**Why Is U.S. Supporting Sham U.N. Human Rights Council?**

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The U.N. Human Rights Council ended its latest three-week session on Friday by abandoning human rights victims the world over and contributing to the spread of anti-semitism. With the United States now a member of the Council, the Obama administration is neck deep in the Big Muddy but telling Americans to push on.

President Obama's decision to join the Council, the U.N.'s lead human rights body, was one of his first foreign policy moves. It has been an unmitigated disaster - for human rights.

Kyrgyzstan

On Friday, the United States delegation in Geneva teamed up with the government of Kyrgyzstan to protect the authorities instead of the people. In the face of what the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has called an "immense" humanitarian crisis, the Council adopted a U.S.-Kyrgyz initiative as trivial as its title suggests: "technical assistance and cooperation on human rights in Kyrgyzstan."

Southern Kyrgyzstan is engulfed in ethnic violence that has affected more than one million people, left 400,000 homeless and thousands of dead and injured according to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the ICRC. The Kyrgyz government is failing to provide protection and to stop the violence, with numerous reports that government security forces are contributing to the targeting of Uzbeks.

Freedom House describes Kyrgyzstan as among the least free states on the globe. Leading journalists are murdered, and the country is ranked 162 out of 180 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index.

In addition to the immediate evidence of an ethnic slaughter, the Human Rights Council had before it a report from one of its own special investigators which alerted it to a number of other disturbing facts.

"Kyrgyzstan is recognized as the country with the highest prevalence of bride-kidnappings," and as many as "30 per cent of all marriages are the result of bride-kidnapping." That's the practice of kidnapping women and forcing them to marry either before or after they are raped. The report also said that forty per cent of women in Kyrgyzstan "had been denied the right to work outside the home or to seek an education."

But as if on another planet, the U.S.-led resolution adopted by the Council, "Expresses its support and encouragement for.efforts made to restore democratic and constitutional order and the rule of law in Kyrgyzstan." No reference is made to current events whatsoever. The resolution mentions only "the loss of life of 7 April 2010," (when the country's former president was toppled).

Instead of criticism or an immediate move to alleviate the crisis, the resolution calls upon the U.N. "to work with the Government of Kyrgyzstan .to identify areas of technical assistance that will assist Kyrgyzstan in its ability to fulfill its human rights obligations."

Think back to three weeks earlier. Nine people were killed by Israel in an attempt by Turkish-backed extremists to run a legal naval blockade of the terrorist-run Gaza strip. With American approval, the same Human Rights Council suspended its normal proceedings and held its first ever "urgent debate" on the subject. The one million people affected by an ethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan attracted no call by the U.S. (or any other Council member) for an urgent debate, or a condemnatory resolution, or a report to the Council, or a demand for immediate steps to halt the violence.

Moreover, the U.S.-Kyrgyzstan resolution merely requests the country conduct "a full and transparent investigation that holds perpetrators accountable" for events on one day in April.

In the case of Israel - with American approval - the U.N. Security Council adopted a unanimous call for "a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards," a formula which led to the immediate launch of a Human Rights Council investigation, with another one by the Secretary-General in the offing. Democratic Israel can't run its own investigation, but corruption-infested Kyrgyzstan can.

And, oh yes, Kyrgyzstan is an elected member of the Human Rights Council.

Iran

The long-suffering people of Iran fared no better. To mark the anniversary of last June's stolen Iranian election, the Obama administration contrived to manufacture the appearance of Council action.

On June 15, Norwegian Ambassador Bente Angell-Hansen read a statement that spoke about human rights violations in Iran for a total of 171 seconds. She spoke on behalf of 56 states, or just 29% of U.N. members. She was interrupted by fourteen separate points of order. The controversy resulted in a suspension of the meeting for two hours and another half-hour was lost debating whether the statement could be read at all.

