

# Background

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## The U.S. Should Link Foreign Aid and U.N. General Assembly Voting

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**Abstract:** *Countries that receive U.S. foreign aid routinely oppose U.S. diplomatic initiatives and vote against the U.S. in the United Nations. While linking humanitarian and security aid to support of U.S. policy priorities would undermine the purposes and effect of that aid, the effectiveness of development aid in improving economic growth and development among recipients remains dubious. Therefore, the U.S. has no compelling reason preventing it from explicitly linking disbursement of development assistance to support for U.S. policy priorities in the United Nations. The U.S. should also work to strengthen and build coalitions of economically or politically free nations in the U.N. because economically free countries and politically free governments tend to vote with the U.S. more consistently.*

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Congress has been concerned for decades that countries that receive U.S. foreign assistance often refuse to support U.S. initiatives and priorities in the United Nations. In 1983, Congress instructed the U.S. Department of State to prepare an annual report on the frequency with which other countries vote with the U.S. in the U.N. These reports have revealed that the vast majority of recipients of U.S. foreign assistance routinely oppose U.S. diplomatic initiatives and vote against the U.S. a majority of the time in both overall non-consensus votes in the U.N. General Assembly and votes deemed “important” to the U.S. In fact, since 2000, about 87 percent of recipients of U.S. development aid have voted against the

### Talking Points

- Since 2000, about 87 percent of recipients of U.S. development aid have voted against the U.S. most of the time on non-consensus votes in the U.N. General Assembly, and over 72 percent voted against the U.S. most of the time on non-consensus votes deemed important by the State Department.
- Over the same period, economically free and mostly free countries voted for U.S. positions in the General Assembly twice as often as mostly unfree and repressed countries.
- Politically free governments voted for U.S. positions in the General Assembly roughly twice as often as less free countries.
- The U.S. should seek to increase support for U.S. policies in the U.N. by explicitly linking development assistance to support for U.S. priorities in the U.N. and by forging coalitions with nations that share the American principles of political and economic freedom.

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U.S. most of the time on non-consensus votes in the General Assembly. By contrast, economically free countries and politically free governments are more likely than less free countries to vote with the U.S.

With these relationships in mind, the U.S. should reshape U.S. policy to more effectively serve American interests, protect U.S. sovereignty, and increase the U.N.'s ability to fulfill its stated purposes of promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and maintaining international peace and security.

Despite the potential to positively influence U.N. voting through the disbursement of U.S. foreign aid, current law does not specifically link U.S. aid to U.N. voting or even instruct the State Department to include U.N. voting when considering foreign assistance. Congress should link disbursement of U.S. development assistance to support for U.S. policy priorities in the U.N. and instruct the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to inform aid recipients of this policy through their missions in New York and explain that opposing U.S. priorities at the U.N. will make Americans, especially Congress, less inclined to continue providing aid.

In parallel with this policy, Washington should communicate U.S. policy priorities at the U.N. directly to foreign ambassadors in Washington, D.C., to ensure that that message is faithfully conveyed to decision makers in their governments and not suppressed in New York. Finally, to bolster international support for U.S. diplomatic initiatives, particularly in the General Assembly, the U.S. should build and strengthen coalitions among economically and politically free nations that share many values and principles with America.

## Low Support for the U.S. at the U.N.

The American public has long recognized the difficulty of working through the U.N. to advance U.S. interests and has expressed frustration with the systematic shortcomings that plague the organization. As Gallup recently noted, "Americans have never held the United Nations in particularly high esteem."<sup>1</sup> In a 2011 Gallup poll, only 31 percent of Americans believed that the U.N. is "doing a good job in trying to solve the problems it has had to face." The lowest approval rating among Americans that Gallup has ever observed was 26 percent in 2009.<sup>2</sup>

This is not a recent phenomenon. With rare exceptions,<sup>3</sup> over the past 40 years Americans have been far more likely to rate the U.N. as doing a "poor job" than a "good job." In fact, in the 31 Gallup polls posing this question since 1970, an average of 51 percent of Americans rated the U.N. as doing a poor job versus 39 percent who thought that the U.N. was doing a good job. In 21 of those polls, more Americans said that the U.N. was doing a poor job than said it was doing a good job. In more than half of the polls, a majority rated the U.N. as doing a poor job.<sup>4</sup>

A key reason for the U.N.'s poor reputation is that Americans generally perceive the organization and, more specifically, a majority of the U.N. member states as unfriendly to U.S. policies and priorities. Frustration over the fact that most countries, even large aid recipients, routinely oppose the U.S. at the U.N. is neither new nor restricted to the American public. It has also been a long-standing frustration for America's diplomats.

For instance, shortly before going to the U.N. in 1975, Ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote of just how much the U.N. had changed since 1945 and how American passivity helped transform it into a hostile forum:

1. Gallup, "Americans' Rating of United Nations Improved, but Still Low," February 19, 2010, at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/126134/Americans-Rating-United-Nations-Improved-Low.aspx> (July 21, 2011).
2. Gallup, "United Nations," 2011, at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/116347/united-nations.aspx> (July 21, 2011).
3. The exceptions include the early 1990s following U.N. support for the U.S.-led Gulf War in 1991 and the early 2000s immediately after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, when the U.N. passed resolutions expressing solidarity and sympathy with the U.S. and support for the U.S. response to the 9/11 attack.
4. Gallup, "United Nations."

This is our circumstance. We are a minority. We are outvoted. This is neither an unprecedented nor an intolerable situation. The question is what do we make of it. So far we have made little—nothing—of what is in fact an opportunity. We go about dazed that the world has changed. We toy with the idea of stopping it and getting off. We rebound with the thought that if only we are more reasonable perhaps “they” will be.... But “they” do not grow reasonable....

It is time, that is, that the American spokesman came to be feared in international forums for the truths he might tell.... As if to compensate for its aggressiveness about what might be termed Security Council affairs, the United States has chosen at the UN to be extraordinarily passive, even compliant, about the endless goings-on.... In Washington, three decades of habit and incentive have created patterns of appeasement so profound as to seem wholly normal. Delegations to international conferences return from devastating defeats proclaiming victory....

It is past time we ceased to apologize for an imperfect democracy. Find its equal. It is time we grew out of our initial—not a little condescending—supersensitivity about the feelings of new nations. It is time we commenced to treat them as equals, a respect to which they are entitled.<sup>5</sup>

Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick echoed this frustration in her testimony before a Senate committee in 1983. She stated that the U.N. was not the institution its American founders hoped it would be and argued that advancing American interests in the U.N. would require confronting countries over their opposition to the U.S. in that body. To bolster her case, Kirkpatrick provided voting statistics showing that only 19 of 150 countries voted with

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***A recent Gallup poll found that Americans have never held the United Nations in particularly high esteem.***

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the U.S. a majority of the time in the U.N. General Assembly in 1982 and that among the regional groups only the Western European and Others Group voted with the U.S. a majority of the time. She provided examples in which the U.S. was isolated even from its allies on significant issues, such as a vote calling on the “Security Council to take steps to establish an independent Palestinian state in the Israeli occupied territories, to create it by fiat and impose it on Israel.”<sup>6</sup> Only the U.S. and two other nations stood by Israel to oppose the resolution, even though America’s NATO allies knew the resolution would only exacerbate an already tense situation.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick argued that the majority of the U.N. member states had become desensitized to the U.N. voting process and consideration of issues, which they saw as largely meaningless and divorced from the real world outside Turtle Bay. Most countries were willing to let the “few who see a chance to roil the waters” run the agenda, because they were convinced that no one was paying much attention to their votes and would therefore pay no consequences inside or outside the U.N.<sup>7</sup>

Ambassador Kirkpatrick’s arguments helped to convince Congress that the U.S. needed to pay more attention to the U.N. and to adopt legislation<sup>8</sup> in 1983 instructing the U.S. Department of State to submit an annual report to Congress on the voting practices of individual nations to ascertain how often they voted with the U.S. The reporting requirement has remained in place since then, although Congress replaced the original law with

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5. Daniel P. Moynihan, “The United States in Opposition,” *Commentary*, March 1975, at <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/the-united-states-in-opposition> (July 28, 2011).
  6. Jeane Kirkpatrick, testimony, in reprint of U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, “International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1983,” 1983, p. 54, at <http://www.disam.dsca.mil/pubs/Vol%205-4/Kirkpatrick.pdf> (July 21, 2011).
  7. *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

new legislation in 1990, amended in 2004.<sup>9</sup> (For the text of the current law, see the Appendix.)

