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Challenges and Opportunities for Advancing U.S. Interests in the United Nations System

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My name is Brett Schaefer. I am the Jay Kingham Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

Chairman Todd Young and Ranking Member Jeff Merkley, thank you for inviting me to testify today before the Subcommittee on "Challenges and Opportunities for Advancing U.S. Interests in the United Nations System."

The preeminent responsibility of the United States government is to defend and protect the American people and advance their interests and welfare. Fulfilling this responsibility, which includes both strategic and economic security, requires the U.S. to involve itself in a broad spectrum of bilateral and multilateral relationships, including international organizations.

The U.S. currently is a member of or contributes financially to nearly 200 international organizations, funds, treaty bodies, councils, groups, bureaus, centers, commissions, and peacekeeping operations. According to the most recent report, the U.S. provides over $12 billion to those organizations each year.[1] The vast majority of this funding, over $10 billion, was distributed to the U.N. and over 60 U.N. specialized agencies, peacekeeping operations, funds, programs, or other entities related to, or affiliated with, the U.N.

There is no uniform funding arrangement for international organizations.

The most well known budgets, the United Nations regular and peacekeeping budgets, are funded through mandatory dues (assessments) paid by member states. In 2019, the U.S. is assessed 22 percent of the U.N. regular budget and 27.8912 percent of the U.N. peacekeeping budget—levels of assessment greater than the vast majority of U.N.

[1]U.S. Department of State, *United States Contributions to International Organizations: Sixty-Sixth Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 2017*, p. 5, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Sixty-Sixth-Annual-Report-to-the-Congress-for-FY-2017.pdf (accessed October 8, 2019).

member states *combined*.

As illustrated in Table 2 at the end of my testimony:

- For the regular budget, the U.S. is assessed more than 178 other U.N. member states combined and 22,000 times more than the 30 countries assessed the minimum level of 0.001 percent.
- The 30 countries charged the minimum assessment of 0.001 percent each will pay only $29,059 in 2019 based on the 2018–2019 biennial regular budget as amended in December 2018. By comparison, the U.S. is assessed $639 million.
- For the peacekeeping budget, the U.S. is assessed more than 186 countries combined and over 278,000 times more than the 17 countries assessed the minimum level.
- The 17 countries charged the minimum peacekeeping assessment of 0.0001 percent in 2019 are each assessed $6,519 under the recently approved peacekeeping budget. By

TABLE 1

U.S. Funding of the U.N. System and International Organizations

	UNITED NATIONS CHIEF EXECUTIVES BOARD FOR COORDINATION			REPORTS TO CONGRESS		
Year	**Total Revenue for the U.N. System**	**Total Revenue from the United States***	**United States Share of U.N. Revenue**		**U.S. Contributions to International Organizations**	**U.S. Contributions to the U.N. System**
2010	$39,526,833,430	$7,075,888,246	17.9%	2010	$8,518,300,409	$7,691,822,000
2011	$39,509,014,336	$6,176,742,945	15.6%	2011	$5,372,801,191	$4,715,922,111
2012	$42,323,684,975	$8,237,873,575	19.5%	2012	$7,473,284,288	$6,716,965,814
2013	$44,638,863,032	$7,680,181,185	17.2%	2013	$6,741,127,985	$5,999,534,918
2014	$48,079,838,381	$10,066,592,972	20.9%	2014	$7,360,833,363	$7,942,662,070
2015	$47,979,602,491	$9,914,072,653	20.7%	2015	$10,821,521,001	$8,783,808,135
2016	$49,333,227,820	$9,718,025,938	19.7%	2016	$10,487,783,062	$8,670,580,612
2017	$53,199,702,441	$10,427,924,316	19.6%	2017	$12,124,205,262	$10,202,104,430
2018	$56,018,773,165	$9,976,039,097	17.8%	2018		
Total	**$420,609,540,071**	**$79,273,340,927**	**18.8%**		**$68,899,856,561**	**$60,723,400,090**

* UNCEB did not include peacekeeping assessments in revenue from governments until 2013 so "Total Revenue from the United States" adds peacekeeping assessments from "United States Contributions to International Organizations" for FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012 as a proxy.

NOTES:
Data on U.S. contributions to the United Nations System for FY 2011-2013 compiled by the author using funding information provided in U.S. Department of State annual reports on "United States Contributions to International Organizations." Determination of which organizations are part of the U.N. system is based on the table of U.N. organizations in Office of Management and Budget, "Report to Congress of United States Contributions to International Organizations for Fiscal Year 2014" on pages 35-37. "U.S. Contributions to the U.N. System" does not include contributions to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) even though the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination included those organizations as part of the U.N. system for the purposes of calculating revenue. The IOM officially became a related organization to the U.N. in 2016. The Office of Management and Budget includes contributions to the IOM in its 2017 report to Congress. Data on U.S. contributions to the United Nations System for FY 2014-17 and FY 2010 as reported by the Office of Management and Budget to Congress.

