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THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED NATIONS: A BALANCE SHEET

INTRODUCTION

Born from the ashes of a devastating world war, the United Nations was to many a new hope for a more peaceful world. The United States gave its blessings: on July 28, 1945, the U.S. Senate ratified the U.N. Charter by a vote of 89 to 2. Were the vote to be taken today, the tally probably would be reversed. Not only has the U.N. failed to fulfill the lofty hopes of its founders, but it has itself become -- in the eyes of growing numbers of American observers -- a major cause of global disharmony. To some, indeed, the U.N. has become -- to cite the titles of two books about the organization -- "a dangerous place."[1] And to many Americans, the U.N. has become an object of suspicion and, perhaps worse, of ridicule and derision.

What has happened to the U.N. since its founding? Or, at least, what has happened to American perception of that institution? Why does the U.S. find itself under almost constant siege at the U.N.? These are questions which American policymakers ought to be and are asking. How they are answered may well determine for the rest of this century the role of the U.S. in the U.N. -- or even whether the U.S. chooses to stay in the U.N.

By almost any measure, the U.S. has been the world's most enthusiastic booster of the U.N. From the outset, American

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1 Abraham Yeselson & Anthony Gaglione, A Dangerous Place: The United Nations as a Weapon in World Politics (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1974); Daniel Patrick Moynihan, A Dangerous Place (New York: Berkley Books, 1980).

generosity exceeded that of any other nation. Until 1964, the U.S. paid almost 40 percent of the U.N. assessed budget, gradually reducing this to 25 percent in 1974 (still the current percentage). By contrast, the U.S.S.R. pays less than 13 percent. From 1946 to 1980, the U.N. cost U.S. taxpayers nearly $10 billion. In 1980 alone, the U.S. paid more than $500 million in voluntary contributions, in addition to its $350 million membership assessment. This does not include the billions of U.S. dollars for direct or indirect foreign aid, which often find their way to the U.N. and other international organizations since many developing nations are dependent on Washington for the money with which they pay their dues.

Nothing has changed the nature of the U.N. as much as its exploding membership. In his article "The United States in Opposition," former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Daniel Patrick Moynihan traces the problem to "the British revolution" of 1947, when Britain granted India independence.[2] The other great empires, except the Russian, soon broke up as well, resulting in a tripling of U.N. membership within less than four decades. From 51 members in 1945, the U.N. grew to 82 by 1958, 115 in 1964, and now stands at 157; three states were admitted in 1981. Few observers realized in the early years that the new nations, most of them plagued with internal economic and political problems, would be interested less in international stability and more in asserting "the international power to which [they] feel entitled by virtue of their numbers."[3]

U.N. membership did not inevitably have to expand so rapidly. The Charter had stipulated that membership be restricted to "peace-loving states" which are both "able and willing to carry out the [Charter] obligations." This provision, however, was modified substantially in practice: in 1955, ignoring an advisory opinion by the International Court that each application for membership be considered on its own merits,[4] the Soviet Union and the United States agreed to a "package deal" whereby sixteen new states were admitted to membership. Such a package seemed necessary to avoid a paralyzing stalemate. By 1964 sixty-six additional members had joined the U.N., many of them freshly emerged from

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2 Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "The United States in Opposition," Commentary, March 1975.

3 Joseph E. Johnson, "Helping to Build New States," in Francis O. Wilcox and H. Field Haviland, Jr., The United States and the United Nations (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 3.

4 In 1947, the General Assembly (on Western initiative) requested the International Court to define membership criteria more clearly -- in particular, to decide whether a member was juridically entitled to make its consent to admission dependent on an additional condition that other states be admitted simultaneously. In 1948, the court advised that it was not so entitled; the vote was 9-6. Cited in Ruth B. Russell, The United Nations and United States Security Policy (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1968), p. 360.

colonial dependency, not always able or willing to carry out their Charter obligations.[5]

Problems were quick to surface. Since each member is entitled to an equal voice in the General Assembly, a discrepancy between voting power and financial contribution is inevitable. As Ambassador Edward Hambro of Norway remarked in 1970: "It is ridiculous, of course, that we have a voting majority that pays only 3% of the budget."[6] During fiscal year 1980-1981, for example, rich Saudi Arabia paid only .58 percent of the U.N. budget and Kuwait paid a mere .2 percent, compared to 4.4 percent for the relatively poor United Kingdom, .5 percent for Norway and 1.7 percent for Spain.[7] In fact, the entire "Group of 77," whose more than 120 members -- among them Saudi Arabia -- aggressively urge economic redistribution to benefit developing countries, contributes only about 8.8 percent of the total U.N. budget. Yet the policies endorsed by many of the smallest U.N. contributors have serious negative implications -- both political and economic -- for its largest supporter, the U.S. It is no wonder, therefore, that the American public is becoming increasingly disenchanted with the U.N.

THE PUBLIC VIEW

The American public originally had welcomed the U.N.[8] Even in 1959, the Gallup Poll reported that 87 percent of Americans thought the U.N. was doing a good job. But within little over a decade, on October 24, 1970, Thomas Vail, a member of the President's Commission for the Observance of the 25th Anniversary of the U.N., was to report that public faith in the U.N.'s peacekeeping ability had declined to 50 percent. The following year, the Gallup Poll reported a drop to 35 percent. On November 19, 1980, George Gallup revealed that the public's rating of the U.N. performance had dropped to a 35-year low: only three out of ten Americans felt the U.N. was doing a "good job" in trying to solve the problems it has had to face, while 53 percent felt it was doing a "poor job." In his report, Gallup noted that his poll "has measured the public attitudes toward the U.N. since its formation in 1945, using questionnaires appropriate to the internal

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5 The nations admitted in 1955 were: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Ceylon, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Jordan, Laos, Libya, Nepal, Portugal, Romania, and Spain.

