

Background

No. 2018
March 26, 2007



Published by The Heritage Foundation

U.S. Aid Does Not Build Support at the U.N.

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The United States' relationship with the United Nations is complex. The U.S. has vast and varied national interests in every region of the world, and the U.N. and its affiliated organizations have potential utility in helping the U.S. address foreign policy priorities. It is clearly in the interest of the United States to engage the United Nations to advance U.S. priorities, to address secondary or tertiary problems, and to facilitate cooperation with other nations in addressing common concerns.

A key venue for analyzing support for U.S. diplomatic initiatives is the U.N. General Assembly, which conducts discussions and adopts resolutions on critical issues of peace and security, terrorism, disarmament, economic and social development, humanitarian relief, and human rights. A country's record in General Assembly non-consensus votes is one means of measuring its support for U.S. priorities. It also provides some important guidelines for a strategy to elicit greater support for U.S. foreign policy objectives. For example:

- U.S. foreign assistance has not led recipients to support U.S. positions in the U.N. On the contrary, on non-consensus votes and non-consensus important votes, most recipients of U.S. assistance vote against the U.S. more often than they vote with the U.S.
- Economically free countries are more likely to support U.S. positions. The more economically free a country is, the more likely it is to vote with the U.S. on non-consensus votes and important votes.

Talking Points

- Foreign assistance has not led recipients to support U.S. positions in the United Nations.
- On the contrary, most recipients of U.S. assistance vote against the U.S. more often than they vote with it on non-consensus votes and non-consensus important votes.
- Politically and economically free countries are more likely to support U.S. positions on non-consensus votes and important votes in the U.N. General Assembly.
- Forging freedom coalitions in the United Nations is a practical strategy for working with other nations to promote mutual goals, positions, and policy objectives.
- The United States should work with Secretary General Ban Ki Moon both to pursue freedom coalitions in the United Nations and to build support for U.N. reform.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:
www.heritage.org/research/internationalorganizations/bg2018.cfm

Produced by The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom
and the Center for International
Trade and Economics (CITE)

Published by The Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4999
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- Politically free governments are also more likely than less free countries to support U.S. positions on non-consensus votes and important votes in the General Assembly.

As nations become freer—both politically and economically—the policies that they consider to be in their interests become more closely aligned with U.S. policies, not because they are U.S. policies, but because they are more likely to be consistent with those countries' own interests. To bolster international support for U.S. policies, particularly in the General Assembly, America should seek to build and strengthen coalitions among economically and politically free nations that already share many values and principles with America.

America should also use its foreign assistance to encourage political and economic freedom in recipient countries so that the ranks of the world's freer countries can be expanded, because free countries are more likely to support U.S. priorities.