SOURCES:
United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination, "Total Revenue," https://www.unsystem.org/content/FS-K00-02#page-title (accessed November 15, 2019); United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination, "Total Revenue by Government Donor," https://www.unsystem.org/content/FS-D00-02 (accessed November 15, 2019); U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Contributions to International Organizations," Congressional Reports, https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/index.htm and https://www.state.gov/u-s-contributions-to-international-organizations/ (accessed November 15, 2019); Office of Management and Budget, "Report to Congress on United States Contributions to the United Nations and Affiliated International Organizations for Fiscal Year 2017," September 25, 2019, p. 1, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/UN-Contributions-2017.pdf (accessed November 15, 2019); Office of Management and Budget, "Report to Congress of United States Contributions to International Organizations For Fiscal Year 2014," July 31, 2016, pp. 35-37, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/IAD/MASTER%20Sec%20312%20OMB%20Report_final.pdf (accessed November 15, 2019); and Office of Management and Budget, "Annual Report on United States Contributions to the United Nations: FY2010 US Contributions to the United Nations System," June 6, 2011, p. 2, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/legislative_reports/us_contributions_to_the_un_06062011.pdf. (accessed November 15, 2019).

comparison, the U.S. is assessed $1.8 billion.

The vast discrepancy between the amounts that different member states are charged for the expenses of the U.N.—with some countries paying less than $37,000 per year, while the U.S. is charged over $2.4 billion—help explain why most member states are disinterested in reforms to make sure the U.N. more efficient and accountable or to prioritize spending. When governments pay minimal amounts—a majority of U.N. member states are assessed less than $700,000 per year for both the regular and peacekeeping budgets—they have little incentive to fulfill their oversight role and take budgetary restraint seriously. The U.S., on the other hand, has a huge financial interest in efficiency and prudent use of resources.

Even within the U.N. system, however, funding mechanisms vary widely. Some organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, base their rate of assessment on the U.N. regular budget to fund their core expenditures even though they receive significant voluntary contributions. By contrast, the International Maritime Organization bases its assessment on economic factors and merchant fleet tonnage, which resulted in a relatively low U.S. assessment of 2.76 percent in 2017. As another example, the World Intellectual Property Organization receives only about 4 percent of its income from member states and nearly 95 percent from fees and services.

Overall, despite these funding disparities, the U.S. is by far the largest contributor to the U.N. system. As illustrated in the accompanying Table 1, between 2010 and 2018, the U.S. contributed, on average, nearly 19 percent of all U.N. system revenues according to the U.N. Chief Executives Board for Coordination. The second-largest contributor over that span has shifted between Germany, Japan, and the U.K. On average, however, the second-largest contributor provided just over 6 percent of total U.N. system revenues.

China has garnered a lot of attention for its increased U.N. payments. In 2018, however, China remained a distant fifth at $1.42 billion in total contributions to the U.N. system. By contrast, the U.S. provided over 7 times more funding to the U.N. system than China.

Opportunities

America's position in the U.N. system presents both opportunities and challenges. One opportunity that should not be overlooked is that the U.S. was instrumental in establishing the organization and continues to value its founding purposes, including maintaining international peace and security, encouraging self-determination of peoples, and promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms.[2] Although the organization has too often ignored these principles, highlighting them strengthens U.S. arguments and can provide justification for its actions and proposals that can be controversial with other member states.

America's position as one of five veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council also gives it considerable influence. The Security Council is the most powerful body in the U.N. system with the authority, in service to addressing threats to international peace and security, to impose sanctions, authorize military action, and require compliance from the other U.N. member states. The veto gives the U.S. unilateral authority to block Security Council actions deemed detrimental to U.S. interests and positively influence the text of resolutions.

Another opportunity is the influence our financial contributions provide to guide the U.N. from within and without. For instance:

Employment in International Organizations. Many international organizations formally or informally link staff recruitment to geographical distribution, membership status, financial contributions, and share of the global population. Because of these arrangements, U.S. nationals comprised 5 percent of total U.N. system staff in 2017—more than any other nation.[3] In addition, as a major contributor, U.S. preferences on candidates for senior U.N. positions—though far from dispositive—are influential.