6 Thomas A. Hoge, "The United Nations' Happy (?) 25th Birthday," The American Legion Magazine, July 1970, p. 4.

7 See "Statement of Assessment of Member States' Contributions to the United Nations Regular Budget for 1981," ST/ADM/Ser. B/250, January 2, 1981, pp. 3-9.

8 See Public Attitudes Toward the U.N., Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Operations of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, July 27, 1977. Also, William A. Scott and Stephen B. Withey, The U.S. and The U.N.: The Public View 1945-1955 (New York: Manhattan Publishing Company, 1958).

situation at the time. At no point since then has satisfaction with the overall performance of the world organization been so low as it is today."[9] The trendline continues to plunge. A March 1981 Roper poll indicates that only 10 percent of the American public believes the U.N. has been "highly effective" in keeping world peace or in carrying out other functions. Americans, it seems, are well aware that the U.N. is not fulfilling its dream and has become an increasingly dangerous place.

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE U.N. ACTION

Many in the United States had unrealistically high hopes for the U.N. Coming back from the Yalta conference, President Franklin Roosevelt said the U.N.:

> spells the end of the system of unilateral action and exclusive alliances and spheres of influence and the balances of power, and all the other expedients which have been tried for centuries -- and have failed. We propose to substitute for all these a universal organization in which all peace-loving nations will finally have a chance to join.[10]

But the U.N. can do no more than what its Charter -- and its members -- allow. Professor Ruth Russell observes:

> The system provided for in that Charter could come fully into being only as the Members of the United Nations fulfilled their commitments to its peaceful purposes and principles. Such a state of affairs did not obtain after the end of the war. Instead, the United States found the Soviet Union seeking to achieve atomic standing and to force world politics into a mold very different from that hoped for by the United States and outlined in the Charter. Lesser powers also complicated the picture with their own conflicts.[11]

Even the lofty language of the Charter was to be used against the intentions of the idealistic American Founders. The provision "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples" has become the banner of the underdeveloped Third World governments' attempt to grab the wealth of the developed nations.[12] The provision that

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9 The Gallup Poll, released November 20, 1980, p. 3.

10 Cited in Ruth B. Russell, A History of the U.N. Charter (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1958), p. 547.

11 Russell, The United Nations and United States Security Policy, p. 3.

12 For an attempt at defining the "Third World," see Alfred Reifman, "Developing Countries -- Definitions and Data; or Third World, Fourth World, OPEC, and Other Countries," Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, March 22, 1976.

nothing contained in the Charter "shall authorize the U.N. to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state" did not prevent Soviet tanks from rumbling into Czechoslovakia in 1968. As the Soviet delegate to the U.N. argued at the time, "events in Czechoslovakia were a matter for the Czechoslovakian people and the states of the Socialist community, linked together as they were by common responsibilities, and for them alone."[13] The Security Council, as a result, did nothing to help the Czechs.

Another institutional flaw was soon reflected in the staffing problems of the U.N. Secretariat. In addition to the pathetic inefficiency for which that office is now known,[14] there is growing evidence of "political pressure and interference exerted by member governments at all levels of the Secretariat in the areas of recruitment and promotion."[15] Major offenders are the Soviet Union and its satellites, which regard as legitimate the use of political pressure to affect personnel decisions. According to Moynihan, moreover, Moscow has violated Article 100 of the U.N. Charter, by placing Soviet KGB agents in the Secretariat.[16] Two Soviet U.N. employees arrested by the FBI in 1979 were subsequently convicted of espionage. Former U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim even appointed a KGB officer as head of Personnel in Geneva, where the U.N. now has more employees than at its New York headquarters. In fact, according to Arkady Shevchenko, the highest ranked Soviet official at the U.N. before his defection in 1978, a very high percentage of Soviet delegates assigned to the U.N. Secretariat and other internationally staffed U.N. organizations, as well as the Soviets' own U.N. mission, report in one way or another to the KGB. A highly respected Swiss daily, the Tribune de Geneve, noted in its March 12, 1980, article "The KGB in Geneva," that "in terms of numbers, the Genevan capital represents the No. 1 stronghold of the Soviet secret service" -- anywhere from 25 to 60 percent according to Western

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13 "Situation in Czechoslovakia," UN Monthly Chronicle, August-September 1968, p. 40. For the broader legal and political context of this action see William O. Miller, "Collective Intervention and the Law of the Charter," Naval War College Review, April 1970, pp. 71-100.

14 See Robert Rhodes James, Staffing the U.N. Secretariat (Sussex, England: Institute for the Study of International Organizations, 1970); Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on Personnel Problems in the U.N., a/6454, October 5, 1971 (New York: UN, 1971); also, Richard Gardner, ed., The Future of the U.N. Secretariat (New York: UNITAR, 1977).

15 Seymour Maxwell Finger and Nina Hanan, "The United Nations Secretariat Revisited," Orbis, Spring 1981, p. 198. It is noteworthy that the Under Secretary for Political and Security Council Affairs has always been a Russian appointee.

16 Testimony of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York in Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, U.S. Participation in the U.N. and U.N. Reform, March 22, 1979, p. 11.

counterespionage. And Arnaud de Borchgrave wrote in Newsweek on May 7, 1979:

> Recently, the United Nations organization in Geneva and a dozen other international organizations in Geneva have been infiltrated by a rapidly increasing number of Soviet and East European spies. According to Western intelligence sources and Swiss security officials, 78 of the 300 Soviet employees serving the various organizations are agents of the KGB or GRU, Moscow's civilian and military intelligence services. They work closely with 50 intelligence operatives at the Soviet consulate and mission, with about 130 Swiss-based spies from East Europe and Cuba and with an additional 100 Third World or Swiss nationals recruited by Communist agents. Geneva, with a population of 325,000, has more Soviet-bloc spies per capita than any other city in the West -- and many diplomats contend that their presence is undermining the work of the United Nations.

The exact number of KGB spies at the U.N. cannot, of course, be known in the West. Yet the FBI appears to have a fairly good idea; Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina has repeatedly requested publication of those figures.[17] Finally, allegations that Secretariat officials have been taking payoffs from individuals seeking jobs are currently being investigated by a Secretariat committee.

In addition to the potential espionage activities of Secretariat staffers, there are many opportunities for spying for members of the various delegations to the U.N. This may have been one of the reasons why the U.S.S.R. insisted that the U.N. be located in the U.S.[18] Some U.N. diplomats have also expressed concern over the inexplicably large number of staff members of other Communist missions, notably the Cuban.[19]

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17 The discussion of KGB infiltration in the U.N. may be found in "Nomination of Jeane J. Kirkpatrick," Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 97th Congress, 1st Session, especially pp. 99-106.

18 Trygve Lie in his book In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the U.N. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954) records that the American delegate Philip Noel-Baker had been against a U.S. site, while "Andrei Gromyko of the U.S.S.R. had come out flatly for the U.S. As to where in the U.S., let the American Government decide, he had blandly told his colleagues. Later the Soviet Union modified its stand to support the East Coast." (p. 60). See also Angie L. Magnusson, "Location of the United Nations," Library of Congress Study, July 27, 1967, unpublished.

19 "Many Western diplomats believe that Cuba's U.N. mission is, indeed, a nest of spies....Westerners point out that Cuba's U.N. mission numbers 43, while countries of comparable population such as Madagascar, Belgium, and Greece maintain staffs of a dozen or under. 'If the Cubans are not spying, what do they need all those people for?' asks one suspicious European diplomat. 'There just isn't that much paperwork for a nation that small.'" U.S. News & World Report, September 22, 1980, p. 21.

Though the Charter and Secretariat bear considerable responsibility for today's disillusion with the U.N., the major culprits are the Security Council and the General Assembly and its affiliated agencies.

DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The Security Council might have been a powerful instrument for keeping peace. But given the ideological gulf between the Soviet Union and the other permanent members of the Security Council (the United Kingdom, France, Nationalist China, and the U.S.), it could never have performed its principal function. In the first two decades alone, the Soviet Union cast over 100 vetoes. Half of them killed membership applications from countries with non-communist governments. This made it impossible to create an international organization as broad as possible (within the limits of the Charter) and certainly frustrated the desires of the U.S.

Other Soviet vetoes:

- five vetoes (on September 20, 1946, July 29, twice on August 19, September 15, 1947) to protect Greece's Communist neighbors during the Greek civil war of 1946-1947, by refusing to endorse Security Council resolutions to investigate the conflicts in Northern Greece;

- the veto on May 24, 1948, of a U.N. probe into the Communist take-over of Czechoslovakia;

- the veto on October 25, 1948 of U.N. efforts calling for action to resolve the Berlin blockade;

- vetoes of resolutions on Korea on September 6, 12, and November 30, 1950, where U.N. action against Communist aggression was originally undertaken only because the Soviet Union had been absent from the Security Council on June 25, 1950;

- the veto of a Security Council resolution on November 4, 1956, calling upon the U.S.S.R. to desist from the use of force in Hungary;

- vetoes of U.N. actions concerning the Congo (on September 16 and December 13, 1960, and then again in 1961 -- two vetoes on February 20 and two on November 24).

The Congo provides a good example of Soviet tactics and American response. Dissatisfied with U.N. activities in that area, Moscow decided not to pay its assessed $40 million share of the cost of African peace-keeping, despite a ruling by the International Court of Justice that it was obliged to pay. In the face of Soviet adamancy, the U.S. backed down and chose to ignore

Article 19 of the Charter, which stipulates that a two-year payment deliquency by a member state is punishable by expulsion. Though Congress approved a $100 million bond issue in 1962 to bail out the U.N. only after obtaining a firm pledge that Washington would not let the Soviet Union get away with nonpayment, the U.S. nevertheless decided not to press the issue two years later. According to the latest State Department figures, the Soviet Union remains delinquent: it owes the U.N. a staggering $180,035,000 -- most of it for peace-keeping operations.

Equally troublesome has been U.S. readiness to endorse the Security Council double-standard. On November 20, 1965, and then again on May 29, 1968, the Council voted mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia's new government headed by Ian Smith. Some observers questioned the wisdom of having the U.S. delegation go along with this: U.S. News & World Report, for instance, saw the action as "cracking down on a country at peace" while the U.N. ignored "Red aggression in Asia."[20] But U.S. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg countered that in Rhodesia "we have witnessed an illegal seizure of power by a small minority bent on perpetuating the subjugation of the vast majority."[21] Could the same not be said of the Soviet Union? Indeed, the sanctions against Rhodesia forced the U.S. to buy chrome, a strategic mineral, from the Soviet Union, at a greatly increased price. Senator Harry F. Byrd, Jr., of Virginia was thus prompted to introduce an amendment -- not approved by the Congress until 1977 -- to permit the U.S. to import strategic materials from Rhodesia if those items were also being bought from Communist nations.

