

# **How Does the Governance of the UN and its Decision-Making Bodies Affect its Independence?**

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## **Abbreviation List**

United Nations UN

Security Council SC

General Assembly GA

International Court of Justice ICJ

Economic and Social Council ESC

Israel Defense Forces IDF

Soviet Union SU

The United States US

The United Kingdom UK

Foreign Policy In Focus FPIF

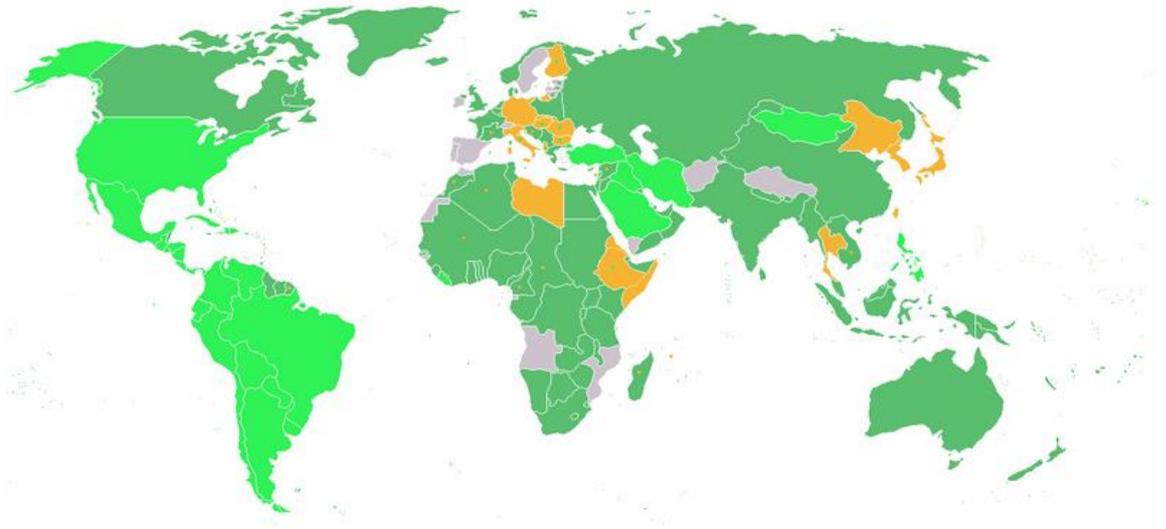
Millennium Development Goals MDG

## **Abstract**

In this paper the decision making structure of the UN System is being discussed. The main goal of this discussion is to find ways of preserving the status and efficiency of the UN system, which is not being guaranteed at the moment. It turns out that the independence of the decision-making bodies is not given, but instead it is centralized in hands of the few, and it is also under the authority of those financing the organization. The analysis makes it very clear that even if there might have been some wisdom in restricting the decision making to a very few big powers in the beginning it seems very obvious that with the progress of development and globalization this structure is dated and counterproductive. It will therefore be argued that there are some possible routes towards independence that should be taken in order to reaffirm the UN as a peacekeeping institution. Reallocation of powers, levying global taxes, and being a self-financed organization are the suggested steps towards Self-reliability of this organization, which would otherwise seem to lose its credibility and influence.

## **Introduction**

The largest armed conflict the world had ever witnessed took place during the Second World War. Two opposing powers were aggressively fighting, The Allied and The Axis Powers. For a period of about 6 years, that War had a severe effect on the world, and was a huge humanitarian disaster resulting in the death of over 60 million people worldwide. In 1945, the world finally found calmness, when that war reached its end with the victory of The Allied Powers. The Allies, often referred to as the "United Nations" during the war, established the United Nations Organization after the War. In 1945, the United Nations Charter was drawn up by representatives of 50 countries, who met in San Francisco at the UN conference on International Organization. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1945, the Charter was signed by those 50 representatives. Later, Poland joined in and signed the Charter, making them 51 countries. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of October of the same year, the UN organization was officially formed by the authorization of China, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Soviet Union, and a majority of other nations.



**(Figure 1)**

The above map represents the participants in the Second World War. The greens are the Allied Powers –whom the war ended by their victory, and afterwards initiating the UN-. The orange represents the Axis Powers.

After experiencing that devastating war, the UN was established for the primary purpose of maintaining peace and security, and preventing wars. It also included the need of developing friendly relations among nations, and attaining international cooperation in solving international problems, politically, socially and economically, as declared in its charter.

Below, is part of the text signed by 50 nations in the year 1945 right after World War II:

***WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED***

*To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime, has brought untold sorrow to mankind and*

*To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and*

*To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,*

*AND FOR THESE ENDS*

*To practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and*

*To insure, by acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and*

*To employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples*

*HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS.*

*Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations, and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.*

*June 26, 1945*

[http://www.patriotism.org/un\\_day/index.html](http://www.patriotism.org/un_day/index.html)

That text wrote about 60 years ago makes every aspect about the organization's aims and purposes extra clear. The text as well makes the obvious violation of its terms by some of those who signed it even much clearer.

This paper will be over viewing the UN internal structure, and getting in depth in the deficiencies and weaknesses found in it. The veto power -the five permanent countries enjoy- give them the power to cancel any substantive decision regardless of the number of votes of all the other 10 member states, is among the deficiencies included. This is found to be very controversial in case of mutual or opposing interests of those 5 permanent members. Another deficiency is found in the election system as well as in the process by which they reach resolutions, which is found to be very weird. Almost every decision goes back in the hands of the Security Council, emphasizing the overgrowing centralization in their structure. One of the really inconsistency issues is the financing system. By this it is meant the source of finance

the UN depends on for operating and accomplishing its aims and purposes, which happens to be assessed and voluntary contributions from member states. It, of course, depends on the ability of each member state to pay. However, you could notice that a free independent powerful international organization should be self-dependent and not rely on any member state, as not to later reflect or influence by any means its decisions. This happens not to be the case in the United Nations Organization. The paper also suggests some possible routes towards independence of the UN. The increased reliance on the Security council and the diminishing powers of the General Assembly have made the organization very tied to the 5 permanent member states, which must not be the case. Among the possible reforms are to shift powers, or in other words, reallocate powers. Many people have also suggested the possibility of relying on global taxes for generating the money needed for the organization. To be self-financed may also be another possible reform urgently needed by the UN.