Since 1983, the State Department has tracked how individual countries vote in the U.N. and reported the results to Congress each year since 1984 in its *Voting Practices in the United Nations* report.<sup>10</sup> Each report includes tables listing the percentages with which countries voted with the U.S. on Security Council votes and all votes in the U.N. General Assembly, including overall non-consensus votes and non-consensus votes deemed “important” by the U.S. State Department. The report also tabulates voting coincidence by regional and ideological groups. These reports serve as a unique and valuable source of information for gauging support for U.S. priorities and policy positions in the U.N. and prove that, to the detriment of American interests, the U.S. is often in the minority in U.N. votes.<sup>11</sup>

Security Council votes are generally far more important than General Assembly votes. However, Security Council votes involve only 14 other countries and, therefore, provide limited insight into support for U.S. positions in the U.N. Moreover, because the U.S. and the other permanent members

of the Security Council can veto resolutions that they do not support, countries often refrain from offering resolutions that are opposed by the U.S. or the other permanent members. Thus, the voting dynamics are skewed.

By contrast, the U.S. has no veto in the General Assembly. It is just one of 193 votes in the General Assembly, which includes nearly all of the world’s countries. The General Assembly also casts a much larger number of votes on which to base an assessment. Unlike U.N. Security Council resolutions, which all U.N. member states are theoretically obligated to obey if they are adopted under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, General Assembly resolutions are non-binding. However, they are not without effect. General Assembly resolutions influence public perceptions in many countries and are often characterized as expressing the “will of the international community.”

Regrettably, many proposals in recent General Assembly sessions, if adopted and enforced, would have damaged both the global economy and U.S. interests. This situation requires the U.S. to pay close attention to General Assembly votes and U.S. diplo-

8. The 1983 report requirement stated: “Not later than January 31 of each year, or at the time of the Report to transmittal by the President to the Congress of the annual presentation materials on foreign assistance, whichever is earlier, the President shall transmit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate a full and complete report which assesses, with respect to each foreign country, the degree of support by the government of each such country during the preceding twelve-month period for the foreign policy of the United States. Such report shall include, with respect to each such country which is a member of the United Nations, information to be compiled and supplied by the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, consisting of a comparison of the overall voting practices in the principal bodies of the United Nations during the preceding twelve-month period of such country and the United States, with special note of the voting and speaking records of such country on issues of major importance to the United States in the General Assembly and the Security Council, and shall also include a report on actions with regard to the United States in important related documents such as the Non-Aligned Communique. A full compilation of the information supplied by the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations for inclusion in such report shall be provided as an addendum to such report. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available pursuant to this subsection shall be obligated or expended to finance directly any assistance to a country which the President finds, based on the contents of the report required to be transmitted under this paragraph, is engaged in a consistent pattern of opposition to the foreign policy of the United States.” Public Law 98–151, at <http://history.nih.gov/research/downloads/PL98-151.pdf> (July 21, 2011).
9. Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991, Public Law 101–246, § 406. The law was later amended by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (Public Law 108–447) to require “a separate listing of all plenary votes cast by member countries of the United Nations in the General Assembly on resolutions specifically related to Israel that are opposed by the United States.” 22 U.S. Code § 2414a(b)(4).
10. Each annual report reports on voting in the session of the previous year.
11. The U.N. conducts discussions and adopts resolutions on peace and security, terrorism, disarmament, economic and social development, humanitarian relief, human rights, and numerous other issues of importance to the U.S.

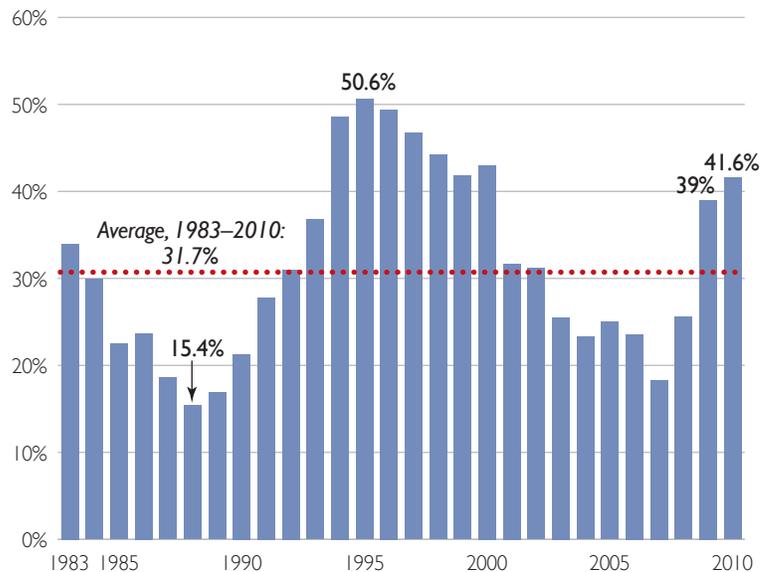
mats and negotiators to spend much time and effort to prevent such initiatives from gaining international legitimacy through U.N. resolutions.<sup>12</sup>

Most General Assembly resolutions are adopted by consensus, i.e., without a recorded vote or without dissent. For instance, the General Assembly adopted 194 (69 percent) of 281 resolutions by consensus during its 65th session in 2010, which is fairly typical of recent U.N. sessions.<sup>13</sup> For the most part, consensus decisions do not address substantive or divisive issues and provide little insight into whether countries support U.S. positions.

Therefore, non-consensus votes—when actual votes are taken on resolutions—deserve much more attention. In the 2010 session, the General Assembly voted on 87 (31 percent) of 281 resolutions. Analysis reveals that the U.S. has historically voted in the minority. Since the U.S. began tracking the data 28 years ago, voting coincidence with the U.S. in the General Assembly on non-consensus votes has averaged 31.7 percent. The all-time low was 15.4 percent in 1988. Following the Cold War, the U.S. enjoyed a honeymoon during which support for its positions on non-consensus votes grew steadily, peaking at more than 50 percent in 1995.

Since 2000, voting coincidence in the General Assembly has averaged 29.8 percent, although it has improved in recent years. In 2010, voting coincidence with the U.S. was 41.6 percent, compared to 39 percent in 2009 and 25.6 percent in 2008.<sup>14</sup>

### Non-Consensus Votes in the U.N. General Assembly Coinciding with the U.S. Vote



**Note:** Data include only resolutions adopted by the U.N. General Assembly.

**Sources:** Authors' correspondence with the U.S. Department of State, and U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 2010, March 31, 2011, p. 2, at <http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/c44269.htm> (July 22, 2011).

