

A United Nations Assessment Project Study

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THE WAYWARD U.N. : A DIGEST OF HERITAGE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations, say many Americans, has failed to create a more peaceful world. In a 1983 survey,¹ 48.8 percent of those polled indicated they do not believe that the U.N. is effective in furthering the causes of world peace and political stability among nations; only 42.8 percent believe that the U.N. furthers peace. Not only has the U.N. failed to fulfill the lofty hopes of its founders, it has become itself a major cause of global disharmony.

The mandate of the U.N. Charter to settle disputes by peaceful means has been ignored as the U.N. has welcomed guerrilla leaders and legitimized various terrorist organizations. The Charter provision "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples" has become the New International Economic Order--the banner of the underdeveloped Third World governments' attempt to redistribute the wealth of the developed nations. United Nations Secretariat staffing has often been consciously anti-American. And the so-called nonaligned nations have been organized into a pro-Soviet, anti-Western voting bloc.

Despite this, the United States continues to contribute about 25 percent of the U.N. budget--a share far greater than that of any other nation. This amounted to \$310,838,765² in 1981 and did not include voluntary U.S. contributions to the U.N. and its specialized agencies. In 1981, total U.S. contributions to the

¹ The Sindlinger Poll, conducted from January 27-March 2, 1983. Sample projection (from a figure of 3,731) was 164,701,000.

² "U.S. Contribution to International Organizations, Fiscal Year 1981," U.S. Department of State publication.

U.N. reached \$825 million.³ By contrast, the Soviet Union has pledged to contribute a mere 14 percent of the budget and remains delinquent on about \$200 million--most of it for peace-keeping operations.

What has happened to the U.N. since its founding? Or, at least, what has happened to the American perception of that institution? Why does the U.S. find itself under almost constant siege at the U.N.? These are questions that American policymakers 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.

To this end, The Heritage Foundation's United Nations Assessment Project, over the past 18 months, has published nearly two dozen studies analyzing the operations, goals, agenda, and effectiveness of the U.N. More than two dozen additional studies are scheduled to be released in the next 18 months. Several of the studies have attracted widespread attention. This paper summarizes the findings of five of those papers.⁴

U.N. SUPPORT FOR TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

In 1974, the U.N. welcomed Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat. He addressed the General Assembly and the Security Council as if he headed a legitimate, sovereign state. Two years later, another leading terrorist organization scored a critical victory, when the General Assembly voted to support the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO) "as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people" (U.N. Resolution 31/146, para.2). U.N. records show that, since 1975, at least \$116 million has been spent or budgeted to support such groups--what the U.N. calls "national liberation movements" (NLMs). U.N. funding and political support for armed guerrilla warfare, however, is not authorized by the U.N. Charter. The Charter, in fact, mandates that "all members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered" (Chapter 1, Article 2, para. 3).

U.N. support of NLMs has been curiously selective. No backing, for instance, has been given to pro-Western national liberation

³ Ibid.

⁴ Juliana Pilon, "The United States and the United Nations: A Balance Sheet," Backgrounder No. 162, January 21, 1982; Thomas Gulick, "How the U.N. Aids Marxist Guerrilla Groups," Backgrounder No. 177, April 8, 1982; Roger Brooks, "The Law of the Sea Treaty: Can the U.S. Afford to Sign?" Backgrounder No. 188, June 7, 1982; Juliana Pilon, "Through the Looking Glass: The Political Culture of the U.N.," Backgrounder No. 206, August 30, 1982; Juliana Pilon, "Americans at the U.N.," Backgrounder No. 247, February 14, 1983.

movements, such as UNITA, now fighting a successful guerrilla war against the Marxist government of Angola. Nor has the U.N. been willing to recognize the non-Marxist representatives of the Palestinians or the democratic political parties of Namibia in southern Africa. Instead, the General Assembly recognized the PLO and SWAPO as the "sole" representatives of the Palestinian and Namibian peoples respectively.

U.N. support of guerrilla liberation movements ranges from gifts of food, housing, and health services to radio channels for broadcasting propaganda. Both SWAPO and the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa make wide use of U.N.-sponsored radio propaganda broadcasts. Military arms, equipment, training, and advisors for these NLMS are provided by the USSR, Cuba, and Eastern Bloc nations. But much of their "humanitarian aid" comes from the U.N., with most of the money--about 65 percent--from the U.S. and other Western industrial democracies.

Probably more important than the actual aid and development projects is the international political legitimacy that official U.N. recognition confers on the NLMS. This is enjoyed by four Marxist guerrilla groups: the PLO, SWAPO, ANC, and the Pan-African Congress (PAC). This U.N. seal of approval gives them an unfair advantage over their political rivals at home in terms of money, aid projects, publicity, and international lobbying power not available to their competitors. It also distorts their image on the international scene--making them appear to be the true representatives of their respective peoples though, in reality, all four are fighting for political survival at home.