## **UN Achievements and Positive Impacts**

This paper does not neglect the value of the UN on people's lives. It discusses its failures and deficiencies in order to enable it to improve and progress for attaining its aims and purposes. Any opposition of its actions is just a positive criticism for making it a better, more efficient, and a more effective organization. And as not to underestimate that respectable organization, below are some of its achievements over the past years.

The UN had succeeded to significantly decrease the rate of violence, wars, and human rights abuse in the world. Statistics showed that since the end of the Cold War, a 40% drop in violent conflict, an 80% drop in the most deadly conflicts, and an 80% drop in genocide and politicide. ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))

With no more words, the paper will talk about some of the achievements of the UN through its long-term plan of the Millennium Development Goals. Placed in the appendix is the 2007 MDG progress chart, illustrating the UN successes throughout the past years. The chart shows the 8 MDG with respect to all regions, Africa (Northern and Sub-Saharan), Asia (Eastern, South-Eastern, Southern, Western),

Oceania, Latin America & Caribbean, and Commonwealth of Independent States (Europe and Asia). For every goal the degree of achievement is colored in one of four colors, Dark green, green, yellow, and red. Every color indicates a certain degree of successfulness. Throughout the 8 goals, the colors almost showed an equality in number of green boxes –indicating that the target is met, almost met, or expected to be met by 2015- and number of yellow and red boxes –indicating that target is not expected to be met by 2015, no progress or deterioration or reversal-. Nevertheless, the number of green boxes, which indicates a progress, could not be neglected. The goal that really showed a progress was that concerning the environmental sustainability, goal 7. And the goal that was behind the plan was goal 6, which was to combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and other diseases. Although, that chart showed a lot of progress in many areas, it still showed failures in some others. Commencing from this point, the paper will discuss the deficiencies that exist in the UN decision-making structure that affects its independency, and eventually affects its effectiveness in accomplishing its goals. To effectively discuss the organization's weaknesses, a brief description of the decision-making structure itself is made. The following paragraphs would be viewing all the UN main bodies, with their functions, purposes, and powers.

## **UN Decision Making Structure**

One of the main organs forming the Structure of the UN is the *General Assembly*. It consists of representatives of all member states of the UN, and a president elected yearly from among the representatives. The General Assembly meets yearly in regular sessions, and can as well meet in Special and Special Emergency sessions. In Special Sessions they discuss important unusual events, as that session held in September 2000 to celebrate the Millennium and discuss the *Millennium Development Goals*. In Special Emergency Sessions, the General assembly may meet due to the inability of the Security Council to take actions related to security and peace. The last special emergency session was held in response to Israel after occupying East Jerusalem and dealt with the *Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. Both Sessions could be held at the request of the UN Security Council or the majority of the UN members.

As for its functions and Powers, and as stated in the UN Charter, the General Assembly is mainly concerned with making recommendations regarding all issues related to the UN, peace and security between nations for instance, with the exception of discussing an issue or a dispute that is currently discussed by the Security Council. It is also concerned with discussing any questions or changes within the scope of the charter. Studies and reports on many issues must be initiated and considered regularly by the General Assembly. The function of election of non-permanent members of the Security Council, and other UN organs members would be among the most important function of the General Assembly. "The Assembly may also take action if the Security Council fails to act, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member, in a case where there appears to be a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression. The Assembly can consider the matter immediately with a view to making recommendations to Members for collective measures to maintain or restore international peace and security" (UN Charter). However it is also stated that the Assembly is only capable of making "non-binding" recommendations and resolutions to member states on international issues.

The voting system on those recommendations is quite clear. A two-third majority of those members present and voting is required in taking important decisions, as those in peace and security and in election of members in the different organs and budgetary matters as well. A simple majority of those members present and voting is needed in all other relatively unimportant matters.

*The Security Council* is considered to be the most powerful organ in the UN Organization as a whole. That would be mainly due to the fact of its ability to take binding resolutions on states members, or in other words its ability to take actions, and not just offer recommendations. The Security Council is formed of 15 members, 5 of which are permanent, and 10 non-permanent members. The non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly for duration of 2 years. A representative of all members should be present regularly and at all times at the UN Head Quarters. The permanent members, those members enjoying the veto power, are China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Great Power Unanimity, often referred to as the veto power, gives them the power to abandon any substantive decision regardless of the number of votes of all the other 10

non-permanent member states. This would maybe reflect the circumstances in which the UN was formed after the Second World War by the victorious Allied Power –the five permanent members-. The presidency of the Security Council rotates among members in an English alphabetical order for a term of one calendar month.

As for its functions and powers, and as stated in the UN Charter, the Security Council is responsible for maintaining peace and security and investigating any dispute or situation that may lead to international friction and violence. Recommending methods for settling these disputes and formulating plans are among its responsibilities. It is also in charge of determining the existence of any threats to peace and security and to take military actions against an aggressor. Among its functions are also recommending the admission of new members, and recommending to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General, and together with the General Assembly elect judges of the International Court of Justice.

Every council member has one vote. Decisions on procedural issues require the affirmative vote of at least 9 members, and decisions on substantive issues require the affirmative vote of 9 members in addition to all 5 permanent members vote. It is also stated "a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting" (Article 27, UN Charter).

*The Secretariat* is an international UN working staff, responsible for executing several tasks of the UN offices everywhere. It is headed by the UN Secretary-General –currently Ban Ki-moon from South Korea- whom is often the representative of the UN organization as a whole. "In the performance of their duties, the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities" (Article 100, UN Charter). He, alone, is responsible of the recruitment of the working staff internationally. He shall also be present in any meetings of all organs of the organization, in the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and the Trusteeship Council. His responsibilities vary with the nature of problems he is dealing with in the UN. Detecting peace and security threats and administering peace-keeping operations, surveying economic and social trends and preparing reports on sustainable

development of nations and on humanitarian related issues as well are among his responsibilities.