Addressing U.S. Concerns and Priorities. Organizations pay significant attention to concerns and criticisms of their largest source of funding. However, to be credible, there must be genuine belief on the part of the organization that failure to address those concerns and criticism could affect

[2]United Nations Charter, Article 1, https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html (accessed November 19, 2019).

[3]UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination, "Human Resources Nationality," https://www.unsystem.org/content/hr-nationality (accessed November 19, 2019).

funding.

Voluntarily funded international organizations tend to be most responsive to U.S. concerns because they know that funding relies on the support and goodwill of their member states. This is why Ambassador John Bolton has written that the U.S. objective should be to move the entire U.N. system to a voluntary funding structure.[4]

Organizations funded through assessed contributions are less responsive because the member states have legally committed to providing funding at levels determined by the organization. Nonetheless, the U.S. has enacted a number of laws over the years limiting or conditioning U.S. funding to the U.N. and other international organizations to achieve specific outcomes when diplomatic efforts fell short.

A previous successful assertion of this pressure occurred in 1994. Former U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, who served as U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management in 1992 and 1993, informed Congress of his failed attempts to clamp down on mismanagement and waste. Congress decided to withhold 10 percent from the U.N. regular budget until the General Assembly created an inspector general. As a direct response, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) was created in 1994 as the U.N.'s primary investigative and auditing unit.[5]

Another example is the Helms–Biden Act that conditioned payment of $819 million in arrears and forgiveness of $107 million owed by the U.N. to the U.S. in return for lower assessments and other reforms.[6]

A current example of this tactic is the "Transparency and Accountability" determination in recent appropriations bills that requires the State Department to withhold 15 percent of U.S. contributions to the U.N. and a few other organizations until the Secretary of State reports to Congress that the organizations are meeting specified standards for whistleblower protection and transparency.[7]

Challenges

International organizations have many member states whose interests are at odds. This means that actions and decisions in these organizations often fall victim to a lowest-common-denominator process and gridlock. Inefficiency, mismanagement, and other problems frequently beset organizations but remain unaddressed because some member states benefit from the arrangement.[8] All too often, countries that are opposed to U.S. policies use the U.N. and other international organizations, in which they are on a more equal footing with the U.S., to assert their influence in order to counterbalance U.S. policy.

The ability of the U.S. to counter these efforts is limited for several reasons:

Regional and Ideological Voting. Within the U.N. system, there is a strong tendency to vote in blocs, whether regional groups or ideological groups like the Group of 77 (G-77, 133 member countries) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC, 56 member countries), to heighten their influence. In practice, this creates a logrolling dynamic wherein countries that have little interest in the substance of a resolution adhere to a group position favored by countries that have a strong interest in the resolution in order to secure their support on resolutions in which they have a strong interest.

Significant overlap in the membership of the groups facilitates extension of positions from one to the others. For instance, while the OIC lacks the numbers of the G-77, most of its members are also members of the G-77, and can influence the G-77 to support OIC positions on Israel. In addition, there is also a strong tendency in the U.N. for regions to

[4]Ambassador John Bolton, "The Key To Changing the United Nations System," forward to Brett D. Schaeffer, ed., *Conundrum: The Limits of the United Nations and the Search for Alternatives* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009).
[5]Luisa Blanchfield, "U.S. Funding to the United Nations System:
Overview and Selected Policy Issues," Congressional Research Service, R45206, April 25, 2018, p. 35, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45206.pdf (accessed November 19, 2019).
[6]Ibid., pp. 35–36.
[7]Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, Public Law No. 115–141, Division K, Section 7048, https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ141/PLAW-115publ141.pdf (accessed November 19, 2019).
[8]An example is Russia's efforts to block reform of U.N. contracting for commercial aviation in support of U.N. peacekeeping. See Colum Lynch, "The Inside Story of Russia's Fight to Keep the U.N. Corrupt," *Foreign Policy*, June 25, 2013, https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/06/25/the-inside-story-of-russias-fight-to-keep-the-u-n-corrupt/ (accessed November 19, 2019).

vote together as blocs. This often reinforces the solidarity of ideological groups because the G-77 and OIC comprise a majority of countries in Asia and Africa. These regions together comprise a majority of U.N. member states.

The size of these voting blocs is important because, under General Assembly rules, a simple majority (97 votes out of 193 member states) is sufficient to pass most resolutions. Decisions on "important questions" as specified in the U.N. Charter, such as approving the U.N. budget, require approval by a two-thirds majority (129 votes out of 193 member states). It is relatively easy for these groups to use the advantage of their numbers to push or block various resolutions and reforms.

