

June 2, 1988

U.S. LEVERAGE AT THE U.N.: ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY?

Charles M. Lichenstein
Distinguished Fellow

INTRODUCTION

This year, as usual, the United States will contribute nearly \$1 billion to support United Nations activities.¹ This is about one-fourth of total U.N. outlays and far more than any other country contributes. In 1986, for example, the Soviet Union gave the organization only about \$120 million or less than 3 percent of total U.N. expenditures. The Soviet Union contributes 10.2 percent of the so-called assessed budget, which supports the U.N. Secretariat in New York and a few specialized U.N. agencies, but less than 1 percent of the costs of the humanitarian and economic development programs that consume the bulk of U.N. resources.

Striking U.S. Generosity. Even more striking is the contrast between U.S. generosity and the combined contributions of the some 123 nonaligned U.N. member-states that dominate U.N. proceedings. These are the countries generally labeled "Third World." In aggregate, the Third World contributes only 9.5 percent of the assessed U.N. budget. Just 80 of these nations constitute an absolute controlling majority in the U.N. General Assembly, but together contribute less than one-tenth of one percent of the total assessed U.N. budget.

It might seem that the preeminent role of U.S. funding at the U.N. would give the U.S. substantial leverage to influence U.N. budgets, policies, and programs. But this

1 Figures used in this study are estimates for 1986 taken from *35th Annual Report, United States Contributions to International Organizations, Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 1986*, issued by the U.S. Department State. These are the latest available figures.

presumption is belied by the evidence of more than a decade. Most U.N. members pay attention to U.S. views only rarely. Frequently, the U.S. votes almost alone in opposition to key U.N. measures. According to the most recent State Department compilation, in fact, the average voting coincidence with the U.S. among all U.N. members in the 1987 General Assembly was a mere 18.6 percent.

Dead in its Tracks. Only in the past couple of years when the Reagan Administration, under orders from Congress, held back a substantial part of the expected U.S. contribution to the U.N. has the U.S. wielded some noticeable leverage at the U.N. The best example: U.N. reform, especially of runaway budgets and the bloated U.N. bureaucracy. When the U.S. threatened major cuts in its contributions, and followed through on its threat, the U.N. reform process finally made some headway. Yet, as soon as U.S. payments were resumed, U.N. reform stopped virtually dead in its tracks.

U.S. leverage over U.N. programs and activities also can be exerted by nonfinancial means. U.S. participation in the U.N. and U.S. collaboration in major U.N. programs lend legitimacy and credibility to the U.N. system as a whole. Strong and consistent U.S. advocacy sometimes can force issues important to U.S. interests onto the U.N. agenda and shape, if not control, U.N. activities. If and when the U.S. leads unequivocally, U.N. majorities sometimes follow.

Given the record of recent years, the only reasonable prescription for increased U.S. leverage at the U.N. must combine financial and political measures to:

- ◆ ◆ **Withhold U.S. contributions, clearly linking this to specific, feasible U.N. reforms.**
- ◆ ◆ **Refuse to accept promises as a substitute for genuine reform.**
- ◆ ◆ **Maintain the pressure until reforms are built into the permanent U.N. structure.**
- ◆ ◆ **Exert forceful leadership in behalf of a coherent U.S. agenda, both for U.N. budgetary and administrative reform and for substantive improvement of U.N. programs.**

REVERSE LEVERAGE: WITHHOLDING

Last year, the U.S. withheld \$70 million from its contribution to support the U.N. Secretariat in New York; this was one-third of the U.S. assessment. In 1986, the U.S. withheld more than half of its U.N. assessment. In addition to its assessment, of course, the U.S. in 1986 made nearly \$900 million in other contributions to the U.N. Nearly every observer of the U.N. — the U.N. Association of the United States, the International Organizations Bureau of the State Department (IO), and probably U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Vernon Walters — would agree that it was precisely these U.S. withholdings of a substantial part of its annual U.N. assessment, as mandated by Congress, that prodded the U.N. toward any reform at all. This was the culmination of a process nearly a decade old.

