

GERMAN REVIEW ON THE UNITED NATIONS | Abstracts

VOLUME 63 | 2015 | No. 5

The UN at Seventy

Paul Heinbecker

pp. 195–200

The United Nations and the G20. Rivalry or Synergy?

As a consequence of the international legal system derived from the UN Charter, the United Nations has become the world's central governing authority. Absent the UN and its universal membership and legal framework, smaller, exclusive groups, as the G20, would be less accepted, less effective and less legitimate. Therefore, the UN remains a necessary, albeit insufficient, response to managing the world's kaleidoscopic issues. The key governance questions will be to determine not just what needs to be done, but also how it can be done and by whom. Answers to these questions will have to come through the world's multilateral institutions and through innovative global governance that complements the UN.

Frank Kaltofen

pp. 201–206

70 Years Ago: The Birth Pangs of a World Organization. A Fresh View to the Founding Conference in San Francisco

Before the United Nations came into being as a world organization in late 1945, a long and often stony road had been traveled since the first draft of a postwar world order. From the Atlantic Charter of 1941 to the deliberations at Dumbarton Oaks in 1944 and the ›Big Three‹ meeting in Yalta early 1945, the planning itself had largely been a point of contention between the three major powers, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. At the ›United Nations Conference on International Organizations‹, taking place in San Francisco from April to June 1945, other nations came into the picture and colliding interests became apparent. The article shows how the issue of Security Council voting nearly broke up the whole conference. As a privilege of the ›Permanent Five‹, it remains contested to this very day.

Martin Pabst

pp. 207–213

The United Nations and Decolonization (I). From Policy to Mandatory Rule

Shortly after its founding, the United Nations was involved in the process of decolonization, which kept it occupied for three decades. The UN supported decolonization in many ways. The General Assembly served as a forum for anti-colonial agitation, and its committees pressured the colonial powers to undertake meaningful steps leading to self-government.

Specialized Agencies tried hard to overcome colonial perceptions and the Secretary-General offered his good offices. With General Assembly resolution 1514(XV) of 1960, the establishment of self-government became an obligation according to international law. Today, the process is almost completed. Only 17 non-self-governing territories are left.

Tom Koenigs

p. 214

Comment: More UN Commitment, Germany!

Germany is one of the biggest financial contributors to the United Nations. But it is rather inactive in terms of policy and staff. The author calls for more coherence in Germany's UN policy and a far greater contribution of German personnel to UN missions.

Miguel de Serpa Soares

pp. 215–219

70 Years of United Nations. The UN's Contribution to the Development of International Law

The exceptionally broad mandate of the United Nations has enabled it to make unique contributions to the development of international law over the past seventy years. The article focuses in particular on (i) the UN's role as a venue for collective action, (ii) the law-making that occurs through its organs and institutions, the adoption of resolutions by the organization's political organs and the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice and, (iii) the contribution of the legal opinions of the UN Office of Legal Affairs to the development of international legal rules and customary norms.

Oliver Ulich

pp. 220–224

The 2015 Review of Peace Operations The High-level Panel's Proposals Lead the Way

In its 2015 report, the Secretary-General's High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations called for four fundamental shifts and made more than 100 recommendations to improve the UN's performance in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and crisis prevention. Most of them were endorsed by the Secretary-General's report in September. Member States welcomed both reports at the 'Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping'. Much work remains to be done, but the chances are good for significant reforms in key areas.