Chart 1 • B 2591 heritage.org

As part of the report, Congress instructed the State Department to annually identify “votes on issues which directly affected important United States interests and on which the United States lobbied extensively.”<sup>15</sup> These important votes also offer insight into support for U.S. positions because they are often controversial and subjects of intense U.S. lobbying. Analysis reveals that voting coincidence with the U.S. on important votes is higher than for overall non-consensus votes, averaging 38 percent in the General Assembly since 2000.<sup>16</sup> On important non-consensus votes, voting coincidence with

12. Kim R. Holmes, “Promoting Economic Freedom at the United Nations,” Heritage Foundation *Lecture* No. 823, February 24, 2004, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Lecture/Promoting-Economic-Freedom-at-the-United-Nations>.

13. See U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 2010, March 31, 2011, p. 2, at <http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/c44269.htm> (July 21, 2011).

14. See U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 1999–2010, at <http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/> (July 21, 2011).

15. 22 U.S. Code § 2414a(b)(3)(A).

16. Data on “important” votes for the entire 28-year period of the report were not available online.

the U.S. was 51.1 percent in 2010, 51.2 percent in 2009, and 27.6 percent in 2008.

This low level of voting coincidence between the U.S. and the broader U.N. membership on contentious issues across multiple administrations is not surprising given that most U.N. member states are neither politically<sup>17</sup> nor economically free.<sup>18</sup> The U.N. practice of “one nation, one vote” allows the many members with repressive economic and political systems and the worst human rights records to “vote together to block not only sensible ideas of economic development, but also proposals for U.N. reform that would loosen their hold on U.N. decision making in areas of budget and economic development.”<sup>19</sup> Nearly 30 years ago, Ambassador Kirkpatrick made the point, which is still relevant today, that repressive governments also exert pressure through regional voting blocs and other political groupings—such as the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference—to dissuade otherwise receptive countries from voting with the U.S.<sup>20</sup>

### Foreign Aid and U.N. Voting

The voting practices report serves as a critical source of information for gauging the impact of American foreign assistance in eliciting support for U.S. priorities and policy positions. To conclude her 1983 Senate testimony, Ambassador Kirkpatrick stated:

In my view, we cannot and should not maintain the compartmentalization that tradi-

tionally has separated our bilateral and our multilateral diplomacy. We need to communicate to nations that their votes, their attitudes, and their actions inside the U.N. system inevitably must have consequences for their relations with the United States outside the U.N. system. We must communicate that it is not possible to denounce us on Monday, vote against us on important issues of principle on Tuesday and Wednesday, and pick up our assurances of support on Thursday and Friday.

...I do believe that behavior, including voting behavior, in multilateral organizations like the United Nations should also be one of the criteria we employ in deciding whether we will provide assistance, and what type of assistance and in what amount. Most particularly, I am convinced that to make attacks on the United States a risk-free operation can have only the effect of insuring that they will take place.<sup>21</sup>

Congress responded to this recommendation by passing legislation linking the U.N. voting report and U.S. foreign assistance by requiring the Administration to submit the report by January 31 each year or at the time of “the annual presentation materials on foreign assistance.”<sup>22</sup> This linkage was strengthened by the additional provision prohibiting use of funds appropriated in the act to assist countries “engaged in a consistent pattern of opposition to the foreign policy of the United States.”<sup>23</sup>

17. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2011: The Authoritarian Challenge to Democracy*, at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=594> (July 21, 2011).

18. Terry Miller and Kim R. Holmes, *2011 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2011), at <http://www.heritage.org/index>.

19. Holmes, “Promoting Economic Freedom at the United Nations.”

20. For a more recent discussion, see Brett D. Schaefer, “Who Leads the United Nations?” *Heritage Foundation Lecture* No. 1054, December 4, 2007, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2007/12/Who-Leads-the-United-Nations>.

21. Kirkpatrick, testimony, p. 55.

22. Public Law 98–151, § 101(b)(1).

23. *Ibid.* This provision was first enacted in Public Law 98–151 and reiterated in 1985 in Public Law 99–190, which stated, “None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available pursuant to this Act shall be obligated or expended to finance directly any assistance to a country which the President finds, based on the contents of the report [on voting practices in the United Nations] required to be transmitted under subsection (a), is engaged in a consistent pattern of opposition to the foreign policy of the United States.” Public Law 99–190, § 529(b), at <http://www.cq.com/graphics/sal/99/sal99-190.pdf> (July 21, 2011). This provision was repealed by Public Law 101–246. The provisions of Public Law 101–246 remain law, as amended by Public Law 108–447.

With this legislation in hand, Ambassador Vernon Walters, Ambassador Kirkpatrick's successor, tried to influence voting in the U.N. in the mid-1980s.<sup>24</sup> Regrettably, when the original 1983 law was replaced in 1990, the provision prohibiting the use of funds for countries "engaged in a consistent pattern of opposition to the foreign policy of the United States" was excised, eliminating the

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***"We must communicate that it is not possible to denounce us on Monday, vote against us on important issues of principle on Tuesday and Wednesday, and pick up our assurances of support on Thursday and Friday."***

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very lever deemed so vital by Ambassadors Kirkpatrick and Walters. However, the legacy of the linkage resulted in the inclusion of information on U.S. foreign assistance in most subsequent reports,<sup>25</sup> including a table in every report on U.N. voting between 1999 and 2009 that listed U.S. foreign assistance disbursements alongside recipients' voting coincidence with the U.S. However, *Voting Practices in the United Nations 2010*, the most recent report, was substantially revised from earlier reports and does not include this table.

Nonetheless, over the years, a number of academic studies have used data from the U.N. voting report to determine whether U.N. General Assem-

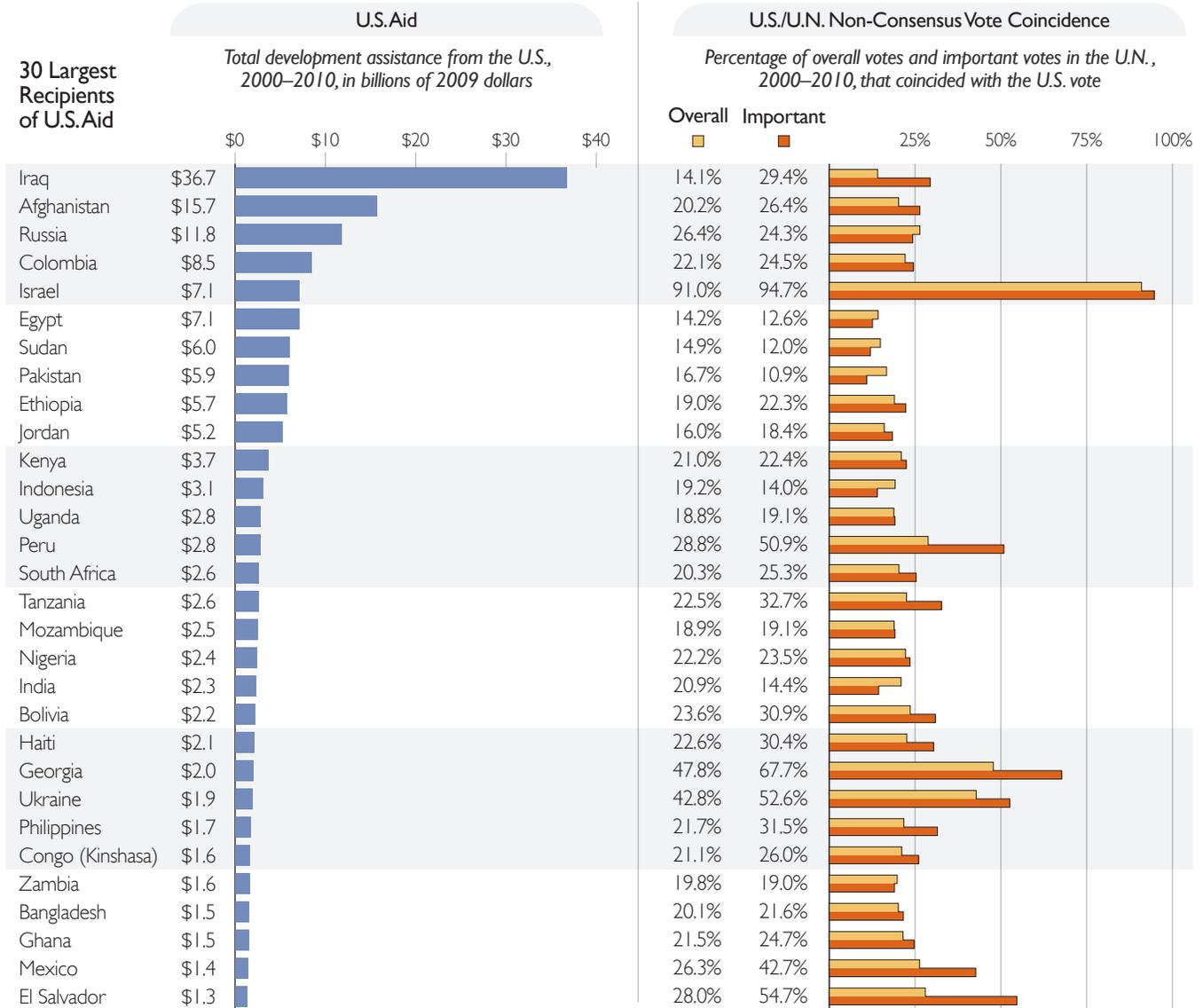
bly voting behavior actually led to adjustments in aid to countries "engaged in a consistent pattern of opposition to the foreign policy of the United States" and whether tying aid to U.N. voting behavior has affected subsequent voting practices.

Most studies conducted in the 1990s did not find a significant relationship between U.N. voting and U.S. foreign assistance disbursements in the General Assembly.<sup>26</sup> However, studies over the past decade found evidence that the U.S. adjusted its foreign assistance disbursements based on U.N. voting and that this adjustment influenced countries to increase support for the U.S. in the U.N. Relying on disaggregated aid data, one study claimed strong evidence of U.S. "vote buying" through specific forms of aid from 1973–2002.<sup>27</sup> Another study analyzed data for 65 countries from 1984–1993 and concluded that the U.S. had "successfully utilized foreign aid programs to induce foreign policy compliance in the UN, particularly on important votes."<sup>28</sup> A 2011 study examining U.N. voting and aid disbursements between 1985 and 2001 concluded that "that the strategic use of aid disbursements indeed induces strategic voting."<sup>29</sup> These studies rely on data ending in the early 2000s.

Analysis conducted by The Heritage Foundation on more current data found no significant relationship between U.S. foreign aid and recipient countries' support for U.S. policy positions in the General Assembly over the past decade. Specific-

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24. Associated Press, "U.S. Warns Countries About Votes at U.N.," *The New York Times*, May 16, 1986, p. A2.
25. See Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991, Public Law 101–246, § 406. It was later amended by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 to require "a separate listing of all plenary votes cast by member countries of the United Nations in the General Assembly on resolutions specifically related to Israel that are opposed by the United States." Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, Public Law 108–447, § 534(k).
26. For instance, see Charles W. Kegley, Jr., and Steven W. Hook, "U.S. Foreign Aid and U.N. Voting: Did Reagan's Linkage Strategy Buy Deference or Defiance?" *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (September 1991), pp. 295–312, at <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2600701> (July 21, 2011).
27. "Using panel data for 143 countries over the period 1973–2002, this paper empirically analyzes the influence of US aid on voting patterns in the UN General Assembly. We use disaggregated aid data to account for the fact that various forms of aid may differ in their ability to induce political support by recipients. We obtain strong evidence that US aid buys voting compliance in the Assembly." Axel Dreher, Peter Nunnenkamp, and Rainer Thiele, "Does US Aid Buy UN General Assembly Votes? A Disaggregated Analysis," KOF Konjunkturforschungsstelle Working Paper No. 138, April 2006, at [http://kofportal.kof.ethz.ch/publications/download/811/wp\\_138.pdf](http://kofportal.kof.ethz.ch/publications/download/811/wp_138.pdf) (July 21, 2011).
28. T. Y. Wang, "U.S. Foreign Aid and UN Voting: An Analysis of Important Issues," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (March 1999), pp. 199–210, at [http://www.stanford.edu/class/ips216/Readings/wang\\_99.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/class/ips216/Readings/wang_99.pdf) (July 21, 2011).
29. David B. Carter and Randall W. Stone, "Vote Buying in the UN General Assembly," March 14, 2011, at <http://www.personal.psu.edu/dbc10/unvote13.pdf> (July 21, 2011).

# U.S. Aid Does Not Translate into Votes in the U.N. General Assembly



Sources: U.S. Agency for International Development, "U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants," July 1, 2011, at <http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov> (July 22, 2011), and U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 2010, March 31, 2011, at <http://www.state.gov/plo/irls/rpt/c44269.htm> (July 22, 2011).

Chart 2 • B 2591 heritage.org

ly, for 2000–2010, U.S. development *and* security assistance disbursements have no statistically significant correlation with the recipient countries' voting coincidence with the U.S. in the General Assembly on non-consensus overall votes (correlation coefficient of 0.01) or important votes (–0.02). Nor is

there a statistically significant correlation (–0.11) when *only* U.S. development assistance disbursements from 2000 to 2010 are analyzed along with recipient countries' voting coincidence with the U.S. in the General Assembly on non-consensus overall votes and important votes.

From a different approach, analysis of whether changes in development and security assistance from one year to the next are correlated with changes in voting coincidence also yields no statistically significant relationship: correlation coefficients of  $-0.004$  for overall non-consensus votes and  $0.01$  for important votes. Analysis of change in voting coincidence with the U.S. and changes in only development assistance from one year to the next similarly also fails to yield a statistically significant correlation: correlation coefficients of  $0.002$  for non-consensus overall votes and  $0.01$  for important votes.

The real world actions of foreign aid recipients support this statistical analysis. Most major recipients of U.S. foreign assistance have voted against the U.S. more often than they have voted with the U.S.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, over the past 11 sessions of the U.N. General Assembly, on average, about 87 percent of recipients of U.S. development and security assistance voted against the U.S. in a majority of the non-consensus votes, and more than 72 percent voted against the U.S. in a majority of the important non-consensus votes.<sup>31</sup> These ratios remain consistent when only development assistance is considered.

Of the 30 largest recipients of U.S. development aid (cumulatively over the past 11 sessions), 29 countries voted against the U.S. in a majority of the non-consensus votes, and 25 voted against the U.S. in a majority of the important non-consensus votes. In 2010, voting coincidence with the U.S. among all U.S. development aid recipients was 40.7 percent on non-consensus General Assembly resolutions and 49.5 percent on important non-consensus votes. The 30 largest recipients of U.S. development assistance supported the U.S. even less frequently,

voting with the U.S. only 36 percent of the time on non-consensus resolutions and 45.7 percent on important non-consensus votes.

Based on this analysis and voting patterns, if the U.S. has adjusted assistance to reflect support or lack of support for U.S. positions in the U.N. over the past decade, this policy is either not communicated effectively or clearly to recipients or applied with such inconsistency that recipients have failed to incorporate the policy into their decision making.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, nearly three decades after Ambassador Kirkpatrick's testimony, recipients of U.S. assistance still apparently feel that voting against the U.S. in the U.N. carries few, if any consequences. As Ambassador Ken Adelman observed:

Early in 1981, as a new U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, I launched a computer tabulation to show the correlation between others' receipt of U.S. foreign aid and their foreign-policy stances. I wanted to know: Did all that money buy America any love? The Neanderthal-era computer spewed its result: Nope.

Huge recipients of U.S. foreign aid—Egypt, Pakistan, and the like—voted no more in tune with American values than similar countries that received no, or less, U.S. foreign aid. Instead, their votes correlated closely with those of Cuba, which wasn't a big foreign-aid donor. That finding, surprising at the time, remains true. Four of the largest U.S. foreign-aid recipients today—Egypt, Israel, Pakistan, and Afghanistan—all take contrary positions on issues of critical importance to the White House.<sup>33</sup>

30. Iraq, as a non-participating U.N. member, did not vote until 2003.

31. In accordance with Section 406 of Public Law 101-246, the State Department is required to analyze and discuss "important votes," which are defined as votes on "issues which directly affected United States interests and on which the United States lobbied extensively." See U.S. Department of State, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 2010, pp. 15-22.

32. A notable exception is when countries are elected to the U.N. Security Council. A 2006 study of U.S. aid to countries elected to the Security Council found that aid increased by an average of 59 percent when a country rotates onto the council and than falls when they rotate off. Moreover, aid allocation increases even more when the Security Council is involved in key issues and crises. This practice strongly implies that U.S. aid does positively affect support among rotating Security Council members. See Ilyana Kuziemko and Eric Werker, "How Much Is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United Nations," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 114, No. 5 (October 2006), pp. 905-930, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/507155> (July 21, 2011).

The problems outlined by Kirkpatrick in the 1980s remain just as serious and relevant today and, based on more recent academic studies, her proposed solution to link aid and U.N. voting seems viable even though the U.S. has failed to apply it effectively over the past decade.

## The Purposes of Foreign Aid

The U.S. provides assistance for a variety of purposes, some of which can reasonably be linked to support for U.S. policy priorities in the U.N.

**Humanitarian Assistance.** Humanitarian assistance is often provided to address sudden major natural disasters, tragedies, or ongoing suffering. Humanitarian assistance is poorly suited to advancing other foreign policy objectives. Such assistance is given for moral and humanitarian reasons and is generally irregular, unpredictable, and of relatively short duration. Thus, the lack of a relationship between humanitarian assistance and support for U.S. positions is understandable.

**Security Assistance.** Support for U.S. interests is clearly at the forefront of providing security assistance, which is primarily used to provide equipment, training, and other assistance to U.S. allies and other nations deemed vital to America's security interests. America's security concerns often involve unstable areas of the world and require cooperation with governments that are less than ideal partners. The U.S. often faces a choice between supporting U.S. interests in the U.N. or supporting U.S. interests around the world. In an ideal world, recipients of security assistance would bolster U.S. interests in both arenas, but securing support in just one of the two is acceptable. If the assistance does not advance U.S. interests in either realm, it should be reallocated. Thus, security assistance can similarly be excused for not being closely associated with support for American priorities in the United Nations.

**Development Assistance.** Development assistance is intended to reduce poverty and encourage

economic growth in recipient countries by funding programs dedicated to improving agriculture, education, health, and democracy and advancing other initiatives. If development assistance demonstrably contributed to development and higher standards of living in poor nations, it would support U.S. interests because wealthier nations are generally more stable, more democratic, and more likely to become economic partners with America. Regrettably, the record of development assistance in facilitating economic growth and development is inconclusive at best and counterproductive at worst.

Between 1980 and 2009, the U.S. disbursed nearly \$503.3 billion (in 2009 constant dollars) in official development assistance.<sup>34</sup> Yet in terms of per capita gross domestic product (GDP), the populations in a majority of these recipient countries are little better off today than they were decades ago. In fact, many are poorer.

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***The record of development assistance in facilitating economic growth and development is inconclusive at best and counterproductive at worst.***

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In the 97 countries that received significant levels of U.S. development assistance (defined as cumulative aid between 1980 and 2009 totaling at least 1 percent of their 2009 GDP) and for which data are available, real per capita GDP:

- Declined in 23 countries,
- Grew by less than 1 percent annually in 27 countries,
- Grew by more than 1 percent annually in 44 countries, and
- Grew by nearly 5 percent (or more) annually in only three countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, and Botswana).<sup>35</sup>

Heritage Foundation analysis found no statistically significant correlation between U.S. foreign

33. Ken Adelman, "Not-So-Smart Power," *Foreign Policy*, April 18, 2011, at [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/18/not\\_so\\_smart\\_power](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/18/not_so_smart_power) (July 21, 2011).

34. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *International Development Statistics*, at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/50/17/5037721.htm> (July 21, 2011).

assistance and recipient countries' growth in real GDP per capita. Specifically, for 1980–2009, the analysis demonstrated a negative, albeit statistically insignificant, relationship between U.S. development assistance and growth in real GDP per capita (correlation coefficient of  $-0.02$ ). This conclusion echoes a number of economic studies that have also concluded that development assistance does not demonstrably contribute to increased economic growth and development. For instance, Professor William Easterly found that “among all low-income countries, there is not a clear relationship between aid and growth.”<sup>36</sup> In a more recent study, he showed that the empirical links between aid and economic growth are fragile, and he questioned whether aid could spur growth even in good policy environments.<sup>37</sup> These conclusions have been validated by subsequent studies by Easterly and other development experts.<sup>38</sup>

This failure to elicit significant economic growth is tragic because strong, reliable, long-term economic growth is critical to development. To reach lower-middle-income status (per capita income of \$996), low-income countries such as Togo (per capita income of \$247 in 2009) or Nepal (per capita

income of \$261 in 2009) must achieve real compound growth in per capita GDP of more than 5.5 percent for more than two decades.<sup>39</sup> To reach upper-middle-income status (per capita income of \$3,946), they must experience real compound growth of 5.5 percent for more than 50 years. Instead, since 1980, Nepal has experienced real annual compound growth of only 2.1 percent, while Togo has had a negative growth rate of  $-1.2$  percent.

With so many recipients of development assistance experiencing declining or insignificant economic growth, one must conclude that development aid from one government to another is not sufficient to facilitate meaningful economic growth and development in the recipient economies. In fact, all too often over the past decades, U.S. foreign assistance has regrettably been awarded to corrupt and anti-democratic governments that have often undermined U.S. policy priorities at the U.N.

Considering the dubious record of development assistance, the U.S. has little reason preventing it from tying development assistance more closely to support for America's priorities in the U.N. With the federal government's mounting budgetary and debt problems in mind, former U.N. Ambassador John

35. While experts may disagree on the impact of an additional dollar of development assistance on economic growth, advocates of development aid generally assert that rapid development requires significant levels of development assistance and commonly blame insufficient assistance for the lack of growth among recipients. For instance, see U.N. Millennium Project, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2005), at <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/MainReportComplete-lowres.pdf> (July 21, 2011). Thus, the analysis in this paper excludes countries that received an insignificant amount of assistance between 1980 and 2009 (cumulative aid over that period totaling less than 1 percent of their 2009 GDP). World Bank, Open Data, at <http://www.worldbank.org/data> (July 21, 2011), and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, International Development Statistics. Due to the lack of earlier data, per capita GDP figures for the earliest available years were used for 22 countries: Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Lebanon, Macedonia, Mongolia, Samoa, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.
36. William Easterly, “The Cartel of Good Intentions: Bureaucracy Versus Markets in Foreign Aid,” Center for Global Development *Working Paper* No. 4, March 2002, revised May 2002, at [http://www.cgdev.org/files/2786\\_file\\_cgd\\_wp004\\_rev.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/files/2786_file_cgd_wp004_rev.pdf) (July 21, 2011).
37. William Easterly, “Can Foreign Aid Buy Growth?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Summer 2003), pp. 23–48, at [http://faculty.nps.edu/relooney/JEP\\_61.pdf](http://faculty.nps.edu/relooney/JEP_61.pdf) (July 21, 2011).
38. See William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); Simeon Djankov, Jose G. Montalvo, and Marta Reynal-Querol, “The Curse of Aid,” *Journal of Economic Growth*, Vol. 13, No. 5 (September 2008), at <http://probeinternational.org/library/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/The-curse-of-aid.pdf> (July 21, 2011); and Raghuram G. Rajan and Arvind Subramanian, “Aid and Growth: What Does the Cross-Country Evidence Really Show?” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (November 2008), pp. 643–665.
39. World Bank, “How We Classify Countries,” at <http://go.worldbank.org/K2CKM78CC0> (July 21, 2011).