In 1979, under the terms of the Kemp-Moynihan amendment (co-sponsored by Representative Jack Kemp, the New York Republican, and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the New York Democrat) barring U.S. aid to terrorist groups, the U.S. withheld that portion of its U.N. assessment that would benefit the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) — both identified as terrorist groups — and Cuba. The amounts withheld were minuscule, never more than about \$50,000 a year; and U.N. "support" for all three continued unabated.

Beginning in 1981, U.S. scrutiny of the U.N. intensified. Scrutiny focused on U.N. programs, the runaway budget (which had nearly tripled in the previous decade), the top-heavy U.N. bureaucracy in the New York-based Secretariat, and its safe haven for Soviet bloc spies (including more than 500 "international civil servants," almost 99 percent of whom were "seconded" to the U.N. Secretariat on fixed-term contracts and were as a consequence under Moscow's tight control). This effort was spearheaded by Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Ronald Reagan's newly appointed U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. and by detailed studies undertaken by Washington-based research organizations.² Congressional concern with the U.N. mounted. At the U.N. in New York, however, it was business as usual.

Kasten Reports. In 1982, Congress mandated what is known as the annual Kasten reports, named for the legislation's sponsor, Senator Robert Kasten, the Wisconsin Republican. These are scorecards ranking all U.N. members' voting records in the General Assembly by percentage of coincidence with the U.S. position. The reports list U.S. foreign aid country by country in a parallel column. The powerlessness of the U.S. in the U.N., which Kirkpatrick had noted in widely publicized speeches inside and outside the U.N.; were demonstrated statistically by the Kasten reports. The first Kasten report (1983) showed an average coincidence with the U.S. position among all other U.N. members of only 25.5 percent. By 1987, the average had declined to a record low of 18.6 percent.

By 1985, Congress apparently had lost its patience with U.N. "business as usual." That year, Representative Don Sundquist, the Tennessee Republican, attached an amendment to the State Department appropriation withholding the U.S. share — estimated at about \$18 million a year — of salaries paid to Soviet nationals seconded to the U.N. Secretariat, who routinely kicked back a major portion of their pay to Moscow. Also in 1985, Representative Pat Swindall, the Georgia Republican, proposed withholding an additional \$20 million from the U.N.; this represented the U.S. share of the budget of the U.N. Department of Public Information (DPI), whose publications, press releases, films, and radio tapes (according to a content analysis conducted by the General Accounting Office) typically show a systematic anti-U.S. bias.³

Kassebaum-Solomon Amendment. The centerpiece of the congressional crackdown on the U.N., however, was the reform-oriented 1985 Kassebaum-Solomon amendment

² The Heritage Foundation began its United Nations Assessment Project in January 1982. Since then the project has published more than 100 studies.

³ See Roger A. Brooks, "The U.N. Department of Public Information: A House of Mirrors," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 332, February 23, 1984.

(co-sponsored by Senator Nancy Kassebaum, the Kansas Republican, and Representative Gerald Solomon, the New York Republican). This legislation called on the U.N. to consider weighted voting — a rough parity between voting power and U.N. members' ranking on the sliding scale of assessments for mandatory contributions to the U.N. budget — in the U.N. General Assembly on budget resolutions. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, for example, from their inception have had weighted voting. Should the U.N. balk at introducing weighted voting on budget matters, the Kassebaum-Solomon Amendment forces the U.S. to cut its contribution to all U.N. agencies funded by mandatory assessment from 25 percent to 20 percent of the total annual assessment.

Flirting with Radical Changes. The cumulative effect of these 1986 congressional enactments was a dramatic cut from \$206 million in assessed contributions to \$100 million in actual U.S. payments to the U.N. in New York. Finally the U.S. message got through to the U.N. The 40th U.N. General Assembly in 1985 already had authorized U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to set up a committee on U.N. reform, the "Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations." Its report was due August 1986. In the meantime, the Secretary General froze hiring at the Secretariat.

