

ДИСКУССИОННЫЙ КЛУБ

UNITED NATIONS: WORLD HISTORY IN THE MAKING

N. Zhukov

Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN
New York, NY, 10065, USA

World history knowledge helps us better understand how and why the world got to be the way it is and what may lie in store for us. The author examines the role of the UN in contemporary international relations.

Key words: World History, United Nations, Security Council, International Relations.



World history is a subject that embraces all mankind in its quest for answers to the question of what makes us special, how we came to the point where we are.

World history knowledge helps us better understand how and why the world got to be the way it is and what may lie in store for us. It gives attention to the histories of nations, civilizations, and other groups and the differences among them. But it particularly emphasizes the history, problems, and challenges that humans have shared. World history is shared knowledge that citizens, whatever their country of allegiance, need in order not to repeat – in the twenty-first century – the mistakes of the past.

Living in harmony, practicing tolerance and living together in peace with one another has always been one of humankind's main aspirations. It is a goal which will never be resolved unilaterally. It is also one of the main lessons of history.

That is why the idea, albeit utopic, of establishing an international security organization first appeared quite some time ago. The concept evolved in close correlation with the socio-economic development of nations, the internationalization

of economic and political ties and came into being in the XXth century, sadly, only after the untold horror and sorrow of two World Wars.

The emergence of the United Nations was therefore neither happenstance or something unpredictable. It was the result of a number of objective historical, economic and military-political factors, and an important milestone in the realization of the perennial dream of mankind to create an effective tool to ensure a lasting peace on earth.



**Заместители Постоянных представителей стран – членов Совета Безопасности
с Генеральным секретарем ООН Пан Ги Мун. Декабрь 2011 г.**

Established in 1945 as a universal international organization with the aim of maintaining peace and international security and promoting cooperation among States, the United Nations currently unites 193 countries and is a key element in contemporary international relations. Its main purposes, bestowed on it by agreement of Member States, are: to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples; to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms; and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

The practical influence of the UN on the world community is significant and multifaceted. This is determined by the following factors:

– The United Nations Security Council is conferred with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, including through the use of armed force.

– The United Nations is the most representative forum for discussions on all crucial issues on the international agenda.



26 марта 2012 г. 6740-е заседание Совета Безопасности ООН.
Совет обсуждает вопрос повестки дня: «Миротворческие операции ООН»

– The UN Charter is the foundation of modern international law, a universally accepted code of conduct of States and their relationships; hundreds of international conventions and treaties governing relations between States in various spheres of international life have been elaborated and signed at the initiative of the Organization.

– A network of specialized agencies, programs, funds and other international mechanism («the UN family») operate under the aegis of the United Nations, encompassing practically every facet of international political, economic and life.

The General Assembly is the main deliberative body of the United Nations. It is composed of all United Nations member states and meets in regular yearly sessions under a president elected from among the member states. When the General Assembly votes on important questions, a two-thirds majority of those present and voting is required. Among such questions are: recommendations on peace and security; election of members to organs; admission, suspension, and expulsion of members; and budgetary matters. All other questions are decided by majority vote. Each member country has one vote. Apart from approval of budgetary matters, resolutions are not binding on the members. The Assembly may make recommendations on any matters within the scope of the UN, except matters of peace and security that are under Security Council consideration.

The Security Council has the power to make binding decisions that member governments have agreed to carry out, under the terms of Charter Article 25. The Security Council is made up of 15 member states, consisting of 5 permanent members – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – and 10 non-

permanent members, currently Azerbaijan, India, South Africa, Colombia, Morocco, Togo, Germany, Pakistan, Guatemala, and Portugal. The five permanent members hold veto power over substantive but not procedural resolutions allowing a permanent member to block adoption but not the debate of a resolution unacceptable to it.

One of the notable features of international relations throughout the second half of the XXth century and the beginning of the XXIst century has been the increasing positive impact of the UN and other international organizations on States' attempts to settle disputes and conflicts and to resolve various international problems. The appearance of the UN and other intergovernmental organizations was one of the most striking manifestations of society's will to create conditions for peace, which would be worthy of the peoples of our planet, free from oppression, violence, war, poverty, chaos, hunger and fear for the future. The UN has repeatedly and convincingly demonstrated for more than half a century, that the most effective way of dealing with the most complex issues of world politics is through negotiations and dialogue and on the basis of international legal agreements and arrangements. The major conflicts of the last decade of the XXth and early XXIst centuries (the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Congo, Libya) clearly show that the provisions of the UN Charter, Security Council decisions and international agreements provide the only durable and long-term basis for dispute resolution, crisis management and ensuring an effective system of collective security at the global and regional levels. In other words, experience has demonstrated that legal nihilism and trying to ignore international law in any crisis, whether it is military-strategic, political, economic, humanitarian are unacceptable and fraught with serious consequences, be it for the «victims» and perpetrators of such actions or for the world community as a whole. Thus, the UN is unparalleled in history as a mechanism for generating fundamental binding rules, principles and norms of international law and justice.



Пресс-конференция Президента Республики Либерии Э. Джонсон-Серлиф после встречи с членами миссии Совета Безопасности ООН по странам Западной Африки. 19 мая 2012 г.

Equally important in terms of enhancing the role of the UN is the rapid increase – in the second half of the XXth and the beginning of the XXIst century – of the number of global issues (economic, environmental, demographic, humanitarian, civilizational, technological, etc.) as well as security risks and challenges that threaten the very survival of humankind (AIDS and other infectious diseases, natural resource depletion, poverty, hunger, international terrorism and extremism and other negative effects of globalization).

A characteristic feature of these and other problems is that they cannot be solved by one state or a group of states, and require a multilateral approach and truly planetary solutions. The most appropriate mechanism for achieving effective solutions is the UN and its extensive system of agencies and institutions. Only the international community of nations, acting together through the network of international multilateral institutions headed by the UN is in a position to shield the world from risks and shocks and to achieve the stable and predictable development of intergovernmental relations based on the rule of law and the creation of strong material, economic, political, legal and other guarantees of peace and stability on the planet.

A strong and efficient UN is an indispensable tool for regulating international relations on the basis of its Charter and international law. The strength and effectiveness of the Organization depend on the active support of its Member States, on the policies they pursue, both within the walls of the Organizations as well as beyond, their willingness to use the UN to harmonize divergent national interests. In the words of Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov: «In the almost 70 years of their existence the UN and its Security Council have survived numerous crises and still constitute an integral part of international relations based on international law. I am convinced that with political will on the part of member states, the UN will continue to play a central role in the coordination of international community approaches to the solution of key problems of our time» (1).

The United Nations is a reflection of World History since ancient times, the embodiment of mankind's age-old aspiration of ridding the world of the scourge of war.

It is also a repository of world history since 1945, an organization which has dealt with all crucial international political, social, economic issues since the end of World War II. Taking into account, analyzing and learning from the UN's experience, humanity may avoid repeating many of History's mistakes.

NOTES

(1) *Лавров С.В.* Интервью // Российская газета. – Федеральный выпуск № 5719 (46) // <http://www.rg.ru/2012/03/01/lavrov.html>

**ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ:
НАРОДЫ ТВОРЯТ ВСЕМИРНУЮ ИСТОРИЮ**

Н.Е. Жуков

Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN
New York, NY, 10065, USA

Изучение всеобщей истории позволяет нам понять, как мир стал таким, каким он является сегодня. Ключевым элементом в международных отношениях является Организация Объединенных Наций, роль которой в современном мире исследуется автором.

Ключевые слова: всеобщая история, Организация Объединенных Наций, Совет Безопасности, международные отношения.