Bolton observed, “Foreign aid to a lot of countries could be readily cut and I think it’s been a mistake by the U.S. government for decades not to take U.N. voting into account.”<sup>40</sup>

**Advancing U.S. Interests.** The U.S. has recognized the necessity to make its foreign assistance programs more coherent and has attempted to reassess its overall policy approach. Under the FY 2007–FY 2012 joint strategic plan prepared by the State Department and USAID, U.S. foreign assistance is guided by seven strategic goals:

- Achieving peace and security,
- Governing justly and democratically,
- Investing in people,
- Promoting economic growth and prosperity,
- Providing humanitarian assistance,
- Promoting international understanding, and
- Strengthening U.S. consular and management capabilities.<sup>41</sup>

In December 2010, the State Department released its first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), which is intended to be a thorough overhaul of U.S. international development policies. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted:

Just as every business must get the most out of every dollar from its investors, State and USAID have to get the most out of every dollar from the American taxpayers; we also have to look ahead, planning for a changing world. It’s ultimately about delivering results for the American people—protecting our interests and projecting our leadership in the 21st century.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, as the QDDR points out, development should be “a strategic, economic, and moral imperative—as central to our foreign policy as diplomacy

and defense.”<sup>43</sup> Yet neither the joint strategic plan nor the QDDR explicitly states that U.S. development assistance should be directly linked to bolstering support for U.S. political priorities in multilateral organizations, such as the U.N. If development assistance is an investment, the return should be clear evidence of economic growth and development among the recipients or increased support for U.S. interests and policies in multilateral organizations. Regrettably, neither is evident.

On the contrary, as Ambassador Kirkpatrick observed nearly 30 years ago, recipient countries too often view U.S. aid as an entitlement unrelated to U.S. foreign policy priorities. This is particularly true in the U.N., where aid recipients seldom face repercussions for failing to support U.S. priorities. By failing to prioritize an explicit link between economic assistance and support for U.S. policies in the U.N., the U.S. is missing an opportunity to advance its policies.

### **Freedom: A Key Indicator of Support**

A country’s level of political and economic freedom is a strong indicator of the likelihood that it will vote with the U.S. on General Assembly resolutions. Specifically, the tendency to side with the U.S. on non-consensus votes increases as political or economic freedom increases, as measured by *Freedom in the World 2011* and the *2011 Index of Economic Freedom*.

**Economic Freedom.** The Heritage Foundation’s annual *Index of Economic Freedom* examines the 10 key components of economic freedom, including economic openness to the world, transparency, regulatory efficiency, and the rule of law. Each country is graded on each of the 10 freedoms on a scale of 0 to 100, and a country’s overall economic freedom score is the average of its 10 scores. Based on its overall score, each country’s economy is classified

40. William LaJeunesse, “It’s All Your Money: Foreign Aid to Muslim/Arab Nations,” Fox News, May 27, 2011, at <http://politics.blogs.foxnews.com/2011/05/24/its-all-your-money-foreign-aid-muslimarab-nations> (July 21, 2011).

41. U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, “Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2007–2012: Transformational Diplomacy,” at [http://www.usaid.gov/policy/coordination/stratplan\\_fy07-12.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/policy/coordination/stratplan_fy07-12.pdf) (July 21, 2011).

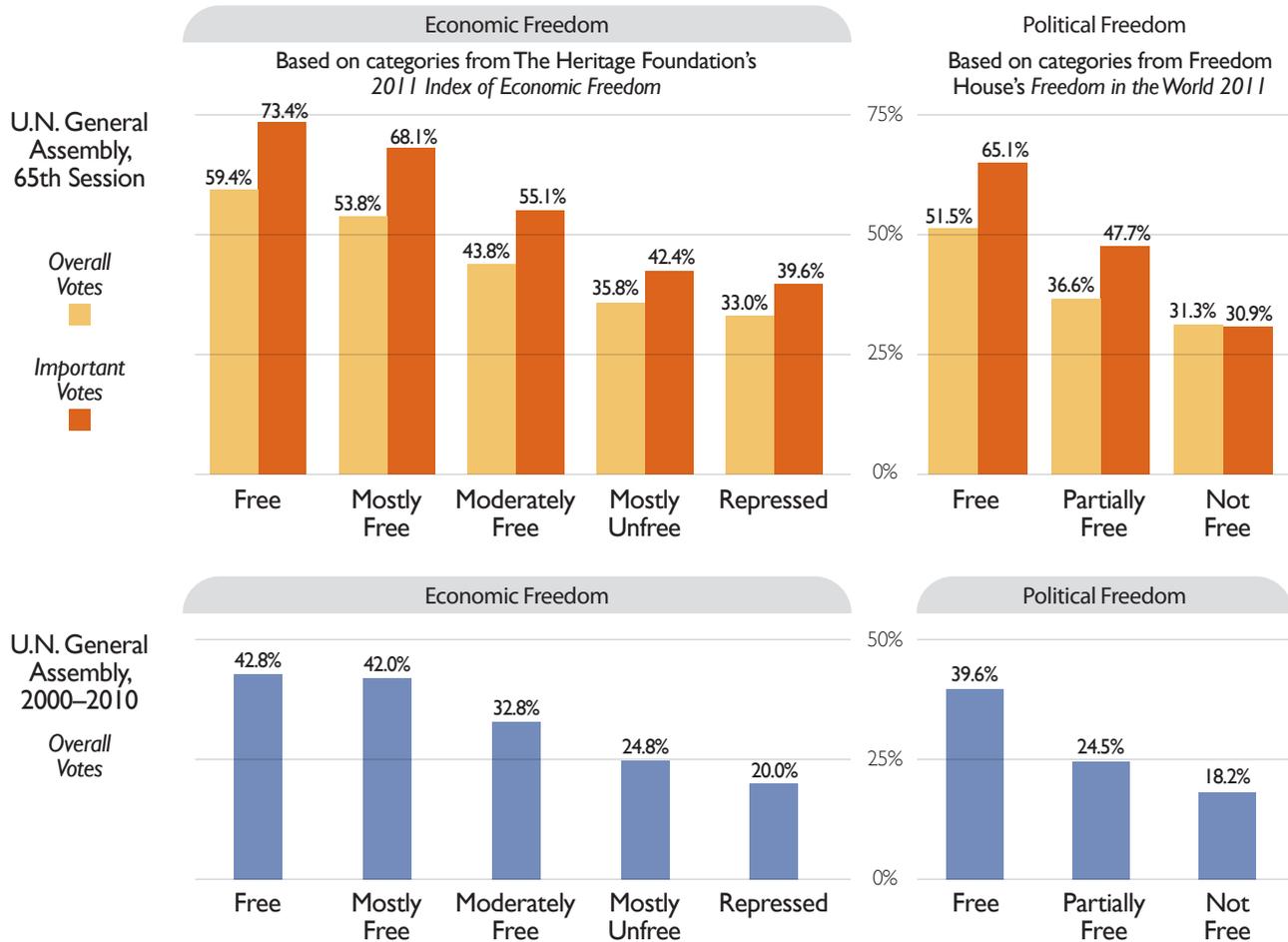
42. U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, *Leading Through Civilian Power, The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, 2010, pp. i–xix, at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153108.pdf> (July 21, 2011).

