# Tillerson is right: The UN 'needs a lot of reform'

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By: Tom Rogan

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As he testified on Capitol Hill, Wednesday, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was asked whether the Trump administration supports the World Trade Organization.

Tillerson responded, "Yes, but W.T.O. needs some reform."

Then, Tillerson was asked whether the administration supports the United Nations. His response was superb.

"Yes, the U.N. needs a lot of reform."

I say superb for a simple reason.

Namely, because unless the U.S. qualifies its support for the U.N. to that institution's reform, it will continue failing.

And be under no illusions, U.N. reform is both urgent and overdue.

For a start, as I've explained, the U.N. is terribly dysfunctional. Originally designed to provide for global peace, today's U.N. is hamstrung by a bureaucracy that seeks consensus above all else. It's a consensus with a heavy price tag. Over the last 25 years, from Bosnia to Rwanda to Syria, the U.N.'s impotence has allowed hundreds of thousands of innocent people to die. Those deaths haunt the U.N.'s pristine corridors.

Yet incompetence is far from the U.N.'s only issue.

The organization is also hugely wasteful. As the Guardian reported in late 2015, "Even accounting for inflation, annual U.N. expenditure is 40 times higher than it was in the early 1950s. The organization now encompasses 17 specialized agencies, 14 funds and a secretariat with 17 departments employing 41,000 people." Think about that. One secretariat with 41,000 employees.

Still, the Guardian also notes that the U.N. retains a bloated staff compensation model. This includes a reference that "mouthwatering daily allowances which result in many of its bureaucrats being far better paid than American civil servants — has more than doubled over the past two decades to $5.4bn."

American taxpayers pay 22 percent of that $5.4 billion budget, amounting to nearly $1.2 billion annually.

We also pay an annual 28 percent (or $2.25 billion) towards the U.N.'s $7.9 billion annual peacekeeping budget.

As the nation that already serves as the anchor for global security and the rule of law — through our own expensive military — these sums are outrageous.

For that reason, Trump is right to threaten cuts to U.N. funding. It's the only way to force the United Nations to reform. And it's the only way to give American taxpayers the commitment they need that their money will no longer be thrown down the drain.

Of course, if the U.N. doesn't want to reform, then that also okay.

In that case, European governments — those who regard themselves as the world's great peacemakers — can make up the difference.