**Defund the United Nations**

January 2, 2017

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Real Clear Politics

<http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2017/01/02/defund_the_united_nations_132694.html>

We’ve come a long way from Daniel Patrick Moynihan excoriating the U.N.’s 1975 “Zionism is racism” resolution in one of the finer exhibits of righteous indignation in the history of American speechifying.

The Obama administration acceded to — and, reportedly, assisted behind the scenes — a less notorious but still noxious Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements. By the administration’s lights, the action is clever — it will be extremely difficult to reverse and will increase Israel’s international isolation.

But the bipartisan outrage over a resolution that, once again, demonstrates the U.N.’s hostility to our closest ally in the Middle East affords an opportunity to force an overdue crisis in the U.S.–U.N. relationship. We are the chief funder of a swollen, unaccountable U.N. apparatus that has been a gross disappointment for more than 70 years now.

Proving that no country is perfect, we came up with the idea for the United Nations in the first place. Franklin Roosevelt thought that the Four Policemen of Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China (with France eventually added as well) would keep the peace in the post–World War II world. Spot the flaw in this plan.

This vision immediately foundered on the reality of power politics. The first major event in the U.N.’s life after the Security Council began meeting in New York City was a threatened Soviet walkout. The Soviets used their Security Council veto about 50 times in the U.N.’s first years of existence.

It turned out that states with different interests and values weren’t going to act as a band of righteous international enforcers. In fact, as demonstrated in Rwanda and the Balkans, when confronted by hideously predatory forces bent on mayhem and murder, U.N. peacekeepers would simply stand aside.

In the decades after the U.N.’s founding, the influence of Third World dictatorships grew, and so did the institution’s anti-Western and anti-Israel orientation, culminating in the Zionism resolution that U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Moynihan so memorably inveighed against. That vote was finally reversed in 1991, but prejudice against Israel has become one of the U.N.’s core competencies — as well as impenetrable bureaucracy.

As early as 1947, a U.S. Senate committee flagged “serious problems of overlap, duplication of effort, weak coordination, proliferating mandates and programs, and overly generous compensation of staff within the infant, but rapidly growing, UN system.” And those were the early, lean years.

We pay more than anyone else to keep the U.N. in business, about 22 percent of the U.N.’s regular budget. As Brett Schaefer of the Heritage Foundation notes, “the U.S. is assessed more than 176 other U.N. member states combined.”

Because nothing involving the U.N. is clean or straightforward, it’s hard to even know how much the U.S. pays in total into the U.N. system. But it’s probably around $8 billion a year. We should withhold some significant portion of it, and demand an end to the U.N.’s institutional hostility to Israel and the implementation of reforms to increase the organization’s accountability. There are individual U.N. agencies that do good work, and we can continue to support those.

Realistically, though, the U.N. will always be a disappointment. The fact is that the closest thing to what FDR envisioned in the U.N. is NATO, a like-minded group of nations that has been a force for peace, order, and freedom. This is why President-elect Donald Trump should embrace NATO and turn his critical eye to the U.N., where there is the genuine opportunity to, if nothing else, save the U.S. some money and rattle the cages of people taking advantage of our beneficence.

Charles de Gaulle dismissively called the U.N. “the thing.” The thing will always stumble on, but maybe Donald Trump can teach it a lesson or two about how we truly value our ally and its nemesis, Israel.