*The International Court of Justice* is a main organ in the UN system that is concerned with a wide range of judicial activity. It consists of 15 judges elected by the GA and the SC. According to Article 9, the membership of the Court is supposed to represent the "main forms of civilization and of the principal legal systems of the world". Its main function is to give advisory opinions on legal issues. In spite of the fact that its decisions are not necessarily followed, it is also responsible for settling conflicts between states. Since the 1980s there is an obvious move towards using the court.

*The Economic and Social Council* is another main organ in the UN system, mainly concerned with the economic well-being of states, and working quite hard to maintain economic development all around the world. It consists of 54 member states, elected by the GA. Remains is the *Trusteeship Council* which apparently seems to be totally inactive. It is composed of the 5 UNSC permanent members. Its functions are mainly repeating those of the other 3 main councils, the GA, the SC, and the Secretariat. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that this council is practically inefficient. This paper is not going to get in details with those two organs, as they're not serving the paper's purpose.

Please see the UN system chart placed in the Appendix

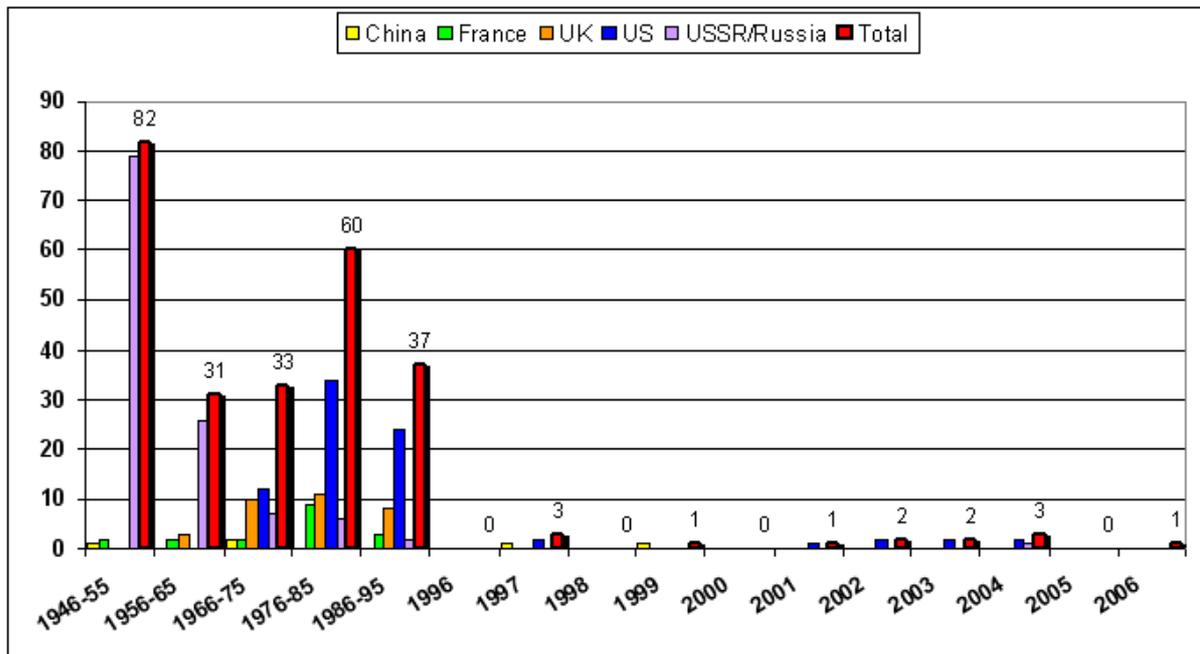
## **Internal Deficiencies within the Structure**

Stating the deficiencies within any structure or system would need a great understanding and an extensive research in it, even more would need an actual interaction in that structure, or in other words being a part of the system, for instance as an employee. Deficiencies in general must certainly be found in any structure or system, otherwise it would just be abnormal and an ideal image that is not found in real life. However, being there with a moderate and a non negative affecting presence is very usual and common. What is actually not usual is the existence of obvious

deficiencies, affecting the efficiency of the structure in one way or another. In the coming paragraphs those deficiencies would be discussed, and as mentioned before stating "all" deficiencies is more or less impossible, yet the main ones and those particularly affecting the UN independence would be hopefully clarified.

The very controversial Great Power Unanimity, often referred to as the *Veto Power* would take the first place among those deficiencies affecting the organization independence. It was formerly found to guarantee the interests of the founders of the UN –the 5 Security Council permanent members-, as it gives them the power to abandon any substantive decision regardless of the number of votes of all the other 10 non-permanent member states. Since the foundation of the Security Council, the veto power was used mostly by the former Soviet Union, to the extent that half of the vetoes were used by the SU. Nevertheless, since 1972, the United States became the most frequent user of the veto. Since the year 1989 till 2004 the veto was used 19 times, 13 of them by the US, and 11 of the 13 in issues and resolutions regarding Israel (Foreign Policy).

Many people argued the suitability of the veto power. They discussed that since 1945 many economical, political, and social changes has taken place, and the most powerful countries then –the Big Five- those who are enjoying the veto power till now, no more represent the most stable and responsible countries in the UN, nor the powers of the new world we are living in. It is also argued that the veto power often slows down important political decisions, resulting in new human disasters. The Rwandan Genocide would serve as a good example, in which the slowing down of decisions dragged a whole nation to severe damages. The death of over million people was the result of delaying the UNSC decisions by the veto holders. Another interesting debate is the exercising of the veto as a political aid for allied countries. This may be very true in the sense of the US aiding Israel 11 times by a veto power, hindering all chances for peace and security in the Middle East. Nothing is more



*Graph prepared by Benjamin Holt, September, 1999 (updated since then)*

**(Figure 2)**

Figure 7 shows that after the year 1975 the US was the most country using its veto power

expressing of the weird blinded support of the US to Israel than the sentence the former US ambassador to Sudan, Donald Bergus, said "At the State Department we used to predict that if Israel's prime minister should announce that the world is flat, within 24 hours Congress would pass a resolution congratulating him on the discovery."! (Curtiss, 1985). Even more, many people have argued that the veto power serves as a mean for permanent members to benefit their supporting countries.