43. *Ibid.*, p. ix.

## Freer Nations More Likely to Vote in Coincidence With the U.S.

In 2010, other nations voted with the U.S. 42 percent of the time on all non-consensus votes in the U.N. General Assembly. However, when the nations are categorized in terms of economic and political freedom, a trend appears—those nations with better freedom scores vote with the U.S. at higher rates.

### Percentage of Votes Coinciding with the U.S.



Note: Data include only resolutions adopted by the U.N. General Assembly.

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 2010, March 31, 2011, at <http://www.state.gov/p/ios/rls/rpt/c44269.htm> (July 25, 2011); Terry Miller and Kim R. Holmes, *2011 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2011), at <http://www.heritage.org/index>; and Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2011 Survey Release," at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=594> (July 25, 2011).

Chart 3 • B 2591 heritage.org

as “free,” “mostly free,” “moderately free,” “mostly unfree,” or “repressed.”<sup>44</sup>

A close look at U.N. voting patterns reveals that economically freer countries are more likely than

countries with less economic freedom to vote with the U.S. Chart 3 illustrates voting patterns of the 175 countries for which economic freedom and voting data are available during the 65th session of the General Assembly in 2010:

44. Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, “Defining Economic Freedom,” Chap. 2, in Miller and Holmes, *2011 Index of Economic Freedom*, pp. 19–27.

- Free countries voted with the U.S. in 59.4 percent of the non-consensus votes;
- Mostly free countries, in 53.8 percent of the votes;
- Moderately free countries, in 43.8 percent of the votes;
- Mostly unfree countries, in 35.8 percent of the votes; and
- Economically repressed countries, in 33 percent of the votes.

Voting on important non-consensus resolutions exhibited a similar pattern:

- Free countries voted with the U.S. in 73.4 percent of the votes;
- Mostly free countries, in 68.1 percent of the votes;
- Moderately free countries, in 55.1 percent of the votes;
- Mostly unfree countries, in 42.4 percent of the votes; and
- Economically repressed countries, in 39.6 percent of the votes.

Analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between a country's economic freedom score in the *Index of Economic Freedom* and its voting coincidence with the U.S. in the General Assembly. Specifically, for 2000–2010, the analysis demonstrated a positive and strong relationship between a country's level of economic freedom and overall non-consensus votes (correlation coefficient of 0.45) and between a country's level of economic freedom and important non-consensus votes (correlation coefficient of 0.49).

Chart 3 also shows average voting coincidence on non-consensus votes for the 175 countries by category of economic freedom over the past 11 General Assembly sessions. It illustrates the strong positive relationship between a country's level of economic freedom and its votes with the U.S. in the General Assembly. Economically free and mostly free countries vote with the U.S. twice as often as repressed countries vote with the U.S.

**Political Freedom.** In its annual *Freedom in the World* study, Freedom House scores each country on political rights and civil liberties on a scale from one to seven. The average of the two scores is then used to classify each country as “free,” “partly free,” or “not free.”<sup>45</sup>

During the 65th session of the General Assembly, politically free countries voted with the U.S. more often than partly free countries did, and partly free countries were more likely to vote with the U.S. than not free countries. (See Chart 3.) On all non-consensus votes:

- Politically free countries voted with the U.S. in 51.5 percent of the votes;
- Partly free countries, in 36.6 percent of the votes; and
- Not free countries, in only 31.3 percent of the votes.

As with economically free countries, politically free countries voted with the U.S. even more frequently on important non-consensus votes:

- Politically free countries voted with the U.S. in 65.1 percent of the votes;
- Partly free countries, in 47.7 percent of the votes; and
- Not free countries, in only 30.9 percent of the votes.

Analysis revealed a statistically significant, positive correlation between a country's level of political freedom as determined by Freedom House and its voting coincidence with the U.S. in the General Assembly from 2000–2010. Specifically, the analysis demonstrated a positive and strong relationship between a country's level of political freedom and overall non-consensus votes (correlation coefficient of 0.61) and between a country's level of political freedom and important non-consensus votes (correlation coefficient of 0.65).

Chart 3 also illustrates the strong positive relationship between political freedom and voting with the U.S. on non-consensus votes over the past 11 sessions of the General Assembly. Politically free

45. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2011*, p. 30.

countries voted with the U.S. twice as often as not free countries voted with the U.S.

### What the U.S. Should Do

Of course, expecting every U.N. member to follow America's lead on every vote is unrealistic. Even America's strongest allies do not agree with the U.S. on every vote. Yet the U.S. could champion its positions more effectively in the General Assembly. Other countries do this, and the U.S. needs to increase its efforts if it wishes to promote its policy priorities more successfully in the U.N.

General Assembly voting patterns indicate and analysis confirms that the U.S. neither effectively rewards countries that support U.S. priorities in the U.N. nor withholds development assistance from countries that consistently oppose U.S. priorities. Table 1 summarizes voting coincidence with the U.S. for the 30 largest recipients of U.S. development assistance and for economically and politically free countries. Clearly, freer countries are more likely than less free countries to support U.S. positions and far more likely than major recipients of U.S. foreign assistance to vote with the U.S.

The Obama Administration and Congress should recognize these realities and take several steps to increase support for U.S. positions in the General Assembly. Specifically, the U.S. should:

- **Explicitly link disbursement of U.S. development assistance to support for U.S. policy priorities in the U.N.** The U.S. provides foreign assistance for a number of reasons from securing increasing economic growth to addressing humanitarian disasters to strengthening the military capabilities of its friends and allies. In allocating U.S. assistance, these priorities generally override whether the U.S. can rely on the recipient nation to support U.S. positions in the U.N. and other international organizations. As a result,

### Summary of U.N./U.S. Voting Coincidence

Non-Consensus Votes in the 2010 U.N. General Assembly Coinciding with the U.S. Vote

	Overall Votes	Important Votes
<b>By U.S. Aid Recipient</b>		
30 largest development assistance recipients	36.0%	45.7%
30 largest development assistance recipients, excluding Israel	33.9%	43.7%
<b>By Economic Freedom Category (2011 Index of Economic Freedom)</b>		
Free	59.4%	73.4%
Mostly Free	53.8%	68.1%
Moderately Free	43.8%	55.1%
Mostly Unfree	35.8%	42.4%
Repressed	33.0%	39.6%
<b>By Political Freedom Category (Freedom in the World 2011)</b>		
Free	51.5%	65.1%
Partly Free	36.6%	47.7%
Unfree	31.3%	30.9%

**Sources:** U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 2010, March 31, 2011, at <http://www.state.gov/p/oi/irs/rpt/c44268.htm> (July 25, 2011); Terry Miller and Kim R. Holmes, *2011 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2011), at <http://www.heritage.org/index>; and Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2011: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties*, at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=594> (July 25, 2011).

Table 1 • B 2591  [heritage.org](http://heritage.org)

many countries consider the U.N. and other international organizations to be penalty-free arenas where they can undermine U.S. initiatives and oppose American policy priorities without fear of retaliation or consequences. Regardless of how they conduct themselves, they remain confident that they will receive U.S. assistance. Similarly, congressional earmarks on foreign assistance often remove executive branch discretion over aid disbursements, thereby limiting its ability to reward nations that support U.S. priorities and penalize those that oppose them. To promote U.S. policy priorities more effectively in the U.N., Congress should reduce its reliance on aid earmarks for specific countries while linking provision of development assistance to support for U.S. policy priorities in the U.N. The State Department and USAID should be instructed to

inform aid recipients of this policy and explain that opposing U.S. priorities at the U.N. will result in reduced aid.