Inertia and Self-interest. The U.N. habitually renews previous resolutions and "mandates" with little debate or scrutiny. For instance, in 2005, the U.N. General Assembly instructed the Secretary-General to compile a list of U.N. mandates for the member states to review for relevance, effectiveness, and duplication. A Mandate Registry was established to provide, for the first time, a comprehensive list of the more than 9,000 individual mandates of the General Assembly, Security Council, and United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Some of these ongoing mandates date back the to the 1940s. One of the few efforts to examine these mandates found that only 155 (56 percent) of the 279 mandates in the Humanitarian cluster were "current and relevant" and that only 18 (35 percent) of the 52 mandates in the African Development cluster were current and relevant. The U.N. General Assembly refused to act on these conclusions and, instead, quietly killed the Mandate Review. Even the Mandate Registry seems to have disappeared from the U.N. website.

Similarly, the U.N. has complained recently about a financial crisis but continues to fund unnecessary and duplicative activities like the Economic Commissions for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia. Together these Commissions cost the U.N. over $250 million per year and employ more than 1,800 staff to, essentially, organize conferences, conduct policy research, and host meetings to facilitate economic integration and development.[9] This may be a fine goal, but it largely duplicates the efforts of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, the regional development banks, the European Union, the African Union, ASEAN, and the other dozen or so U.N. organizations that also try to promote economic development and cooperation. Nonetheless, support for the commissions is robust because they offer plum jobs and are regionally placed, i.e., they ensure U.N. funds are disbursed to multiple countries via regional offices.

Finally, whether to conceal scandal or just to protect senior officials, the U.N. system continues to resist robust transparency and accountability, especially in its treatment of whistleblowers and holding peacekeepers and U.N. officials to account for sexual exploitation and abuse.[10]

Political Agendas, Particularly Bias Against Israel. According to UN Watch, the Human Rights Council had adopted 169 condemnatory resolutions on countries as of the end of May 2018 just prior to the U.S. decision to withdraw. Of those, nearly half (47 percent) focused on Israel. The Human Rights Council also has the authority to convene special sessions to address human rights violations or related emergencies. Of the twenty-eight special sessions convened to date, eight focused on Israel. Next came Syria (the focus of five special sessions) and Burma (the focus of two). Each year the U.N. General Assembly adopts around 20 resolutions condemning Israel and about five for all of the other human rights situations in the world. In 2018, the U.N. General assembly adopted 21 resolutions condemning Israel and six focused on other nations—one each for Burma, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria, and the U.S (for its Cuba policy).[11]

[9]General Assembly Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee), "List of documents relating to the proposed programme plan and budget for 2020: PART V. Regional cooperation for development," A/74/6 Sections 18-22, https://www.un.org/en/ga/fifth/74/ppb2020.shtml (accessed November 19, 2019).

[10]Eileen A. Cronin and Aicha Afifi, "Review of Whistle-Blower Policies and Practices in United Nations System Organizations," Joint Inspection Unit, JIU/REP/2018/4, and Carley Petesch, "Leaked UN report shows failed investigation on sexual abuse," Associated Press, October 31, 2019, https://apnews.com/671330c575b44272bbabe69e43740ac9 (accessed November 19, 2019).

[11]UN Watch, "2018 UN General Assembly Resolutions Singling Out Israel – Texts, Votes, Analysis," November 18, 2018, https://unwatch.org/2018-un-general-assembly-resolutions-singling-israel-texts-votes-analysis/ (accessed November 19, 2019).

Israel should not be immune from scrutiny or criticism for its human rights practices. On the contrary, a credible Human Rights Council must be able and willing to examine the human rights practices of each nation. However, year in and year out, the council and the U.N. member states single out Israel for different treatment from other nations, which is unacceptable.

A more recent, but increasingly urgent, challenge are Chinese efforts to increase its influence in the U.N. system. As its political and economic power has risen over the past 20 years, China has become increasingly assertive in its efforts to insert Chinese terminology and endorsements of Chinese policies and initiatives into U.N. resolutions and statements.[12] China has used its veto to block a U.N. Security Council resolution 12 times since 1971, when the United Nations recognized the People's Republic of China as the official government. All but three of those vetoes occurred since 2007 and served to prevent Security Council action against Burma, Syria, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.[13] Since 2013, China has become increasingly assertive in U.N. human rights institutions, promoting "its own interpretation of international norms and mechanisms."[14]

China has also successfully capitalized on its historical relationships with developing countries, abetted by financial and political carrots and sticks, to secure leadership of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, and United Nations Industrial Development Organization. A Chinese national has led four of the 15 U.N. specialized agencies in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2019.[15] China's rising influence is concerning because its policy priorities are in many areas antithetical to U.S. interests and, unlike nationals from most other countries who generally act independently in their positions, China demands that its nationals protect and advance Chinese interests.[16] China does not hesitate to act when an official fails to advance its interests. In October 2018, China arrested the president of Interpol, Meng Hongwei, and charged him with abuse of power and refusing to "follow party decisions."[17] Hongwei was one of the highest-level Chinese nationals in any international organization.