It is also very contradicting that the Five Big countries, the permanent members of the UNSC, are the most arms suppliers in the world. It would be very normal if they were the most arms producers, and it would just be clarified that this is their way for sustaining peace and security in times of military aggressions of one country on another. However, being the most arms suppliers would have a totally different explanation. Take this simple story as an example. A mother settling a dispute between her little children because they misuse their scissors –supposed to be used in the arts classes- to cut each others clothes, can not possibly provide them with scissors, can she? An organization promoting peace and security, and illegalizing wars and fighting between nations, can not possibly handle its decisions in the hands of the most arms suppliers in the world. In that previous example of the mother, the scissors was mentioned as the tool promoting aggression; however it may have many other peaceful uses. The products used in real life are arms, which to many people has no

peaceful uses at all. It was suggested that the permanent members should be increased to involve other countries and as a mean of better representation of the world. This is to an enormous extent happens to be true. Other people argued that the UNSC might be trading its seats for money. The study done by 2 Harvard University students, Kuziemko and Werker, argued that the 10 non member states of the UNSC receive more foreign assistance during their term on the council more than other countries. They estimated that an increase in the US aid might reach a 59%! In addition to an 8% expected increase from the UN aids itself. (Kuziemko and Werker, 2006)

The increased rate of *Centralization* in the UN would participate as one of the deficiencies affecting the UN independence. Centralization here is used in terms of decision making. It is very noticeable that the UN decisions are all tied to the Security Council, and the Security Council decisions are to extremely great extent tied to the 5 permanent members. So it could be concluded that important, sensitive, and essential decisions are all made by 5 countries in an organization that is supposed to represent the world as a whole. This point is tackled here from two dimensions, the election system, and the resolutions process.

The election system may be taken as the first dimension of the extensive centralization in the UN structure, and consequently having a significant effect on its independence. The Secretary General, who's roles and functions been explained before, is elected by the GA on the "recommendation" of the SC (so it could be just concluded that he/she is elected by the SC), moreover, if any of the permanent members of the SC refuses an elected person by the GA, he/she would definitely be eliminated. Which is exactly what happened to former SG, Boutros Ghali, when the US used a veto against his reelection for a second term! The ICJ judges are elected by both the GA and the SC; again that fact of the veto power would remain to be effective. The trusteeship council is actually composed of the 5 permanent members of the SC, no need for election here. Remains are the GA and the Economic and Social Council; members of both are elected by the GA. Nevertheless, if we could just have a concentrated look, we would notice that on one hand the GA can only make recommendations and "non-binding" solutions. On the other hand, the Economic and Social Council have nothing to do with politics, however, it is really astonishing, how possible that its members are still elected by the GA and not the SC? Well, those were

the main 5 organs of the UN organization, and it was just one aspect which is the election issue, and with no doubt the increased degree of centralization was incredibly noticeable.

As for the second dimension, the resolution process, which magnifies the rate of centralisation in the structure. When viewing the articles concerned with the resolution process, articles 11, 12, 33-51 in chapters 4, 6 and 7, an average reader could easily observe that any thing concerned with the settlement of international disputes between countries is solely in the hands of the SC. Starting with the non-binding resolutions and ending with the binding ones. In order to get this well, the paper will go briefly through the process itself. The parties to a dispute that is threatening international peace and security shall seek a solution by any peaceful means, for instance negotiations. When it deems necessary, the SC shall call upon the parties to help in settling their disputes, and may also investigate those disputes and decide their degree of threat on international peace and security. In case of any threat, the charter also states that the SC shall decide what measures should be taken. Article 41 in chapter 7 states that, *The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions,* (Article 41). Accordingly article 42 states that, *Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security,* (Article 42). So it is the SC who decides the appropriate measures to be taken, and it is itself who decides the adequacy of such measures! In case of the need of military actions to settle disputes, a military staff committee is there to assist the SC in all its decisions. However all the articles concerned with this assistance, project the authority and power of taking decisions in the hands of the SC. The military staff committee remains there to advise and assist, (Articles 45, 46, and 47). On the other hand, The GA, which provides a fair representation of the world, can just make recommendations with regard to peace and security to member states or to the SC. It may also discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of peace and security. Those questions shall be referred to the SC by the GA either before or after discussion. Even more, article 12 states that, *While the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it in the present Charter, the General Assembly shall not make any*

*recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation unless the Security Council so requests*, (Article 12). Due to the importance of the resolution aspect in the decision making process, it would be discussed later in the application part of the Israeli war on Lebanon.

The UN ***Funding system*** would lie among the main reasons behind the decreased rate of independence the UN is experiencing these days. And if any reforms would take place sooner or later, the primary issue to tackle should be the UN source of finance. The UN is financed by measured voluntary contributions from member states. It of course depends on the ability of each member state to pay, or in other words its economical state. However, you could notice that a free independent powerful international organization should be self dependent and not to rely on any one member state, as not to later reflect or influence by any means its decisions. This happens not to be the case in the United Nations Organization. The UN have tried to make the financing process a more organized one by setting a ceiling for member states donations, as not to exceed that ceiling. By this it is meant, a maximum contributions percentage, which happens to be 22% by any member state. The US is the only member that meets that figure, followed by Japan (19.63%), Germany (9.82%), France (6.50%), the UK (5.57%), Italy (5.09%), Canada (2.57%), Spain (2.53%), and Brazil (2.39%), figures in 2001.

Consider that case of an orphan who depends on the money he gets from his adopter to be able to continue and finish his studies. If that orphan once disagreed with his adopter, could he possibly tell him that he's wrong and he would not follow the path he –the adopter- drew for him in life? Well, the answer would be no, he probably would not do so. The reason is simply because he needs him. Apply that case to the UN being the orphan and the big and major financers being the adopter. No comment is needed to over clarify that point, however statistics would still be essential. The table below shows the UN regular budgets, and the monthly contributions of the 15 largest payers.

