation to oversee world peace and cooperation. The most important League legacy bequeathed to the UN was the concept, by now firmly entrenched but revolutionary one hundred years ago, that the community of nations has both the moral right and the legal competence to discuss and judge the use of force by states.

A hundred years ago, war was an accepted institution with distinctive rules, etiquette, norms and stable patterns of practices. Now there are significant restrictions on the authority of states to use force either domestically or internationally. The UN incorporated the League proscription on the use of force for national objectives, but inserted the additional prescription to use force in support of international, that is UN, authority.

The nature of warfare has changed fundamentally since 1945. Instead of huge mechanized armies, today's wars are mostly fought with small arms and light weapons between weak government forces and ill-trained rebels. In most contemporary conflicts, disease and malnutrition resulting from warfare kill far

more people than missiles, bombs and bullets. There has also been a shift over time in where wars are being fought. More people are being killed in Africa's wars today than in the rest of the world combined. Moreover, violent conflicts in Africa exacerbate the very conditions that gave rise to them in the first place, creating a classic 'conflict trap' from which escape is difficult.

My talk disaggregates the UN role of maintaining international peace and security into the separate elements of pacific settlement, collective security, peace operations, arms control and disarmament, legal adjudication, and peacebuilding. An effort is made to analyse the historical record in order to connect the past to the future and to demonstrate changes that might be required in the institutional machinery in order to enhance the UN's peace maintenance role.

Pacific Settlement

The trend towards narrowing the permissible range of unilateral resort to force by nation-states has been matched by the movement to broaden the range of international instruments available to settle their disputes by peaceful means. The 2005 Human Security Report challenged many widely-held myths. By 2003, there were 40 percent fewer conflicts than in 1992. The deadliest (over 1000 battle-deaths) fell by 80 percent. Nearly 700,000 people were killed in battle in 1950 in total; in 2002 the figure was 20,000. The average number of those killed per battle in 1950 was 38,000, plummeting to 600 in 2002. Genocides, international crises and military coups are dramatically down too. Fewer than 1000 people a year on average have been killed by international terrorists over the past 30 years, a fraction of those killed in warfare. The UN has played a critical role in driving these positive changes. Its efforts increased between fourfold to tenfold to stop wars starting (preventive diplomacy), end ongoing conflicts (peacemaking), mount peace operations and impose sanctions (which can help pressure warring parties into peace negotiations).

One of the most delicate forms of UN intervention is through the good offices of the Secretary-General. This institutional point is likely to be the most

active in pacific settlement in the foreseeable future. The political role of the SG was a novel phenomenon of post-1945 international politics. Article 99 of the Charter authorises him to bring to the attention of the Security Council ‘any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security’. The carefully crafted language is instructive: *any* matter, without limitation; *matter*, not dispute or conflict; *in his opinion*, not in the judgment of others; *may* threaten, not actually threatening. Article 99 confers on the SG both a broad reservoir of authority and a wide margin of discretion requiring the exercise of political judgment, tact and integrity.

The pacific settlement of disputes under chapter 6 is potentially among the SG’s most valuable political roles with respect both to conflict prevention and constructive collaboration. The SG is in regular contact with representatives of many governments, chief executives of international organisations and multinational corporations and civil society organisations. This multi-textured milieu of international relations provides the SG with many opportunities to probe and explain, test and tease, persuade and dissuade; to engage in diplomatic parlance but also to exercise ideational leadership. Quiet diplomacy within the confidential confines of the SG’s private office can be supplemented or substituted by the occasional public diplomacy of the UN’s bully pulpit.

But the SG cannot act in isolation from the shifting power structures of world politics. Rather, his exercise of international leadership is subject to the systemic and structural constraints of a unipolar world order whose bedrock organisational principle is state sovereignty. He must play a political role complementary to the Security Council and never in competition with it; respectful of the pivotal role of the Council in maintaining peace and security while mindful of the political temper in the GA, which is the truer barometer of the sentiments of the international community. When the major powers and groups are bitterly divided, the SG must strive to forge a fragile agreement by identifying common elements, reminding member states of the Charter principles, nudging them towards face-saving formulations that can recreate a sense of common purpose and appealing for calm and unity.