When the Ambassador was finally allowed to proceed, she gingerly read the remainder of the statement by omitting the word 'Iran' three times from the original written text. How painful to listen to her plead "We call on the \*aforementioned government\* to live up to the commitments it has undertaken.and to fulfill its obligations.[We] wish to see an improvement in the human rights situation of individual people \*in this country.\*"

While the State Department broadcast the written statement (and not the one actually delivered), the U.S. Ambassador Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe spun the story this way. She called it "a significant accomplishment" and an "important moment" for the Human Rights Council. She explained the toothless nature of the remarks by telling Reuters that the statement "is intended as a show of solidarity with the human rights defenders, rather than a condemnation of the government."

A short lesson in U.N. processes is necessary to fathom the fraud involved in the administration's actions on Iran. The Human Rights Council can respond to human rights violations by a state in a number of ways. It can (1) adopt a resolution launching a human rights investigation, (2) adopt a resolution condemning the violations of human rights, (3) adopt a decision read by the Council President reflecting unanimous concern, (4) decide to hold a special session devoted to the state's human rights abuses, and/or (5) decide to hold an urgent debate on the country at hand. In the case of Iran, the Council did none of the above - no resolution, no decision, no special session, no urgent debate, no condemnation by the Council of any kind.

While Iranians are denied the most elementary civil and political rights, and Americans are held hostage by its government, the Obama administration managed to get the U.N.'s lead human rights body to permit a fraction of U.N. members to read haltingly a statement with no consequences. Yet Donahoe crowed before the cameras: "American engagement and leadership matters at the Human Rights Council."

Freedom of Expression

The fallout from the Obama administration's "leadership" on the Council got worse. On Friday, the Council adopted a resolution on freedom of religion or belief. It was instantly heralded by none other than the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) - with good reason.

In the context of a major push by the OIC to expand the reaches of their notions of "freedom" of thought, conscience, religion or belief, the United States agreed to remove a reference to freedom of expression as a countervailing principle.

The last time such a resolution on the subject was adopted by the Council, pre-dating an Obama presence, it read: "appeals to all Governments to take all appropriate measures.to counter intolerance and related violence based on religion or belief,.recognizing that every individual has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, expression and religion."

Even in the General Assembly last fall, the resolution on the subject said: "freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing." With Obama's people on the Council, freedom of expression was erased from the statement of entitlements flowing from religion and belief.

The U.N.'s Durban Racist Anti-racism Conference

And it didn't end there. Friday the Obama administration changed course on nine consecutive years of clear American opposition to the product of the anti-semitic hatefest known as the 2001 Durban conference.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), which was adopted after Israel and the United States walked out of the conference in disgust, names only Israel and charges it with racism. The UN system has made so-called "follow-up" of the DDPA one of its central goals. So has its fan Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who opened a Durban II conference in Geneva in April of 2009.

Now the U.N. is planning to hold two more such meetings as "commemorations" of the tenth anniversary of the 2001 conference. There will be a one-day event in September 2011 organized at the same time as presidents and prime ministers are in New York for the opening of the General Assembly.

Most of them refused to attend Durban I and II, but the plan is that this time they will be a captive audience.

And on Friday the Council adopted a resolution which decides to hold a second commemorative meeting at the UN Human Rights Council in June of next year. It also urges the widespread participation of civil society in the festivities. Civil society members used Durban I to adopt a declaration that zionism is racism.

One would have thought that encouraging the celebration or repetition of Durban I would be anathema to a U.S. administration. After all, between 2002 and 2009 the United States faced twelve main U.N. resolutions on Durban follow-up in the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, and voted against each and every time. But no longer.

Ambassador Donahoe explained that the United States would allow the resolution to be adopted without a vote, and the U.S. would simply dissociate itself. Donahoe explained her failure to demand a vote, rally like-minded states to oppose the resolution, and vote against, as a consequence of the resolution's sponsors agreeing to place one paragraph dealing with an unrelated report of a working group into the resolution's preamble instead of its "operative" part.

Her feeble story ignored the obvious inconsistency between prior policy and three remaining operative paragraphs which give birth to son of Durban.

Cuba

In addition to this kind of American "leadership," there were only three votes held during the Council session, and the United States was on the losing end of the stick every time.