**Table Notes:** Sums in \$US millions, rounded to the nearest million.

UN Regular Budget for 2006: US\$																	
Country	2006 Assessm.	Prior Years Due	Total Assessm.	Jan. Paym.	Feb. Paym.	Mar. Paym.	Apr. Paym.	May Paym.	Jun. Paym.	Jul. Paym.	Aug. Paym.	Sep. Paym.	Oct. Paym.	Nov. Paym.	Dec. Paym.	Total Paym. in 2006	Total Debt
US	423	252	675	0	0	0	0	0	0							0	675
Japan	332	0	332	0	0	49	0	0	117							166	166
Germany	148	0	148	74	0	0	0	0	74							148	0
UK	105	0	105	105												105	0
France	103	0	103	103												103	0
Italy	83	0	83	0	83											83	0
Canada	48	0	48	48												48	0
Spain	43	0	43	0	0	43										43	0
China	35	0	35	0	0	0	18	0	0							18	17
Mexico	32	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	2							2	30
Republic of Korea	31	0	31	0	0	31										31	0
Netherlands	29	0	29	0	29											29	0
Australia	27	0	27	27												27	0
Brazil	26	32	58	35	0	0	0	0	0							35	23
Switzerland	20	0	20	20												20	0

**(Table 1)**

**Source:** *United Nations: 2006 Status of Contributions to the Regular Budget, International Tribunals, Peacekeeping Operations and Capital Master Plan*

That table might be trying to show contributions to the regular budget of the UN by countries; however it may also be showing dependence degree of the UN on different countries. For instance, the United States total assessments of \$US 675 millions, that would almost be equal to Japan, Germany, UK, and France contributions all added up. Referring to the financial power –and therefore political power- of the US on the UN.

Consider the following table and graph, which show the US total debt versus all states total debt to the UN. If we could notice, we would see that the debt is increasing in an increasing pattern from January to February by \$US 4 millions. From

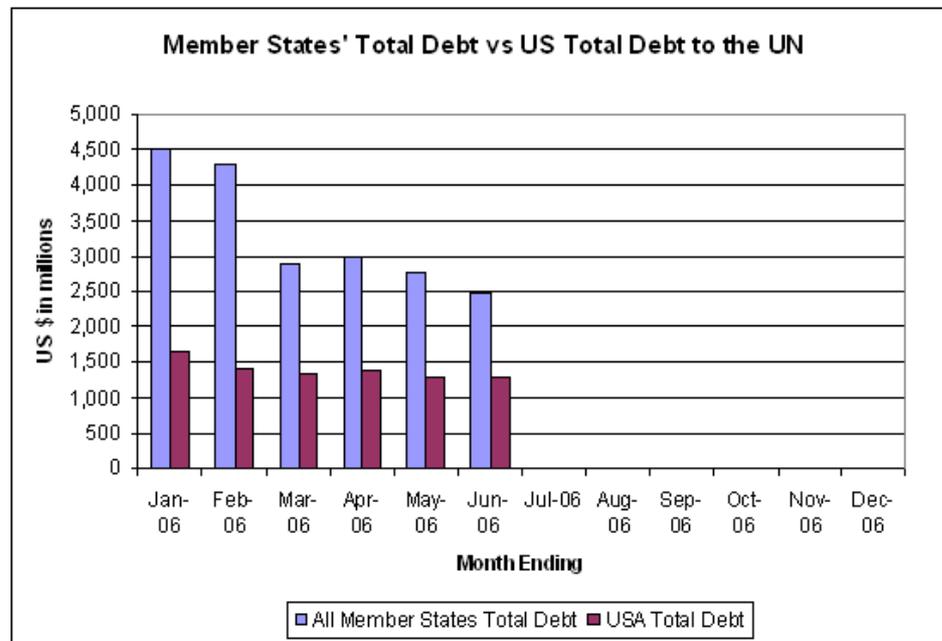
February to March it increased by \$US 7 millions. From March till May the enlargement slowed down, and increased by \$US 2 millions in a duration of 2 months, however, it return to increase again by an effectively large increase of \$US 11 millions from May till June. In the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2006 the debt reached its top by a 67%, compared to all other states debts to the UN. If we could notice we would find out that, in spite of its bad financial position –due to the continuous loss in Iraq and many other reasons-, the US didn't pay a single dollar of its debts to the UN starting January of that year, 2006, till June of the same year. This fact might seem meaningless for many, nevertheless it could be understood, by many also, that this act was some kind of a previous threat for the UN concerning the Israel war on Lebanon 2006. As weird as this explanation might be thought of, it still may be a possible explanation.

**Table Notes:**

- Capital Master Plan was introduced in 2003.
- Sums in \$US millions, rounded to the nearest million

Month Ending	Regular Budget			Peacekeeping Operations			International Tribunals			Capital Master Plan			Total Arrears		
	All Member States Total Debt	USA Total Debt	Percentage of USA Debt to All Member States	All Member States Total Debt	USA Total Debt	Percentage of USA Debt to All Member States	All Member States Total Debt	USA Total Debt	Percentage of USA Debt to All Member States	All Member States Total Debt	USA Total Debt	Percentage of USA Debt to All Member States	All Member States Total Debt	USA Total Debt	Percentage of USA Debt to All Member States
31-Jan	1,567	675	43%	2,664	890	33%	293	82	28%	16	6	38%	4,540	1,653	36%
28-Feb	1,425	675	47%	2,644	655	25%	215	82	38%	15	6	40%	4,299	1,418	33%
31-Mar	1,261	675	54%	1,438	576	40%	185	82	44%	10	6	60%	2,894	1,339	46%
30-Apr	1,211	675	56%	1,640	658	40%	142	51	36%	10	6	60%	3,003	1,390	46%
31-May	1,205	675	56%	1,399	554	40%	139	51	37%	10	6	60%	2,753	1,286	47%
30-Jun	1,005	675	67%	1,336	554	41%	103	51	50%	30	11	37%	2,474	1,291	52%
31-Jul															
31-Aug															
30-Sep															
31-Oct															
30-Nov															
31-Dec															

(Table 2)



(Figure 3)

**Source:** *United Nations: 2006 Status of Contributions to the Regular Budget, International Tribunals, Peacekeeping Operations and Capital Master Plan*

Since the last 2 decades, financial crisis in general is faced by the UN that it had to cancel some important programs to be able to manage its other operations. Many member states have not paid their dues to the UN and many have chosen to decrease their donations to the UN's funding system, leading to even more complications and restrictions to the UN to work as intended. The Funding system is and would remain to be the most threatening aspect leading the UN to increased dependence on countries day after day.

