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## **THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL IN THE LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC POLITICIZATION**

**Introduction.** The United Nations Security Council (further – the UNSC) has become one of the most important intergovernmental international institutions, which is involved in resolving the COVID-19 pandemic as a transboundary biological threat to humanity. At the same time, the institution's activities in 2020 were significantly influenced by the global COVID-19 pandemic politicization process, which manifested in the intentional manipulation of the current pandemic by its Member States to realize foreign policy interests and use the institution's sessions to promote its vision of dealing with the problem. As a result, due to the lack of attention to consensus-building on a common approach to preventing the spread of the virus in the early stages of the pandemic, the UNSC has become the focus of the politicization

of the current pandemic, and its ineffective activities have become the subject of political debate about the institution's real ability to address similar potential global biological and other types of threats in the future.

**Review of recent publications.** The issue of the UNSC's activities in preventing the spread of COVID-19 is the subject of research in the works of several foreign scholars. M. Arcari has devoted a paper to a detailed analysis of the text component and the political significance of the resolutions adopted by the institution in 2020 [1]; C. Lynch identifies key political contradictions between the UNSC Member States as one of the main reasons for its late reaction to the pandemic [8; 9]; and B. Charbonneau emphasizes the undermining of the relevance and authority of the UNSC in the UN system and the weakening of the US leadership and influence during Donald Trump's presidency [2].

**The objectives of the paper** are as follows:

- to find out whether the solving of biological problems are within the competence of the UNSC according to the UN Charter;
- to identify the reasons for ineffective activities of the UNSC in the context of resolving the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020;
- to analyze the peculiarities of interaction between the UNSC Member States in the process of adopting the relevant resolutions;
- to identify the consequences of the UNSC ineffectiveness for the overall response of the UN system to the current pandemic.

**Results of the research.** According to Chapters V and VII of the UN Charter, the UNSC is the only UN body empowered to take legally binding decisions for all Member States in the process of identifying the threats to international peace, stability, security and enforce their implementation through sanctions or using the military forces [3; 4; 10], which turns it to the most powerful element in the UN system and a place for coordinating global efforts to solve the global problems in the broadest sense of «security». It is essential to note, that the management of the COVID-19 pandemic as a biological threat is not in the direct competence of the UNSC, unlike the World Health Organisation, but the need to form a body's general response, especially against the background of escalating political relations and disputes over the virus among Member States, spurred the UNSC into the active work to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of the pandemic.

A late response to the COVID-19 pandemic is the first argument in favor of the inefficiency of the UNSC. From the time COVID-19 was described by the World Health Organisation (further – the WHO) as a pandemic and the UN Secretary-General's (further – the UNSG) calls for an «immediate global ceasefire» on 23.03.2020 [13] to the adoption of the first (and only so far) resolution S/RES/2532 (2020) «Maintenance of international peace and security» on 01.07.2020 [11], more than three and a half months had elapsed since the UNSG had called on the UNSC Member States to use their collective influence and power to adopt a global response plan and protect the millions of people affected by military conflicts [6]. The resolution resulted in the identification of COVID-19 as a threat to international peace and security, the demand for a comprehensive and immediate cessation of

hostilities and the establishment of durable humanitarian pause in military conflicts for at least 90 consecutive days [11: 2].

A detailed analysis of the process of adopting this resolution [1] shows that the intensified bilateral geopolitical confrontation between the United States of America (further – the USA) and the People's Republic of China (further – the PRC) during the COVID-19 pandemic at the level of intergovernmental international institutions was the main reason for such a delay in the body's response and undermined its ability to deal with biological threats.

So, one of the main elements of this was the incompatibility of the both states views on the role of the WHO in resolving the COVID-19 pandemic, attempts to agree on a compromise version of the reference to which in the text of the resolution postponed its adoption for almost two months. Mandatory indication of the exclusive role of the WHO and expression of support for its operations by the UNSC, which the PRC strongly insisted on, was completely unacceptable for the US delegates, who even resorted to blocking the abovementioned resolution. This controversy was due to Donald Trump's public criticism and suspicions of the WHO representatives' biased attitude to China, so in this way, the US diplomacy tried to put the UN Security Council under pressure to further promote the name "Wuhan virus" or "Chinese virus" and accuse the PRC of concealing morbidity data.

