

Dana Neacsu's Presentation at the Launch of the 2010 *Yearbook of the United Nations* (organized by the Department of Public Information Yearbook Unit)

Monday, 15 December 2014, from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m., in the Woodrow Wilson Reading Room, on the second floor of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

First, I would like to thank Finn [Mr. Finn Summerell, DPI], for inviting me to address today's guests [members of permanent missions, observer missions and United Nations correspondents are invited].

What is the value of yet another reference work in the age of Google, when users expect to type whatever is their heart's desire in the google search box and obtain an academic paper on the topic, along with a Wikipedia entry? The same value any expert offers the novice: well-documented, authenticated, reliable and correct responses, which do not change erratically from one day to the other.

As a researcher and a researcher's teacher and collaborator, I welcome The UN Yearbook as a cathedral of reliable information about the UN and the work it stands for . Perhaps the most I welcome it for is its invaluable contribution to gathering basic, ready-to-use information for researchers of all competences. I still remember the late Louis Henkin calling to make sure that some data he was going to use in one of his works was correct. And I mention him because of his instrumental work in the field of human rights, a topic well represented in all UN Yearbook issues, including the one we are here to celebrate, and especially for his well-known assessment of the United States involvement with human rights, alas, unchanged since Professor Henkin summarized it: "In the cathedral of human rights," he wrote in a well-known passage in a 1979 article, "the United States is more like a flying buttress than a pillar — choosing to stand outside the international structure supporting the international human rights system, [and] without being willing to subject its own conduct to the scrutiny of that system."

The UN Yearbook filled with critical data in so many areas is yet another way of helping researchers gather the information they need to raise major questions which I hope will help us make the work of the UN even more useful and effective in the years to come. And maybe someday of giving professor Henkin a wonderful posthumous gift: the U.S. as a pillar, and not just a buttress of human rights.

Thank you.