## **Application: Humanitarian Decision Making**

### **Israel War on Lebanon 2006**

To better understand those internal deficiencies in the UN's structure, and their effect on the independence of the UN in all its decisions, this application about the

latest Israel war on Lebanon was included. It would try clarifying the role of one of the permanent members of the UNSC, the United States of America, in that war. How it was ridiculously influencing a huge organization as the UN, and how and when was the UN able to act.

On Wednesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of the July 2006, the Lebanese population was terribly terrified by the Israeli military attack by intensive air strikes and bombing targeting infrastructure and civilians. This attack was a reaction by the Israeli government after Hezbo Allah captured 2 of their soldiers, which was thought by the Israeli government as an "unspeakable provocations". As described by Piers Mostyn, a supporter of Socialist Resistance, in his article *Israel's new Lebanon war*, "On the simple basis of this chronology, IDF actions cannot be explained as "self defense" against the Hezbollah missile attacks. In any event they were grossly disproportionate, deliberately targeting densely populated civilian areas and basic infrastructure". Below are careful statistics covering the actions and damages resulting from this attack, which would probably contribute to the analysis:

*The 34 days of war –from 12 July to 14 August 2006- killed over 1,500 people, mostly Lebanese civilians, severely damaged Lebanese infrastructure, and displaced about 900,000 Lebanese and 300,000 Israelis. Even after the ceasefire, 256,000 Lebanese remained internally displaced, and much of South Lebanon remained uninhabitable due to unexploded cluster bombs.*

*During the campaign, Israel's Air Force flew more than 12,000 combat missions. The Navy fired 2,500 shells, and the Army fired over 100,000 shells, destroying large parts of the Lebanese civilian infrastructure. 400 miles of roads, 73 bridges and 31 targets such as Beirut International Airport, ports, water and sewage treatment plants, electrical facilities, 25 fuel stations, 900 commercial structures, up to 350 schools and two hospitals were destroyed, as well as some 15,000 homes. Some 130,000 more homes were damaged.*

*During the campaign, Hezbollah fired between 3,970 and 4,228 rockets,*

*which landed in all major cities of northern Israel, including Haifa, Nazareth, and Tiberias. However, the number of civilian deaths in each side of the conflict is to be considered: 1,187 Lebanese, one third of whom were children under 13 years of age, and 44 Israelis.*

*In depth: The war on Lebanon. Retrieved October, 2006, from Choike Website: [http://www.choike.org/nuevo\\_eng/informes/4643.html](http://www.choike.org/nuevo_eng/informes/4643.html)*

For a period of 34 days, the UN wasn't able to react to cease-fire in that conflict. 34 days of suffering for the Lebanese people, 34 days of violating international laws by Israel, 34 days of committing international war crimes by Israel, and 34 days of inability of the UN to respond. As varied as people's opinions were on this war, most of them agreed on the fact that there was an extensive US support to that attack by Israel. Even more, some people claimed that it was not an Israeli war it was an American one. Well, the US supporting Israel in any war or any action is not the interest of that paper, however, a permanent member in the UNSC enjoying a veto power, supporting an aggressor in its so called "self defense" actions, is what really worth tackling. The coming paragraphs would discuss the role of the US in that war – as a permanent member in the UNSC-, and on the UN actions as well.

Piers Mostyn named the Israeli army as the "Washington-financed and organized war machine". He accused the US and the UK as well of providing unconditional and uncritical support for Israel. Bill Van Auken, in his article *Behind Bush's "truce" plan: The drive towards a wider Middle East war*, described the resolution brought to the UN by the US and France "represents one more step in widening the war initiated by the Bush administration in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq into a regional conflagration". He also stated that Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State, worked systematically over the past month to block a ceasefire and ensure that the killing in Lebanon be allowed to continue, belittled the objections of the Lebanese. He added that "There is every indication that "never-ending war" is precisely the strategy of the Bush administration in the Middle East". Well if that was actually the US intentions regarding the war, how could it possibly agree to a cease-fire resolution? Even more, how could a cease-fire resolution exist whereas it opposes the US interests? Auken argued that the US had every benefit behind the Israel war on

Lebanon, and the control of the Middle East in general. He analyzed it as a "single-minded objective of installing pliant Arab regimes that would insure a steady flow of oil at profitable rates, while suppressing the aspirations of their own people.

Washington has made it a point of principle that it will have no contact with either Hezbollah or the two nations with the strongest ties to Lebanon and its Shiite population—Syria and Iran. Instead, it has sought to demonize all three, laying the ideological groundwork for further wars of aggression". As reported by Auken about Bush's remarks in a conference before the UN resolution –during the war- he related the events in Lebanon to his administration's broader policy in the Middle East and the so-called "global war on terrorism." He declared: "What the American people need to know is we've got a strategy—a strategy for freedom in the Middle East which protects the American people in the long run. And we've got a strategy to deal with the situations that arise in the Middle East—first Lebanon; of course, the Iranian nuclear weapon issue." He continued: "The challenge in the 21st century is to remind people about the stakes, and remind people that in moments of quiet, there's still an Islamic fascist group plotting, planning and trying to spread their ideology. And one of the things that—one of the things that came out of this unfortunate incident in the Middle East is a stark reminder that there are those who want to stop the advance of liberty...". This speech provides evidence that the US, directly or indirectly, is a party in that war, and according to the UN charter, article 27, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting. However this was not applied, not even brought to discussion. Auken finally described the US policy is "essentially to utilize its military power to assert domination over the oil resources of the Middle East and Central Asia, and thereby assure American capitalism both a secure energy supply and the ability to dictate terms to its economic rivals". Abdulla Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia, in the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the UNGA, criticized the war on Lebanon, and indirectly blamed the US as he said "The suppression of Palestine which is being allowed to fester, the invasion of Afghanistan, the conquest of Iraq and most recently, the unrestrained destruction of Lebanon have all been carried out in the name of the war against terrorism". There was also this analysis by Stephen Zunes, in his report for the FPIF, "One reason for such broad Democratic support for the resolution may stem from the fact that the Arms Control Export Act forbids arms transfers to countries that use American weapons for non-defensive purposes, such as attacking civilians. Thus, in order to protect the profits of politically influential American arms merchants, the

Democrats joined with Republicans in supporting language in the resolution claiming that Israel's actions were "legitimate self-defense."