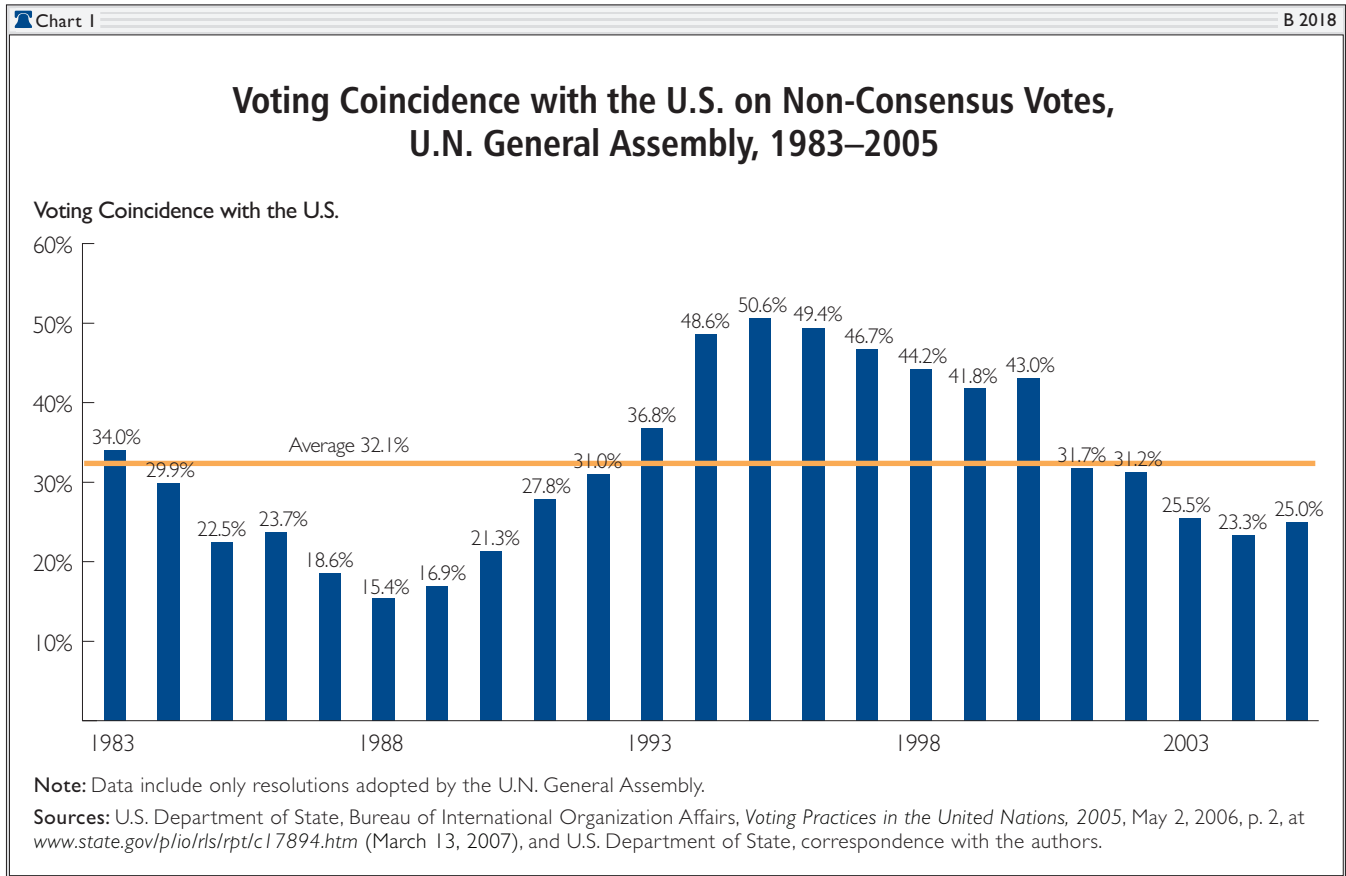
Foreign Aid Does Not Promote U.S. Policies at the U.N.

One measure of how strongly U.S. foreign assistance programs support U.S. priorities is the degree to which aid recipients vote with the U.S. in the General Assembly. Historically, the United States has been largely unsuccessful in eliciting support for its positions in non-consensus votes in the General Assembly.¹ Following the Cold

War, the United States enjoyed a honeymoon with the U.N. during which it steadily gained support for its positions on non-consensus votes, culminating in a voting coincidence of over 50 percent in 1995. Since then, however, voting coincidence with the U.S. on non-consensus resolutions adopted by the General Assembly has declined steadily to 25 percent in 2005, which is fairly consistent with the average of 32 percent over the past two decades.²

This divergence between the broader U.N. membership and the U.S. over contentious issues is not surprising, given that a majority of the U.N. member states are neither politically nor economically free, according to *Freedom in the World 2007*,³ published by Freedom House,⁴ and the *2007 Index of Economic Freedom*,⁴ published by The Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal. The U.N. practice of “one nation, one vote” allows the many members with repressive economic policies or political systems 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.”⁵ Worse, these repressive governments exert pressure through regional voting blocs to dissuade countries that would otherwise be more receptive to U.S. policy positions from voting with the U.S.