The most important requirement for the SG is to exercise the skills of soft leadership: the elusive ability to make others connect emotionally and intellectually to a larger cause that transcends their immediate self-interest. Leadership consists of articulating a bold and noble vision for a community, establishing standards of achievement and conduct, explaining why they matter and inspiring or coaxing others to adopt the agreed goals and benchmarks as their personal goals.

The method of selection and the terms of office undercut the prospects of those rare individuals who combine the qualities of inspirational, robust, effective and aspirational leadership. The Security Council vote on the SG's election is subject to veto. This immediately changes the thrust from selecting someone who commands the widest following to someone who is least unacceptable to the major powers. The procedure places a premium on a non-activist, pliant SG. The GA should reclaim an active, not merely a reactive, role in the selection of the SG. With the current crisis over the president of the World Bank, we have a fresh opportunity to change the modus operandi of choosing the chief executives of international organisations. If Washington agreed to a genuinely open recruitment process whereby the best person in the world was chosen as the new president of the World bank, and the Europeans agreed to open the choice of the next IMF chief to a similarly international competition, then we may be able to apply the same criteria to the choice of the next SG. But the developing countries are never going to agree to the idea that the World Bank and IMF chiefs should be the discretionary choice of the US and the EU respectively but the SG should be chosen from a worldwide pool.

Collective Security

Unlike pacific settlement, collective security is not concerned with the causes and conditions of war. Only one assumption is necessary, that wars are probable; only one normative premise is required, that wars must be prevented and stopped. It entails the imposition of diplomatic, economic and military sanctions against international outlaws under chapter 7.

Efforts to devise an operational collective security system have been thwarted by a fundamental tension in the concept. War between lesser states, however deplorable and unhealthy for their nationals, cannot endanger *world* peace. Collective security understood as the maintenance of *international* peace and security is therefore superfluous in respect of small states. Equally, however, it is impossible to enforce against major powers, since any attempt to launch military measures against a great power would bring about the very calamity that the system is designed to avoid, namely a world war.

The UN sought to avoid the latter eventuality by conferring permanent membership of the Security Council upon the great powers with the accompanying right of veto. The practical effect of the veto is that the virtually unlimited decision-making competence of the Council, necessary for the successful operation of a collective security system, is curtailed by the extensive decision-blocking competence of the P5.

The closest that the UN has come to engaging in collective enforcement action was in Korea in 1950. Yet its collective security character was heavily qualified. Action in Korea was made possible by a temporary marriage of convenience between UN-centred collective security and US-centred collective defence. As in Korea in the 1950s, the advantage of action by a UN-authorized multinational coalition in the Gulf in 1990–91 was that it allowed the UN to approximate the achievement of collective security within a clear chain of command necessary for large-scale military operations. The cost was that the both wars became identified with American policy over which the organisation exercised little real control.

The decision by a US-led coalition to wage war on Iraq in 2003 without UN authorisation so split the international community and roiled the world of international diplomacy that Kofi Annan assembled a group of 16 distinguished experts to forge a new consensus on the norms and laws governing the use of force in world affairs in relation to contemporary threats. Its report concluded that threats can come from state and nonstate actors and endanger human as well as national security. Collective security is necessary because today's threats cannot be contained within national boundaries, are interconnected and have to

be addressed simultaneously at all levels. The panel endorsed UN-authorized but not unilateral preventive action. The UN will likely continue to remain engaged with a broad and broadening conception of security well beyond the traditional parameters of conventional military attack by uniformed soldiers across territorial borders.