However, Russia's support for Chinese diplomacy made it difficult for US officials to insist on their own, which highlighted the need to find a compromise. Even though the USA once again disagreed with the option of indirect reference to the WHO, namely the «UN system, including specialized health care facilities», proposed by France and Tunisia [16], the UNSC Member States managed to reach a consensus to mention the consideration of the resolution A/RES/74/270 «Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)» adopted by the UN General Assembly (further – the UNGA) on 02.04.2020 [11: 1], where the crucial role played by the WHO and the UN «in catalyzing and coordinating the global response to control and contain the spread of COVID-19» was already mentioned [12: 1]. As a consequence, the resolution «Maintenance of international peace and security» on 01.07.2020 was finally adopted.

Along with the controversy over the WHO, the USA and the PRC could not reach a consensus on the source and place of origin of the virus: American diplomats insisted on mentioning these two things in any future resolution, but the Chinese – opposed [5]. This has highlighted the problem of different perception of the COVID-19 pandemic at the international intergovernmental level because the USA and the PRC consider the UNSC meetings as an opportunity to blame each other for the virus once again, rather than as a chance to deal with a threat and support the UNSG's initiatives [14].

This statement is reinforced by the initial blocking of the Republic of Estonia's initiative to recognize the pandemic as a threat to international peace and security by the Republic of South Africa, the Russian Federation, and the PRC. At the beginning of the pandemic, these three states did not consider the virus in terms of threats and

were convinced that it is inappropriate to discuss it in the UN Security Council, as biological problems are in the full competence of the WHO [9; 15].

Such difficulties in reaching consensus between permanent and non-permanent Member States of the UNSC have reduced the role of the institution in the UN system in resolving similar global emergencies in the future [7] and can be seen as part of the lack of the UN system's unified response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Political disputes have completely undermined their ability to act as leaders of the world community and to offer their own vision of fighting the pandemic that other countries would agree to.

As a result, a «(geo)political vacuum» of leadership in the UNSC was formed [8; 9], and the issue of filling it meant not only strengthening a particular country's political influence in the UN system (such attempts were made by France, the Russian Federation, Estonia, Tunisia, etc. by initiating resolutions with their vision of resolving the crisis in the UNSC and the UNGA) but also led to a significant weakening the political influence of the USA as the current leader in most multilateral institutions the restoration of which will be one of the priority foreign policy tasks of the newly elected US President Joe Biden in the context of strengthening the American power in the international arena in the upcoming years.

**Conclusion.** Even though the COVID-19 pandemic remains primarily a biological threat, its interpretation as a threat to international peace and security was objectively exaggerated, and attempts to deal with it at the UN Security Council sessions were impractical, as this not only did not lead to the high efficiency of the institution, but also further deepened the politicization of the current problem in international relations due to the intentional transfer of bilateral confrontation between the United States on the one hand, and China and the WHO on the other hand to the level of international organizations.

The lack of consensus among the UNSC Member States was not the result of the COVID-19 pandemic and their differing views on how to deal with the problem, because it was based on the commitment of these great powers to different models of the world order, including one that will be formed after ending the COVID-19 pandemic in a few years, and the desire to consolidate its own dominant or leading position by using the COVID-19 pandemic issue for a variety of political purposes.

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## **UNDP-UKRAINE PARTNERSHIP**

**Introduction.** After the Crimea Peninsula annexation and the beginning of the conflict in the eastern Ukraine, cooperation between Ukraine and the United Nations Development Program (hereinafter – UNDP) began to develop rapidly. Citizens and state institutions of Ukraine were supposed to have more external assistance. Therefore, the impetus for a new level of cooperation between Ukraine and UNDP was the deteriorating economic situation, declining living standards in Ukraine, human rights violations, and the Government's inability to provide sufficient assistance to conflict victims, children and internally displaced persons. In recent years, effective and time-bound achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals has been threatened due to the presence of a significant number of problems and the emergence of new ones.

**Review of recent publications.** Views on the problem and approaches to its solution have been covered by a small group of scholars. Basically, they draw attention to the lack of investment in order to overcome social and economic problems. G.V. Herasymenko [1] recommended developing the strategies for effective cooperation between international donors and government agencies, business and civil society to improve the work of international donor organizations; and T. Zatonatska [2] proposed to increase the investment attractiveness of the national economy and use budget funds efficiently. Furthermore, official UNDP documents and current statistics from the official sources [4; 7] have been used to reinforce the statements made in the paper under consideration [3; 5; 6; 8].

**Objectives of the paper.** The aim of the research is to identify the main problems and obstacles faced by UNDP in Ukraine.

**Results of the research.** UNDP is an important partner for Ukraine, which has been cooperating with this institution since the beginning of the country's independence. The organization focuses its activities on solving social and economic problems. This institution uses an integrated approach to solve global challenges. To