The Experts Group, whose membership included most of the major contributors to the U.N. budget, labored long and hard (67 meetings in six months) and nearly agreed on a genuinely radical reform package. This omnibus proposal would have revised the scale of assessments (with a 15 percent cap for the U.S. share), required major contributor consensus on the budget, cut U.N. Secretariat staffing by 15 percent (lopping off, among other slots, some 200 "supergrade" sinecures), consolidated a number of overlapping Secretariat units, reduced secondments to no more than 50 percent of any country's Secretariat contingent, and capped budget "add-ons" to 2 percent of the total. But the Experts Group consensus fell apart, and its carefully crafted reform package was scaled back drastically to little more than a recommended wish list.

Diluted Reform. The 41st U.N. General Assembly, convening in September 1986, diluted the Experts Group proposals even more. Its so-called Reform Resolution (41/213) dropped all of the specific numbers and percentages and simply called on the Secretary General to tidy up the costly administrative mess, amply documented in the Experts Group report, as best he could.

In the end, the only tangible reform adopted was to "enhance" the role of the largely moribund 21-member Committee on Program and Coordination (the CPC, elected by the General Assembly for fixed terms from nominations by the regional blocs, with a slight tilt toward the major contributors). This Committee was to make consensus budget recommendations (if it could achieve consensus) to the General Assembly, where consensus might or might not hold. It was the CPC's failure last year to make any decision at all on a budget ceiling for 1988-1989 that Ambassador Vernon Walters, current U.S.

Permanent Representative, has described as the "key disappointment" of the 42nd U.N. General Assembly. So much for U.N. reform.⁴

Paying Up Anyway. Even so, the U.S., seeking added leverage presumably, resumed payments of its mandatory U.N. assessment for 1987. On November 12, 1987, the U.S. Mission in New York turned over \$10 million. On December 3, 1987, an additional check for \$90 million was handed to the Secretary General. What happened next is highly instructive. On December 17, the General Assembly voted to expand the CPC to 34 members, opening up about ten additional seats to the Soviet bloc and less developed countries, all largely hostile to U.S. interests. The result: any chance that the CPC, the linchpin of U.N. reform, would serve as a brake on U.N. profligacy and waste diminished to near zero. So much for leverage.

WHAT DO THE KASTEN SCORECARDS SHOW?

The annual Kasten reports provide one index of U.S. influence at the U.N. They began with the 38th General Assembly in 1983, counting only contested votes and excluding the housekeeping and/or "motherhood" resolutions adopted by consensus, which inflate the appearance of coincidence with the U.S. position. While they may be an imperfect index, they nonetheless are useful and have been the first systematic attempt to measure how the U.S. fares at the U.N. Jeane Kirkpatrick in 1984 compared the Kasten scorecards to congressional voting records, noting that both reflect such external pressures as upcoming elections, constituency interests, party (or U.N. bloc) loyalty, and financial rewards or penalties. She concluded:

But cumulatively a Congressman's votes tell us in a general way about where he stands on various kinds of issues, what he stands for, and with whom he stands....And over time...a country's votes [at the U.N.] reflect its choices about values and priorities.⁵

What if anything do these scorecards tell us about U.S. leverage at the U.N.?

1) **They provide a crude measure of U.S. powerlessness.** At best, in recent years, the U.S. has been on the winning side in the U.N. General Assembly about 25 percent of the time; at worst, about 18 percent of the time. When the index's focus is narrowed to key issues — those affecting such vital U.S. interests as disarmament, terrorism, and the Middle East peace process or resolutions attacking the U.S. by name — strong friends of the U.S. become stronger. Israel's coincidence with U.S. positions increases from the high 80s to 100 percent, and NATO countries', from about 65 percent to 90 percent or better.

4 See Charles M. Lichenstein, "United Nations Reform: Where's the Beef?" Heritage Foundation *Background* No. 567, March 10, 1987.

5 From Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, *Legitimacy and Force*, Vol. 1 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1988), pp. 280-281.

