



**Citizens for  
Global Solutions**

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# **Reinventing the United Nations**

## **Kofi Annan's *In Larger Freedom* and America's Priorities**

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On March 21, 2005, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan released a report entitled *In Larger Freedom*, in which he proposed groundbreaking recommendations as part of a comprehensive strategy to restructure and improve the United Nations. Many aspects of Annan's proposals mirror America's top priorities for revitalizing the United Nations, including addressing security threats in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, dealing with poverty and disease, and restructuring the international body so that it can play an effective role in an era of global interdependence. Below are Annan's and U.S. official's stances on various proposals.

### **Millennium Development Goals**

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In 2000, the international community agreed to confront global poverty, hunger, disease and other development concerns by laying out key pragmatic targets for 2015 known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). One of the key goals of the UN Summit will be to get Member States to recommit to MDGs and reach, by 2015, the 0.7 percent of gross national income they dedicated to help people lift themselves out of poverty.

#### **In Larger Freedom Proposal**

"The urgency of achieving the Millennium Development Goals cannot be overstated. Despite progress... the world is falling short of what is needed... Our agenda is still achievable globally, but only if we break with business as usual and dramatically accelerate action."

- Kofi Annan, *In Larger Freedom*

#### **What U.S Officials Have Said**

"The United States plays a leading, active, and positive role in development. We share a commitment to building healthy institutions and strong economies, through trade, foreign investment and aid."

- U.S. Department of State: *Priorities for a Stronger, More Effective United Nations*

### **Warning System for Disasters**

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Following the devastation of the Tsunami in South East Asia, the world body has sought to implement prevention mechanisms that would help divert future tragedies. In response, a proposal will be put before Member States to implement a worldwide warning system for all natural hazards building on existing national and regional capacity.

## In Larger Freedom Proposal

"The devastating impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami has reminded us all of the vulnerability of human life to natural disasters, and also of the disproportionate effect they have on poor people... With the help of the United Nations and others [we] are now taking steps to establish a regional tsunami early warning system."

- Kofi Annan, *In Larger Freedom*

## What U.S Officials Have Said

"...never again should lives be lost because a global tsunami warning system doesn't exist... [The United States is] committed to do whatever it takes, in partnership with others, to expand and enhance the existing Pacific Ocean tsunami warning system into a global system..."

- Ambassador Howard Baker, head of U.S. delegation to the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction, January 2005

## Terrorism

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During the Summit, Member States will be pushed to agree on a clear definition of terrorism as any intentional attack on civilians and noncombatants by non-state actors for political purposes. Such an agreed-upon definition is seen as needed, in order to defy the notion of some Member States that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." The United States has already played a prominent role in creating the Counter-Terrorism Committee at the UN. The committee has since become a leading promoter of collective action against international terrorism.

## In Larger Freedom Proposal

"Terrorism is a threat to all that the United Nations stands for... We must convince all those who may be tempted to support terrorism that it is neither an acceptable nor an effective way to advance their cause."

- Kofi Annan, *In Larger Freedom*

## What U.S Officials Have Said

"It is time for all UN members to recognize that there can be no justification for such attacks, regardless of the cause, motivation and grievance."

- Ambassador Anne Patterson, Speech to the United Nations, June 22, 2005

## Peacebuilding Commission

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A key proposal put forth by Kofi Annan, and supported by the United States, has been the creation of a permanent Peacebuilding Commission to identify states on the verge of collapse, provide assistance to prevent such collapses, and sustain the efforts of the international community in post-conflict peacebuilding operations. Currently, half the countries that emerge from conflict revert back to instability within five years. A Peacebuilding Commission would help shepherd these countries towards stability.

## In Larger Freedom Proposal

"The time is now ripe for a decisive move forward: the establishment of an interlocking system of peacekeeping capacities that will enable the United Nations to work with relevant regional organizations in predictable and reliable partnerships."

- Kofi Annan, *In Larger Freedom*

## What U.S Officials Have Said

"We need a Peacebuilding Commission to provide recommendations on post-conflict situations and on bridging between peacekeeping missions, reconstruction and stabilization efforts."

- R. Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, July 21, 2005

## Democracy Fund

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On December 21, 2004, President Bush proposed the creation of a Democracy Fund at the United Nations, for the purpose of promoting democratic governance and practices throughout the international community. At the September Summit, Member States will be pressed to create this Democracy Fund, which would allow a board of donors and democracies to support NGOs and other entities with their assistance to countries in transitional democracy.

### In Larger Freedom Proposal

"Welcome the creation of a Democracy Fund at the United Nations, to provide funding and technical assistance to countries seeking to establish or strengthen their democracy."

- Kofi Annan, *In Larger Freedom*

### What U.S Officials Have Said

"[The Democracy Fund] is a great calling for this great organization. The fund would help countries lay the foundations of democracy by instituting the rule of law and independent courts, a free press, political parties and trade unions."

- President Bush, September 21, 2004

## Human Rights Council

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The current Commission on Human Rights is widely regarded as broken, allowing countries such as Libya and Sudan to cover up their own porous human rights records rather than promoting better practices. In response, world leaders will consider a plan, to replace the current Commission with a smaller Human Rights Council. Membership in the new Council would require a two-thirds majority vote from the UN General Assembly and would be limited to states with credible human rights records.

### In Larger Freedom Proposal

"The United Nations has committed itself to striving for a world of peace and justice grounded in universal respect for human rights... [But] change is needed if the UN is to sustain long-term engagement on human rights issues."

- Kofi Annan, *In Larger Freedom*

### What U.S Officials Have Said

"We believe the members of the new [human rights] council should have a solid record of commitment to human rights and should not include serious human rights abusers."

- Ambassador Anne Patterson, Speech to the United Nations, June 22, 2005

## Security Council Expansion

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One of the most contentious issues that will be put in front of Member States at the Summit is the issue of expanding the UN Security Council. It is believed that the Security Council must be enlarged and reorganized so that it is more representative of the modern world. However, reaching a consensus on this restructuring could prove difficult, and should not disrupt other reform efforts.

### In Larger Freedom Proposal

"The Security Council must be broadly representative of the realities of power in today's world... [We] should bring into the decision-making process countries more representative of the broader membership."

### What U.S Officials Have Said

"The United States is open to UN Security Council reform and expansion... We have to look, of course, at the overall geographic balance of the Council, but effectiveness remains the benchmark for any reform."

- Kofi Annan, *In Larger Freedom*

- U.S. Department of State: *Priorities for a Stronger, More Effective United Nations*

**Annan proposes two models for Security Council Reform**

**Model A** calls for six new permanent seats – with no additional veto power – and three new, two-year non-permanent seats divided among major regional areas.

**Model B** calls for no new permanent seats, but for a new category of eight, four-year renewable seats and one, two-year non-permanent (and non-renewable) seat divided among major regional areas.