1. This paper considers both non-consensus votes and important votes. In the 2005 session, the General Assembly adopted 256 resolutions, 73 (28.5 percent) of them without consensus. This analysis of General Assembly voting patterns ignores consensus decisions because they generally do not adopt substantive language and contribute little to determining support of U.S. positions. See U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, *Voting Practices in the United Nations, 2005*, May 2, 2006, p. 2, at www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/c17894.htm (March 13, 2007). By law, 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, 2005*, pp. 111–166.
2. The all-time low since 1983, when the State Department began tracking this information, was 15.4 percent in 1988. U.S. Department of State, *Voting Practices in the United Nations, 2005*, p. 2, and U.S. Department of State, correspondence with the authors.
3. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2007: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties*, at www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=15 (March 15, 2007). See also Arch Puddington, “Freedom in the World 2007: Freedom Stagnation Amid Pushback Against Democracy,” Freedom House, at www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/press_release/fiw07_overview_final.pdf (March 13, 2007).
4. Tim Kane, Kim R. Holmes, and Mary Anastasia O’Grady, *2007 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2007), at www.heritage.org/index (March 13, 2007).
5. Kim R. Holmes, “Promoting Economic Freedom at the United Nations,” Heritage Foundation *Lecture No. 823*, February 24, 2004, at www.heritage.org/Research/TradeandForeignAid/upload/56671_1.pdf (March 13, 2007).



General Assembly votes are non-binding, unlike U.N. Security Council resolutions, which all U.N. member states are obligated to obey. However, General Assembly votes do influence public perceptions in many countries and are often characterized as the “will of the international community.” Regrettably, a wide array of proposals in recent General Assembly sessions could significantly damage the global economy and U.S. interests if they were adopted and enforced. This situation requires that the U.S. pay attention to General Assembly votes and that U.S. diplomats and negotiators spend much time and effort trying to prevent such initiatives from gaining international legitimacy through U.N. resolutions or decisions.⁶

A potential lever for increasing support is U.S. foreign assistance. However, analysis of U.S. economic and military assistance over the past six years shows that U.S. foreign assistance is not signifi-

cantly correlated with the recipients’ support of U.S. policy positions in the General Assembly. Historically, America has made little effort to use foreign aid to support U.S. priorities in the U.N. Unsurprisingly, most major recipients of U.S. foreign assistance vote against the U.S. more often than they vote with it. (See Table 1.)

- Over the past six sessions of the U.N. General Assembly for which the U.S. Department of State has published data (2000 through 2005), over 90 percent of U.S. foreign aid recipients voted against the U.S. a majority of the time on non-consensus votes, and over 74 percent voted against the U.S. a majority of the time on non-consensus important votes.
- Of the 30 largest recipients of U.S. foreign aid that have voted during the past six sessions, 28 countries voted against the U.S. a majority of the time on non-consensus votes, and 25 voted against the

6. *Ibid.*

U.S. a majority of the time on non-consensus important votes.

Humanitarian Assistance. The lack of a relationship between humanitarian assistance and support for U.S. positions can be excused. Humanitarian assistance is often provided to address sudden major disasters, tragedies, or ongoing suffering. Such assistance is given for moral reasons as distinct from foreign policy objectives.

Military Assistance. Military assistance can similarly be excused for this disconnect. Support of U.S. interests is clearly preeminent in the provision of military assistance, which is overwhelmingly used to provide equipment and training to U.S. allies or to nations and goals deemed vital to America's security interests.

America's military concerns are often in unstable areas of the world and require cooperation with governments that are less than ideal partners. Here the choice is between different facets of support for U.S. interests—one in the U.N. and one around the world. In an ideal world, recipients of military assistance would bolster U.S. interests in both arenas, but securing support in just one of the two is justifiable. If U.S. interests are not advanced in either realm, assistance should be reallocated to support U.S. interests more effectively.

Development Assistance. Ties between development assistance and American interests are questionable. Arguably, such assistance would support U.S. interests if it contributed to higher standards of living in poor nations, because wealthier nations are generally more stable, democratic, and likely to become economic partners with America.