The PLO

Before attaining U.N. recognition, the PLO was viewed widely as an unpredictable and dangerous international terrorist organization. The world's law enforcement agencies, in fact, have had no reason to change their minds about that. But since Yassir Arafat's speech at the U.N. and the creation of two PLO-dominated U.N. committees--the Inalienable Rights Committee and the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights--the PLO can now wave its U.N. identification badge and claim legitimacy. This boosts its image among other Arabs.

The PLO enjoys full observer status at the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The Special Unit on Palestinian Rights publishes pamphlets implicitly supporting the PLO as the only real representative of the Palestinians. One booklet, available in the U.N. bookstore and distributed to U.N. centers world wide, is entitled The International Status of the Palestinian People. Lauding Arafat as a freedom fighter, it justifies his and the PLO's use of terrorism by noting how

successful the "Palestinian Commandos" have been through terrorism in bringing the Palestinian question to the world's attention. In 1975, the PLO was invited to attend the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Geneva, Switzerland. The U.S. National District Attorneys' Association was outraged and called for withdrawal of the invitation, quoting from PLO Spokesman, the group's official newspaper. Only months after the Munich massacre of Israeli Olympic athletes, the paper boasted in its September 1972 issue:

We have to kill the most famous. Since statesmen are difficult to kill as they are well protected, we have to kill artists and athletes.⁵

Gerhard O. W. Mueller, an American who is Executive Secretary of the U.N. crime prevention congress, refused to withdraw the invitation, citing the PLO's official U.N. observer status.

In 1977, the PLO was admitted to the U.N. Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) Commission for Western Asia. Never before had full membership status been given to a noncountry. To make matters worse, the PLO has been allowed to chair the Commission. PLO members and influence, moreover, pervade the U.N. Secretariat. "All the Palestinians working at the U.N. are members of the PLO," Zehdi Labib Terzi, the PLO's Permanent Observer at the U.N., told The Heritage Foundation.

U.N. legitimization of the PLO extends to funding. In the 1982-1983 U.N. biennial budget, the Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is to receive \$71,800. The Special Unit on Palestinian Rights has budgeted \$6,156,500 for the two-year period.

Aside from this direct support, the U.N. indirectly supports the PLO via the U.N. Relief Works Agency (UNRWA). Of UNRWA's 17,000 worldwide employees, all but about 120 "international staff" are Palestinians. There is strong evidence that this organization, run almost entirely by Palestinians, is dominated by the PLO. There is further evidence that the PLO controls the U.N. Palestinian refugee camps. The Associated Press reported on June 18, 1979, that PLO terrorists controlled three Palestinian refugee camps around Tyre and Lebanon's southern and eastern outskirts. These are UNRWA camps. Even more conclusive evidence of PLO use of U.N. refugee camps is the statement of the Lebanese Ambassador, Edward Ghorra, in a letter to former U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim:

The Palestinians increased the influx of arms into Lebanon...they transformed most of the refugee camps--if

⁵ Letter from the National District Attorneys' Association, Chicago, Illinois, to Gerhard O. W. Mueller, Executive Secretary, 5th U.N. Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, August 27, 1975, p. 4.

not all--into military bastions...the camps, in fact, became centers for the training of mercenaries sent and financed by other Arab states.⁶

UNRWA's annual budget is about \$200 million. Most of that pays for over 600 Palestinian elementary schools, according to John Miles, director of the UNRWA's New York liaison office. Roughly \$20 million a year goes to the camps in Lebanon.

Since it is highly likely the PLO plays a large role inside UNRWA, should the U.S., which contributed \$62 million to UNRWA in 1981, continue to participate in the Palestinian refugee program? According to a recent survey,⁷ 90.8 percent of Americans polled believe that Congress should cut off all funding for U.N. organizations that aid terrorist groups.

SWAPO

The U.N. General Assembly in 1976 recognized SWAPO as the "sole and authentic" representative of Southwest Africa, the South African trusteeship often known as Namibia. Yet SWAPO is but one of 45 political parties representing Namibia's one million people. It has a well-documented record of terrorist attacks against civilians dating from the late 1960s. Addressing the U.N. General Assembly in 1973, SWAPO Leader Sam Nujoma declared:

I pledge here and now that we will continue to talk to South Africa in the only language they understand and that is intensification of armed liberation struggle....

SWAPO enjoys U.N. recognition and support as much as the PLO does. SWAPO is invited to the international conferences of such U.N. specialized agencies as the International Labor Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization, World Health Organization, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the Universal Postal Union. It benefits from the free international public relations service provided by the U.N. Department of Public Information. The resolution providing for free international public relations notes the need "to intensify the widespread and continuous dissemination of information on the struggle for liberation being waged by the people of Namibia, guided by their liberation movement, [sic] the SWAPO." Like the PLO, SWAPO relies heavily on the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc nations for military equipment, supplies, and military training. For humanitarian aid, SWAPO turns to the U.N.

