



newsletter

of the Maine Chapter
of the United Nations Association
www.unamaine.org



Winter 2004-5, Vol. XIII, No.4

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ANNUAL MEETING

A separate flyer is going to members to confirm arrangements for the Annual meeting, which will be held on Saturday, December 11th, from 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM at the Holiday Inn in Augusta. {Directions to the Holiday Inn, located at 110 Community Drive. Take exit 31A from the Turnpike on to Rte 27 South. Community Drive and the Holiday Inn will be on the right, just down from the Civic Center.}

Registration, election of officers and directors for the coming year, a report by Board member Vanessa Saric on the Model UN for 2004 and the plans for 2005. and the Chapter President's annual report will comprise the agenda for the business meeting, from 10:30 to 12:00. A buffet luncheon will be served at noon. Members planning to attend will be asked to return the questionnaire contained in the flyer, indicating their choice of luncheon main dish and confirming their intention to attend. The price of the luncheon, all included, is \$15.00 per person.

Following the luncheon, Victoria Holt, our guest speaker, will give a talk focussing on "Whither the United Nations Under a New Administration in Washington." "Tori" is a senior associate at the Henry L. Stimson Center. She has worked on UN and peacekeeping issues at the Center, the Council for a Livable World and the U.S. State Department over the past 15 years. She is Past-President Thurston Holt's niece.

Proposed slate of officers and directors for 2005

The Nominating Committee will present the following slate:

Officers: Continuing in their present posts for the year 2005 are:

President: Wendy Hazard
Vice President: Bruce Stedman

Treasurer: Bob Howe
Immediate Past Pres Thurston Holt

Lydia Sparrow has asked to be relieved of the office of Secretary, and the Nominating Committee recommends the election of Board member Anne Brautigam to that post. Mrs. Brautigam has been a member of UNA since 1987 and served several terms as Secretary of the Bluegrass (KY) UNA chapter as well as Secretary of the Kentucky Division (UNA) Board of Directors.

Directors (two-year terms)

Suzanne Hedrick (re-election)
Victoria Mares-Hershey (new member)
Mary Lee Rushmore (re-election)
Trudi Schneider (re-election)

The Board expresses its gratitude to departing members Ken Rodman and Julia Edwards. Both have given valuable service to UNA-Maine over a number of years. Julia Edwards will be residing out of state for two years. When she returns to Maine, we hope she will consider rejoining the Board.

Directors completing the second year of their two-year terms (for information)

Isabel Denham, Tom Ewell, Lynn Kuzma, Thesil Morlan, Al Niese, Vanessa Saric, Herschel Sternlieb, Phil Thompson and Sarah Walton.

UNITED NATIONS DAY

by Thesil Morlan

Our UN Day 2004 speaker, Innih Archibong, Columbia University's Visiting Scholar from Nigeria, made clear and compelling the troubles of the Niger Delta region and the travails of its people, whose lands, livelihoods and rights have been severely damaged by practices of certain transnational corporations in conjunction with the Nigerian federal government. "The government's failure to protect the human rights of its people has created a conducive environment for companies to act without adequate accountability," observes event co-sponsor Amnesty International, announcing a new report, "Nigeria: rights in the pipeline?" this month. Consequently, escalating violence brought over a thousand deaths to the Niger Delta in 2003, according to authoritative reports. Amnesty's calculations indicate that the number of people killed in Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa States this year already

may amount to 670. Of course, these numbers do not measure the extent of human suffering or the environmental degradation. Mr. Archibong and his colleagues are training Nigerians to seek redress and future improvements by legal means rather than resort to violence.

While he acknowledged that the ideals of the UN Charter made this topic appropriate for the occasion, Mr Archibong's presentation raised questions about what the United Nations and its supporters could do in such situations, before a crisis worsens to the unpredictable point that the Security Council has to consider intervention, for which it has only crude and tardy tools that are usually locked up anyway by powers with vested interests.

Noting that Mr. Archibong had confirmed that "a major party to the problems of the Niger Delta is his federal government, which works hand in glove with the oil-exploiting industries there," chapter Vice-President Bruce Stedman asks if the UN, "still largely stuck with dealing with the governments of member states, really wants to deal with such issues smoldering around the world, since intervention would bring cold comfort to other 'guilty' regimes."

This question of the need for UN reform, for a stronger and fairer global system, is a topic that the UNA-Maine chapter took up at its last annual meeting and must continue to explore.

Meanwhile, citizens, especially as consumers and shareholders, can press corporations to operate within the framework of the "Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights," adopted by the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in August 2003.

November Board Meeting

The UNA-Maine Board will meet in the offices of Howe and Company, Augusta, on Friday, November 19th at 1:00 PM. This is an appropriate time to recognize the great contribution made by Bob Howe and his

people to our Chapter in the form of providing space for meetings and clerical services and labeling and mailing our quarterly newsletter. Many thanks, guys.

News Bites from UN Wire

As has become the tradition, we set out here a few selected items from UN Wire, chosen because they are not widely known, but thought to be of interest. NOTA BENE! UN Wire has changed its e-mail address to: www.UN.wire@smartbrief.com

9/29 The Nigerian government and rebel militia fighting in the Niger Delta region agreed Wednesday on a truce which relates to the rebels' demand for autonomy. A rebel leader repeated his warning to foreign oil workers to leave the region until a final agreement is achieved. Amnesty International said as many as 500 civilians were killed in fighting around Port Harcourt in the first three weeks of September. (See also the account of Mr. Innih Archibong's remarks under "UN DAY" in this issue.)

10/06 Charles Duelfer, the top US weapons inspector in Iraq is expected to announce today that Saddam Hussein did not have the capability to produce weapons of mass destruction. Duelfer said that while Hussein may have had the desire to produce weapons, his capabilities were significantly less in 2003 than they were when the international inspectors left Iraq in 1998.

10/06 A bill before the House of Representatives contains provisions that would permit the US to send suspected terrorists to countries that employ torture as an interrogation tactic.

11/04 Secretary-General Kofi Annan offered "warm" wishes to President George W. Bush following his re-election, though US-UN relations have been anything but warm over the course of Bush's first four-year term. Those concerned with UN affairs were quick to point out, however, the importance of mending fences with Washington if the organization is to play an effective role on the world stage, particularly in upcoming elections in Iraq. Annan also commended challenger John Kerry "on his prompt and statesmanlike decision to accept the outcome." (Inter Press Service News Agency and UN News Center.)

11/04 The Deputy Secretary-General of the British Commonwealth lent support to a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for a greater role for women in conflict resolution. Speaking to the UN Security Council, Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Winston Cox said women suffer some of the worst atrocities in conflict situations, and therefore should be given a more prominent role in the "peace-building, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction processes." (All Africa Global Media/ Commonwealth News and Information Service.)

11/04 Quote of the Day: The Bush policies toward the United Nations are likely to remain similar — viewing the UN as a significant tool when useful to Washington, and as irrelevant otherwise." (Norman Solomon, Executive Director, Institute for Public Accuracy.)

11/05 In a letter sent last Sunday, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair against a large-scale military assault on the city of Fallujah. Amman expressed concern that such an assault could lead to a Sunni boycott of the planned elections, and "would also reinforce perceptions among the Iraqi population of a continued military occupation." (LA Times)

11/05 The British government's top scientific adviser, David King, said his country hopes it can have more influence over the US during President George W. Bush's second term when it comes to dealing with climate change initiatives (Reuters).

11/05 The re-election of President George W. Bush will provide an opportunity for the U.S. to re-engage with the United Nations and European allies to solve global issues and get to work defining a new world order, writes former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in the International Herald Tribune.

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