The above paragraph, handled all about the US position in that war, however, the UN position remains to be indistinct. Many countries, states, and people blamed the UN of having no strict actions, and being unable to respond to Israel. Bill Van Auken stated that "the UN itself serves only as a tool for imperialist policy". Michel Chossudovsky, from the globalresearch.ca, wrote an article about the role of the UN in that Israeli attack titled "The word "war" is not mentioned in the resolution on Lebanon". The title itself is quite enough to express the content. Along the article, he proved this literally violation of the UN charter. He explained that "The resolution does not acknowledge the extensive war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Israel against the people of Lebanon. In this regard, Israel is indelibly responsible for "Crimes against Peace" as defined in Article 6a of the Nuremberg Charter: for *"the planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties"*. Israel is also responsible for "War Crimes" under Article 6b of the Nuremberg Charter .through the *"plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity;"* (Art. 6b). It is responsible for "Crimes against Humanity" through the perpetration of acts of: *"murder... and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war..."* (Article 6c)". He also added "It describes the bombing and destruction of an entire country as a "conflict between Hezbollah and Israel". He also referred to the fact that the resolution neglected all the historical causes of the war, and just claimed that the abduction of the 2 Israeli soldiers by Hizbollah was the only cause! He finally claimed that the UN is in danger, due to the fact that its SC –highest body- failed to admit that the Israeli government had committed the previous mentioned crimes, and it also acted in the interest of Israel. The resolution also didn't mention that Israel violated article 15 of the Geneva Convention by preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid to the war zone, (Chossudovsky 2006). He also explained that in the resolution 1701, nothing is mentioned that requires Israel to immediately and unconditionally withdraw its troops. There is this last point that Chossudovsky added, "The draft of Resolution 1701 was prepared in close consultation with the Israeli government,

which is responsible for extensive war crimes". So, is that possible! To discuss the resolution with one of the parties involved and not the other! Actually, it's not just this point that is controversial; the resolution process is full of many other weird aspects. Those were just 7 points from a report of 11 points proving the weakness of the UN when it comes to the interest of one of its permanent members. Well, this makes a lot of sense in case of the contributions of the US government to the UN's budget.

As stated in the Amnesty International report as of August 2006, Amnesty International calls for the immediate establishment of a comprehensive, *independent* and impartial inquiry into violations of international humanitarian law by both Hezbollah and Israel in the conflict. The inquiry should examine in particular the impact of this conflict on the civilian population. It should propose effective measures to hold accountable those responsible for crimes under international law, and to ensure that the victims receive full reparation. Amnesty International has asked the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council to request the UN Secretary General to establish a panel of independent experts to conduct this inquiry. They should include experts with proven expertise in investigating compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, in military matters, as well as in forensics and ballistics. The experts should receive all necessary assistance and resources. The outcome of the inquiry should be made public and include recommendations aimed at ending and preventing further violations. However, nothing took place, because this "independent" inquiry, Amnesty has referred to, cannot exist. Because in the case that it exists, the UN would be overlooking the interests of the most important permanent member of its SC, the US.

## **Routes Towards Independence**

"It is no secret to anyone that the United Nations cannot survive as a vital force in international politics if it does not reform, if it does not reform its organization, if it does not reform its secretariat, if it does not reform its management practices" Condoleeza Rice, responding to a question about the nomination of John

Bolton as the US permanent representative to the UN. Regardless of the kind and nature of *reform* that the US demands, it is an urgent one. This reform is becoming the desire of not only the US government, but of the world as a whole. This paper cannot be viewing all the deficiencies within the structure without proposing any ideas for reforms, or as it is called here, routes towards independence. Reallocating Powers, being a self-financed organization, and enforcing global taxes are the proposed reforms. Before discussing the possible solutions, a brief view over the history of reforms at the United Nations must be done.

The Reforms started taking place in 1992, when Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali took over and started doing structural changes through out the organization. The year after, the GA created 5 working groups to work on the reforms in the run-up 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and beyond, however just one working group –the one concerned with the SC- continued working till 1996. The GA set the office of internal oversight services in the year 1994, to work as an inspector for any inefficiencies. At that same year the secretary general Ghali issued his reform document, An Agenda for his reforms with no tangible outcomes. In June 1996, the pressure from the side of the US government against the reforms increased, and it described Ghali as “an insufficiently enthusiastic supporter of UN *reform*” as quoted by James A. Paul in article *UN Reform, An Analysis*. The US government went even further in its opposition and used a veto against the reelection of Ghali for a second term. In the year 2000, Kofi Annan the appointed secretary general subsequent to Ghali, along with the GA came up with the *Millennium Development Goals*. 5 years later, they issued the *millinium+5 Summit* reform document that discussed the achievements and goals after 5 years from the issuance of the first reform plan. They following year they initiated the new Human Rights Council, which replaced the Human Rights Commission of ECOSOC. At the times of appointing the new SG, many NGOs called for more transparency and accountability in the process.