The U.N. and its specialized agencies allocated at least \$40 million in direct or indirect aid to SWAPO between 1977 and 1981 and for programs beginning and continuing during 1982-1986. The U.S. contributes about 30 percent of this.

⁶ Letter from Lebanese Ambassador to the United Nations, Edward Ghorra, to Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, August 17, 1976, U.N. Document A/31/179.

⁷ Sindlinger Poll, op. cit.

The United Nations Development Program budget for 1977-1981 earmarked \$7,750,000 for SWAPO; another \$7,750,000 has been recommended by UNDP officials for the 1982-1986 budget. UNDP will receive another \$4,477,870 for Namibia via the Namibia Trust Fund. As the sole "national liberation movement" recognized by the U.N. for Namibia, SWAPO will play a leading role in the distribution of this sum. And the United Nations has a separate fund of about \$8.8 million called "Aid to Refugees and National Liberation Movements," divided among the PLO, SWAPO, and the two South African terrorist guerrilla groups, the ANC and the PAC.

Another \$17.6 million is on the drawing boards via the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). UNCTAD also has submitted a large proposal for national liberation funding, which would direct yet more funds to SWAPO, ANC, and PAC "to provide an opportunity for the leadership of the NLMS to be more fully acquainted with the activities of UNCTAD in the area of international economic relations" and to build up "management capacity of NLM cadres" (U.N. Document TD/B/WP/16, p. 20).

In the \$17.6 million UNIDO proposal for training of industrial managers, the U.N. sketches its blueprint for helping SWAPO. The proposal is divided into three parts: pre-independence, transitional, and post-independence aid. This program, like all the U.N. programs for Namibia/SWAPO, takes place outside Namibia and is dominated by SWAPO recipients. Since the intent is to train the professional cadres of a future independent Namibia, why is SWAPO the main beneficiary of these programs? Why has the U.N. decided that in some future Namibia, these professionals will come from SWAPO's ranks? The U.N., in effect, is feeding, clothing, educating, and giving civilian training to the SWAPO guerrilla army. And the U.N. is also training SWAPO candidates as government functionaries for the day when SWAPO seizes the reins of power in Namibia. What about the non-SWAPO groups in Namibia? Why do they not qualify for help from the U.N.? Why are they victims of the U.N. double standard?

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

Much effort at the U.N. goes toward establishing a New International Economic Order--a scheme devised by the Third World radicals to redistribute the wealth of developed countries. NIEO seeks to transfer to the developing states the economic resources of the industrial nations, especially the U.S., and to control the activities of Western businessmen.

The arguments underlying NIEO permeate most of what the U.N. does. According to the 1982 Report of the U.N. Director General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, entitled "Towards the NIEO," the existing economic order--"which (is) characterized by inequality, domination, dependence, narrow self-interest and segmentation"--should be changed. The enemy is the free enterprise market economy. One of the earliest attempts to

use the U.N. to transform rapidly the economics of the Third World was UNCTAD. Established in 1965 as a permanent body for formulating general rules on trade between developed and undeveloped countries, UNCTAD 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 with 10 abstentions. The U.S. was among the tiny group of opponents. A new breed of international regulators uses this charter, along with the NIEO, to justify schemes for an elaborate system of redistribution, which would compel the U.S. to share its technological resources and output with the developing nations.

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 the Third World nations.

Perhaps the most widely known effort on behalf of NIEO is the Law of the Sea Treaty. After eight years of fruitless negotiations, the U.S. delegation on April 30, 1982, refused to approve the Draft Convention of the Law of the Sea Treaty. A main reason for U.S. opposition to the treaty was the attempt by the developing nations, represented by a coalition commonly referred to as the Group of 77, to use the negotiations as part of their general effort to establish the NIEO. They insisted that the Sea Law Treaty be based on the notion that resources of the earth, particularly the deep seabed mineral deposits, were the "Common Heritage of Mankind," to be enjoyed by all even though the very high cost of developing these resources would be borne by the U.S. and a few other industrial states. This would amount to a massive redistribution of wealth and technology, conflicting with American concepts of private property, free enterprise, and competition.

Another 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, UNIDO, and the World Health Organization (WHO)--have been trying to control pharmaceuticals. Enactment by WHO of a code recommending regulation of breast-milk substitutes, for instance, has serious implications for the regulation of food products in general and drugs in particular. WHO is also planning to regulate drug quality by establishing a body that would, in effect, supersede the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. UNIDO, moreover, 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.

The economic offensive against the industrial nations shows no signs of abating. U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar

of Peru has called on the U.N. to continue and accelerate its efforts at redistribution. In a December 15, 1981, speech, he noted that he was assuming his 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."