Moving Forward

It is in the interests of the U.S. to participate and work through international organizations to bolster its security, foreign policy, and economic prospects, but the U.S. also must be strategic and focused in its efforts. To maximize its influence and administer the resources of the American taxpayer as prudently as possible, the U.S. should recognize both the challenges and opportunities presented by participation in the U.N. and its affiliated organizations to advance U.S. interests by:

- **Focusing on the international organizations that are important to U.S. interests.** This process begins by conducting an analysis of and publicly reporting on how U.S. participation in each international organization advances specific

[12]See, for instance, Frédéric Burnand, "China's 'Win-Win' Rights Initiative Makes Waves in Geneva," swissinfo.ch, March 26, 2018, https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/un-human-rights-council-_china-s--win-win--rights-initiative-makes-waves-in-geneva/44000588 (accessed November 19, 2019), and Associated Press, "China and US Clash Over 'Belt and Road' Link to UN Afghanistan Mission," September 17, 2019, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3027596/china-and-us-clash-over-belt-and-road-credit-un-security (accessed November 19, 2019).

[13]United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Library, "Security Council–Veto List," https://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick (accessed November 19, 2019).

[14]Ted Piccone, "China's Long Game on Human Rights at the United Nations," Foreign Policy at Brookings, September 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/FP_20181009_china_human_rights.pdf (accessed November 19, 2019).

[15]The last permanent member of the Security Council to do this was the U.S. in 1956. A French national led three U.N. specialized agencies and the World Tourism Organization from 1978 to 1985, but that was before the World Tourism Organization joined the U.N. in 2003.

[16]Brett D. Schaefer, "How the U.S. Should Address Rising Chinese Influence at the United Nations," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 3431, August 20, 2019, https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/BG3431_0.pdf.

[17]"Wife of China's Meng, Former Interpol Chief, Sues Agency," Reuters, July 7, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-france-interpol/wife-ofchinas-meng-former-interpol-chief-sues-agency-idUSKCN1U20L6 (accessed November 19, 2019).

U.S. interests. The U.S. should conduct a regular evaluation of the costs and benefits of membership in international organizations and use the results of this analysis to shift U.S. funding to increase support where U.S. interests are served while reducing funding where they are not.

If an organization has proven to be critically flawed, such as the Human Rights Council, the U.S. should not lend it unwarranted prestige and credibility by rewarding it with financial support or participation. Likewise, if U.S. interests are negligible or are being capably addressed by the private sector, the U.S. should terminate its support and membership. For instance, after a comprehensive review, the Clinton Administration decided to withdraw from the World Tourism Organization and the U.N. Industrial Development Organization on the basis that they, respectively, provided poor value for money and were unable to "define its purpose and function very well."[18] A more recent example is the decision of the Trump Administration to withdraw from the International Coffee Organization in 2018 because U.S. stakeholders are able to represent their interests without a U.S. government intermediary. In addition, the threat of withdrawal can sometimes spur desired reforms, such as those adopted in September by the Universal Postal Union to address U.S. concerns.[19]

This process should be undertaken periodically by every U.S. administration. In a handful of cases, it could result in a reevaluation of U.S. membership, but in most cases, the benefits of U.S. membership in international organizations will outweigh the costs. Overall, however, it serves U.S. interests to periodically evaluate the benefits of international organizations and can be a powerful tool to prioritize funding and identify organizations in need of reform.