One was a successful Cuban-driven initiative, entitled the right to peace. It pushes for "the renunciation of the use or threat of use of force in international relations," which is not to be confused with turning swords into plowshares. The idea is to ensure that countries engaged in breaches of international peace and security and human rights have nothing to fear, ever.

And there was a second successful Cuban-led resolution on foreign debt, which alleges human rights eliminate any connection between the entitlement to debt relief and responsibilities of the debtor.

The resolution says: "the exercise of the basic rights of the people of debtor countries to food, housing, clothing, employment, education, health services and a healthy environment cannot be subordinated to the implementation of structural adjustment policies, growth programmes and economic reforms arising from the debt."

Israel and Anti-Semitism

In addition to losing every time it cared enough to vote, the Obama administration has utterly failed to diminish the Council's lethal obsession with Israel and Jews - contrary to its undertakings when it joined. Today, it is clear that U.S. membership has simply given it undeserved credibility.

The Council has a standing agenda of ten items. One is reserved specifically for condemning Israel. One is for all of the other 191 UN states, should anybody consider them to raise "human rights situations that require the Council's attention."

The practical consequence of such a skewed agenda was plain this session. On the basis of the regular agenda, five hours were devoted to Israel-bashing and four hours were devoted to all other countries.

The Council thought that was insufficient. By deciding to hold an additional "urgent debate" over the pro-Hamas blockade-busting enterprise, they spent another 4.5 hours on Israel.

In total, the Council spent more than twice as much time on Israel than the rest of the world taken together. Sitting there twiddling its thumbs was the Obama administration, which made no objection to the change in the procedural rules to increase the amount of time spent on Israel.

To get a full sense of the U.N. Human Rights Council pathology, consider the number of Israel-focused investigations in play at this session. First, on June 1 the Council chartered a supposed "investigation" of Israel over the flotilla event (after already deciding to "condemn" Israel for its "outrageous attack.")

Second, on June 14 the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay announced the formation of a three-person committee to follow-up the findings of the infamous Goldstone Report. The report is a modern manifestation of the ancient blood libel against the Jewish people, since it alleges that Israel really intended to murder civilians rather than defend itself against eight years of rocket attacks. (In Goldstone's words, Israel "deliberately.terrorize[d] a civilian population" and Israeli "violence against civilians w[as] part of a deliberate policy.")

And third, the Council took up a document from another of its investigators who is charged with reporting on Israeli human rights violations on a year-round basis. September 11 conspiracy enthusiast Richard Falk advised the Council this month that 4 million Palestinians have a right to return to Israel (thereby eliminating a Jewish state), and encouraged the Council to back a "Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign" (intended to isolate and cripple the country).

That's a total of three separate investigations on Israel alone currently sponsored by the Human Rights Council. But as part of the Obama administration's decision to become a member, it also decided American tax dollars should pay for it.

So U.S. taxpayers are now on the hook for 22% of the cost - trips, meals, assistants, press conferences, webcasts, printing.all the everyday items that make hate-mongering possible.

Last, but not least, there was the old-fashioned anti-semitism characteristic of the day-in and day-out proceedings. This session, Syrian representative Rania Al Rifaiy told the Council that Israeli school children "sing merrily as they go to school and I quote 'With my teeth I will rip your flesh. With my mouth I will suck your blood.'"

Sitting in the room listening to her, not a peep of protest was uttered by the American delegation. Nor was anything heard from the Belgian president of the Human Rights Council, who in the past has had no difficulty interrupting and reprimanding speakers on less popular themes.

Bottom Lines

With the conclusion of this latest Human Rights Council session, the grim statistics sum up the disastrous disregard for human rights from both the Council and the administration.

There are more Council resolutions and decisions condemning Israel than all other U.N. states combined.

The Council has held fourteen regular sessions on human rights everywhere and six special sessions on Israel alone. The Council has had only one urgent debate about human rights anywhere - on Israel.

The Council is now sponsoring three simultaneous investigations of Israel. Seven other countries are subject to a single Council inquiry, and 181 states are deemed not worth investigating at all.

Why is the Obama administration there and why are Americans paying for it?