In the seventies, the U.S. found itself increasingly on the losing side. The Security Council seat of Nationalist China was given to the People's Republic of China in 1971, while the U.S. compromise proposal that Taiwan be allowed to retain a seat in the General Assembly was soundly defeated.

Now finding itself, as Moynihan puts it, "in opposition," the U.S. turned reluctantly to the weapon it had abjured for a quarter century: the veto. Washington cast its first Security Council nay on March 17, 1970, joining the United Kingdom in blocking a resolution which would have condemned Britain's refusal to use force against the Ian Smith regime in Southern Rhodesia, and would have severed all diplomatic, consular, economic, military, and other relations with that country. Then-U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Charles W. Yost said that it was a "most serious" decision for the U.S. to veto a resolution of the Security Council but that the U.S could not support a move implicitly calling on Britain to use force to overthrow the Smith regime, nor could it agree to measures that cut off the means by which Americans might leave Rhodesia.

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20 "Double Standard for U.N.? Action on Rhodesia and Vietnam," U.S. News & World Report, April 25, 1966, p. 50.

21 U.S. Department of State Press Release 304, December 29, 1966, p. 6.

Two years later, on September 10, 1972, the U.S. stood alone in its veto of a resolution that called for an immediate halt to military operations in the Middle East but failed to mention the terrorist acts -- the Israeli Olympic team murders -- that led to Israeli strikes against Syria and Lebanon. U.S. Secretary of State William P. Rogers said that the U.S. intended to use the veto again; too often in the past, he told reporters, other delegations had persuaded the U.S. to soften its position so that the Soviet Union or some other permanent member of the Security Council would not use the veto.[22] In 1973, the U.S. vetoed another Security Council resolution concerning the Middle East, only to witness, a year later, the spectacle of the General Assembly welcoming to its podium Yassir Arafat, the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, a Soviet-backed terrorist organization dedicated to the annihilation of Israel. This was the first time that a representative of any group lacking official U.N. status had appeared before the General Assembly.

Also in 1974, the U.S., along with Britain and France, blocked a resolution to expel South Africa from the U.N. Whatever one may think of South Africa's separatist policies, they argue, that country represents no great threat to international peace -- no greater, certainly, than the U.S.S.R. -- and is thus entitled to participate in the Assembly.

Some comfort might be gained from the belief that the Security Council, if often ineffective, at least did not harm the U.S. But according to another point of view, ably articulated by Senator Henry Jackson of Washington, the U.N. prevented the U.S. from acting more vigorously in pursuit of its own interests. And the very existence of the U.N. might have hampered a wiser definition of American national interest.

DISAPPOINTMENTS IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The principal action of the U.N. takes place in the General Assembly. This is due in part to the paralysis of the Security Council. Indeed, as soon as the U.S. recognized that the Security Council would be at the mercy of Soviet vetoes, it turned to the General Assembly in the hope that it could appeal to the moral sense of the majority of its members. The U.S. took advantage of Article 10, which empowers the Assembly to discuss any questions or matter "within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter." This made it possible for the U.S. to propose the "Uniting for Peace Resolution" on November 3, 1950, to deal with the Korean crisis. The General Assembly asserted its right to meet in emergency session whenever there was a threat to the

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22 M. A. Farrar, "U.S. to Use U.N. Veto More, Rogers Says," New York Times, October 15, 1972.

peace and the Security Council was unable to agree upon a course of action. That resolution added to the prestige, if not the power, of the General Assembly.[23] In retrospect, however, it is questionable whether the prestige of the Assembly should have been enhanced. By the mid-1970s, the Assembly had become a center of anti-Western rhetoric and action. Some examples are:

- inflammatory rhetoric condemning the U.S. and its allies on almost every political, economic and social issue;
- measures designed to redistribute to the developing states the economic resources of the industrial nations, especially the U.S., and to control the activities of Western businessmen;
- measures designed to curtail the free flow of information;
- measures to aid terrorists.

INFLAMMATORY RHETORIC

The crescendo of inflammatory rhetoric under the auspices of the General Assembly is one of the most disturbing features of that organization. Initially, it was the Soviet Union that delivered the anti-American speeches. After 1961, when the size of U.N. membership had more than doubled, the attacks echoed in other quarters as well. Ideology was being formed, and terms redefined. In 1961, for example, India's Krishna Menon stated that "colonialism is permanent aggression." The phrase was soon to assume a life of its own. Professor Ali A. Mazrui explains:

> This became an important theme in Afro-Asian argumentation mainly following India's annexation of Goa....The more militant attitude toward colonialism which now characterizes the General Assembly both reflects and helps to consolidate new attitudes toward that phenomenon. And even the criteria of what constitutes domestic jurisdiction and external intervention and interference may imperceptibly be undergoing a legal re-definition as the old principles are newly tossed around in the tussle of United Nations politics.[24]

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23 Besides being invoked during the Korean crisis, the "Uniting for Peace" Resolution has been used eight times. One recent case was in 1980 to respond to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and another was in September of 1981 to condemn South Africa's occupation of Namibia.

24 Ali A. Mazrui writes in his article "The U.N. and Some African Political Attitudes":

> Krishna Menon started invoking the concept of "permanent aggression" to reporters (the BBC broadcasted the doctrine) even before he

A few years later, in 1965 and in 1966, the General Assembly declared the continuation of colonial rule and the practice of racial discrimination to be crimes against humanity and threats to international peace. These words later would be used by the Soviet Union and Third World delegates to attack the U.S. action in Vietnam, the policies of South Africa and the actions of Israel -- among others.

