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8 January 2007

Ambassador Martin Palouš  
Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations  
1109 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10028

Dear Ambassador Palouš,


Eastern European States will have the opportunity, according to current practices, to nominate a candidate to the position of President of the 62<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly. As a civil society organization committed to a stronger and more democratic United Nations, we are interested in the nomination of highly qualified candidates to the position of President of the General Assembly. We oppose the idea that the position is merely symbolic. The few instances of highly organized and effective Presidents of the GA demonstrate the impact that the office can have.

I write to encourage you, as Chair of the Group of Eastern European States, to take what we believe could be a precedent-setting step in your group's nomination process – to develop clear and appropriate criteria prior to the consideration of candidacies. These criteria should address the unique responsibilities of the position while also advancing the concerns of Eastern European countries. Based on practices and recommendations of other international organizations, criteria could include:

- Availability to devote full-time attention for many months;
- Political independence;
- Multilateral leadership experience, including negotiation and consensus-building skills and the ability to deal with multiple powerful stakeholders; and
- A thorough understanding of the UN Charter.

The nomination process should focus on identifying the best-qualified candidates, avoiding any reciprocal agreements, as Member States consider candidacies.

The establishment of such criteria would have multiple benefits. It would ensure that individuals are nominated based on their relevant qualifications, experience, and ability to devote the necessary time to the position. The adoption of criteria would allow for small and middle-power countries in the region to make nominations on more even footing. It should also reduce the impact of pressures for reciprocal agreements.



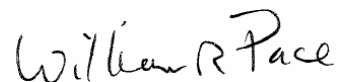
Another benefit would arise when the criteria are announced publicly. Eastern Europe would set an example for transparency in high-level selection processes throughout the UN system and, by doing so, encourage more openness throughout such important decisions.

Lastly, the benefits would extend beyond this particular decision. The process for developing criteria likely would form a foundation for future processes, making the Eastern European community better equipped to make decisions on other high-level nominations.

A transparent and qualifications-based selection process for the President of the General Assembly will result in better leadership and a more productive General Assembly, having positive effects for your country, others in the region, and the people represented by the UN membership at large.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide you with any assistance in considering or implementing an improved nomination process for the President of the General Assembly.

Sincerely,



William R. Pace

CC: Permanent Missions of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine