Pierre Bessard

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The United Nations, the world’s most influential and inclusive international organization, was officially established in 1945 to promote world peace, protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and enhance the welfare of all humanity through international cooperation and collective action. U.N. commitment to the principle of universality in the spirit of tolerance is stated in the Charter drawn up by the founding governments more than 60 years ago.

But behind the glossy façade of its statement of purpose there is another, very different reality. Founded at the height of collectivism, with the United States under New Deal programs, Europe torn by war, and Russia under Soviet rule, the United Nations never so much united nations as it did governments: Article 4 of the U.N. Charter evocatively invites „all other peace-loving states” to join the organization. From the outset the U.N. has been a union of governments, mostly serving as psychological assurance and legitimization of state power and, more often than not, abuse of power: Under the principle of „sovereign equality” laid out in Article 2 of the Charter, the U.N. hardly ever makes any moral distinction between the types of regimes in power.

The semantic confusion between nation and state is at the core of the U.N.’s ideology. In a way, the U.N. has encouraged governments to „nationalize” nations: Under its assumptions nations no longer reflect the feelings of individuals sharing the personal desire to live together and perpetuate the value of their heritage; nations become the prerogatives of governments. Since it implies nationalizing feelings, the rigid concept of a „nation-state” underlying U.N. doctrine is an aberration: History shows that states are more likely to destroy spontaneous national communities than to promote them. As the French philosopher Ernest Renan put it, „a nation has no more right than a king does to say to a province: ‘You belong to me, I am seizing you.’ A province is its inhabitants; if anyone has the right to be consulted in such an affair, it is the inhabitant. A nation never has any real interest in annexing or holding on to a country against its will. The wish of nations is, all in all, the sole legitimate criterion, the one to which one must always return.” In other words, nations do not depend on states. And contrary to what is commonly thought, neither are they based on race, language, religion, or geography: „Man is a slave neither of his race nor his language, nor of his religion, nor of the course

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of rivers nor of the direction taken by mountain chains. A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and warm of heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation."³ A nation is therefore first and foremost a personal matter, based on individual reason and free will, on voluntarily shared traditions and cultural preferences. Anyone, regardless of citizenship, can change his „nationality“ and identify with other values if he chooses to do so, or, alternatively, not experience any „national“ feelings at all.

Yet under the U.N. system, nations are artificially transformed into ensembles of uniform people, with definite ethnic characteristics, under one government safeguarding „national interests“, as defined according to political arbitrariness and territorial boundaries. Depicted as the embodiment of the „international community“, as the U.N.’s catchphrase would have it, governments have consequently replaced nations as spiritual entities with a soul of their own – a distortion that blurs the true causes of political events and the policymakers’ moral responsibility. Worse, by letting representatives from any regime, including brutal dictatorships and totalitarian governments, speak in the name of all residents of a particular country, the U.N. inherently contains an in-built dichotomy between its purported aims and its actual workings. In his famous study on imperialism and world politics, American historian Parker T. Moon described the problem of seeing the world exclusively through the eyes of governments as follows:⁴

Language often obscures truth. More than is ordinarily realized, our eyes are blinded to the facts of international relations by tricks of the tongue. When one uses the simple monosyllable „France“ one thinks of France as a unit, an entity. When to avoid awkward repetition we use a personal pronoun in referring to a country – when for example we say „France sent her troops to conquer Tunis“ – we impute not only unity but personality to the country. The very words conceal the facts and make international relations a glamorous drama in which personalized nations are the actors, and all too easily we forget the flesh-and-blood men and women who are the true actors. How different it would be if we had no such word as „France“, and had to say instead – thirty-eight million men, women and children of very diversified interests and beliefs, inhabiting 218,000 square miles of territory! Then we should more accurately describe the Tunis expedition in some such way as this: „A few of these thirty-eight million persons sent thirty thousand others to conquer Tunis.“ This way of putting the fact immediately suggests a question, or rather a series of questions. Who are the „few“? Why did they send the thirty thousand to Tunis? And why did these obey?

Statism and the „nationalization“ of nations have allowed U.N. member governments to systematically avoid answering such questions. The U.N. has merely legitimized any action taken by politicians or despots gaining power over the

³ Ibid.
particular countries named in its list of member states. As a result, it has helped and encouraged countless tyrannical governments to stay in power long after they would have fallen in a world that refused to recognize their legitimacy and denounced their crimes.

I. Statism and Moral Relativism Against Human Rights

Besides including as a charter member the Soviet Union, an oppressive regime accountable for 20 million civilian deaths according to conservative estimates, the United Nations has regularly favored totalitarianism over freedom. One of the most dramatic demonstrations of such a tendency was the exclusion in 1971 of the Republic of China (Taiwan) from the U.N. system, to replace it with the communist People’s Republic, whose regime murdered 65 million civilians to seize and keep power. Although Taiwan was a charter member and its expulsion would have been forbidden by the U.N.’s own Charter, the General Assembly still proceeded to it. The contrast in human welfare under both systems could not be greater: Today, Taiwan has a per capita GNP of 14,032 U.S. dollars, more than ten times higher than that of communist China. Taiwan ranks 24th in terms of economic freedom in the world, tying with Sweden; China comes 95th.

In recent years, the Chinese government’s continuous increases in military expenditure and the number of missiles deployed against Taiwan have elevated tensions and posed a serious threat to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. The People’s Republic has been aggressively promoting its “one China principle”, arguing that Taiwan belongs to China and that the Chinese government represents the people of Taiwan. Worst of all, the Chinese National People’s Congress enacted an “anti-separation law” in March 2005, emphasizing that, under specific circumstances, it will adopt “non-peaceful means and other necessary measures” to settle the disagreement between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Despite such overt belligerent threats, the Chinese government still has a permanent seat in the U.N. Security Council.

6 Ibid.
7 Source: Fraser Institute 2006 Economic Freedom of the World Index.
8 Source: Government Information Office, Republic of China (Taiwan).
By putting nearly every single government on the same moral plane, the U.N. is legitimizing totalitarian regimes which have been characterized by massive violations of human rights and kept entire populations in poverty. These violations include individual and mass assassinations and executions, death in concentration camps, starvation, deportations, torture, slave labor and other forms of physical terror. A vast number of victims were those countries’ own nationals. Yet the perpetrators of these crimes and atrocities have never been brought to trial before a U.N. court. On the contrary, the U.N.’s moral relativism toward its member states has made the difference between mass murder and human rights merely a matter of political opinion subject to majority voting in the General Assembly.

The U.N.’s relativist approach to human rights has had particularly dire consequences in the Middle East. By recognizing Yasser Arafat as a legitimate leader, rather than condemning his terrorism and oppressive and autocratic rule, the U.N. has played a substantial role in sustaining the Palestinians’ misery over more than four decades. Starting in 1968, the General Assembly began passing a series of resolutions recognizing the Palestinians’ “right to struggle” to achieve self-determination. Arafat’s first appearance before the U.N. General Assembly in 1974 was the culmination of this process. Although the Palestine Liberation Organization has always held power by force, preached murderous ideologies, and devastated the lives of the Palestinians through economic repression and corruption, it was endorsed and promoted by the U.N. ever since. Arafat’s ways are well documented. He and his Palestinian Authority are responsible for the deaths of thousands of Israeli, American, and Lebanese civilians. In their war against Israel they orchestrated the kidnapping and murder of schoolchildren, the hijacking of airliners, countless car bombings and death-squad killings, while using “peace” as a deceptive strategy. The Palestinian Authority’s laws prohibiting free speech, its arbitrary confiscation of property and detention and torture of dissenters have never been issues of concern to the U.N. Even now that Arafat’s party has been replaced by the even worse and openly terrorist Hamas, the “aid” flow from the United Nations is due to continue.

10 For a detailed account of Arafat’s duplicity and reign of terror, see in particular Efraim Karsh, Arafat’s War: The Man and His Battle for Israeli Conquest (New York, N.Y.: Grove Press, 2003).
11 A portion of the humanitarian aid goes directly to the Palestinian Authority. Cf. Sophie Mongalvy, “Donors Pledge 500 Million Dollars in Aid to Palestinians”, AFP, September 1, 2006.
The Crusade Against Israel

While sponsoring terrorist organizations, the U.N. has been heavily targeting Israel, a country where Arab residents paradoxically enjoy more rights and freedoms than under any Arab state. An analysis of U.N. voting toward Israel commissioned in 1991 by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir shows unambiguous results. From 1967 to 1989 the Security Council passed 88 resolutions directly against Israel, zero resolution criticized or opposed the actions or perceived interests of an Arab state or body, including the Palestinian Authority. Israel was “condemned” 49 times; Arab governments, not once. Over the same span in the General Assembly, 429 anti-Israel resolutions were passed. Israel was “condemned” 321 times; Arab governments, not once. The automatic majority enjoyed by the totalitarian bloc enables this group to pass any anti-Israel resolution it chooses, no matter how one-sided it may be. In 1975, the U.N. notoriously ruled that Zionism was “a form of racism”. This same majority blocks the adoption of any resolution that has any hint of criticism against the Palestinian Authority or an Arab state. On average, 19 anti-Israel resolutions are adopted by the General Assembly annually. Meanwhile, the “Special Committees” and “Palestinian Units” of the U.N. spend more than five million U.S. dollars a year, essentially to spread anti-Israel propaganda. These bodies are the focus of the worst anti-Israel activism, with increasingly frequent cases of blatant anti-Semitism.

The Commission on Human Rights also routinely adopted totally disproportionate resolutions regarding Israel: Of all the condemnations issued by the Commission, 26 percent referred to Israel alone, while neighboring and other rogue states were never criticized. The Commission, which included representatives of some of the world’s worst abusers of human rights, held its last session in March 2006, before being replaced by the U.N. Human Rights Council. Over 60 years, the Commission served mainly as a shield for dictatorships such as China, Cuba, the Soviet Union, or Syria, which used their votes to escape all criticism and denounce governments of relatively free countries. The Commission hardly ever promoted human rights; it mostly undermined them by providing oppressive and totalitarian regimes with respectability. In 2001, in one of the Commission’s last showdowns, the United

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12 Israeli Arabs are full citizens of the state of Israel, with equal protection under the law, and full rights of due process. Unlike Jewish citizens, they cannot be drafted into the Israeli army, but they may serve voluntarily. The number of Muslim legal residents, including East Jerusalem permanent residents, in Israel stands at around 1,350,000, about 19.5% of Israel’s population.

13 Source: Arutz Sheva Reference Desk.

States was demonstratively supplanted by Sudan, whose government condones the practice of slavery and has been actively supporting genocide against hundreds of thousands of people in the Darfur region. However, in 2005 less than half of the General Assembly could agree that the Sudanese government was guilty of human rights violations. The same year, none other than the Zimbabwean government under President Robert Mugabe, which ruined the country’s economy and whose crimes include large-scale and violent expropriation and extortion, arbitrary detention, torture, and murder, was voted into the Commission. In the end, the accumulation of abuses and hypocrisies proved too much even by U.N. standards.

Yet the new Human Rights Council replicates exactly the same biases. Israel and the U.S. have refused to join it with good reasons. The Council includes the governments of countries such as Algeria, Cuba, China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia – all violators of human rights in more than one way. And it is already focusing exclusively on Israel. At its first special session in July 2006, the Council adopted a resolution calling for an urgent fact-finding mission on the human rights situation in the Palestinian territories. At its second session one month later, it condemned the „grave Israeli violations of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law“ in Lebanon and decided to „urgently establish and immediately dispatch“ a high-level inquiry commission to the region.

This feast of Israel-bashing as the „occupying power“ in the Middle East does not make any mention of the Hamas and Hezbollah terrorist provocations – the constant rocket attacks against Israeli civilians and the sneak attacks into Israel that have resulted in the killing of civilians and the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers. Instead, the Council wants to „investigate the systematic targeting and killings of civilians by Israel, examine the types of weapons used by Israel and their conformity with international law, and assess the extent and deadly impact of Israeli attacks on human life, property, critical infrastructure and environment“. In other words, the U.N. has already ruled on the findings before the investigation has even started. By „condemning“ Israel without ever criticizing its enemies, the U.N. is offering legitimacy as well as a counterfeit moral victory to neighboring tyrants and terrorist organizations, while keeping populations oppressed and tying Israel’s hands, enticing it into self-sacrificial appeasement.

Given that human rights offenders set the standards, U.N. resolutions on human rights cannot even be taken seriously as symbolic gestures. By undermining the legitimacy of the existence and self-defense of a relatively free country such as Israel and defending totalitarian, theocratic and terrorism-promoting regimes, the U.N. serves primarily the interests of their despots and tragically ignores those of the populations subjected to them. Security Council members China and Russia have also obstructed progress on the issue of the Iranian government's uranium enrichment program, although it is openly intent on the destruction of Israel. Both governments maintain extensive ties with Iran, view it as a strategic ally, and otherwise sell it military weapons. It is therefore in no way unjustified to recoil at the U.N.'s double standards and ignore its authority, as have done Israel, the U.S., and other Western governments over several issues, including the controversial intervention in Iraq, which the U.N. had declared „illegal“.

II. Toward a Global Socialist Paradise?

The U.N.'s statist ideology goes far beyond legitimizing governments of all stripes – and totalitarian regimes in particular – under the guise of „sovereignty“. It permeates nothing less than its Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On top of listing genuine and essential individual rights such as life, liberty, and security of person; the right to own property; freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; and freedom of opinion and expression, the Declaration includes a whole range of entitlements requiring violations of those same rights. From Articles 22 to 28, it provides „rights“ to public services, social security, work and protection against unemployment, paid holidays, „free“ and compulsory education, food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services, and even a „right“ to cultural life. Although these things may be desirable and even necessary to sustain human life, they cannot, of course, be viewed as rights: If people were fundamentally entitled to such benefits, they would be legitimizied to seize each other's property to pay for them, thereby resorting to theft. In other words, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which needed to accommodate the Soviet Union, is as much a blueprint for a true socialist paradise or at least a full-blown Swedish folkshemmet („people's asylum“) as anything else. Article 29 lays this out fairly explicitly: „Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.“17

The Declaration not only submits genuine human rights to the needs and whims of other residents within state boundaries according to socialist ideals, but does so “through international cooperation, in accordance with the organization and resources of each State” (Article 22). Such a provision legitimizes government redistribution of resources on a global scale while precluding any discussion of the organization of its member states, thereby implicitly sparing socialist governments that destroy most incentives to production, generate economic chaos, and end up in political tyrannies:¹⁸ Taxpayers of freer and therefore wealthier countries, according to the U.N., have a “duty” to sustain the livelihoods of the governments and populations in those countries, regardless of governance issues. Given the sheer evil and misery brought about by socialism, in particular by the Security Council member states Russia and China (see table), the U.N. Declaration seems at best cynical. It destroys property and makes a mockery of human rights.

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<th>Civilian victims of state terror in the name of socialism</th>
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The U.N.’s Anti-Capitalist Agenda

The U.N’s perverted definition of human rights has opened the door to all kinds of degenerations. In recent years, it has served as a starting point not only to request ever more „aid“, but also to criticize Western governments for failing to violate more aggressively the property rights of stockholders of pharmaceutical corporations in order to provide „free“ healthcare and medicines against AIDS, a disease
most prevalent in countries where governments have imposed all sorts of restrictions on pharmaceutical business activities and on freedom of speech about the consequences of unsafe sexual behaviors. In parallel, the U.N.'s World Health Organization provides justification for the never-ending extension of state intervention in healthcare. Since the U.N. sees health as a fundamental human right that „society“ has to provide to everyone, the market is supposed to be unable to rise to the challenge. The WHO therefore promotes highly centralized and politicized healthcare, whereby an undefined „public health“ takes precedence over individual health: The Hippocratic Oath is replaced by the pseudo-ethics of political bargaining and collective „agreement“, with the WHO as the standard-setting body.\textsuperscript{19}

The U.N. is increasingly attempting to transfer the responsibility of bad political governance to free enterprise, as with its Global Compact initiative, which commits business to human rights, labor, anti-corruption, and environmental standards, as if the U.N. member governments had nothing to do with the conditions prevailing in their own countries. Again, the U.N. is conveniently releasing corrupt and totalitarian regimes from their own responsibilities, calling instead for „responsible investing“ and blaming global capitalism, although the positive correlation between economic freedom and peace has been empirically established.\textsuperscript{20} The Global Compact principles are recommendations, but they undoubtedly signal the intent of worldwide regulation of economic activity, which would spell the end of regulatory competition and constraints on state intervention. There is no doubt that global regulation would heavily hinder innovation and economic development, and run the risk of large-scale devastating consequences as a result of wrong regulatory decisions applied to the entire globe. Above all, poor countries do not suffer from too little regulation, but precisely from the opposite: government oppression and bureaucratization of economic activity as well as insufficient recognition of property rights.\textsuperscript{21}

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Yet in 2006 the U.N.’s International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted a recommendation on work relations, disputing the legitimacy of contractual agreements between employers and employees and submitting them to legislation and “national policy” through labor inspection services, the social security administration, and the tax authorities.\textsuperscript{22} Since its founding the ILO has also been actively promoting the extension of taxpayer-funded “social security” as a “basic human right”. It has further set up a World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, which has described the current global economy as “ethically unacceptable and politically unsustainable” and called for a system of global economic governance.\textsuperscript{23} It incongruously criticizes the “democratic deficit” in trade and finance and the alleged predominance of economic over social issues, and advocates measures compatible with human rights (as defined by the U.N.) and “international solidarity”, that is, intergovernmental redistribution at taxpayers’ expense.

The U.N.’s assault against free industry is further evidenced by its Convention on Climate Change and the subsequent Kyoto Protocol. In that context, the U.N. has been accused by some scientists, among whom the leading Massachusetts Institute of Technology climatologist Richard S. Lindzen, of misrepresenting their work to fit a preconceived political agenda. In particular, advocates of the theory of catastrophic global warming seem to have manipulated results of climate science to create the illusion of a certainty about its impact, whereas current knowledge would not allow deriving any policy conclusions. One reason for the uncertainty is that the climate is always changing: Thirty years ago, for example, climatologists were concerned with global cooling. And scientists can just as poorly predict changes in greenhouse gases, as it is impossible to forecast economic and technological innovation over a century.\textsuperscript{24}

But there are more disturbing sides to the global warming hype. Scientists who dissent from the alarmism have actually seen their research grants reduced, as governments have sought to promote the issue to justify intervention in energy markets.\textsuperscript{25} As a consequence, lies about climate change gain credence even when they fly in the face of the science on which the alarmism is supposedly based. Pa-

radoxically, some scientists hold that global warming is more likely to benefit than to harm humanity: Increased carbon dioxide emissions, coupled with warmer autumns and winters, would boost agricultural production and reduce heating costs, for example.\(^\text{26}\) The costs of curbing greenhouse gas emissions, in any case, would far exceed even the most pessimistic predictions of the improbable losses resulting from climate change. Their impact on prosperity would be significant: between 1.8 to 5 percent of GDP depending on the country.\(^\text{27}\) Artificially high energy prices and government distortion of energy markets would result in less investment, less employment, and migration of industry. As GDP growth would slow, industry would also have fewer resources to invest in research, whereby technological progress would be impeded.

Why, then, do so many scientists and observers view global warming as a threat requiring government intervention? One reason might be the way science is financed: With issues competing with each other for monopoly funding by governments, scientists tend to create a culture of dishonesty and exaggeration to attract subsidies, while the political community can then take credit by acting as if it had saved the population from certain doom.\(^\text{28}\) But the issue also reflects the U.N.’s ideological outlook.

The U.N.’s attempts to undermine the market economy with worldwide regulation can be attributed to what has been dubbed „neo-Leftist radicalism“ because of its parallels with the utopian projects of the twentieth century.\(^\text{29}\) The U.N.’s economic and social agenda carries equally strong tones of utopianism. Socialism collapsed because it failed to recognize the enduring qualities of human nature and tried to change that nature through social engineering: In its claims and ambitions, the U.N., too, seeks to alter human nature in the name of a worldwide redistributionist ideological vision. And like its national precursors it must tend to become totalitarian, or it cannot advance.


Global Taxation as the New Tyranny

The U.N.'s socialist leanings are further substantiated by its proposal in 2001 to establish an International Tax Organization. Among its stated aims, the ITO would develop international norms for tax policy and administration and maintain surveillance of tax developments – all of which would be harmful enough and reduce the pressure for innovation and emulation of best practices. However, the ITO would not stop there: It would also establish a mechanism for multilateral sharing of tax information, so as to curb the scope for tax avoidance, and seek to restrain tax competition designed to attract multinational corporations, including by imposing uniform taxation. Tax levels would of course rise to unprecedented heights if such a worldwide tax cartel ever came into being.

In addition, the U.N. suggests that the ITO raise direct revenues through several "innovative" sources: a tax on currency transactions (or Tobin Tax), a tax on carbon dioxide emissions, and, worst of all, a tax enabled by information sharing on flight capital and emigrant income: Those people precisely fleeing oppressive regimes would therefore be punished for seeking a better life elsewhere and remain subjects of their "nationalized" nation against their will. Global taxation would further bring U.N. spending outside the realm of national accountability and financially emancipate it from the U.S., which remains its main contributor. Clearly, human rights properly understood, capital accumulation, the efficiency of international capital markets, and wealth creation would all be undermined by the International Tax Organization and the various contemplated U.N. taxes.

Yet global taxation has been actively promoted by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and some of the ideas laid out in 2001 are making progress. In 2006, at the initiative of two notorious statists, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and French President Jacques Chirac, 15 governments have started implementing a so-called "solidarity levy" on airplane tickets. France alone expects to raise 200 billion euros a year, charging anywhere between one and 40 euros per flight, depending on travel distance and ticket class. However, the airplane ticket tax is designed to be a pilot project and the precursor to other global taxes. Since the U.N. is under the control of a majority of oppressive dictatorships and totalitarian governments ruling over countries kept deliberately poor, the burden of those taxes would ine-

31 Cf. supra, pp. 1-2.
32 Source: French Foreign Ministry.
vitably fall on residents of wealthier countries, forced to support ever increasing amounts of international redistribution, with no way out.

**Aid: The Road to Sustained Poverty**

The move for global taxation comes together with the appeal for huge increases in international redistribution under the label of „aid“. Under the so-called Millennium Goals, U.N. member states should commit 0.7 percent of GNP to development aid by 2015, as well as „extensive and generous“ debt relief in favor of governments in poor countries. The aid alone would represent roughly 300 billion U.S. dollars a year, or twice as much as today. According to the U.N., this goal is vital to „international and national security and stability“ because poor and hungry societies are much more likely than high-income societies to fall into conflict over scarce vital and natural resources. But this view does not stand up to close scrutiny. By pretending that „societies“ generate conflicts, the U.N. is again letting its member governments and their poverty-generating policies off the hook.

Over the last five decades, moreover, the West already spent 2.3 trillion U.S. dollars in aid, and there is little to show for it. Although poverty levels have decreased dramatically in regions liberalizing their economies and opening up to trade and investment, such as East and South Asia, it is not the case among traditional aid recipients. In Africa alone, 568 billion U.S. dollars have been spent, while real per capita revenues in the region decreased by 11 percent since the mid-1970s. Dozens of „structural adjustment“ loans (aid loans conditional on policy reforms) ended in the failure of both policy reform and economic growth. Empirically, aid has never been shown effective as a way to generate economic growth; controlling for economic freedom, it may well have a negative impact. Again, statist ideology largely explains why it is still advocated. Although socialism was demonstrated impracticable as early as 1920, the greatly exaggerated reported growth of the Soviet Union from the 1930s through the 1950s made many observers unsure as

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34 Easterly, op. cit., p. 4.


to which system delivered superior economic results: That mistake led many of the early development economists to recommend national economic planning to achieve growth.\(^{37}\) The ineffectiveness of aid, therefore, has little to do with a lack of money to redistribute. Its roots lie in its collectivist nature. Countries with good governance and policies grow and reduce poverty whether they receive aid or not: As the leading development economist Peter Bauer has shown, there is no such thing as a „vicious circle of poverty“.\(^{38}\) If that were true, then humanity could never have left the Stone Age, as the world never received any investment from outside of itself. The „vicious circle“ fallacy, once again, conveniently ignores institutional and political factors.

As mentioned, aid has been even less successful at promoting free markets and restraining government. The evidence suggests that aid, including debt relief, results in less accountable and honest government, not more.\(^{39}\) Aid, therefore, is not only ineffective, it is above all counterproductive: By reducing the accountability of national governments and subsidizing the prevailing corrupt institutions and politicians, it perpetuates the poverty it claims to cure.\(^{40}\) Aid hurts the recipient country in many material ways, but the dependence and the resulting loss of self-respect and self-reliance are certainly not the least of its consequences. At the same time, aid violates the legitimate property rights of taxpayers in Western countries, generating additional tensions. It has also financed countless military adventures by providing belligerent regimes with funds that they did not need to raise in their own countries. In contrast to voluntary private investment, aid is inevitably statist and socialist. Even if the funds directly finance specific projects without any government intermediaries, they not only free up other government resources for wasteful spending, but also usually disrupt local markets and entrepreneurial efforts: Without the direction of market prices and the measure of profit, there is no way that aid can ever be productive. The substantial evidence gathered in the last fifty years indicates that aid has never worked and will never work. It is not a matter of how it is designed or evaluated; by nature aid is intrinsically harmful.

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37 Easterly, op. cit., p. 32.  
39 Andrew Mwenda, „Foreign Aid and the Weakening of Democratic Accountability in Uganda“, Foreign Policy Briefing No. 88, Cato Institute, July 12, 2006.  
But despite this overwhelming evidence of the failure of aid, the U.N. is advocating more of the same: Its Millennium Project includes a total of 449 interventions ranging from „providing impoverished farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa with affordable replenishments of soil nitrogen and other soil nutrients“ to „free school meals for all children using locally produced foods with take-home rations“ and „establishing, in each country, an office of science advisor to the president or prime minister to consolidate the role of science in national policymaking“. These projects reflect the U.N.’s ideology. It is based on a nationalistic and statist top-down approach. It does not seek to incite governments to abandon harassment of private business, restrictive labor laws, punitive taxation, nationalization, expropriation, and seizure, which have been preventing so many economies from growing. Nor does it seek to open up markets and abolish barriers to trade and foreign investment. On the basis of national sovereignty it supplies instead rationalizations for protectionism and the absence of internal reforms. The same principle of sovereignty that shields the worst governments against international criticism is providing an excuse for keeping out foreign investment, favoring „national“ producers, and applying heavy tariffs on imported goods, including from neighboring countries. Of course, agricultural protectionism in richer countries is legitimately criticized, but the most sheltered economies are those of countries kept poor as a result: Estimates by the World Bank, OECD, and Oxford Economic Forecasting put the gains from full liberalization of trade at between 800 billion and 1.2 trillion U.S. dollars per year, with a major portion of that going to poorer countries.

Unfortunately, based on the same mercantilist fallacy, the World Trade Organization (which has „close de facto working arrangements“ with the U.N. system) has been exempting poorer countries from liberalization in a broad range of goods and services, resorting instead to the notion of „aid for trade“. The WTO is thereby protecting vested interests at the expense of entrepreneurs and entire populations, in addition to departing from the principle of non-discrimination and sustaining the gross misrepresentation of trade as a matter of „concessions“ between governments. No wonder the Doha round of negotiations was suspended in July 2006: Biennial WTO Ministerial Conferences in the last 10 years have actually achieved little aside from offering a visible platform for opponents of free trade to voice their hostility. The WTO has also entrenched and expanded „anti-dumping“

43 WTO Doha Work Program, Ministerial Declaration, Sixth Ministerial Conference, Hong Kong, December 18, 2005.
regulations and cross-retaliation clauses, thereby leading to more trade litigation, reprisals, and disputes among governments, further eroding the case for free trade and denying that businesses and individuals, as producers and consumers, and not in fact governments, choose to trade with each other.

The great Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises ridiculed the U.N.'s approach to trade with an analogy: If the United Nations had been established in 1600 and the Indian tribes of North America had been admitted as members of the organization, under the pretense of sovereignty and self-determination they would have been given the right to exclude all foreigners from entering their territory and from exploiting the natural resources which they themselves did not know how to utilize. Today, the North American continent would still be a desert. Whether governments are preventing foreign investors from exploiting natural resources or pursuing policies that are so arbitrary that foreign investments are unsafe, tremendous prejudice is inflicted on the local populations in terms of lost opportunities to raise themselves out of poverty. What generates conflicts within those countries is precisely the long-refuted fallacy that free trade and foreign investment would impoverish them and that governments need to protect economic „national interests“, an absurdity in itself, as all economic interests are necessarily private. But under the assumption of a „national“ economy, force replaces voluntary exchange as the obvious way to obtain more resources. The U.N. does nothing to dispel that tragic misunderstanding.

Another unpleasant truth is that aid has become a large subsidized industry from which many professionals and bureaucrats derive a good living – whom the British journalist Graham Hancock, a former East African correspondent of The Economist, has described as the „lords of poverty“, thereby unmasking supposed philanthropy and disinterestedness as a grand fraud at the expense of taxpayers and the poor. Indeed, what would happen to an industry that depends on poverty for its survival if poverty were to be eradicated? On-the-ground accounts of the ravages of U.N. aid document how it bankrupts honest farmers and local businesses, attracts fake refugees interested in free food and medical care, and exacerbate crises by sustai-

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ning corrupt and oppressive governments without offering any hope for long-term development.\(^{47}\)

The scandal that was uncovered in the U.N. Oil-For-Food Program in Iraq exposed the beneficiaries of U.N. aid: Designed to alleviate the devastating effects on the Iraqi population of the U.N.’s own sanctions against Iraq, the program strengthened Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship and illegally enriched his government, international supporters of his regime (including the French, Russian, and Chinese governments as members of the U.N. Security Council), terrorist organizations, and high-level U.N. officials. Even Secretary-General Kofi Annan was tainted by it.\(^{48}\)

### III. The Failure of U.N. „Peacekeeping”

The U.N.’s attempts to keep the peace by force have proved just as ineffective and harmful as its bogus human rights ideology, its socialist global governance projects, and its development aid programs. The end of the Cold War led many people to think that the United Nations could impose peace around the world, ignoring the intricacies of the dozens of civil conflicts and wars over which there is often little reporting and knowledge. The self-delusion ended in failed missions in Somalia, Rwanda, East Timor, Biafra, Cambodia, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Bosnia, Kosovo, and many other places.\(^{49}\) The U.N.’s „nationalized“ concept of nations hijacked by governments provides ample explanation of why competing gangs are often fighting to ignite the fires of collectivist nationalism and ethnicity to gain power and recognition. In many conflicts, there is simply no good side to support and their irrational origins makes a peaceful outcome arbitrary.