Throughout the sixties, the U.S. was charged increasingly with enormous crimes against humanity. Among them was "racism." As early as 1964, when the U.S. joined Belgium to send a mercy mission to Stanleyville in the Congo to rescue not only whites but Asians and blacks as well who were suffering from the war in that area, eighteen black African governments protested that the mercy lift was an act of aggression, colonialism, and imperialism.

By 1971, the U.S. was routinely being condemned as an imperialist aggressor in the halls of the General Assembly. In November of that year, when the representative of the People's Republic of China replaced the Taiwanese delegate at the U.N., a decisive turn against the U.S. had taken place. The U.S. had previously been able to marshall enough support to block Peking's admission to the U.N. The seating of Peking symbolized America's shrinking power in the U.N. In his acceptance speech, the Chinese ambassador accused the U.S. of aggression for sending U.S. naval forces into the Taiwan Strait, and for military intervention in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. George Bush, then-U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., chastised the Chinese for "intemperate language" and for firing "empty cannons of rhetoric."

Volleys were fired constantly from other Third World nations. Consider the outrageous statement by M. S. Aulagi, representative of South Yemen, in the General Assembly on October 11, 1971:

> The insistence of the U.S. in continuing [its imperialist and colonialist] policies, which are in contradiction of the interests of humanity in progress and cooperation, will lead that country once again into isolation and eclipse, against its own will.

In fact, reading through speeches made by representatives from Cuba, Libya, Niger, Albania, and most of the other Third World nations over the next decade reveals a disturbing rhetorical

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arrived at the U.N....Professor W. H. Abraham of Ghana lent philosophical backing to Menon's approach by reaffirming that "colonialism is aggression." [See his Mind of Africa (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1962), p. 152.] This idiom may have started as merely figurative use of the word "aggression." But it would not be the first instance in which a figurative use of a given term later took on a literal meaning as well.

International Organization, vol. XVIII, No. 3, Summer 1964, p. 506.

battle. Yet it has taken years for the U.S. to realize its significance. It is this which prompted Moynihan in 1975 to accuse the U.S. of "complacency" which could only be due, he charged, to "the failure to perceive that a distinctive ideology was at work [in the Third World], and that skill and intelligence were required to deal with it successfully."[25]

A major victory for the proponents of that ideology was the condemnation, on November 10, 1975, of Zionism as "a form of racism." This move so outraged American lawmakers, who saw the resolution as an insult to language and to common sense, that many questioned whether the U.S. should continue contributing money to the U.N. The following day, the Senate unanimously called for prompt hearings to "reassess the U.S.' further participation in the U.N."[26] In the Senate debate, Robert Packwood of Oregon said, "I can't think of anything in the last 30 years as odious. Wherever Hitler may be I am sure he drank a toast to the devil last night."[27]

A more recent case of the anti-American offensive took place at the end of September 1981, when ninety-three Third World nations endorsed a document accusing the U.S. of being the only threat to world peace and prosperity today. Then on October 1, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Feleke Gedle-Giorgis unleashed a tirade from the General Assembly podium.

> International imperialism, spearheaded by the United States, has intensified its futile effort to reverse national liberation and social emancipation in southern Africa....We are being daily threatened by United States imperialism. There are some ten United States military bases in and around our region alone. These keep a constant watch on countries in the region which are not amenable to Washington's dictate. The now all too familiar bogey being employed is, of course, the Soviet threat. No one, except those who worship the demi-god in Washington, will be fooled by such a smoke-screen.

Gedle-Giorgis went on to claim that the U.S. was "bent on dominating the people of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean."

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25 "The United States in Opposition," p. 36.

26 This was not a move to get the U.S. out of the U.N. Rather, it was a call for a reassessment of U.S. participation in the U.N. Calls to get the U.S. out of the U.N. have been made in Congress ever since 1950 (H.R. 5080 and H.R. 5081, both asking to rescind membership of the U.S. in the U.N.). Many other similar bills have been introduced (e.g., H.R. 164 on January 4, 1965; H.R. 11465 on July 13, 1967; H.R. 360 and H.R. 2632, both in January 1971) but none have met with much support.

27 See Daniel Patrick Moynihan, A Dangerous Place, Chapters 9 and 10, for a detailed description of the circumstances surrounding the vote.

The next afternoon, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Jeane Kirkpatrick stingingly countered with a hard-hitting speech condemning the Ethiopian minister's "strident and vituperative attack on the United States." She accused him of the "Big Lie":

> The pattern is a simple one: He accuses others of committing crimes which have, in fact, been perpetrated by his own regime and by those countries with which his regime is allied....He speaks, for example, of "the determination of Africans"....In fact, it is his own regime that is guilty of the very savagery of which he speaks....It is estimated that some 30,000 persons in Ethiopia were summarily executed for political reasons between 1974 and 1978 -- 10,000 in 1977 alone.

Adding that Cambodia "is occupied by 200,000 troops from Vietnam," the Ambassador said "these are the 'imperialist meddlers.'" In her closing words, she expressed U.S. commitment to international cooperation, but warned that this country "cannot sit by quietly when the Big Lie echoes in these chambers." The speech expressed well the frustration of the American people when faced with such rhetoric.

It is this Big Lie that has made a mockery of General Assembly human rights discussions. As Ambassador Kirkpatrick said on November 24, 1981, "no aspect of United Nations affairs has been more perverted by politicization in the last decade than have its human rights activities." Moreover, what the U.N. has not done is no less part of the record, with all the cries of outrage it has not uttered, all the moral indignation it did not express. The human rights agencies of the United Nations have been silent while 3 million Cambodians died in Pol Pot's murderous Utopia; the human rights agencies of the United Nations have been silent while a quarter of a million Ugandans died at the hands of Idi Amin. The human rights organizations of the United Nations have been silent about the thousands of Soviet citizens denied equal rights, equal protection of the law, denied the right to think, write, publish, work freely, or to emigrate to some place of their own choosing.

