

The Global South Is Done Waiting For The UN To Solve Humanity's Challenges



Roger McKenzie - Photo: Morningstar

Dag Hammarskjöld, the tragic second United Nations secretary general, once said the organization “was created not to lead mankind to heaven but to save humanity from hell.”

Of course, this depends very much on what kind of hell you had in mind.

The fallout from Adolf Hitler’s extermination camps must have dominated Hammarskjöld’s world during his tenure from 1953 until his sad death in a plane crash in 1961. So must have the shadow of possible nuclear annihilation arising from the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

What he may have been able to say, even back then, is that the U.S. saw itself as the predominant world power, prepared to unleash its own version of hell whenever and however it wanted.

Hammarskjöld must have known that the UN was completely powerless to reign in the U.S. and it could, and usually did, do pretty much anything that it wanted on the world stage.

The UN is, and has been for some time, a pretty meaningless institution that merely acts as a useful idiot when the White House decides it has some role to perform in protecting U.S. interests.

The proxy war being conducted by the U.S. against Russia in Ukraine and the ramping up of tensions against China with no meaningful sign of life from the UN to stop what's happening is a clear example.

The UN, based in the belly of the beast itself in New York, is a body devoid of any worthwhile criticism of the U.S.

The fact that for the last 30 consecutive years, the vast majority of countries at the UN General Assembly have demanded the lifting of the illegal embargo by the U.S. on Cuba is completely ignored. But every country is expected by the U.S. to follow its instruction to sanction Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

In 2003 Colin Powell told the UN Security Council, supposedly the organization's key body, that the U.S. had evidence that Iraq had clear weapons of mass destruction and this was a justification for going to war.

Of course, President George W. Bush was going to invade Iraq anyway but the White House clearly felt it was important to send their top diplomat to the UN to tell what everyone in their administration knew to be a lie to get international support for their misadventure.

Even the U.S. Congress found that the administration had lied but at the UN there has been a deafening silence about any sanction against the U.S. for lying to the world so it could kill hundreds of thousands of people in the name of regime change.

While China and Brazil appear to be making efforts to bring about peace in Ukraine, there are no meaningful peace moves from the UN.

It took the Chinese to bring Saudi Arabia and Iran together to broker a deal that looks as though it might bring about peace in the nearly nine-year-old conflict in Yemen. The UN failed.

Just this week the U.S. tried unconvincingly to insist that after originally bringing the Saudis and the Iranians together the Chinese had done nothing to bring about peace in Yemen.

That, apparently, was done by a junior official from the U.S. State Department making a phone call to the Saudis.

One can only presume that the UN knows that the U.S. and the military-industrial complex it administers are deeply woven into both conflicts, making any attempt to go against its will futile.

There seems little chance that the US will ever have to face the music even when its wrongdoing is universally acknowledged.

When, in 2010, Julian Assange and WikiLeaks demonstrated clear breaches of international law through leaks provided by U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning, there was never the remotest chance that the U.S. would be held to account.

For the U.S., this was in fact a signal to go after Manning and Assange rather than be held accountable.

Its diplomats even had the gall to walk out of a UN meeting recently when a Russian representative, accused of war and human rights violations alongside President Vladimir Putin, began to speak.

The UN is reduced to being a mere conference organizer on important issues such as the climate emergency, water, and a range of other issues.

The fact that these conferences take place is important. But there are rarely real outcomes that make any difference from the marathon “negotiation” sessions that are usually highlighted from these conferences.

When observers believe that there are real outcomes, the reality is that the UN has no teeth or desire to hold the most difficult nations, such as the US, to account for anything they choose to do or not do as a result of the conference.

I am not arguing that bringing all the nations of the world together under one roof to debate the challenges facing the planet is not important. Far from it—it is vital. But it is only important if the organization has the teeth to hold everyone equally to account.

This has led countries of the Global South to look for new ways to do business.

Within the UN system, for example, the African Union is demanding permanent representation on the Security Council. It will likely achieve that as the scramble for influence over the still abundant natural resources of the continent continues.

But many countries of the Global South are now seeing much more value in creating structures that take their interests into account—not just as pawns of the U.S.

The BRICS alliance of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa is attracting major interest from other countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The BRICS nations are also set to trade among themselves in their own currencies as a prelude to developing their own common currency for the Global South. This will smash the dominance of the dollar over the vast majority of the world's population.

The message for the UN is that you can be relevant to the Global South or you can sit in your rocking chair smoking your pipe, chatting about the good old days with the U.S. while large swathes of the global population go about their business to make a real difference to their people.

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