2) In the 1970s, when all General Assembly votes were counted, the averages were higher. But the pattern of increasing U.S. powerlessness was clear. The earliest data available from the State Department go back to 1975. In that year, the average coincidence with the U.S. position in the U.N. General Assembly was 55.2 percent. By 1980, the average had dropped to 30.6 percent, a huge 45 percent decline.

3) The U.S., of course, could puff up the coincidence index: the U.S. delegation simply could "go with the flow" and vote for all but the most outrageous U.N. General Assembly resolutions. This was the tendency during the Carter Administration. Example: The annual General Assembly resolution on "the free flow of information" and related issues of international communications. In the late 1970s, the nonaligned countries and the Soviet bloc invented the New World Information Order, which to most U.S. journalism professionals smelled of old-fashioned censorship. The early U.S. position was to join the consensus, sometimes with a bland statement of reservations. But beginning in 1981, however, U.S. representatives in the U.N. Committee on Information fought to amend the draft resolution drastically; they demanded separate votes on the most offensive paragraphs; they lobbied friendly delegations to join with the U.S.; and in the end they broke the consensus (usually in concert with Israel and a few West European delegations and sometimes alone), and they made the U.S. objections clear. But on the Kasten scorecard it was another negative vote and a lower index of coincidence.

4) Most significantly, there is no discernible correlation between the coincidence index and U.S. payment or nonpayment of its assessed U.N. contribution. When in the 1970s the index was up in the 50 percent range (inflated by the inclusion of consensus resolutions), the U.S. paid a full 25 percent of total U.N. expenditures: In the 1980s, with the index in the 20 percent to 25 percent range, the U.S. was still paying its full 25 percent assessment. From year to year, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the index drifted up and down. But the trendline of ever increasing U.S. powerlessness never varied significantly. Last year, in fact, the U.S. did withhold about one-third of its assessment for the U.N. core budget, and the Kasten scorecard hit an all-time low. But the chronology noted above — the vote to dilute U.S.-major contributor influence in the committee in charge of the budget process, the sole tangible focus of serious U.N. reform, immediately following a large U.S. payment — strongly suggests that the leverage of U.S. dollars is modest at best.

EFFECTIVE LEVERAGE

The important questions remain: 1) what kinds of leverage does the U.S. really want at the U.N.; 2) what kinds can it reasonably hope to achieve; and 3) by what means is it likely to increase its leverage? The experience of 1981 to 1985 is instructive.⁶

The U.S. is not likely to win most of the votes in the U.N., certainly not in the one nation-one vote General Assembly, and only marginally in the Security Council (where the

6 The writer must admit to possible bias in what follows. He was a participant at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. during much of the period in question. But, whatever discounting may be required, facts to a major extent speak for themselves.

threat of the U.S. veto provides substantial leverage, especially in toning down the rhetoric and sometimes keeping a draft resolution off the table altogether). The working majority of the nonaligned and the Soviet bloc is too strong. The ingrained bent toward lashing out at the majority's designated pariahs, Israel and South Africa, is too deep. And many potential U.S. allies shrink from getting too far out front, either for fear of retaliation (one weak but often supportive African country spoke openly to members of the U.S. Mission in 1983 about direct Libyan threats of stepped-up terrorism) or because of the perception that U.N. resolutions are just words and do not make much difference in the real world (a favorite rationale for West European concurrence in Israel-bashing).

Doing Something About Business As Usual. But some U.N. votes can be won on issues of special importance to the U.S. The prevailing climate at the U.N. can be modified, especially by working on potential support constituencies outside the U.N. itself, as in the case of U.N. reform.⁷ Perhaps most important of all, some issues of special significance to U.S. foreign policy can be forced onto the U.N. agenda, or brought forcefully to the attention of the members, if the U.S. seizes the opportunities or creates them and refuses to "go with the flow."

Example: Introduction into the debates of the General Assembly's Third (or Human Rights) Committee, within regular agenda items, of documentation of psychiatric abuse in the Soviet Union, religious oppression in Nicaragua (as well as in other Soviet bloc countries), and political prisoners in Cuba. These draft resolutions were intended by their Soviet surrogate sponsors to focus only on Chile and Guatemala, on South Africa and Israel, but U.S. representatives made sure they did not.