ECONOMIC MEASURES

More serious than the rhetorical offensive, however, are the actions by the General Assembly and its related agencies which attempt to redistribute U.S. resources and to regulate activities of American businessmen dealing in the Third World. Although not explicitly coordinated, the regulatory programs debated and sometimes adopted at the U.N. share common principles and common methods of implementation.

One of the earliest attempts to use the U.N. to transform rapidly the economics of the Third World was the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Established in 1964 as a

permanent body for formulating general rules on trade between rich and poor countries, UNCTAD soon began working on so-called codes of conduct designed specifically to help non-Western nations. UNCTAD also served as midwife at the birth of the U.N. Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, adopted on December 12, 1974, by a General Assembly vote of 120 to 6 (including the U.S.), with 10 abstentions.[28] A new breed of self-styled international regulators cites this charter, along with The New International Economic Order (NIEO), to justify schemes for recasting world economic relations.[29] In essence, these efforts aim at creating an elaborate system of redistribution which would compel the U.S. to share its technological resources and output with developing nations.[30]

Perhaps the most celebrated of the efforts for a new economic order is the draft treaty by the U.N. Conference on the Law of the Sea which has been meeting since 1973. It would create a major multilateral body called "the Seabed Authority," authorized to allocate mining sites, conduct its own seabed explorations, control private competitors and levy its own taxes.

In March 1981, before the opening of what was to be the Law of the Sea Conference's final session, the Reagan Administration announced that it would not, as the Carter Administration had agreed, conclude the treaty by May 1981. The reasons for the delay, explained by the Administration, are that the Law of the Sea treaty, as it stands,

- discriminates against private mining enterprise;
- inadequately protects development investments made before the treaty's effective date;
- fails to make any provisions for arbitration of disputes between the mining industry and governments; and

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28 The Economic Charter was adopted in GA Res. 3281 (XXIX), 29 UN GAOR, Supp. (No. 31) 50, UN Doc. A/9631 (1974). The countries that joined the U.S. in its vote against the Charter were Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Luxemburg, and the United Kingdom.

29 "The Economic Charter, a consensual U.N. declaration, arguably has legal force that delineates the rights and duties of member states." Edward A. Laing, "International Economic Law and Public Order in the Age of Equality," Law & Policy in International Business, vol. 12: 727, 1980, p. 754. Laing's article provides useful background discussion and analysis of the history and implications of the Economic Charter.

30 See Richard Berryman and Richard Schifter, "A Global Straightjacket," Regulation, September/October 1981, pp. 19-28. For a good discussion of the implications of U.N. regulatory action see Raymond J. Waldham, Regulating International Business Through Code of Conduct (Washington, and London: American Enterprise Institute, 1980).

- fails to make any provisions for arbitration of disputes between the mining industry and governments; and

- subjects U.S. interests to decisions made by a forum in which the U.S. would carry very little weight.

Other areas potentially rich in important natural resources are also targets of U.N.-inspired international regulation. An Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies took effect in 1980; it establishes an international regime to govern exploration and extraction activities in outer space with an eye to favoring the enterprises of developing nations. Lacing this agreement are theoretical implications hostile to the principles of free enterprise. Though Jimmy Carter eventually decided not to endorse the treaty, the issue is by no means dead.

Another scheme designed to benefit the developing nations at potentially great cost to the Western industrial societies is the Code of Restrictive Business Practices, adopted by the General Assembly in 1980. This Code forces multinational corporations to sell their technology and know-how more cheaply and less efficiently for the benefit of Third World nations.[31]

An equally alarming UNCTAD action is the Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences to take effect when the European Economic Community ratifies it, as it soon is expected to do. This Code aims at promoting the maritime industries of developing nations by allocating shipping tonnage.[32] If the Code goes into effect this year -- and it may -- it could bring some far-reaching changes to American shipping:

- freight rates would be subject to large jumps every fifteen months;

- the U.S. could lose liner cargoes because these would be shifted to more specialized carriers;

- American laws would have to be changed extensively, resulting in increased regulations; and

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31 A useful discussion of international regulation affecting the transnational corporation may be found in Studies in Transnational Economic Law, vol. I: Legal Problems of Codes of Conduct for Multinational Enterprises, edited by Norbert Horn (Deventer, the Netherlands: Kluwer Publishers, 1980).

32 For a useful recent analysis of the Liner Code see Stefan Lopatin, "The UNCTAD Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences: Time for a U.S. Response," 22 Harvard International Law Journal, 1981, pp. 355 ff. For a brief discussion of the development of the liner conference system, see Department of Transportation, "Potential Economic Impact Non-Market Cargo Allocation in U.S. Foreign Trade," Report No. DOT-TSC OST-76-31, pp. 19-20.

- disputes would be settled by a conciliation process; this reverses the longstanding U.S. practice of maintaining open liner conferences and ignores U.S. laws requiring that government and government-financed shipments be carried by U.S. flagships.