The U.N. has led 60 peacekeeping operations since 1948, and has currently 15 operations running with a staff of over 87,000 people. However, as a testimony to its ineffectiveness, the U.N. was unable to prevent the escalation of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, although it has maintained an interim force in Lebanon with over 2000 staff since 1978. Often peacekeeping with humanitarian objectives becomes entangled in local contradictions. For outside intervention to be meaningful, it has to be all-out war with occupation, or abstention. „Peacekeeping“

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\(^{48}\) For a definitive account of the scandal, see Jeffrey A. Meyer and Mark G. Califano, *Good Intentions Corrupted: The Oil-for-Food Scandal and the Threat to the U.N.* (New York, N.Y.: PublicAffairs, 2006).

does not work where there is no peace to keep. Yet intervention can entrap external governments in potentially endless conflicts with no relevance to the security of their jurisdictions: As evidenced by the situations in Afghanistan and Iraq, taking over a country and establishing new institutions to be able to leave one day is easier said than done. The simplistic assumption by the U.S. government, for example, that „democracy“ can be organized as a top-down way of life proves tougher to materialize than thought. In many cases, the U.N. and its member governments entertain the fatal conceit of having the knowledge of what is needed to impose lasting peace. Historically, the former African colonies also went through processes that should have prepared them for independence, but that did not prevent their implosion. External intervention all too often ignores the underlying factors of past hatreds long after they seemed forgotten, as was the case in the Balkans. And when security interests, perceived or real, are at stake, coalitions of governments can act on their own, regardless of U.N. approval.

The United Nations' recognition of totalitarian, criminal, and murderous regimes as legitimate parties in negotiations in the name of „sovereignty“ also lies too far from any realistic policy to ever produce results. Ambassadors to the U.N. are representatives of people who often gained power by terror and oppression. It is absurd that such an organization could achieve anything as ambitious as peace, when in addition the documented corruption of U.N. agencies and the one-sidedness of U.N. resolutions contribute to exacerbate conflicts. With the imperialist and criminal Soviet regime as a charter member, the U.N. had to turn a blind eye on both respect for law and human rights from the beginning: Its declared mission has therefore been constantly disconnected from the reality of its workings. In the meantime, more governments have emerged in different parts of the world that respect neither law nor rights, and in some cases support terrorist organizations that can operate from any country in the world, including Western ones, making the issue of „peacekeeping“ in specific territories increasingly irrelevant to ensure peace.

Nor are U.N. sanctions in any way useful, as they have no effect on disseminated terrorist networks, but simply hurt populations while strengthening the political regimes that hold power over them. Similarly, the assumed precedence of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights over national legislations is just as meaningless: By rationalizing violations of property rights through the classification of entitlements as „human rights“, the Declaration provides apologies for totalitarian regimes and violent conflicts over resources, while the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees shifts the humanitarian consequences to other countries. The U.N. cannot keep the peace because it is based on the surreal idea that
governments are guarantors of human rights, although in the real world they are the worst offenders of those rights. Protection of genuine human rights cannot be implemented in legal systems that do not recognize them. That is also why the common distinction between the Europeans’ alleged preference for international law, as epitomized by French President Jacques Chirac’s grandstanding over Iraq, and the U.S. government’s preference for force is totally baseless: The U.N. does not stand for legality, but for lawlessness, in the image of the many dictatorships and corrupt governments that it harbors with impunity.

The Alternative

The U.N.’s record as a force for peace has been exclusively negative. Its collectivist ideology and statist precepts have done more harm than good. By legitimizing brutal dictatorships and criminal regimes, pushing for a global socialist agenda, extorting resources from Western governments at the expense of their taxpayers’ legitimate property rights, and sustaining poverty with its development programs, the U.N. is unquestionably more a threat than a way to peace.

What is the alternative? Just as war is the natural consequence of collectivism, peace is the natural consequence of liberty. Peace arises from the voluntary cooperation and free exchange of goods, services, and ideas among people, whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is in the global marketplace that humanity’s peaceful ways are expressed. By contrast, any government intervention in the sphere of voluntary exchange leads to conflicts and, ultimately, war. Governments are commonly seen as „necessary evils” to tame human nature’s proneness to conflict, but this view completely neglects that governments are themselves human organizations and therefore just as prone to conflict as any other, as the empirical record – and not least that of the U.N. as a union of governments – shows only too well: As monopolists of legal force, governments have systematically disrupted global human harmony, which is why government monopoly should also be challenged over security: As the Belgian economist Gustave de Molinari identified, „under a regime of liberty, the natural organization of the security industry would not be different from that of other industries.” Removing government barriers, disconti-

50 Cf. supra, p. 3, note 9.
ning intergovernmental bureaucracies with totalitarian leanings, and universally recognizing and respecting individual property rights as the genuine human rights, starting with the right to life, are the best answers to world oppression and poverty, and the best guarantees for world peace.
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