Created from the ashes of the Second World War with the allies determined to prevent a repeat of Hitler's horrors, for most of its existence the UN has focussed much more on external aggression than internal mass killings. Yet Nazi Germany was guilty of both. Unlike aggression against other countries, the systematic and large-scale extermination of Jews was a new horror. The convergence of the interests of human rights and humanitarian communities with respect to protecting victims of atrocity crimes has been given expression as the responsibility to protect.

Peacekeeping

The responsibility to protect is called into action only in extremis and in very rare cases. The instrument of choice by the UN for engaging with the characteristic types of contemporary conflicts is peacekeeping, which evolved in the grey zone between pacific settlement and military enforcement. The number of operations increased dramatically after the end of the Cold War. Reflecting the changing nature of modern armed conflict, UN operations expanded also in the nature and scope of their missions. Many of the tenets of classical peacekeeping were realigned with the new political realities based on the Brahimi Report in 2000.

The need for UN peacekeeping remains and will continue. Today there are around 100,000 personnel from over 100 countries serving in 18 UN peace operations around the world, at an annual cost of five billion dollars. UN peace operations have to undertake tasks like military disengagement, demobilisation and cantonment; policing; human rights monitoring and enforcement; observation, organisation and conduct of elections; rehabilitation and repatriation; and temporary administration. Sometimes the UN had to undertake 'peace-enforcement' operations, at other times it authorised enforcement

operations that were actually undertaken by a single power or ad hoc multilateral coalitions. In Kosovo and East Timor peace enforcement operations were preludes to transitional international administrations.

Modern peacekeeping demands a broad range of skills and competence, including innovation, initiative and integrity. Peacekeepers have to determine the application of relevant domestic, international humanitarian and human rights law to their conduct and operation. Civilian, police and military elements have to cooperate willingly and coordinate effectively with one another and with NGOs. They have to be adaptable as the focus changes from security in one mission to humanitarian assistance in another and peacebuilding in yet a third. All this and more must be done in harmony with professional colleagues in a truly multinational, multicultural and multilingual effort operating in highly localised and particularised theatres.

Because the US will remain the main financial underwriter of the costs of UN peacekeeping, it will continue to exercise unmatched influence on the establishment, mandate, nature, size, and termination of UN peace operations. Washington faces an irreconcilable dilemma between instilling the principle of multilateralism as the world order norm and exempting itself from the same principle because of the sustaining and enduring belief in exceptionalism, in its identity as the virtuous power. This tension will continue to animate UN efforts at crisis management and resolution in the foreseeable future.

Of course the multinational diversity can slow down the pace of decision-making in the UN system: its very strength, universality, is a major impediment to efficient and speedy action. But usually the hesitations are rooted in different worldviews rather than wilful obstructionism. Cf Sikh farmer and tractor: we do all interpret the world in the light of our own experiences.

The Rand Corporation undertook a comparative assessment of UN and US experience in peace operations. The UN is better at low profile, small footprint operations where soft power assets of international legitimacy and local impartiality compensate for hard power deficit. The quality of UN peacekeeping troops, police officers and civilian administrators is more uneven and their arrival on the scene is often tardy. But military reversals are less damaging for the UN

because military force is not the source of its credibility, whereas they strike at the very heart of the basis of US influence. In order to overcome domestic scepticism for overseas missions, American policymakers define the mission grandly and make the operations hostage to their own rhetoric. UN missions are outcomes of highly negotiated, densely bureaucratic and much more circumspect documents.

UN operations tend to be undermanned and under-resourced, deploying small and weak forces into hopefully post-conflict situations under best-case assumptions. If the assumptions prove false, the forces are reinforced, withdrawn or rescued. Washington deploys US troops under worst-case assumptions with overwhelming force to establish a secure environment quickly. The US monthly expenditure in Iraq is comparable to a year's budget for all the UN operations combined. The total number of UN peacekeepers may be modest by the standards of American expeditionary capability but is more than any other country or coalition can field.