The disadvantages to signing the Code may be less onerous, however, than outright refusal to ratify, which would leave the U.S. out of important negotiations that might permit working out mutually acceptable arrangements.[33]

Another major target of U.N. regulatory activity is the pharmaceutical industry. During the past six years, four different U.N. entities -- UNCTAD, the U.N. Center for Transnational Corporations, the U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the World Health Organization (WHO) -- have begun trying to control pharmaceuticals. WHO, for instance, has passed a code recommending regulation of breast-milk substitutes; this has serious implications for the regulation of food products in general, and drugs in particular. UNIDO is trying to redistribute the revenues of the pharmaceutical companies by limiting royalties and prices; it is also seeking ways to obtain licensing information and technology transfer for the benefit of underdeveloped countries. Moreover, WHO is planning to regulate drug quality by establishing a body that would, in effect, supersede the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. In his "Background Paper on the North/South Dialogue and the New International Economic Order," prepared for the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association in June 1980, Paul Belford complains: these efforts "have generally been politically motivated, poorly researched, and biased against private industry."

The regulatory efforts of the U.N. and its agencies are heading full-speed ahead into 1982. The General Assembly, for example, has instructed the Centre on Transnational Corporations on December 22, 1981, to prepare a "register" of profits as part of an effort to regulate the economic activities of foreign interests which ostensibly impede the achievement of independence by peoples under "colonial domination" as defined in the Declaration of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The United States and other Western countries strongly opposed the resolution calling for this "register" on the grounds that it was ideologically motivated and completely failed to recognize the benefits of foreign investments in developing areas.

The economic offensive against the industrial nations shows no sign of abating. Indeed, the new Secretary General of the U.N., Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru, has called on the U.N. to

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[33] For a fine, thorough study of the Liner Code and various options available to the U.S., see the four-volume study by E. G. Frankel, Inc., entitled "Impact of Cargo Sharing on U.S. Liner Trade with Countries in the Far East and South East Asia," released by the Federal Maritime Commission in late December 1981.

continue and accelerate its efforts at redistribution. In his speech of December 15, 1981, Cuellar noted that he was assuming his new post at a time when "the longstanding initiative for the renewal of global negotiations between North and South is coming back within the purview of the U.N....This coincides with one of the most serious world economic crises of the past few decades, the most sorely pressed victims of which are the populations of the developing countries." By way of relief, he proposes to champion the cause of those whose "right to a better distribution of wealth and social well-being [is] in fact being infringed."

THREATS TO THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

Better covered by the press than efforts to regulate business activities are plans by the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to censor the flow of information. Since a 1976 Conference in Nairobi, UNESCO has been at work outlining a New World Information Order (NWIO) whose principal purpose is to alter the role of the media.[34] The Third World governments want to use the press to further their national ideologies. To this end, UNESCO produced a study in 1980 entitled Many Voices -- One World which recommends that journalists be "licensed" and "protected" and calls for a code of ethics for journalists. Congressman John J. Rhodes of Arizona commented:

> Understandably, the U.S. -- and, in fact, all nations that cherish a free press and the free flow of information -- strongly oppose implementation of the NWIO. Questions of news content and news values do not belong on intergovernmental agendas.[35]

An amendment to a State Department Authorization bill, which goes to conference in February 1982, would provide that none of the funds that go toward the assessed U.S. contribution to UNESCO will be paid in the event that the NWIO is implemented.

This is not the first time the U.S. has threatened to cut off funds to a U.N. agency. In November 1975, for example, the U.S. withdrew from the International Labor Organization (ILO) largely because of objections by American labor organizations. The list of American grievances included the ILO's recognition in June 1974 of an observer from the PLO, as well as the double-standard implicit in the ILO attacks on the human rights record of such countries as Chile and Tanzania while remaining silent on the Soviet and Eastern European dictatorships. At congressional

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34 An enormous amount of material has been written on the NEIO. A concise set of papers was included in The Media Institute's Issues in International Information, vol. I, distributed on November 13, 1981, and vol. II, forthcoming.

35 Human Events, December 12, 1981, p. 17.

hearings on May 12, 1981, Ambassador Kirkpatrick recommended the U.S. cut off funds from the ILO and urged using that method again. "I think that we have in a way acquiesced in the perversion of a good many of the U.N. agencies and activities," she said, "by failing to object as vigorously as we should have, or to demonstrate our unhappiness, for example, by withholding funds." She was especially concerned that such agencies as UNESCO, the U.N. Environmental Program (UNEP), and the Women's Decade Conference, have been transformed into platforms for anti-U.S. demagoguery.

U.N. AID TO TERRORISTS

Since November 13, 1974, when Yassir Arafat appeared before the General Assembly, the PLO has enjoyed observer status at the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization, joined the U.N. Economic and Social Council's Commission for Western Asia (the first time a non-nation had been granted full membership in a U.N. agency), and was authorized to use U.N. funds for propaganda purposes by the U.N.-sponsored Mid-Decade Women's Conference held in Copenhagen in July 1980.

As Evelyn Sommer testified before Congress in May 1981, she was shocked by the fact that Forum 80, the daily newspaper of the Copenhagen conference funded by the U.S., carried interviews with PLO members. On January 30, 1981, the U.N. Postal Administration even went so far as to issue a set of three stamps commemorating the "Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People." The main sponsor of the stamp project was the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People which, according to Congressman Hamilton Fish, Jr., of New York, "is merely a front in the U.N. for the PLO."

Another terrorist group that receives U.N. assistance is the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO). According to a 1979 study by the London-based Foreign Affairs Research Institute:

> The United Nations Commissioner for Namibia, his three offices in New York, Luanda and Botswana, the UN Council for Namibia, the UN fund for Namibia and the UN approved Institute for Namibia are all organizations which co-operate closely with SWAPO as the "sole authentic representative of the Namibian People." All are bodies in receipt of generous funds from the UN budget. The UN Commission for Refugees and the Economic and Social Council's United Nation's Development Programme are other organisations providing "humanitarian aid" on a lavish scale for refugees and others from Namibia. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided $31,500 to SWAPO for "education and training in the field of public information" during the year 1976-1977. It has also provided $151,000 in general education assistance to SWAPO within Angola.[36]

Almost as an aside, the report adds: "During the course of raids by the South African Army on SWAPO bases in Angola during the summer of 1979, food cartons...orginating from the UN's world food programme were found in the camps."