Example: Elaboration of the annual resolution on "foreign forces in Afghanistan" into a full-scale review of Soviet use of anti-personnel mines in the guise of children's toys, terrorism against the civilian population, and evidence of Soviet use of chemical and biological warfare.

Example: Using the occasion of the debate on famine and refugee flows in the Horn of Africa to describe how Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam created famine and exploits refugees as deliberate weapons in the civil war with Ethiopian separatist resistance movements.

Winning Votes. Some votes can be won, even in the U.N. General Assembly. The most dramatic illustration was the Puerto Rican "inscription" issue, September-October 1982. Cuba had proposed that the question of Puerto Rico's "colonial" status as a "vassal" of the U.S. be inscribed on the agenda of the Committee of 24, or Decolonization Committee. This committee echoes the conventional Soviet line that the Western democracies, and

⁷ See Charles Lichenstein, Mohamed Sahnoun, Gunther van Well, Tommy T.B. Koh, "How the United Nations Can Be Reformed, The Recommendations of Four Former Ambassadors to the U.N.," *Heritage Lecture* No. 66, August 7, 1986, in which three current ambassadors to the U.S., former U.N. representatives, endorse far-reaching U.N. reforms. In doing so, they must be assumed to be reflecting their governments' views. "Working the capitals" is always an essential complement to "working the corridors" at the U.N.

especially the U.S., are guilty of imperialistic aggression in the Third World. They point to Puerto Rico.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick decided to fight this, in strong opposition to the State Department, which was prepared to capitulate. U.S. representatives put this issue at the top of their lists for their traditional summertime bilateral consultations in foreign capitals around the world, looking toward the next U.N. General Assembly. Latin American countries were given special attention. Mayor Hernan Padilla of San Juan, a rising young Puerto Rican political leader, was appointed as a U.S. public delegate to the 37th General Assembly. The mayor, along with all of the ambassadors and political officers of the U.S. Mission, lobbied hard, conceding only the core Soviet bloc as lost causes. Kirkpatrick personally made the case against putting this issue on the decolonization agenda in the General (or Steering) Committee, the group that controls General Assembly business. Much to the State Department's astonishment, and probably Moscow's, the U.S. won with votes to spare.

Cuba was not convinced and decided to appeal to the full General Assembly, which formally adopts the agenda at an early plenary session. And there the U.S. won again by a bigger margin than before.

The U.S. can win if it clearly identifies an issue as "very important" to U.S. national interests — if it pulls out all the stops in bilateral diplomacy and works the U.N. lobbies and corridors in the approved manner of legislatures everywhere. Leverage in such cases follows the flag, if the U.S. shows unequivocally that it cares about the outcome.

Winning Some in the Security Council. Experience in the U.N. Security Council during the Kirkpatrick era suggests the same conclusion, with the provisos that 1) the threat of a U.S. veto carries special weight, and 2) the most frequent measure of success in the Security Council is that nothing happens: that is, no resolution is tabled, or none makes it past "informal consultations" where consensus is the rule. The imperative that operates with particular force in the Security Council is the desire to avoid a U.S. veto. U.S. willingness to use the veto when vital U.S. interests are at stake must be signaled clearly. This Kirkpatrick did early in her tenure with full support from the White House.

The most striking illustration: her successful negotiation with the Foreign Minister of Iraq (who had come to New York to head the Iraqi delegation), following Israel's preemptive air strike in June 1981 on the Iraqi nuclear reactor outside Baghdad only months before it would have been able to produce weapons grade nuclear fuel. The U.S. had criticized the strike severely but had no intention of permitting the incident to turn into the usual round of Israel bashing. For its part, Iraq very much wanted U.S. support for a tough Security Council resolution against Israel. In several days (and nights) of hard bargaining, most of the inflammatory rhetoric was stripped away, and the issue came down to a single paragraph condemning "nations" that provided military assistance to Israel. It was aimed straight at the U.S. With the U.S. veto explicit, Iraq withdrew the offensive paragraph, and the resolution was adopted by consensus. Israel was by no means pleased, but a rupture in the U.S.-Israeli strategic relationship was avoided, and the process of restoring formal U.S.-Iraqi diplomatic ties continued to a successful conclusion late in 1983.