AMERICANS AT THE U.N.: AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

A frequently ignored problem facing the United States at the U.N. is the diminishing number of Americans in top-level, decision-making posts. Though the U.S. foots 25 percent of the U.N.'s bill, Americans occupy only 17.32 percent of selected professional staff in the Secretariat of the U.N. system.⁸ The U.N. Secretary-General admits that the number of U.S. citizens in senior and policy-making U.N. posts is well below the "desirable" range--and falling.⁹

At first, personnel quotas mirrored the size of a nation's financial contribution to the organization. The developing countries, however, forced a reinterpretation of the U.N. Charter provision that stressed "equitable geographical distribution." The weight of financial contributions was reduced and now affects only 55 percent of the quota. According to O. Richard Nottidge, Deputy Director for Policy Coordination at the U.N. Personnel Office, this proportion is likely to continue to diminish. Not only the U.S. loses when the number of Americans at the U.N. dwindles. Though other nations have sent hardworking, well-qualified nationals to the U.N., Americans are widely acknowledged to be among the most efficient employees. In addition, according to a high-ranking American who has worked in the Secretariat almost since its inception, most other nationals, especially from the developing states of the Third World, "do not understand the profit motive," and thus are less inclined to save the U.N. money and run it in a businesslike fashion. Some Secretariat employees appear to assume that the U.N. is to be used for private gain; this practice seems more prevalent, or at least more obvious, among non-Americans. Nottidge also states that "Third World countries may have good, qualified people--but not necessarily available for employment by the U.N."

While the role of Americans at the U.N. is shrinking because of Third World pressure, Moscow's power probably is mounting. It is well known, for example, that the Soviet Union has violated Article 100 of the U.N. Charter by placing Soviet KGB agents in the Secretariat.¹⁰ Two Soviet employees arrested by the FBI in

⁸ As of December 1981, from the State Department, IO/IR 2, 3/82.

⁹ (A/37/378/Add. 1, p. 7.)

¹⁰ 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.

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. According to Arkady Shevchenko, the highest-ranking Soviet official in 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.

THE NONALIGNED

The major force at the U.N. is the group of so-called non-aligned nations. Despite its name, the group is strongly pro-Soviet. The Communist bloc and less developed nations may have quite diverging interests, but share an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist rhetoric. This seems to supersede common sense and the reality of international relations.

An Asian diplomat, who wishes to remain anonymous for fear of Soviet reprisals against his country, told The Heritage Foundation that developing countries usually side with the Soviet Union, even though many realize that Moscow does not help them much. Moscow has a miserly foreign economic aid program. And when it does contribute to such efforts as the U.N. Development Program, it does so in rubles, a nonconvertible currency capable mainly of buying Soviet products.

The pro-Soviet lobby at the U.N., apart from clients such as Angola, Cuba, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Vietnam, consists of countries whose relationship with the USSR is more tenuous but which, for a variety of reasons, adopt a political stance that is more clearly anti-Western than it is pro-Soviet. Third World and Soviet affinity, however, goes beyond philosophy and such issues as foreign aid. Writes veteran U.N. observer Arie Eilan:

this fact has wider implications than the mere use of similar political cliches in speeches and resolutions; it has affected the practice of parliamentary democracy in the U.N. and has gradually destroyed all claims of objective adjudication that its (the U.N.'s) Charter so clearly stipulates.¹¹

The result is a remarkably pro-Soviet voting pattern at the U.N. among the nonaligned. The percentage of support for the Soviet Union during the 1981 General Assembly shows overall agreement to

¹¹ Arie Eilan, "Soviet Hegemonism and the Nonaligned," Washington Quarterly, Winter 1981, p. 98.

be 84.9 percent (compared with 25 percent average agreement with the U.S.).¹²

CONCLUSION

Through the U.N., the U.S. is inadvertently supporting Marxist guerrilla-terrorist groups. American taxpayer dollars are being used to promote the New International Economic Order. Americans are being passed over for U.N. Secretariat posts, while KGB agents, in violation of U.N. Charter, hold high positions. And a group of nations claiming to be "nonaligned" in reality almost always endorses the Moscow line.

These cases are among many examples of the United Nations gone awry. For good reason, therefore, the U.N. is more suspect than at any time in its history and American support for it is plummeting. There are valid and pressing questions as to whether the U.S. is benefiting from its expensive U.S. membership, given the anti-American, anti-Western, anti-industrial, anti-capitalist majority in the General Assembly. Is the U.S. getting any value for all that it is spending in resources and energy on the U.N.? These are questions that the Reagan Administration and the U.S. public must--with urgency--begin addressing.

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¹² For voting tables, see Juliana Pilon, "Through the Looking Glass: Political Culture at the U.N.," Heritage Backgrounder No. 206, August 30, 1982, pp. 18-19.