On October 2, 1978, SWAPO president Sam Nujoma told a meeting of non-aligned nations in New York that his organization shares a common bond of militant comradery and solidarity with Rhodesia's terrorist Patriotic Front, the terrorist PLO, and "other gallant forces of liberation."

Moreover, there is evidence that UNICEF has been helping terrorists: for example, in 1979, UNICEF money turned up in Mozambique following a raid by troops from Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. Consequently, there are calls in Congress for both the State Department appropriations bill and the Foreign Assistance Act appropriations bill to contain a specific prohibition against the use of tax dollars by the U.N. to finance terrorism.[37] Neither of these bills, however, contains any provision to prohibit tax dollars from use in programs that finance SWAPO.

SELECTED ABUSES

In addition to measures which could seriously impair the activities of American businessmen and journalists, the U.N. is plagued by other abuses which call into question the organization's usefulness. Among them:

- Fraud. According to Business Week on July 20, 1981:

> The evidence is mounting that the U.N.'s $300 million plus economic research programmes are being manipulated to promote the "new international economic order".... Appointments to the organization's professional staff of 3,000 economists have become increasingly politicized and, more important, numerous studies of world trade and growth -- many of them by outside experts -- have been suppressed, altered, or so stripped of detail that they have become useless as a basis for setting policy.
>
> Professor Ingo Walter of New York University and other consultants charge that some of the most egregious instances of altered work have occurred at UNCTAD.

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36 Cited in Robert E. Lee, The United Nations Conspiracy, pp. 208-209. Elsewhere, the F.A.R.I report asserts: "Despite its [SWAPO's] lack of military success, incessant lobbying at the United Nations resulted in the astonishing decision [by the General Assembly] to grant it recognition as the sole legal representative of the Namibian people despite the known minority nature of its support."

37 See, Congressional Record, October 5, 1981, p. E4628.

- Misallocation of Resources. On November 15, 1981, CBS-TV's "60 Minutes" spotlighted the inefficiencies of UNICEF and other U.N. organizations in helping refugees, particularly in Uganda in the Spring of 1980. At UNICEF, politicization is also a serious problem. The UNICEF Executive Board, for example, in 1970 approved a $200,000 purchase of cloth for North Vietnamese children's clothing. It was purchased from the Soviet Union and supposedly was delivered to North Vietnam by the Soviet Union in 1972. UNICEF has no way of making sure, however, that the supplies were actually distributed to children.

- Indoctrination. Some U.N. activities are used to indoctrinate the participants. As Evelyn Sommer told Congress in May 1981, the Women's Decade Conference shocked her with "the brutal indoctrination espoused by many of the forum's participants"; she was also disturbed by the draft declaration submitted originally by East Germany and other Communist and so-called non-aligned countries, which is "an anti-West, hypocritical, controversial document that has no value whatsoever in achieving progress for women."

- Puerto Rico. In September of 1972, by a 12 to 0 vote, with 10 abstentions, the U.N. Special Committee on Colonialism ordered a study of Puerto Rico as a colonial territory of the U.S. Washington objected that consideration of the island's status was "totally improper" and interfered in the "purely domestic affairs of the U.S." On August 20, 1981, however, the Committee -- composed largely of Soviet bloc and Third World nations -- returned to the issue over the protest of the U.S. For the moment, the U.S. has prevented a General Assembly discussion of the issue; should the Assembly take it up in the future, however, it would undoubtedly become a real problem.

- Representation in the Statistical Commission. For the first time in U.N. history, the U.S. in May 1981 was denied a seat on the Statistical Commission. This shocked the U.S. and its allies. Said Ambassador Kirkpatrick, "we -- by not sitting on that commission -- are denied an opportunity to effectively or even ineffectively work hard to influence its policies." She suggested "that our contribution in the form, for example, of technical expertise, ought also to be reduced commensurate with our opportunity for input and policies."

CONCLUSION

Not all U.N. activities are flawed, of course. Ambassador Kirkpatrick has praised some of the programs of the World Health Organization, the refugee efforts, and meteorological organizations, as well as some of those agencies fighting hunger and advancing science.

The ultimate question, of course, is whether these relatively few praiseworthy programs are worth the cost. While the World Health Organization distributes vaccines, for instance, it is also drafting codes to control Western food and drug companies for the sake of Third World nations. The refugee programs, besides helping the homeless, also aid terrorists. Even the scientific organizations are not immune to politicization. The U.N. Civil Aviation Organization (CAO), for example, granted observer status to the PLO in 1977. It was undoubtedly highly instructive to the terrorists, for the CAO then was discussing ways to prevent air piracy. Other examples abound.

For good reason, therefore, the worth of the U.N. is more suspect than at any time in its history. It was not solely an exaggeration when James J. Kilpatrick wrote on September 22, 1981, in The Baltimore Sun that "the purpose [of the U.N.] as a forum has been reduced to a nullity," and suggested that the media "should carry news of the U.N. back on the comic pages to dwell with Doonesbury and his friends." There are questions, too, as to whether the U.S. is benefiting from its U.N. membership, given the paralysis of the Security Council and the anti-American, anti-Western, anti-industrial, anti-capitalist majority in the General Assembly. Is the U.S. getting much of value for all that it is spending in resources and energy on the U.N.? These are questions which the Reagan Administration and the U.S. public must -- with urgency -- begin addressing.

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