Regrettably, development assistance has a dismal record in catalyzing economic growth. The U.S. dis-

bursed nearly \$269 billion (in 2005 constant dollars) in development assistance between 1980 and 2005, yet people in many of these countries are no better off today than they were decades ago in terms of per capita gross domestic product (GDP). In fact,

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Voting Coincidence with the U.S. Among the 30 Largest Recipients of U.S. Aid

Country	U.S. Economic and Military Assistance (millions of 2005 dollars)	Non-Consensus Overall Votes	Non-Consensus Important Votes
Israel	\$19,676	92.3%	94.6%
Iraq	\$19,512	7.7%	25.0%
Egypt	\$11,964	14.5%	14.6%
Afghanistan	\$6,537	18.1%	22.8%
Russia	\$5,364	29.3%	27.6%
Colombia	\$4,222	21.8%	32.8%
Jordan	\$4,216	16.3%	16.7%
Pakistan	\$2,793	14.1%	11.1%
Ethiopia	\$2,454	21.4%	28.3%
Sudan	\$2,058	16.1%	14.0%
Serbia and Montenegro	\$1,877	43.4%	65.7%
Indonesia	\$1,639	19.3%	16.4%
Turkey	\$1,501	40.2%	40.0%
Peru	\$1,337	29.0%	49.3%
India	\$1,226	20.0%	19.2%
Bolivia	\$1,178	26.8%	39.7%
Philippines	\$1,113	22.3%	22.3%
Uganda	\$988	20.4%	23.2%
Kenya	\$920	20.7%	21.5%
Georgia	\$900	47.3%	65.5%
Ukraine	\$845	37.4%	51.8%
Uzbekistan	\$807	39.3%	48.0%
Nigeria	\$740	22.7%	22.5%
Haiti	\$736	21.4%	31.1%
Mozambique	\$720	18.8%	18.7%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	\$717	54.9%	70.0%
Angola	\$700	25.1%	27.4%
Bangladesh	\$662	19.7%	18.3%
Armenia	\$659	29.8%	33.1%
South Africa	\$625	20.8%	17.7%
Average	\$3,289	27.7%	33.0%

Note: Data include only resolutions adopted by the U.N. General Assembly.
Sources: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, *Voting Practices in the United Nations, 2005*, May 2, 2006, p. 2, at www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/c17894.htm (March 13, 2007), and U.S. Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants: Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945–September 30, 2005*, at pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADH500.pdf (March 14, 2007).

many are poorer. Of the 103 countries for which per capita GDP data are available and that received economic assistance between 1980 and 2005 totaling at least 1 percent of their 2005 GDPs:⁷

- Twenty-nine experienced a decline in real per capita GDP;
- Another 32 experienced negligible real growth of less than 1 percent compound annual growth in real per capita GDP; and
- Forty-two experienced real growth exceeding 1 percent, but only four countries exceeded 5 percent.⁸

This failure to elicit economic growth is tragic. To reach lower-middle-income status (per capita income of \$876), a low-income country with a per capita income of less than \$1 per day (e.g., Mali and the Central African Republic) must see a real compound growth of approximately 5 percent for 20 years.⁹ To reach upper-middle-income status (per capita income of \$3,466), it must experience real compound growth of nearly 6 percent for 40 years. Instead, since 1980, Mali and the Central African

Republic have experienced real annual compound growth in per capita GDP of 0.38 percent and -1.28 percent, respectively.

With so many aid recipients experiencing declines in economic growth or insignificant economic growth despite development assistance, one must conclude that providing development assistance is not sufficient to facilitate development. Combined with the demonstrated failure of U.S. assistance to engender support for U.S. policies in the U.N., this should lead policymakers to reassess America's means of disbursing development assistance and to examine options for increasing its effectiveness in catalyzing growth and rewarding support for U.S. priorities.

According to statements by the Bush Administration on its Strategic Framework for U.S. Foreign Assistance, the U.S. is attempting to make America's foreign assistance programs more coherent and to ensure that those resources support U.S. policy priorities more directly.¹⁰ As noted in the State Department's budget request for fiscal year 2008:

