

**Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations  
Andrey I. Denisov's Interview with RIA Novosti published August 12, 2004**

**Question:**

Andrey Ivanovich, do you perceive a possibility of the United Nations stepping up its contribution to the post-crisis reconstruction of Iraq, both in political and in economic terms? Is there consensus among the Security Council members as to the necessity to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Iraq, which expires on August 14?

**Answer:** The United Nations is already working in Iraq as security conditions permit. In the political field assistance is being given to the organizers of a national conference, which is due to gather on August 15. The new special representative of the UN Secretary General, Ashraf Qazi, has left for Baghdad. He is entrusted with assisting the further advancement of the political process for the purpose of forming a system of government towards the end of 2005. The UN is also going to help in the organization of elections for a national assembly and drafting of a new Iraqi constitution.

The UN is doing a great deal in the economic area as well, primarily in terms of infrastructure reconstruction. Funds are being allocated for the most significant economic projects in the fields of health care and education and for preparing the elections. As conditions are normalized the UN will be able to be more extensively involved in economic and social transformation in Iraq.

As to extension of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, I am certain that consensus will be reached on this matter.

**Question:** How real is the prospect of Afghanistan's presidential elections, scheduled for this fall, being postponed? UN representatives have been expressing fears that the schedule for voting might be disrupted.

**Answer:** In accordance with the Afghan electoral commission's decision, presidential elections are to be held there at the beginning of October and parliamentary elections will take place next spring. The ensuring of security is of key importance for a successful holding of the elections. Unfortunately, the situation in this field still has not stabilized: sallies by the Taliban are continuing, and terrorist attacks on international personnel and Afghans participating in the electoral process.

Following Russia's initiative the UN Security Council on August 18 will consider the situation in Afghanistan at its meeting open for all the wishing delegations. The task of the Council's members now is to give every kind of assistance to Afghan authorities and the international community in averting destabilization in the country ahead of the elections and in providing favorable conditions for their holding.

As to the possibility of a postponement of the elections, we hope that it will not come to that. If, however, truly serious problems arise with the preparation for elections, the UN Security Council will be ready to examine carefully that situation.

**Question:** Iraq and Afghanistan are hot spots of the fight against terrorism now, and Russia has been presiding over the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council recently. What is the role of this body in countering one of the major threats to international security and are there any plans to widen its scope of authority?

**Answer:** The Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) operates in accordance with SC resolution 1373 (2001), coordinating international cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Its task is by relying upon interaction with UN member states and monitoring their efforts to comply with resolution 1373, to help establish a comprehensive system of combating the terrorist threat. The result of this joint work

must be a neutralization and prevention of the emergence of new seats of terrorist activity, whether in Afghanistan, Iraq or elsewhere.

On the period of Russia's chairmanship in the CTC, which will last until the end of the current year, falls the decisive stage of strengthening its organizational and expert potential. This is the objective of the CTC work program for the next three months, drawn up by the Russian chairmanship and endorsed by the Security Council. It devotes primary attention to the launching of a mechanism for activity of a new auxiliary body of the Committee, the Counterterrorism Executive Directorate. The CTC also has already endorsed the main documents for evaluation of the requirements of countries in the rendering to them of technical assistance in the fight against terrorism.

**Question:** As is known, the High-Level Panel, appointed by the UN Secretary General, is now working on proposals to reform the Organization, with regard to new realities and threats. After studying them, Kofi Annan must set forth his vision of the UN's future at the 59th session of the General Assembly, opening in September. What is the attitude of Russia to the problem of reforming the Organization, including its Security Council? Does Moscow support the idea of increasing the number of SC permanent members?

**Answer:** We are looking forward with considerable interest to the submission by the Panel (the so called Panel of Wise Men) of its report to the Secretary General in December. Russia from the very beginning actively backed the establishment by Annan of this Panel, in which Academician Yevgeny Maximovich Primakov has been included from our country. We expect that the recommendations of the Panel will deal with the matters of UN reform as well, including its Security Council. We presume that steps in this direction should lead to an enhancement of the efficiency in the work of the United Nations and its main bodies on the basis of the broadest possible consensus among the member states on all aspects of reform.

Regarding the proposal for increasing the number of SC permanent members, Russia holds a flexible stand on this issue. The most important thing is that Security Council reform should lead to an enhancement of the efficiency in its work and not disunite, but, on the contrary, unite members of the Organization. Taking these basic points into account, we generally view favorably the possibility of enlarging the permanent membership of the Security Council. At the same time, we do not rule out, in principle, other possible options for its reform either.

**Question:** How likely is greater involvement of the United Nations and its institutions, in particular, the Security Council, in tackling the problems of the post-Soviet space, including a normalization of the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia?

**Answer:** The United Nations Security Council has been actively involved in resolving the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. In August 1993 it established the UN Observer Mission in Georgia, whose mandate was recently extended for another period of six months (till January 2005). The UN Mission jointly with the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force has been making an important contribution to helping stabilize the situation in the zone of conflict and achieve a comprehensive settlement.

The already not easy situation in Georgian-Abkhaz settlement, undoubtedly, is being adversely influenced by the exacerbation of the situation in some other areas of Georgia, in particular, in South Ossetia. But the situation in South Ossetia does not come within the mandate of the UN Mission, nor generally within the scope of peacekeeping activities of the Organization. Making a contribution to assisting political settlement there is the OSCE (in particular, it backs the activities of the Mixed Control Commission).

Russia as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and as a facilitating party is doing all it can to advance the process of peaceful settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. With the strengthening of trust between the parties it will be possible

to move forward in the area of political settlement as well, including in dealing with the question of the status of Abkhazia with regard for the principle invariably being maintained by us of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.