

Bush accused of undermining the UN with aid coalition

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United States President George Bush was tonight accused of trying to undermine the United Nations by setting up a rival coalition to coordinate relief following the Asian tsunami disaster.

The president has announced that the US, Japan, India and Australia would coordinate the world's response.

But former International Development Secretary Clare Short said that role should be left to the UN.

"I think this initiative from America to set up four countries claiming to coordinate sounds like yet another attempt to undermine the UN when it is the best system we have got and the one that needs building up," she said.

"Only really the UN can do that job," she told BBC Radio Four's PM programme.

"It is the only body that has the moral authority. But it can only do it well if it is backed up by the authority of the great powers."

Ms Short said the coalition countries did not have good records on responding to international disasters.

She said the US was "very bad at coordinating with anyone" and India had its own problems to deal with.

"I don't know what that is about but it sounds very much, I am afraid, like the US trying to have a separate operation and not work with the rest of the world through the UN system," she added.

In your dreams, UN. As if the United States is going to trust you with such

sci.astro: Bush accused of undermining the UN with aid coalition
a task after the oil-for-food scandal and your refusal to investigate it.