U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley: ‘I Believe You Will See Cuts to the U.N.’

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<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/u-n-ambassador-nikki-haley-171007885.html>

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, set out her agenda for the U.N. during a speech Wednesday at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, confirming that the U.S. budget for the U.N. is likely to be decreased.

“I believe you will see cuts to the U.N.,” said Haley, adding, “We don’t want to just cut for the sake of cutting. There are places we can cut. Everybody knows there’s fat at the U.N. Everybody knows there’s fat in the peacekeeping missions. So that’s why we’re taking each one.”

Earlier this month, President Donald Trump unveiled what he called an “America First” budget that promised “deep cuts to foreign aid.” It called for slashing the Department of State budget, which covers the U.S. Mission to the U.N., and for the U.S. to fund 25 percent of the U.N.’s peacekeeping budget, down from the current 29 percent. The U.S. currently funds around 22 percent of the U.N.’s overall regular budget.

During her remarks Wednesday morning, Haley said she intends to focus on two areas when the U.S. assumes the rotating presidency of the U.N. Security Council next month: the role of human rights in national security and reforming the U.N.’s peacekeeping operations, including “winding down” the missions in [Haiti](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&sqi=2&ved=0ahUKEwj66vS5kPzSAhVJ7IMKHS7mBqMQFggaMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.un.org%2Fen%2Fpeacekeeping%2Fmissions%2Fminustah%2F&usg=AFQjCNH26M5LUTbNtmw5Ht8OIHocbBZAug&sig2=kalR0PQ9fDNAU8AH6fVNUg&bvm=bv.151325232,d.amc)—“It’s not needed anymore”—[Liberia](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwj6ipvBkPzSAhWq6YMKHTNsA9UQFggaMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.un.org%2Fen%2Fpeacekeeping%2Fmissions%2Funmil%2F&usg=AFQjCNF47ggDJEG2xRnUO4Ca5HJIfGrpkw&sig2=lD-I90I95L85hg4uDz1oLg&bvm=bv.151325232,d.amc) and [Ivory Coast](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&sqi=2&ved=0ahUKEwiit8XHkPzSAhVn5IMKHZ-oB1MQFggaMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.un.org%2Fen%2Fpeacekeeping%2Fmissions%2Funoci%2F&usg=AFQjCNEmBJIsjIvEII8HRsWC_egGmYRY8Q&sig2=pL-LmfsAzd765ePVBwuYpA&bvm=bv.151325232,d.amc). Haley added that she’s “working to change the culture” at the Security Council, which she compared to South Carolina’s Legislature: Both, she said, are clubs and have rules and cultures that need to change. (Haley is the former governor of South Carolina.)

“There is a constant pressure to comply with its culture, and soon enough, members are doing things a certain way because that’s the way they’ve always done them,” she said, without specifically naming countries. She went on to call the U.S. the “moral conscience of the world” and said the U.S. “will insist that our participation in the U.N. honor and reflect this role.” The U.N., she noted, will be “an effective tool on behalf of our values.”

“The U.N. is missing the growing discontent and the growing mistrust among the people it’s supposed to represent,” she added. “The fact is, a wave is building throughout the world, it’s a wave of populations that is challenging institutions like the United Nations and shaking them to their foundations.”

Haley said she plans to dedicate a Security Council meeting to “the broader question of how human rights abuses can lead to a breakdown in national peace and security,” which, she said, would be a first for the council. While human rights are usually discussed at the U.N. Human Rights Council, Haley claimed that the group “is so corrupt” and said she intends to “essentially put them on notice” when she addresses the body in June.

Amnesty International said Haley’s remarks were “certainly encouraging” and added that it hopes they “show that the U.S. will honor its obligations, including not reducing funding to the U.N.”

Regarding peacekeeping operations, which have been particularly controversial in recent years due to allegations of sexual abuse by troops, Haley said it is an area with a “great potential for reform.” She emphasized the need for the U.N. to have an exit plan in many of the regions where it has peacekeeping troops.

“And if things don’t improve,” she said, “we have to have the political will to adjust the mission, even if some countries and bureaucracies are going to lose funding in the process.” Haley said the U.N.’s political mission in Afghanistan will soon be under “strategic review” because “no one has ever thought to check and see if we’re actually achieving any goals. This is unacceptable.”

Meanwhile, the peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic should be ended, she said. The bodies of [two U.N. investigators](http://www.newsweek.com/bodies-congo-likely-un-investigators-father-missing-man-575212)—Zaida Catalan, a Swede, and Michael Sharp, an American—were believed to have been discovered in the DRC this week. Haley [expressed her sadness](https://twitter.com/columlynch/status/846938949356572672) on Tuesday.

Asked why the U.N. should have an exit strategy for its peacekeeping missions, Haley said, “Because there should never be a time we don’t want to lift up countries. There should never be a time we don’t want to make them more independent. If we’re there all the time, all you’re doing is creating dependence.” Haley also said that peacekeeping missions are “not fair to the American taxpayer.”

Haley spoke one day after she made remarks during the annual American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference, during which she called herself “a new sheriff in town” and said she would end “Israel bashing” at the U.N. On Wednesday, she alluded to “yet another ridiculously biased report attacking Israel” that resulted in the [resignation](https://www.unwatch.org/head-arab-un-agency-resigns-report-apartheid-israel-nikki-haley-demanded-un-pull-report/) of Rima Khalaf, executive secretary of the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. The report, which said that Israel has “created an apartheid regime that dominates the Palestinian people as a whole,” was also withdrawn.

“So many dollars and man-hours were spent to produce a false and defamatory report,” said Haley.

Toward the end of her talk, Haley touched upon the refugee crisis, saying Trump’s executive order—which is also referred to as a Muslim ban or travel ban—“is about keeping the terrorists out” of the U.S. She then brought up “situations like what just happened in London—that was devastating.”

Moderator Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, corrected Haley, noting that [Khalid Masood](http://www.newsweek.com/london-parliament-attack-khalid-masood-572332), the attacker who killed three people in London last week, was born and lived in the U.K. and thus would not have been kept out by a travel ban. As a homegrown extremist, he did not enter the U.K. from a different country.