- **Balancing U.S. support against other foreign policy priorities.** While supporting international organizations often helps extend or amplify U.S. influence, sometimes other foreign policy priorities are so negatively affected that the U.S. should withdraw or end its support. An example of this dynamic is the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The Palestinians have sought membership in U.N. organizations for years as a way to achieve recognition without a negotiated peace with Israel. In response, the U.S. enacted legislation in the 1990s to withhold funding from international organizations that accord "the Palestine Liberation Organization the same standing as member states"[20] or grant "full membership as a state to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood."[21] The U.S. did this because the Palestinian effort undermines prospects for a negotiated peace with Israel. When the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) granted full membership to the Palestinians in 2011, the U.S. ceased funding to UNESCO and withdrew in 2018. Despite Palestinian efforts, other U.N. specialized agencies have heeded the U.S. response to UNESCO and have not granted them full membership if U.S. funding could be effected. To discourage U.N. organizations from granting membership to the Palestinians before they have concluded a mutually agreed peace agreement with Israel, Congress and the Administration should enforce U.S. law.
- **Using U.S. withholding purposefully.** As discussed earlier, the U.S. has successfully and justifiably withheld funding from the United Nations and other international organizations to

[18]United States General Accounting Office, "U.S. Participation in Special-Purpose International Organizations," GAO/NSIAD-97-35, March 1997, https://www.gao.gov/assets/230/223708.pdf (accessed November 19, 2019), and Warren Christopher, "Readying the United Nations for the Twenty-First Century: Some 'UN-21' Proposals for Consideration," U.S. Non-Paper, July 20, 1995, p. 3.

[19]Brett D. Schaefer, "A U.S. Victory at the Universal Postal Union," September 27, 2019, https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/commentary/us-victory-the-universal-postal-union (accessed November 19, 2019).

[20]H.R. 3792, Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991, Public Law No. 101–246, 101st Cong., February 16, 1990, Title IV, Section 414, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-104/pdf/STATUTE-104-Pg15.pdf (accessed October 8, 2019).

[21]H.R. 2333, Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995, Public Law No. 103–236, 103rd Cong., April 30, 1994, Title IV, Section 410, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-108/pdf/STATUTE-108-Pg382.pdf (accessed October 8, 2019).

secure specific reforms. When funding is withheld for little discernable purpose, however, it can undermine U.S. interests. A case in point is the practice of paying U.N. assessments in the last quarter of the year. This practice, launched in 1984 to realize a one-time budget savings, continues today. The practical impact on the U.S. budget is negligible—the funds are appropriated regardless, albeit delayed—but provides grist for those eager to criticize the U.S. for any number of reasons. Congress should consider appropriating funds to reverse this practice and its unnecessary damage to U.S. influence for no clear policy purpose.

By contrast, the U.S. must be willing to withhold funding to press the U.N. or other international organizations to adopt specific reforms. Financial leverage is often necessary to spur reluctant member states or bureaucracies to support reforms. A defensible illustration of this practice is the 15 percent withholding to ensure that the U.N. is implementing best practices on whistleblower protection. Another principled withholding is enforcing a 25 percent maximum payment for U.N. peacekeeping. Since the first scale of assessments in 1946, the U.S. has objected to relying excessively on a single member state for the budget.[22] Two decades ago, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke testified to the Senate that he had secured a deal to lower the U.S. peacekeeping assessment to 25 percent as required under U.S. law and as a condition for payment of U.S. arrears under the Helms–Biden agreement. By 2009, the U.S. share had fallen to less than 26 percent. Starting in 2010, however, the U.S. assessment began to rise again. Today, it is 27.8912 percent. The failure to lower the U.S. assessment to 25 percent has cost U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars because Congress, in past years, has approved payments over 25 percent in continuing resolutions and omnibus appropriations bills.[23] When the U.S. does this, the other U.N. member states have little incentive to adopt a maximum peacekeeping assessment of 25 percent. The U.S. should enforce the 25 percent cap as an incentive for the U.N. member states to change the scale of assessments. As with the Helms–Biden Act, the U.S. should pay these arrears only after the U.N. incorporates a maximum assessment of 25 percent in the methodology for calculating the peacekeeping scales of assessment.

- **Initiating and maintaining aggressive diplomatic efforts to achieve U.S. policy objectives.** Withholding funds will not achieve the intended outcome unless other nations know what the U.S. wants to accomplish. Broad-brush goals are not sufficient, the U.S. must inform other governments of the specific changes necessary to resume U.S. funding and initiate aggressive diplomatic engagement. For example, criticizing the Human Rights Council for its anti-Israel bias and poor membership—both valid criticisms—is not sufficient. If the U.S. wants to reform the council, it must explain what specific reforms would lead it to continue its participation and support and work with other governments to achieve those reforms.[24]

  Discussions about desired reforms must start and continue in New York (or Geneva or other locations where organizations are headquartered) but success will require support from U.S. ambassadors to individual countries and occasional intervention by the Secretary of State and the White House. Similar effort must be

[22]Brett D. Schaefer, "The U.S. Must Increase Diplomatic Pressure to Change the United Nations Scale of Assessments," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 3397, March 19, 2019, https://www.heritage.org/budget-and-spending/report/the-us-must-increase-diplomatic-pressure-change-the-united-nations-scale.