UN missions have been the more successful – a higher proportion of local countries were left in peaceful and democratic conditions than with US operations. This could be a statistical artifice, in that a different selection of cases might have produced different results. Or it could indicate that the American operations have been intrinsically more difficult, requiring larger forces, more robust mandates and greater combat weight. Or it could even be that the UN has been better at learning lessons. Kofi Annan kept many of his staff from his days as head of peacekeeping with him in New York in key advisory positions, thereby offsetting many institutional discontinuities. Washington by contrast tends to staff each new operation as if it were and will remain one of a kind.

The UN needs an effective peacekeeping capacity commensurate with the demands placed on it. It needs strategic reserves that can be deployed rapidly. The establishment of an interlocking system of peacekeeping capacities would enable it to work with regional organisations in predictable and reliable partnerships. There is also renewed interest in the idea of a small but robust and rapidly deployable UN ready reaction force that could be rushed to trouble spots and in humanitarian emergencies.

Arms Control, Nonproliferation and Disarmament

The UN Charter was signed weeks before the first use of atomic weapons. The UN has been engaged with the topic of nuclear arms control and disarmament from the start. The very first GA resolution called for the newly established UN Atomic Energy Commission to make proposals for the elimination of atomic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The goal of containing the spread and enlargement of weapons and arms stockpiles has rested on three pillars, each of which has been crumbling in the last few years: norms, treaties, and coercion. The momentum generated by the historic and favourable changes after the end of the Cold War was allowed to lapse. The consequences of not having seized the moment to make further deep and irreversible rollbacks, in light weapons and small arms as well as weapons of mass destruction, are being felt once again in different parts of the world.

More and more countries are bumping against the nuclear weapons ceiling at the same time as the world energy crisis is encouraging a move to nuclear energy. Nuclear arms control is back on the international agenda with a vengeance. The fourfold crisis arises from non-compliance with obligations of the NPT by some states engaged in undeclared nuclear activities; other states that have failed to honour their disarmament obligations; states that are not party to the NPT; and nonstate actors seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. In addition, we face dangers of weaponisation of outer space.

The NPT could be strengthened by making the IAEA Additional Protocol mandatory for all states parties, toughening up or even eliminating the exit clause and making clear that withdrawal from the NPT will be treated as a threat to peace and security. But these cannot be done without also addressing gaps on the disarmament side of the NPT and reform of the composition and procedures of the Security Council. The NPT contains a triangular linkage between verified nuclear nonproliferation, cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear disarmament. The pursuit of nuclear nonproliferation is doomed without

an accompanying duty to disarm. If nuclear weapons did not exist, they could not proliferate.

The UN's strengths and assets are research, advocacy, norm building and networking. It has established procedures and forums for sustaining annual debates and discourses, provides a rare channel for non-nuclear countries to network with one another and exert pressure on the nuclear holdouts, tries to coordinate global regimes and regional initiatives, and undertakes analytical, empirical and problem-solving research. Its weaknesses are cumbersome procedures easily captured by holdouts and recalcitrants to block any initiative, meagre resources devoted to what is said to be among the gravest threats to international security, and the most powerful enforcers of peace and security being the worst offenders in terms of military arsenals and sales.

Peacebuilding

I define peacebuilding as actions undertaken to consolidate peace and prevent violent conflicts from arising, intensifying (vertical proliferation), spreading (horizontal proliferation), persisting, or recurring. UN operations shifted over time from a linear sequence of transition from war to peace to an integrated approach to conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding. In parallel with this, the Security Council broadened its understanding of threats to international peace and security to include such subjects as children in armed conflict, small arms, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the role of natural resources in causing and prolonging conflict, pandemics like HIV/AIDS and, most recently, climate change.