7. While experts may disagree about the impact of an additional dollar of development assistance on economic growth, advocates of development aid generally call for greatly increased assistance and commonly blame insufficient levels of 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 www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/MainReportComplete-lowres.pdf (March 13, 2007), and Jeffrey D. Sachs, "The Development Challenge," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (March/April 2005), at www.earth.columbia.edu/about/director/documents/foreignaff0305.pdf (March 13, 2007). Thus, this analysis excludes countries that received an insignificant amount of assistance between 1980 and 2005 (cumulative aid over that period totaling less than 1 percent of their 2005 GDP). World Bank, World Development Indicators Online, January 2007, at www.worldbank.org/data (January 2007; subscription required), and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, International Development Statistics, at www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline (March 13, 2007).
8. Due to the lack of earlier data, per capita GDP figures for the earliest available years were used for the following 22 countries: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guinea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Lebanon, Macedonia, Micronesia, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia and Montenegro, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.
9. World Bank, *Country Classifications, Definition of Country Groups, Income Group*, at <http://web.worldbank.org/wbsite/external/datastatistics/0,,contentMDK:20420458~menuPK:64133156~pagePK:64133150~piPK:64133175~theSitePK:239419,00.html> (March 13, 2007).
10. See Randall L. Tobias, "Democracy and the New Approach to U.S. Foreign Assistance," speech before Democracy Advisory Committee, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., January 17, 2007, at www.usaid.gov/press/speeches/2007/sp070117.html (March 13, 2007); Randall L. Tobias, "A Strategic Approach to Addressing Poverty & Global Challenges: We Are in This Together," address at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., February 5, 2007, at www.usaid.gov/press/speeches/2007/sp070205.html (March 13, 2007); U.S. Department of State, *Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Request: International Affairs Function 150, Summary and Highlights*, at www.state.gov/documents/organization/80151.pdf (March 13, 2007); and U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Assistance Framework," January 29, 2007, at www.state.gov/documents/organization/79748.pdf (March 13, 2007).

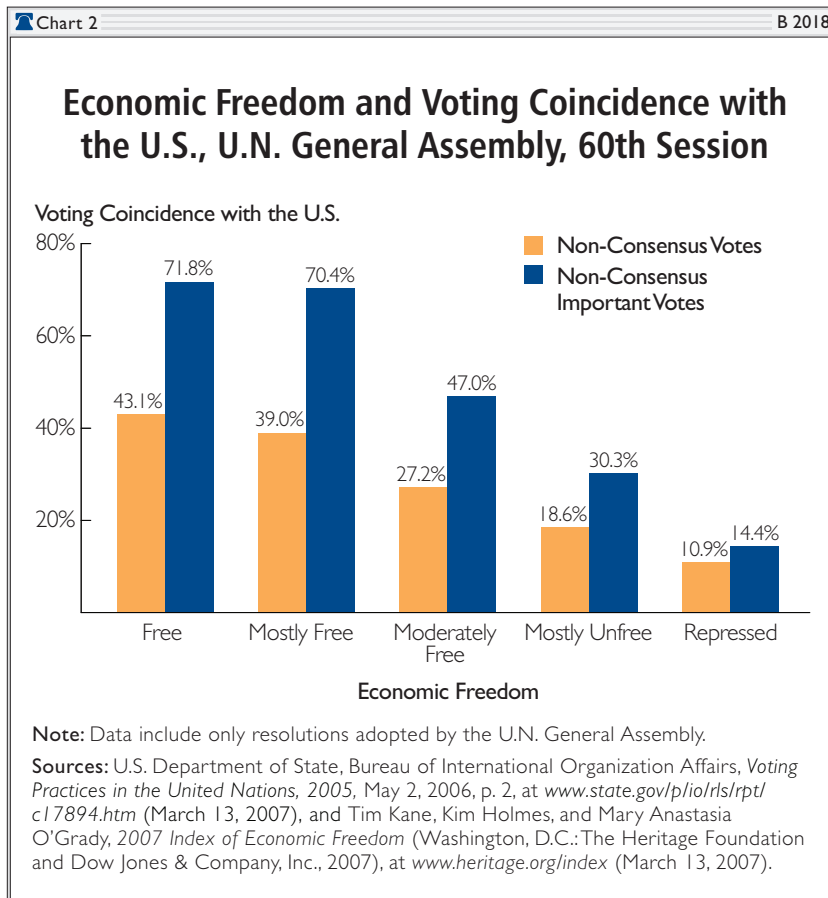
[T]he United States has reformed its organization, planning and implementation of foreign assistance in order to maximize the impact of our foreign assistance dollars to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives and improve the lives of those around the world.... For the first time in our nation's history, all \$20.3 billion of U.S. foreign assistance under authority of the Department of State and USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development], as well as resources provided by MCC [Millennium Challenge Corporation], are being applied to the achievement of a single overarching goal—transformational diplomacy:

To help build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.¹¹

The Administration's acknowledgement that America's foreign assistance programs are not achieving their intended outcomes or supporting U.S. priorities as well as they could is welcome. The stated emphasis on supporting economic and political freedom in developing nations should help to bolster support for U.S. policy positions in the U.N. General Assembly.

Freedom: A Key Indicator of Support

While foreign assistance has little impact on recipients' voting patterns, a country's level of political and economic freedom is a key indicator of the likelihood that the country will vote similarly to the U.S. on U.N. General Assembly resolutions. The proba-



bility that countries will side with the United States in the U.N. General Assembly on non-consensus votes increases if a country is politically or economically free as measured by *Freedom in the World 2007* and the *2007 Index of Economic Freedom*.

Economic Freedom. The *Index* measures economic freedom in 157 countries according to their performance on 10 economic freedoms, including freedom from government, trade freedom, business freedom, fiscal freedom, and labor freedom. Scores range from 0 percent to 100 percent. The overall economic freedom score is calculated by averaging the scores for each of the 10 freedoms, and each country's economy is classified as free, mostly free, moderately free, mostly unfree, or repressed.¹²

11. See U.S. Department of State, *Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Request*.

12. William W. Beach and Tim Kane, Ph.D., "Methodology: Measuring the 10 Economic Freedoms," chapter 3 in Kane *et al.*, *2007 Index of Economic Freedom*.

Analysis of voting patterns reveals that economically free and mostly free countries voted with the U.S. on non-consensus U.N. General Assembly votes more often than moderately free economies. Similarly, moderately free countries are more likely than mostly unfree countries to vote with the U.S., and mostly unfree countries are more likely than repressed countries to vote with the U.S.

Chart 2 illustrates the voting patterns on non-consensus votes and non-consensus important votes, as identified by the U.S. State Department, by level of economic freedom during the 60th session of the General Assembly. (The chart covers the 154 countries for which economic and voting data are available.) Patterns on non-consensus votes were as follows:

- Free and mostly free countries voted with the United States 43.1 percent and 39 percent of the time, respectively;
- Moderately free countries voted with the U.S. 27.2 percent of the time;
- Mostly unfree countries voted with the U.S. 18.6 percent of the time; and
- Countries with repressed economies voted with the U.S. only 10.9 percent of the time.

Similar patterns were evident in non-consensus important votes:

- Free and mostly free countries voted with the United States 71.8 percent and 70.4 percent of the time, respectively;
- Moderately free countries voted with the U.S. 47 percent of the time;
- Mostly unfree countries voted with the U.S. 30.3 percent of the time; and
- Countries with repressed economies voted with the U.S. only 14.4 percent of the time.

Chart 3 shows average voting coincidence on non-consensus votes for the 154 countries over the General Assembly's past six sessions by category of economic freedom. This chart clearly demonstrates a positive relationship between a country's level of

economic freedom and the frequency with which it votes with the U.S. in the General Assembly. Economically free countries vote with the U.S. at more than twice the rate of repressed countries. The statistically significant relationship between economic freedom and voting patterns implies that a 10 percentage point increase in a country's economic freedom score is likely to increase the country's average support for U.S. positions on non-consensus votes by 6 percentage points.¹³

Political Freedom. Analysis reveals a similar relationship between voting coincidence with the U.S. in the General Assembly and a country's level of political freedom as measured by Freedom House in its annual study *Freedom in the World*. Freedom House awards points to each country based on 10 questions on political rights and 15 questions on civil liberties. The total points in each category are used to determine the country's numerical ratings (from 1 to 7) for political rights and civil liberties. The average of the two ratings is used to classify each country as free, partly free, or not free.¹⁴

Analysis of voting patterns reveals that politically free countries voted with the U.S. more often than partly free countries, and partly free countries were more likely to vote with the U.S. than not free countries. This pattern held true during the 60th session of the General Assembly as shown in Chart 4. On non-consensus votes:

