

## Other Publications

### Book Review

### *The UN close up*

Stefano Baldi is an Italian diplomat with a gift for multilateralism. Having arrived in Brussels a few months ago, where he is serving with the Italian delegation to the EU, after long spells in Geneva and New York, he did not wait long to get his second book on the United Nations published. “Le Nazioni Unite viste da vicino”\* (The UN close up), is a follow up to his first book, “L’Italia al Palazzo di Vetro” (Italy at the Glass Building), in which he examines Italy’s diplomatic action in the UN.

“The Italian publications on the UN have traditionally had either a legal or a political approach, which left an important portion of the public lacking more practical knowledge of the universal body”, he told us in an interview. “The hands-on approach in this book fills this gap” Baldi said. “Future decision makers can only benefit from updated facts on the UN’s action”.

Other international officials and academics regularly contribute to Stefano Baldi’s publications.

Amongst the themes that the book addresses are humanitarian crises, economic and social activities, migration, peacekeeping, Human Rights and Africa.

The chapter on how the UN communicates with the member states describes the birth of the Regional Information Centre in Brussels (UNRIC) as a prototype born out of the 2003 reform project; “A

rationalization process which involved the regionalisation of UN information activities and the closure of Western European national offices.” The book mentions the Information Technology project with UNRIC at the hub of a web system linking many UN national information offices currently with connectivity problems, especially in Africa. The book also emphasizes the partnership between UNRIC and the European Union.

The IT-savvy Baldi, an atypical diplomat who holds a degree in statistics and describes himself as a ‘cyberdiplomat’, acknowledges in the publication the key role that UNRIC’s Italian webpage has been playing since the Centre’s creation, and especially following the launch of UNRIC’s new website, in June 2006. The Italian page, the book points out, features the highest number of UN official documents translated into Italian.

Given the high praise for our work at UNRIC, we can only hope that Stefano Baldi’s book will be translated into many other European languages!



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