'Peacebuilding' addresses both proximate and root causes of conflicts through direct and structural measures. The new Peacebuilding Commission aims to fill a critical gap in the institutional architecture for maintaining international peace and security. Its efficacy and authority will rest on the prestige of its membership: representatives from the Security Council, donors, troop contributors, ECOSOC and the GA. Its work will be executed by country-specific committees whose membership will include the country recovering from

conflict, other regional countries, major donors and troop contributors, relevant regional organisations and international financial institutions, and senior UN officials.

International Law and International Criminal Accountability

The law of the Charter governs *when* force may be used; international humanitarian law governs *how* force may be used. While the World Court deals with justice among states, the increasing attention and sensitivity to human rights abuses and humanitarian atrocities raise questions of individual criminal accountability in a world of sovereign states.

The world has made revolutionary advances in the criminalisation of domestic and international violence. The international community has responded to barbarism by drafting and adopting international legal instruments that ban it. Nuremberg and Tokyo were instances of victors' justice. Yet by historical standards, both tribunals were remarkable for giving defeated leaders the opportunity to defend their actions in a court of law instead of being dispatched for summary execution. The ad hoc tribunals of the 1990s were neither unqualified successes nor total failures. They helped to bring hope and justice to some victims, combat the impunity of some perpetrators and greatly enrich the jurisprudence of international criminal and humanitarian law. But they have been expensive and time-consuming and contributed little to sustainable national capacities for justice administration.

The International Criminal Court offers hope for a permanent reduction in the phenomenon of impunity. The landscape of international criminal justice has changed dramatically in a remarkably short period of time. In 1990, a tyrant could have been reasonably confident of the guarantee of sovereign impunity for his atrocities. Today, there is no guarantee of prosecution and accountability; *but not a single brutish ruler can be confident of escaping international justice*. The certainty of impunity is gone. The credit for the dramatic transformation of the international criminal landscape belongs mainly to the UN.

Legality, Legitimacy and the Rule of Law

Progress towards the good international society requires that force be harnessed to authority. A gulf between lawful and legitimate use of force is evidence of an erosion of the sense of international community. Those who would challenge and overthrow the existing order must indicate which is their preferred alternative *system of rules, including dispute resolution*; simply rejecting an existing rule or norm, no matter how unsatisfactory or unjust, in order to overthrow a particular ruler, no matter how odious, is not enough.

Authority is the right to make policy and rules; power is the capacity to implement the policy and enforce the rules. Lack of enforcement capacity means that the UN remains an incomplete organisation, one that practices only parts of its Charter. Conversely, the US is global in reach and power but lacks international authority. To the extent that the material capacity to deploy and use force at various trouble spots around the world is concentrated in the US while the authority to do so is legally vested in the Security Council, the US-UN relationship will be the central dynamic shaping the UN role in and contribution to conflict resolution and management in the foreseeable future.

The thrust of the ongoing efforts to reform the UN machinery is to make its structures and operations more efficient and legitimate in order to enhance its authority and improve its performance. The key executive decision-making body, particularly with respect to underwriting international peace and security, is the Security Council. If it remains essentially unreformed and unreconstructed, the rest of the reform effort will amount to mere tinkering and the UN will continue to suffer from a steady erosion of legitimacy and authority and gradually fade into irrelevance. While Iran's president may have tweaked Uncle Sam's nose in his address to the GA, the more fundamental challenge he lay down was to the authority and legitimacy of the UN Security Council. Intriguingly, at a lecture at the UNU in Tokyo on 11 April, Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the World Court, even put forward a rule of law argument for reforming the structure and procedures of the Security Council (in terms of equality before the law and law that is publicly promulgated, independently adjudicated and impartially enforced).

A central challenge is how to combine the UN's unique legitimacy and international authority with US global reach and power. Some commentators pose the question as to why America should submit voluntarily to 'Gulliverisation', tied down by innumerable threads of international treaty and normative restraints, especially but not solely with respect to the use of force overseas. Have the structures and agreed procedures of multilateral forums become dangerously detached from the underlying distribution of power? Even if that were to be true to some extent, recent events have demonstrated, conclusively, that the diplomatic transaction costs of a complete withdrawal from multilateral forums, even for the United States, will be a very high price to pay.