[23]Brett D. Schaefer, "U.S. Must Enforce Peacekeeping Cap to Lower America's U.N. Assessment," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2762, January 25, 2013, https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/us-must-enforce-peacekeeping-cap-lower-americas-un-assessment, and Brett D. Schaefer, "Diplomatic Effort to Reduce America's Peacekeeping Dues Must Start Now," Heritage Foundation *Issue Brief* No. 4781, November 1, 2017, https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/IB4781.pdf.

[24]See, for instance, Brett D. Schaefer, "A U.N. Human Rights Council Reform Agenda for the Trump Administration," Heritage Foundation *Issue Brief* No. 4674, March 29, 2017, https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2017-03/IB4674_0.pdf, and Brett D. Schaefer, "U.N. Human Rights Council: Reform Recommendations for the Trump Administration," Heritage Foundation *Issue Brief* No. 4788, November 27, 2017, https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/IB4788_0.pdf.

initiated early to help rally support for preferred candidates to lead important international organizations.

- **Identifying the purpose, scope, and means of expanded Chinese influence in international organizations.** Congress should charge the U.S. intelligence community with reporting on Chinese objectives, tactics, and influence in international organizations. These reports should be the basis for adjusting U.S. policy and resources to equip the executive branch to counter Chinese influence where it undermines U.S. interests or the independence and purposes of those organizations.
- **Making U.N. voting a mandatory consideration in aid allocation.** While the U.S. uses its foreign assistance to advance a number of goals, advancing U.S. interests in the U.N. must be a priority. Considering the serious matters discussed, debated, and decided in the U.N., failing to include this goal among the hundreds of legislative directives on aid allocation is extremely imprudent. Not every U.N. vote is equally important to the United States, but some affect important U.S. interests. Between 1980 and 2017, voting coincidence with the U.S. averaged 34.6 percent.[25] Diplomacy alone cannot shift the balance; the U.S. can and should exert more influence and pressure on other member states to support its positions when important U.S. priorities are at stake. This consideration has acquired increased urgency now that China is using its bilateral assistance to reward support in the U.N.[26] Congress should make support for U.S. positions in the U.N. a mandatory consideration when allocating aid.

Conclusion

The U.S. should not regard multilateral relationships and membership in international organizations as ends in themselves; they are means for securing the safety, prosperity, and opportunities of the American people. Each international organization has its own virtues and flaws. They contribute differently to U.S. strategic, economic, and political interests. The U.S. should participate where membership benefits U.S. interests, cease participation when the costs outweigh the benefits, and always press for reforms to improve performance, efficiency, and accountability.

American leadership can be decisive in improving the performance of international organizations and focusing them on the missions and purposes that they were created to pursue. It is incumbent on U.S. policymakers to be responsible and judicial in assuming international commitments. If the U.S. is to succeed, it must be willing to work through international organizations to address genuinely shared concerns, but it must not hesitate to use the tools available to it, including withholding its financial support, to bolster its efforts to reform these organizations and advance U.S. interests.

[25]Brett D. Schaefer and Anthony Kim, "The U.S. Should Employ Foreign Aid in Support of U.S. Policy at the U.N.," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 3356, October 5, 2018, https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/BG3356.pdf.

[26]Axel Dreher, Andreas Fuchs, Bradley Parks, Austin M. Strange, and Michael J. Tierney, "Apples and Dragon Fruits: The Determinants of Aid and Other Forms of State Financing from China to Africa," AidData *Working Paper* No. 15, October 2015, http://docs.aiddata.org/ad4/files/wps15_apples_and_dragon_fruits.pdf (accessed November 19, 2019).

TABLE 2

United Nations Scale of Assessments for 2019 (Page 1 of 2)

