What goes for UNESCO goes also for the UN

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Citing “the need for fundamental reform in the organization, and continuing anti-Israel bias at UNESCO,” the US State Department notified UNESCO director-general Irina Bokova on October 12 of the Trump administration’s decision to withdraw from the organization, effective December 31, 2018.

This decision stemmed from repeated Israel-bashing by UNESCO, notably since 2011, when the Palestinian Authority sought and won admission to UNESCO as a full member-state, despite the fact that there exists no sovereign Palestinian state. The State Department saw this as “regrettable, premature” and harmful to “our shared goal to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.”

Indeed, Washington cut off US funding for UNESCO under a law that prohibits the US government from funding any UN agency that admits a non-state as a member. American funding, once accounting for more than one-fifth of UNESCO’s budget, hasn’t been restored since 2011.

By withdrawing from UNESCO, the US has sent an important message to the UN that America doesn’t have infinite patience for international institutions that function as platforms for Jew-hatred.

The US permanent representative to the UN, Nikki Haley, decried UNESCO’s politicization as a “chronic embarrassment,” adding that US taxpayers should no longer be on the hook to pay for “policies that are hostile to our values and make a mockery of justice and common sense.”

As reported in The Washington Post on October 12, Haley said the United States will evaluate all UN agencies “through the same lens.” Logically then, if UN bodies are to be thus evaluated, then the conclusion could only be that the UN organization itself – decayed, flawed, manipulated and abused even more so than UNESCO – should be the next in line for a mass withdrawal by responsible states.

More than 20 annual Israel- bashing resolutions specifically singling out and condemning Israel are adopted by an automatic majority of Muslim and Arab states, often with the support of other states, including Europeans. One may only wonder why the US and other serious and responsible states have not come to realize that something is very, very wrong with the organization that they financially maintain.

While the UN may be the “only club in town,” no one can doubt that it has veered far from the noble intentions of its founding fathers, who called in the preamble to the UN Charter “to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors” and resolved “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights” and “to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.”

The manner in which Israel is treated in the UN and in its various specialized agencies and other UN bodies is the very antithesis of such purposes and principles. Isolating Israel and preventing its full involvement in the UN organs (including the Security Council and International Court of Justice, where Israel has never been elected to serve) is in clear violation of the first principle of the UN Charter declaring the “sovereign equality of all its Members.”

The annual Israel-bashing parade of senseless resolutions undermines any credibility of the organization, and turns it into a willing tool for cynical manipulation and abuse by gangs of states plying their particular political interests – mostly against Israel.

Perhaps the straw that is breaking the camel’s back is an amazing, recent joint UN-Palestinian project for the years 2018-2022, the title of which conceals its true intentions: “UN Development Assistant Framework – State of Palestine.”

The UN has committed to channel no less than $1.3 billion into various UN agency signatories to the framework, in order to assist the Palestinian leadership in advancing its diplomatic warfare against Israel.

The project aims to finance “training, capacity-building and technical advice” with a view to assisting “Palestinian victims” to exploit international accountability mechanisms and to prosecute “Israeli violations of international law.”

In other words, the entire UN human-rights assistance machinery has now been formally and officially recruited and financed to streamline the harassment and persecution of Israel.

The question is when whether there are any serious and responsible states that, out of genuine concern for the organization, would be willing and prepared to demonstrate their frustration and disgust. This would entail taking the appropriate action of suspending their membership, their annual payments and substantive involvement until the organization corrects itself and returns to the original purposes and principles for which it was created.

Logic would assume that the US, Israel and the major European powers should now take decisive action to halt this deterioration.

First and foremost, they should each dock $1.3b. from their membership fees as a demonstration of their disgust at the UN’s official policy of Israel-bashing. What is good for UNESCO should be all the more relevant to the UN itself.