

Following the Iraq war of 2003 Kofi Annan identified a stark choice for the UN: effectiveness or irrelevance. Dr Imber argues that the High Level Panel Report of 2004 and the follow-up *In Larger Freedom* provide useful reference points for the future of the UN: an expanded view of human security, expansion of Security Council membership, and recognition of US priorities on terrorism and self-defence. However, Dr Imber also identifies obstacles to reform, including confusion over the understanding of 'UN reform' itself, the lack of resilience of the UN Charter, the expansion of 'competing' multilateral organisations (such as the G8 or the European Union), and diverse reform agendas.

Despite the difficulty of pushing through reform, the stakes are high. Poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation join with conflicts between and within states as sources of insecurity, and the rising importance of non-state actors requires a UN capable of dealing with an environment far removed from that which it was designed to operate in. This pamphlet makes several recommendations for the way ahead. Not least, Dr Imber asserts the growing importance of the UN to those without a powerful state to represent their interests -- the global poor, the dispossessed and displaced. The author calls on all parties to ensure that the obstacles posed by vested interests, exemplified by the US 'double veto', should not be allowed to stand in the way of turning the UN towards much more effective multilateralism.

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UN Security Council Reform: 'From Here to Eternity?'

Mark Imber