At the same time, the volatility and turbulence that swept through the organisation was a sobering reminder that laws and norms, and institutions and organisations in which they are embedded, are not ends in themselves, but instruments to a better ordering of the world. Should they fail in this overarching goal, their members will look to alternatives.

Conclusion

Many of the world's most intractable problems are global in scope and will most likely require concerted multilateral action that is also global in its reach. But the policy authority for tackling them remains vested in states, and the competence to mobilize the resources needed for tackling them is also vested in states. This strategic disconnect goes some way to explaining the recurrent difficulties facing the UN and the fitful nature of many of its responses.

Over time, the chief threats to international security have come from violent eruptions of crises within states, while the goals of promoting human rights and democratic governance, protecting civilian victims of humanitarian atrocities, and punishing governmental perpetrators of mass crimes have become more important. As a major consequence of the changing nature and victims of armed conflict from soldiers to civilians, including through excess deaths caused by conflict-related disease and starvation, the need for clarity, consistency and

reliability in the use of armed force for civilian protection lies at the heart of the UN's credibility in the maintenance of peace and security.

The UN record shows a surprising capacity for policy innovation, conceptual advances, institutional adaptation and organisational learning. We have seen this with respect to peace operations, human security and human rights, atrocity crimes and international criminal justice, sanctions and the use of force, and what Annan described as particularly precious to him, the responsibility to protect innocent civilians caught in the cross-fire and victims of atrocity crimes.

Some have argued that the UN Charter was written in another age for another world. Yet for many it is a living and breathing document that remains vitally relevant today. It is the framework within which the scattered and divided fragments of humanity come together to look for solutions without passports to problems that respect no passports. We must never fall victim to the soft bigotry of low expectations. Rather, we must always hold the organisation to the more exacting standards of exalted expectations.

The vocabulary of democracy, good governance and human rights has steadily advanced to become the language of choice in international discourse. Because human rights champions the cause of the rights and dignity of individual human beings, it is entirely fitting that the great champions of the human rights and international humanitarian law movements were such giants of individuals as Raphael Lemkin who helped to bring the Genocide Convention into being, Peter Benenson who founded Amnesty International, and Henri Dunant who started the Red Cross.

Their examples demonstrates, very powerfully, that the chief impulse to human rights is the recognition that every human being is deserving of equal moral consideration. It is an acceptance of a duty of care by those ensconced in safety towards those in zones of danger. We are indeed our brother's keeper, all our brothers' and sisters' keepers around the world. The United Nations' normative mandates on security, development, human rights and civilian protection embody this powerful intuition.

The causes of war are many and complex, the call to end it is single-minded and simple. Like terrorism, a war of choice is an unacceptable tactic no matter how just the cause and deserves to be similarly criminalised. Cynics insist that war is an inherent part of human society. To end war would indeed be to end history. Maybe. But so too have crime and poverty always been part of human history. Should we give up then on the fight to end crime and poverty? Confronted with a world they cannot change, reasonable people adapt their behaviour to reality. But the turning points in human history have come from the efforts of those unreasonable people – Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela among them – who set out to change the world instead. The long walk to freedom from war draws inspiration from this thought.

The Caliph and the prisoner...

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am merely the messenger. There is but one UNU god. His name is Hans van Ginkel, and I am his prophet. Most of you will recognise this as a play on Robert Mugabe's comment in the General Assembly on George Bush and Tony Blair. As I look around the room at this august assemblage of the directors of UNU RTC/Ps and associated institutions, I leave with a sense of satisfaction. Hans and I can take pride in the team we have assembled and the quality – as well as the volume – of work that is being done across the UNU system. If the words had not been so tainted and corrupted, we might even have been tempted to boast: 'Mission Accomplished'.

Thank you very much.