Another example: Throughout the spring and summer of 1982 the U.N. Security Council was in almost nonstop session over the Israeli military operation against PLO bases in Lebanon. The U.S. officially deplored the operation and joined in several Security Council resolutions calling for a cease-fire. As the Israeli troops pushed north, however, Syrian involvement became increasingly apparent, and the U.S. position hardened: any Israeli withdrawal had to be matched by a Syrian withdrawal, leaving Lebanese sovereignty intact.

In the Security Council, the Soviet Union argued Syria's brief, and three times the U.S. had to resort to the veto. On another half dozen occasions, however, it was the Soviets who backed off when it became obvious that they lacked the eight additional votes to force a veto. (In the 15-member Security Council, nine votes constitute a working majority on all but procedural motions.) In fact, a subtle shift could be detected among the Council members in reaction to Soviet heavy-handedness. On one notable occasion, the Chinese representative (who rarely took part in the closed-door debate) was moved to reprimand "those" — he was looking directly at the Soviet ambassador — who "make no constructive proposals" to end the conflict. A famous victory for the U.S.? Hardly. But over these many months the U.S. articulated a coherent position and, with the veto handy, was able to shape if not quite control the process. As a result, it could at least limit the damage to its own and Israel's strategic interests.

LEVERAGE THAT WORKS

Clearly, money does not talk as effectively in the U.N. context as:

- 1) A clear, coherent, forcefully presented U.S. position, backed up by ample documentation.**
- 2) A willingness to use negative rewards — the Security Council veto, for example — as weapons of choice.**
- 3) Understanding of the politics of the U.N. and using that skill to manipulate the process.**
- 4) Coordination within the U.S. government, embracing both Congress and executive departments and agencies, in explicit support of U.S. strategy in the U.N.**

Insofar as money talks at all and equals effective leverage, it tends to work in reverse. Money withheld, or even the threat of it, only occasionally provides the lever of control or influence. This is no novel discovery. In 1954, George Kennan stated the principle succinctly:

I view with skepticism our chances of exerting any useful influence unless we learn how to create respect for our possible disfavor, at least as great as the respect for our possible favor.⁸

Kennan was writing in this passage about U.S.-Soviet relations, not about the U.N. — but he might have been. Examples from U.S. experience in the U.N., 1981 to 1985:

Refugee Relief. In April 1981, Kirkpatrick headed the U.S. delegation to a U.N. conference in Geneva in which pledges of contributions were to be made for African refugee relief. Moves were made to bar the Israeli delegation from the conference. Kirkpatrick reminded the delegates of the serious purpose of the conference and observed that her airplane was warmed up and ready to return to the U.S. — with both delegation and checkbook aboard. Israel remained in the conference.

Telecommunications Union. A few months later, the same issue arose at a meeting of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in Nairobi. The same warning was delivered by the U.S. chief of delegation. Same result.

Atomic Energy Agency. At about the same time, at an executive board meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Israel was excluded from participation in a key study group. The U.S. immediately suspended payments to the agency and threatened to withdraw altogether. At the next board meeting, the Israeli exclusion was dropped.

"Nonpeace-Loving State." Beginning with the 1982 U.N. General Assembly, Libya, Iran, and South Yemen introduced an amendment to the credentials report denying Israel its seat in the General Assembly as a "nonpeace-loving state." The U.S. delegation warned that, if such action were taken, the U.S. would walk out (with the implicit threat that most of the U.S. assessment would be withheld). U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz unequivocally repeated the warning. With Finland in the lead, the General Assembly voted to set aside the exclusion amendment as "out of order." Recurrently over the next five years, the issue was revived. Sometimes it was voted down on a procedural motion, and sometimes the amendment was withdrawn. Now, wisely, the U.S. response to Israeli exclusion — immediate withdrawal, immediate suspension of funding — has been written into law by Congress and extended to all U.N. bodies, including those, such as subsidiaries of the Economic and Social Council, in which membership is elective.