	REGULAR BUDGET		PEACEKEEPING BUDGET	
	Assessment (%)	Dollars	Assessment (%)	Dollars
Total		$2,905,898,900		$6,518,855,700
Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council				
United States of America	22.000%	$639,297,758	27.8912%	$1,818,187,081
France	4.427%	$128,644,144	5.6125%	$365,870,776
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	4.567%	$132,712,403	5.7900%	$377,441,745
China	12.005%	$348,853,163	15.2197%	$992,150,281
Russian Federation	2.405%	$69,886,869	3.0490%	$198,759,910
Non-Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council				
Belgium	0.821%	$23,857,430	0.8210%	$53,519,805
Cote d'Ivoire	0.013%	$377,767	0.0026%	$169,490
Dominican Republic	0.053%	$1,540,126	0.0106%	$690,999
Equatorial Guinea	0.016%	$464,944	0.0024%	$156,453
Germany	6.090%	$176,969,243	6.0900%	$396,998,312
Indonesia	0.543%	$15,779,031	0.1086%	$7,079,477
Kuwait	0.252%	$7,322,865	0.2331%	$15,195,453
Peru	0.152%	$4,416,966	0.0304%	$1,981,732
Poland	0.802%	$23,305,309	0.2406%	$15,684,367
South Africa	0.272%	$7,904,045	0.0544%	$3,546,258
Total All Current Security Council Members	54.418%	$1,581,332,063	65.1561%	$4,247,432,139
Other Highly Assessed Countries				
Australia	2.210%	$64,220,366	2.2100%	$144,066,711
Brazil	2.948%	$85,665,900	0.5896%	$38,435,173
Canada	2.734%	$79,447,276	2.7340%	$178,225,515
Italy	3.307%	$96,098,077	3.3070%	$215,578,558
Republic of Korea	2.267%	$65,876,728	2.267%	$147,782,459
Saudi Arabia	1.172%	$34,057,135	1.0841%	$70,670,915
Japan	8.564%	$248,861,182	8.5640%	$558,274,802
Turkey	1.371%	$39,839,874	0.2742%	$17,874,702
Spain	2.146%	$62,360,590	2.1460%	$139,894,643
Large Peacekeeping Troop Contributors				
Bangladesh	0.010%	$290,590	0.0010%	$65,189
Ethiopia	0.010%	$290,590	0.0010%	$65,189
India	0.834%	$24,235,197	0.1668%	$10,873,451
Nepal	0.007%	$203,413	0.0007%	$45,632
Pakistan	0.115%	$3,341,784	0.0230%	$1,499,337
Rwanda	0.003%	$87,177	0.0003%	$19,557

TABLE 2

United Nations Scale of Assessments for 2019 (Page 2 of 2)

	REGULAR BUDGET		PEACEKEEPING BUDGET	
	Assessment (%)	Dollars	Assessment (%)	Dollars
Notable Groupings				
Lowest assessment (30 countries regular budget, 17 countries peacekeeping budget)	0.001%	$29,059	0.0001%	$6,519
Least assessed 129 countries (regular budget)	1.633%	$47,453,329		
Least assessed 178 countries (regular budget)	21.603%	$627,761,339		
Least assessed 186 countries (peacekeeping budget)			27.5258%	$1,794,367,182
Geneva Group (17 countries)	67.462%	$1,960,377,516	74.2753%	$4,841,899,628
G–77 + China (133 countries)	25.477%	$740,335,863	20.2829%	$1,322,212,983
G–77 without China	13.472%	$391,482,700	5.0632%	$330,062,702
NAM (119 countries)	9.533%	$277,019,342	4.1673%	$271,660,274
OIC (56 countries)	6.615%	$192,225,212	3.0984%	$201,980,225

NOTES:

• The regular budget amount is half of the biennial budget for 2018 and 2019 as adjusted mid-biennium in December 2018. The peacekeeping budget amount is the approved resources for July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

• The Geneva Group is made up of countries who share a common view on administrative and budgetary matters. Membership is Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. Membership list available at The Geneva Group, "About the Geneva Group," http://www.thegenevagroup.net/cms/home/about-the-geneva-group.html.

• The G-77 is made up of 132 countries and "Palestine." Membership list available at The Group of 77, "The Member States of the Group of 77," http://www.g77.org/geninfo/members.html.

• The NAM is made up of 119 countries and "Palestine." Membership list available at 16th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, "NAM Members & Observers," May 2012, https://web.archive.org/web/20140208210716/http://nam.gov.ir/Portal/Home/Default.aspx?CategoryID=27f3fbb6-8a39-444e-b557-6c74aae7f75f.

• The OIC is made up of 56 countries and the "State of Palestine." Membership list available at Organisation of Islamic Cooperation , "Members," https://www.oic-oci.org/states/?lan=en.

SOURCES:

United Nations General Assembly, "Approved resources for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020," A/C.5/73/21, July 3, 2019, https://undocs.org/A/C.5/73/21; Report of the Secretary-General (accessed November 15, 2019); United Nations General Assembly, "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations: Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 55/235 and 55/236," A/73/350/Add.1, December 24, 2018, http://undocs.org/en/A/73/350/Add.1 (accessed November 15, 2019); and United Nations General Assembly, "Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019," A/RES/73/280 A–C, January 7, 2019, https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/280%20A (accessed November 15, 2019).

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