**What America Really Needs To Do About the UN**

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This week brings fresh reports that the Trump White House wants to [slash funding](http://ktla.com/2017/03/14/white-house-demands-20b-cut-to-state-dept-un-funding-for-foreign-aid-and-peacekeeping-programs/) to the United Nations, possibly by as much as 50%. That would be a wise move, and if that's what actually happens, it would be a good start and a welcome signal -- the first from an American president in many years -- that it is time for the UN to stop treating Washington as a moronic sugar-daddy. It is way past time for the UN (and Washington itself) to stop treating U.S. tax dollars as a multi-billion-dollar annual entitlement for the bigots and thug governments that so amply populate Turtle Bay. It is time for the U.S. to stop shelling out roughly $10 billion per year for the benefit of a UN in which, for instance, the member states have just elected -- I'm not kidding -- the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism,  [*Iran,* as head](http://kayhan.ir/en/news/37168)of the largest voting caucus at the UN assemblies in Vienna.

But behind any move to slash UN funding loom a number of questions. What, precisely, might America hope to achieve? Where can this go? If the aim is to reform the UN, is that even possible?

These are among the questions I address in a Broadside pamphlet published this week by Encounter Books, on "[What To Do About the UN."](https://www.amazon.com/What-About-U-N-Encounter-Broadsides/dp/1594039720/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1489498976&sr=8-1&keywords=claudia+rosett)

The usual defense of the UN is that it may be "imperfect," but "it's all we've got" -- a refrain that tends to be accompanied by prescriptions for reforms that either won't stick, or won't work at all.

My argument is, if the UN is all we've got, then it is way past time to come up with something else.

And while it happens fairly often that columnists here and there (myself included) will call for defunding the UN, replacing the UN, supplanting the UN, and so forth, there is very little in the public domain that actually explores, in serious ways, in detail, with the benefit of real expertise, exactly how America might divorce itself from the UN, and avail itself of arrangements more appropriate to the 21st century.

In the elite circles of Washington and New York, there has long been an implicit taboo on any serious call for the U.S. to shrug off the UN. It's time to end that taboo. It is time for a real debate. It is time for some of those with the know-how, resources, and genuine goodwill toward future generations, to take a serious, in-depth look at the opportunity cost to America of cleaving to the UN. What possibilities are we passing up, in order to maintain this multilateral morass? Is the UN really the best we can do? Could we please start asking these questions not as a rhetorical flourish, but as serious questions?

Some background, in case you are not already acquainted with Encounter's Broadsides. Mine is the 50th in a series that over the past seven years or so has included essays by such figures as former Attorney General Michael Mukasey, former Ambassador John Bolton, and PJMedia columnists Andrew McCarthy and Victor Davis Hanson. These Broadsides are a project of Encounter Books, which is run by my PJMedia colleague Roger Kimball, who in a 2010 post on PJMedia called these publications "a wakeup call. An alarm bell. A blueprint," and further [described them](https://pjmedia.com/rogerkimball/2010/05/29/the-hottest-spot-last-wednesday/) thus:

...they are modestly priced, handsomely printed essays of some 5000-7000 words — long enough to elaborate a case, short enough to be composed quickly by a seasoned writer and to be read in a sitting.

In my Broadside on "[What to Do About the UN](https://www.amazon.com/What-About-U-N-Encounter-Broadsides/dp/1594039720/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1489498976&sr=8-1&keywords=claudia+rosett)," I argue that the UN, for all the high-minded aims of its charter, is basically configured to fail, and is doing so in ways increasingly dangerous  to the U.S.

The UN, for all its flowery promises, was designed  with appalling flaws from the start. The UN operates with no real accountability, no functional moral compass, and no mechanism for acquiring any such vital features. The problems that lead almost inevitably to the UN's bigotry, waste and abuse of its lavish funding and ever-expanding mandates are written into its tyrant-friendly, diplomatically-immune collectively-irresponsible DNA. The incentives suggest, and the record goes far to confirm, that for America the effort to genuinely reform the UN is a project about as promising as investing in the golden future of the workhorse, [Boxer](http://study.com/academy/lesson/boxer-in-animal-farm-character-allegory-analysis.html), in George Orwell's "Animal Farm."

Unwinding the U.S. from the UN might seem a daunting project. But surely it is worth asking whether the toll of sticking with the UN might turn out to be even worse. If I may quote from the closing lines of my [Broadside on the UN](https://www.amazon.com/What-About-U-N-Encounter-Broadsides/dp/1594039720/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1489498976&sr=8-1&keywords=claudia+rosett) (yes, I am hoping you might be interested to read it in full):

The UN is swift to tout its own achievements, real or imagined. But there is plenty in the record to suggest that the more we understand about the real workings of the U.N., the stronger the case for consigning it to the heap of failed collectivist experiments of the 20th century and for designing better alternatives. Either this task gets done in the not-so-distant future because men of vision and good will put their minds to finding ways to do it. Or it waits upon the aftermath of some cataclysm, toward which the U.N., as now configured, increasingly impels us.

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