CONCLUSION

Other legislative applications of the Kennan "disfavor principle" are the Sundquist and Swindall amendments related, respectively, to Soviet "civil servant" kickbacks to Moscow

⁸ From "Realities of American Foreign Policy," essay cited in Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

and the anti-U.S. bias of the U.N. Department of Public Information.⁹ The principal case in point, of course, is Kassebaum-Solomon.

With the full impact of Kassebaum-Solomon withholdings looming late in 1985, U.N. Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar became a born-again budget cutter, and the U.N. General Assembly created the Experts Group to spearhead U.N. reform. Coincidental? Not very likely. Now, however, with the dilution of the Experts Group's recommendations into little more than a potentially useful new budget process — and the further dilution even of that modest step by the expansion of Committee on Program and Coordination membership — the issue is no longer the idea of reform. The issue, rather, is the reality of reform. Early signs are not hopeful.

A Condition of U.S. Participation. Assuming that the U.S. is serious about U.N. reform, possibly even as a condition of continued U.S. participation in the U.N., how can the momentum be revived and increased? How can U.S. leverage be exerted?

One possibility would be to "declare victory," pay up all withheld contributions, and hope for the best. This appears to be what the State Department and the U.S. Mission to the U.N. are doing. This ignores the lessons of history and fails to serve U.S. interests.

A second possibility is to pursue vigorously the course laid down by Congress. In the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for fiscal 1988 and 1989, adopted last December, Congress set out detailed findings concerning: 1) Soviet bloc violations of the U.N. Charter relating to blatant abuse of secondment (which keeps the door open for continued Soviet use of the U.N. system as a safe haven for spies); 2) effective implementation of the consensus process for adoption of the U.N. budget, pursuant to the recommendations of the Experts Group; and 3) the Secretary General's compliance with his own announced hiring freeze (and 15 percent staff reductions in the U.N. Secretariat in New York), equitably allocated among the nationals of all U.N. members. (About two-thirds of all exceptions to the freeze so far have been of benefit to the Soviet bloc.)

Leverage of Penalties. The congressional formula is clear-cut: 40 percent of the assessed U.S. contribution to the U.N. (as compared to the hundreds of millions the U.S. voluntarily contributes to a host of U.N. agencies and programs) will be paid on October 1st of each year; an additional 40 percent will be paid on receipt of an annual report by the President that genuine progress is being made in all three areas of concern; and the final 20 percent will be paid within 30 days unless Congress finds inadequate compliance in these three areas. Any catch-up on arrearages from previous years, moreover, will be contingent on availability of federal financial resources and acceptance by Congress of the President's assurances that the reform process is on track. The message is plain: Congress is prepared to reject wishful thinking and to demand tangible evidence of genuine compliance. And so it should.

⁹ Mark Huber, "At the (U.N.) Movies: Making America the Villain," Heritage Foundation *Background* No. 648, May 6, 1988. Apparently, the DPI has not yet gotten the message and the pattern of anti-U.S. bias persists.

The ball is now in the President's court — or as a practical matter, in the State Department's. Ultimately the ball is in the U.N.'s own court, which is where it has been all along. Effective U.S. leverage as a direct consequence of U.S. benefits and rewards has no track record at all. Quite the contrary. The leverage of penalties, on the other hand — of U.S. support withheld in the absence of tangible, measurable progress toward U.N. reform — occasionally has nudged the ball ahead. But the reform process is barely under way and the outcome is far from certain.

All Heritage Foundation papers are now available electronically to subscribers of the "NEXIS" on-line data retrieval service. The Heritage Foundation's Reports (HFRPTS) can be found in the OMNI, CURRNT, NWLTRS, and GVT group files of the NEXIS library and in the GOVT and OMNI group files of the GOVNWS library.