The increased centralization that exists in the UN structure, and the misuse of the veto power, are two faces for the same coin. A coin that is implying an improper allocation of power. Many argued that the world powers now are different from what it was at the time when the UN was initiated. Members of the G4, India, German, Japan, and Brazil see that the UNSC represent the world of 1945 not of

2006. It was the Allied powers who won the Second World War, and who after then initiated the UN organization to maintain peace and security all over the world. The Axis powers, Germany and Japan at that time, the countries that were defeated, are now gaining greater power. And the Soviet Union who fell many years ago is still having a veto. Obviously powers did change over time, and thus need a simultaneous change in the UN's structure. Among the nations that are requesting the enjoyment of the veto power are the G4, who are demanding a permanent membership in the Security Council. On the other hand, the Muslim population is growing at a rate of 6.4%, as recorded by the Islamic web statistics between the years 1994 and 1995. And the whole percentage of Muslims at the year 1996 was 26%, over quarter of the earth's whole population, as stated by the CIA World's Facts Book. Accordingly, there should be a permanent place for one or more Muslim country in the SC, for a fair representation of the world. The Arab world constitutes 5 % of the world population (Daniel del Castillo, 2003), and is scattered among 23 different countries, implying their right to have their permanent seat in the SC as well. Change is occurring everywhere, and a fast, efficient response is what is required to survive. A lot have happened since the year 1945, implying the desperate need for reforms in the SC. Empowering some nations and forbidding others, eradicating unilateralism while keeping a fair and equal representation of the world might be the first route towards the organization's independence.

Many have talked about the financial crises that faced the UN in 1995 (that the paper covered in its earlier part *the deficiencies*), and how could any reforms be effective in that area. UN officials have suggested the Global taxes as a key. In other words, they suggested levying taxes on pollution as for instance carbon emissions, and on international trading as for instance currency and arms trading. Kevin Baumert in his article *global taxes and charges* has discussed that point quite well. He explains that although financial resources are becoming scarce, globalization is creating new and different challenges, which by them, new ways of finance could be opened, and global taxes are among them. He provides a practical example about the currency trading, and how levying a global tax would generate a sufficient amount of money for the UN to help it spend on its development and peacekeeping programs. He explains that the currency trading per year is 10 times the global GNP, and so a tax of 0.5% would yield over \$1.5 trillion per year. Taking in account that the total UN

budget is no more than \$10 billion! He then provides more benefits for the global taxes other than generating money, as for instance decreasing harmful pollution producing activities of carbon. The problem of global taxes remains in the ability and willingness of nations to pay. The US acts as an example of a powerful country opposition of such taxes when they conditioned their payments to the UN upon the abandon of the idea of global taxes. As stated in the global policy forum website, in 1996 the US congress clearly passed a law providing that if global taxes are discussed in any context, the US will not pay its dues to the UN!

The third and last reform may seem new to huge organizations as the UN, however it is not new to many effective NGOs. It is the concept of self-reliance in terms of finance. That's to say, being a self-financed organization, depending on your own sources of finance and not any country's contributions. To be a self-financed organization, you should be having your own profitable projects, which yield millions of money to help you finance your projects and achieve your goals. There are many living examples of NGOs, which shows –but on a smaller scale- the possibility of initiating your own profitable businesses and investing the outcomes on your other non-profitable projects. This idea might face many hurdles if we considered it for a very large scale as in the case of the UN. However, it also has its advantages. Considering the problems and how they could be handled, the UN will face the difficulty of managing many businesses in addition to its already existing NGOs and projects. However, the UN could effectively manage them if they considered the idea of initiating a separate organization -as the ILO, WHO, UNESCO, etc- that is composed of business and management experts. The organization should be especially responsible for managing all the profitable businesses and projects of the UN, and dealing with all its aspects as financing, marketing, hiring employees, and day-to-day operations. An example of such businesses may be hypermarkets chains all over the world, grand fashion stores, communication companies, etc. Those businesses should be located in every country in need of FDI, to help it decrease its unemployment, increase its GDP and welfare, and accelerate its economic growth. The question would remain is from where would the enormous capital of all those projects be generated? Well, as a start, that could possibly be from the donations of the member countries, and afterwards could be from the profits of the projects themselves. For example taking donations from the US to invest it in projects in Egypt, and then

taking the profits of Egypt's projects and invest it in Ghana, and so on. Of course it is not as simple as its theoretical explanation, but at least it is achievable. Another hurdle that could be faced might be the degree of transparency in such process. Where are the donations going? How is it spent? On what is it spent? Where are the profits going? And many other questions exist. Although, those questions are asked anyway, a media department could be responsible for clarifying every action through all the possible channels, television, internet, booklets, etc. Remains is the problem of opposition of the big powers, who will never agree to lose their pressuring force –the financing- over the UN. And who will never agree about, nor help in the independency process of the UN.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the deficiencies previously mentioned, the UN had succeeded to significantly decrease the rate of violence, wars, and human rights abuse in the world. The UN noticeable efforts and felt changes can never be overlooked nor neglected. However the paper discusses its failures and deficiencies in order to enable it to improve and progress for attaining its aims and purposes.

The paper has tried to be as neutral as possible in analyzing the case, and not to be biased to any of the involved parties by any means. Due to the fact that there have always been that theory of the Middle East, Arabs, and Muslim countries hating the Western countries, and vice versa, the conspiracy theory, and due to the fact that I myself is a Muslim Arab, I have tried to depend the least on opinions of Arabs or Muslims. Even more, all the opinions included are of non-Muslims Europeans, Asians and Americans, as a way to bring the real image of the UN role in today's world. This paper might seem politically oriented, however, due to the rapidly globalizing world, international relations and international businesses can never be discussed without the inclusion of politics.

Finally the paper has discussed the deficiencies, the most affecting the UN independence, and this does not mean none existence of other deficiencies that is not

mentioned. What is really needed right now is the *urgent radical reform* of the UN internal structure. And surprisingly as Condoleeza Rice adds, "Its fine to say all nice things about the United Nations. As important an institution as it is, one has to say there are some things that are not so great about the UN right now, and everybody recognizes that and we've got to fix it". No sentence is more expressing of the vague, messed up, controversial life people are living, and will be living the coming years, than that sentence that ended the American produced film, *Lord of War*, "The world's biggest arms suppliers are the US, UK, Russia, France and China. They are also the five permanent members of the UN security council!" (Andrew Niccol, 2005).

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## **MDG: 2007 Progress Chart**

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## **Declaration**

I herewith declare that this report is in full accordance with the Plagiarism Guidelines of the Faculty of Management & Technology at the GUC.

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