- **Require the State Department to include information on foreign assistance in its annual report to Congress on voting practices in the United Nations.** While not required by current law, previous editions of the report included a table listing the amount of U.S. assistance provided to each country alongside its voting coincidence. Providing the information in this format was useful in illustrating the support of American foreign assistance recipients for U.S. priorities in the U.N. However, the Obama Administration modified the most recent report so that it no longer includes data on foreign assistance. Most likely this was done to downplay the fact that the vast majority of recipients of U.S. foreign assistance routinely oppose U.S. diplomatic initiatives and vote in opposition to the U.S. in the General Assembly. Congress should require the State Department to include this table in future *Voting Practices in the United Nations* reports.
- **Engage directly with Washington embassies on U.S. priorities in the U.N.** Sometimes U.S. priorities at the U.N. and communications in New York from the U.S. officials to the missions of countries to the U.N. are not passed on to national governments and therefore do not have the desired effect of changing votes on key issues. Communicating U.S. priorities through Washington embassies provides an alternative means for messages to reach decision makers in other governments and can help circumvent parochial U.N. politics and relationships that can influence votes by country missions in New York irrespective of the wishes of their governments.
- **Seek to coordinate voting by politically free governments in the U.N.** Numerous U.N. members are considered politically free, but routinely fail to hold repressive governments accountable. Even worse, they frequently permit repressive governments to run roughshod over U.N. bodies and resolutions that are designed to highlight or curb human rights abuse and political repression.<sup>46</sup> The U.S. and its democratic allies should more clearly denounce actions by regional groups that undermine representative government, the rule of law, or basic human rights. The U.S. has sought to organize these nations, coordinate policy positions on relevant issues at the United Nations, and promote democracy among the member states.<sup>47</sup> The U.S. needs to maintain these efforts and seek to create a more cohesive caucus for political freedom and fundamental human rights.
- **Seek support for an economic freedom coalition within the U.N.** Another strategy for strengthening the American cause at the U.N. is to create a caucus to promote economic freedom among nations that have a record of economic freedom. Such a coalition would serve U.S. interests by offering alternative voting relationships beyond regional groupings and would facilitate common principles that both developed and developing countries could champion. While the U.S. has spoken about the need for economic freedom, its efforts to organize other nations around this concept have not been as successful as those focused on democracy have been.<sup>48</sup>

46. Kim R. Holmes, *Liberty's Best Hope: American Leadership for the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 2008), p. 53.

47. For instance, see the U.N. Democracy Fund, "What Is the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)?" at <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/XWhatIsUNDEF.htm> (July 21, 2011); U.S. Department of State, "The Community of Democracies," at <http://www.state.gov/s/saced/communitydemocracies/index.htm> (July 21, 2011); and U.N. Democracy Fund, Web site, at <http://www.un.org/democracyfund> (July 21, 2011).

48. In 2006, the U.S. Department of State reported, "Like-minded nations have succeeded in gaining some support for the principles of economic freedom, although the Economic Freedom Caucus has been hindered by a prolonged and contentious debate in the General Assembly on the respective roles and responsibilities of developed and developing countries." U.S. Department of State, *Performance and Accountability Report, Fiscal Year 2006*, November 2006, p. 153, at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/75840.pdf> (July 21, 2011). For more information on promoting economic freedom at the U.N., see Holmes, "Promoting Economic Freedom at the United Nations."

The U.S. should seek to emulate its modest successes in coordinating actions and positions of democratic countries by establishing a Global Economic Freedom Forum<sup>49</sup> in addition to an economic freedom caucus to emphasize the need for economic freedom in U.N. discussions on development.

## Conclusion

America's engagement with the United Nations has been multifaceted, and the U.N. is an important venue for discussing many of today's global challenges. The United States, the largest contributor to the U.N. budget,<sup>50</sup> has steadfastly supported the founding ideals of the U.N. It is clearly in America's interest to work with the U.N. to advance U.S. diplomatic initiatives related to these values and to facilitate cooperation with other nations to address these common concerns.

In protecting and advancing American interests, the U.S. should seek to strengthen and broaden support for America's policies in the U.N. The U.S. should focus on changing the U.N. dynamics by explicitly linking U.S. assistance to support for U.S. priorities in the U.N., by forging coalitions with nations that share the American principles of political and economic freedom, and by seeking to expand the membership of those coalitions.

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49. Holmes, *Liberty's Best Hope*, p. 122.

50. The U.S. pays 22 percent of the U.N. regular budget, making it by far the U.N.'s largest contributor, but the U.S. has only one of the 193 votes on budgetary matters. The combined assessment of the 129 least-assessed countries—two-thirds of the General Assembly—totals less than 1 percent of the regular budget. These countries, combined with influential voting blocs in the U.N., can and do block attempts to implement reforms and curtail budgets. See Brett Schaefer, "The U.S. Must Maximize Its Influence over U.N. Budgetary Decisions," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 3234, April 25, 2011, at <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/04/the-us-must-maximize-its-influence-over-un-budgetary-decisions>.

**APPENDIX**  
**LAW REQUIRING ANNUAL REPORT ON VOTING PRACTICES AT THE U.N.**

22 U.S. Code § 2414a

§ 2414a. Annual report to Congress on voting practices at United Nations

(a) In general: Not later than March 31 of each year, the Secretary of State shall transmit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a full and complete annual report which assesses for the preceding calendar year, with respect to each foreign country member of the United Nations, the voting practices of the governments of such countries at the United Nations, and which evaluates General Assembly and Security Council actions and the responsiveness of those governments to United States policy on issues of special importance to the United States.

(b) Information on voting practices in United Nations: Such report shall include, with respect to voting practices and plenary actions in the United Nations during the preceding calendar year, information to be compiled and supplied by the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, consisting of—

(1) an analysis and discussion, prepared in consultation with the Secretary of State, of the extent to which member countries supported United States policy objectives at the United Nations;

(2) an analysis and discussion, prepared in consultation with the Secretary of State, of actions taken by the United Nations by consensus;

(3) with respect to plenary votes of the United Nations General Assembly—

(A) a listing of all such votes on issues which directly affected important United States interests and on which the United States lobbied extensively and a brief description of the issues involved in each such vote;

(B) a listing of the votes described in subparagraph (A) which provides a comparison of the vote cast by each member country with the vote cast by the United States;

(C) a country-by-country listing of votes described in subparagraph (A); and

(D) a listing of votes described in subparagraph (A) displayed in terms of United Nations regional caucus groups;

(4) a listing of all plenary votes cast by member countries of the United Nations in the General Assembly which provides a comparison of the votes cast by each member country with the vote cast by the United States, including a separate listing of all plenary votes cast by member countries of the United Nations in the General Assembly on resolutions specifically related to Israel that are opposed by the United States;

(5) an analysis and discussion, prepared in consultation with the Secretary of State, of the extent to which other members supported United States policy objectives in the Security Council and a separate listing of all Security Council votes of each member country in comparison with the United States; and

(6) a side-by-side comparison of agreement on important and overall votes for each member country and the United States.

(c) Format: Information required pursuant to subsection (b)(3) of this section shall also be submitted, together with an explanation of the statistical methodology, in a format identical to that contained in chapter II of the Report to Congress on Voting Practices in the United Nations, dated March 14, 1988.

(d) Statement by Secretary of State: Each report under subsection (a) of this section shall contain a statement by the Secretary of State discussing the measures which have been taken to inform United States diplomatic missions of United Nations General Assembly and Security Council activities.