

Prologue

This report is submitted pursuant to the “United Nations Participation Act of 1945” (Public Law 79-264). Section 4 of this law provides:

“The President shall from time to time as occasion may require, but not less than once each year, make reports to the Congress of the activities of the United Nations and of the participation of the United States therein.”

In July 2003, the President delegated to the Secretary of State the authority to transmit this report to Congress.

The *United States Participation in the United Nations* report is a survey of United States government activities and policies in the United Nations and its agencies, as well as the activities of the UN and those agencies themselves. More specifically, it seeks to assess UN achievements during 2003, the effectiveness of U.S. participation in the UN, and whether U.S. goals were advanced or thwarted.

The United States is committed to the founding ideals of the United Nations. When addressing the UN General Assembly in 2003, President Bush said, “The founding documents of the United Nations and the founding documents of America stand in the same tradition. Both assert that human beings should never be reduced to objects of power or commerce, because their dignity is inherent. Both recognize a moral law that stands above men and nations, which must be defended and enforced by men and nations. And both point the way to peace, the peace that comes when all are free.” The United States believes the United Nations should be a place where diverse countries and cultures of the world work together for freedom, democracy, peace, human rights and prosperity for all people. In 2003, the UN faced many challenges in living up to those founding principles.

This report organizes thematically UN activities that most significantly affected U.S. interests. It is divided into six chapters:

Part 1, on **Political and Security Issues**, focuses on activities undertaken by the United Nations to maintain peace and security. Under the UN Charter, the primary responsibility for this task lies in the Security Council, which can act through resolutions authorizing peacekeeping missions, special political missions, and other instruments. Political activities of the UN General Assembly and other UN bodies are also described. Finally, this chapter covers security-related thematic issues, such as disarmament and international terrorism.

The most important U.S. priority in the United Nations in 2003 was to achieve Security Council resolutions restoring stability, legitimacy and representative government to postwar Iraq. Following the coalition’s liberation of Iraq, the United States succeeded in obtaining three UN Security Council resolutions that helped to consolidate Iraq’s liberation. All three of these binding measures were adopted unanimously. Security Council

Resolution 1483 ended UN economic sanctions on Iraq; defined UN responsibilities in Iraq, including the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General; and supported establishment of a transitional administration run by Iraqis. Resolution 1500 welcomed the establishment of the Iraqi Governing Council and created the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq. Resolution 1511 underscored the Coalition Provisional Authority's role in security and civil administration, called upon countries to contribute to a multinational stabilization force, provided a framework for the transfer of power and for international participation in the political and economic rebuilding of Iraq, and supported a vital and strengthened role for the United Nations.

Earlier in February 2003, the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain introduced a draft resolution that noted Iraq's failure to comply with a total of 17 resolutions over the previous 12 years, including Resolution 1441. The Iraqi regime had defied all of these measures. Faced with Iraq's continued defiance, the United States pointed out that sufficient legal authority for use of force already existed, if needed in 1441 and other resolutions. This draft resolution was an opportunity for the Council to demonstrate unity and political will to enforce its own resolutions on Iraq. However, as a result of a veto threat from one permanent member, France, and reluctance on the part of a few other members to vote for any resolution that might deliver an ultimatum to Iraq, the sponsors decided not to call for a vote. Nonetheless, this effort helped mobilize support from U.S. coalition partners for military action in Iraq.

U.S. leadership in the Security Council also promoted progress and helped realize U.S. priorities for UN involvement in Afghanistan. The Council adopted Resolution 1471 to extend the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan in its work to strengthen protection of human rights, rule of law, national reconciliation, and management of UN humanitarian relief, recovery, and reconstruction activities. Resolution 1510 broadened the role of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force.

Fostering international peace is a founding principle and a fundamental reason for U.S. participation in the United Nations. The need for UN peacekeeping missions continued in 2003. The UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia was established in October 2003 with U.S. support after the departure of Charles Taylor from Liberia. Peacekeeping or observation missions were successfully closed on the Iraq-Kuwait border, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Prevlaka peninsula; missions in Sierra Leone and East Timor were downsized.

Part 2, on **Economic and Social Affairs**, assesses the work of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the UN Commission on Human Rights, and various subsidiary bodies and commissions on issues that involve economic development, the status of women, humanitarian aid, and crime prevention and control.

Among the most important U.S. achievements in the General Assembly in 2003 were the adoption by consensus of a U.S.-sponsored resolution to expand women's participation in the political process and passage of resolutions on human rights and democracy. In other areas, however, the General Assembly continued to be ineffective, debating many of the same politically-motivated resolutions as in past years, including several targeted resolutions against Israel, which were unbalanced in number and content.

Important U.S. victories in the Commission on Human Rights included adoption of resolutions on religious intolerance and on human rights in Burma, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Turkmenistan, and defeat of a proposal for an anti-U.S. Special Sitting on Iraq. Stronger resolutions in some instances were blocked by the one-third of Commission members in 2003 who were widely recognized human rights abusers, and who were more interested in protecting themselves from criticism than in improving human rights.

Part 3, on **Specialized Agencies**, describes the work of a host of agencies, from the Food and Agriculture Organization to the World Health Organization, and assesses how they served U.S. interests.

One of the most noteworthy developments in 2003 was the U.S. return to membership in the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization after a 19-year absence. The Organization agreed to dedicate U.S. dues in 2003 to revitalize education infrastructure in post-conflict areas, such as Afghanistan and Liberia, and to increase funding for preservation of cultural artifacts.

Part 4, on **Legal Developments**, highlights the work of the International Court of Justice and other judicial bodies, such as the War Crimes Tribunals in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and legal issues such as cloning.

Part 5, on **Reform of the UN System**, describes progress on reform of UN management and peacekeeping, and of the UN's main bodies.

In 2003, the United States achieved modest administrative and management reforms in a resolution setting out the UN's 2004–2005 biennium budget. This resolution provided the Secretary-General with greater authority to manage UN staff on an organization-wide basis, to move professional positions among departments in the Secretariat, and to terminate 912 obsolete or redundant activities.

The United States maintains that a key factor in the successful reform of the United Nations lies in the world's democracies standing together in defense of human rights, freedom, prosperity, and peace, and working more closely to increase accountability and transparency in the United Nations. In 2003, the United States stepped up its efforts to form a democracy caucus within the United Nations.

Part 6, on **Administration and Budget**, provides an overview of the UN current financial situation and resource management issues.

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Information on funding of UN activities and UN bodies, as well as U.S. assessments or contributions, are provided throughout this report. Unless otherwise noted, figures provided are for calendar year 2003.

Finally, the report's appendices include the President's 2003 speech to the UN General Assembly, information about the principal organs of the United Nations and their membership and leadership in 2003, a list of U.S. representatives to the United Nations in 2003, and other reference information.

U.S. participation in the United Nations will continue to be guided by three principles. As one of the founders of the United Nations, the United States wants it to realize its fundamental vision of making the world more secure, democratic, and prosperous. As an active member of the United Nations and its many committees and commissions, the United States believes that effective multilateral diplomacy requires principled and consistent leadership, as well as the full engagement of all UN partners. Finally, as the largest financial contributor to the United Nations, the United States believes good stewardship of UN resources is vital to its success.

Questions about this report may be directed to the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

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