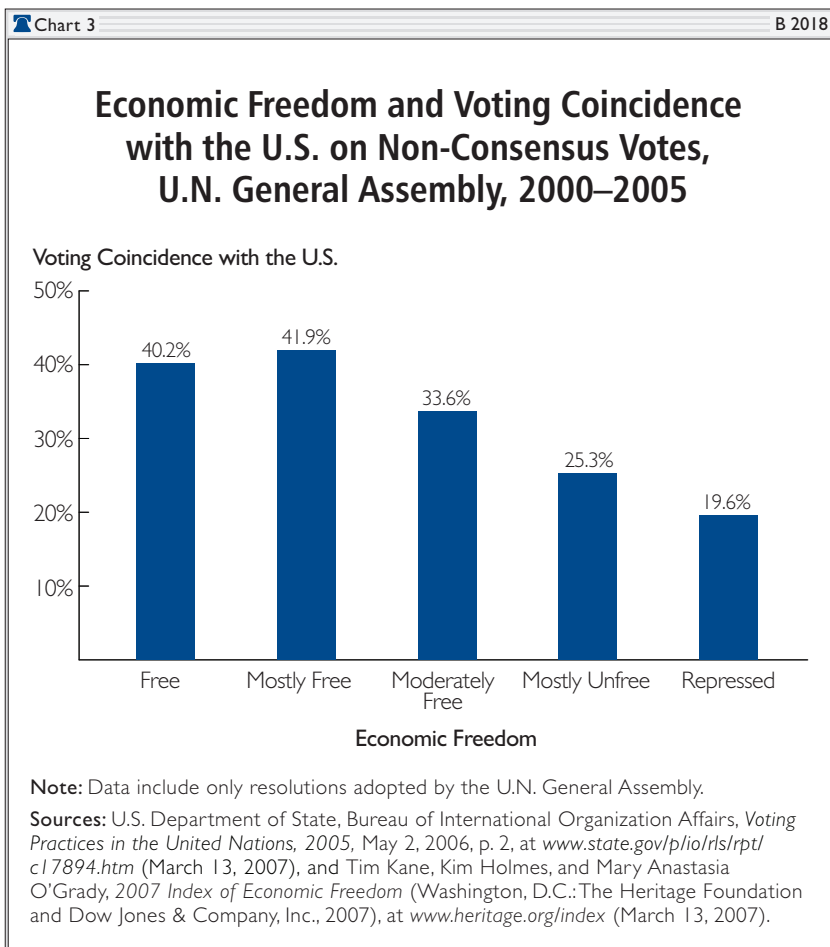
- Politically free countries voted with the United States on non-consensus votes 35 percent of the time,
- Partly free countries voted with the U.S. 18.9 percent of the time, and
- Not free countries voted with the U.S. only 11.9 percent of the time.

As with economically free countries, politically free countries were far more in line with U.S. positions on non-consensus important votes:

- Politically free countries voted with the United States 58.3 percent of the time,

13. For full regression results, see Table 3 in the Appendix.

14. Freedom House, "Methodology," in *Freedom in the World*.



- Partly free countries voted with the U.S. 34.4 percent of the time, and
- Not free countries voted with the U.S. only 17.4 percent of the time.

As Chart 5 shows, the relationship between political freedom and voting with the U.S. on non-consensus votes in the General Assembly over the past six sessions is consistent with the results from the 60th session. As with economically free countries, politically free countries are more likely than less free countries to vote with the U.S. on non-consensus General Assembly ballots. Politically free countries vote with the U.S. more than twice as often as not free countries. The statistically significant relationship between political freedom and voting patterns

implies that a one point increase in a country’s political freedom score is likely to increase the country’s average support for U.S. positions on non-consensus votes by 5 percentage points.¹⁵

Why do these patterns exist? Experience and common sense lead to the obvious conclusion that nations vote according to their national interests in the United Nations. The organization is a microcosm of international relations. As nations become politically and economically freer, the policies that they consider to be in their interests become more closely aligned with U.S. policies, not because they are U.S. policies, but because they are more likely to be consistent with those countries’ own interests.¹⁶

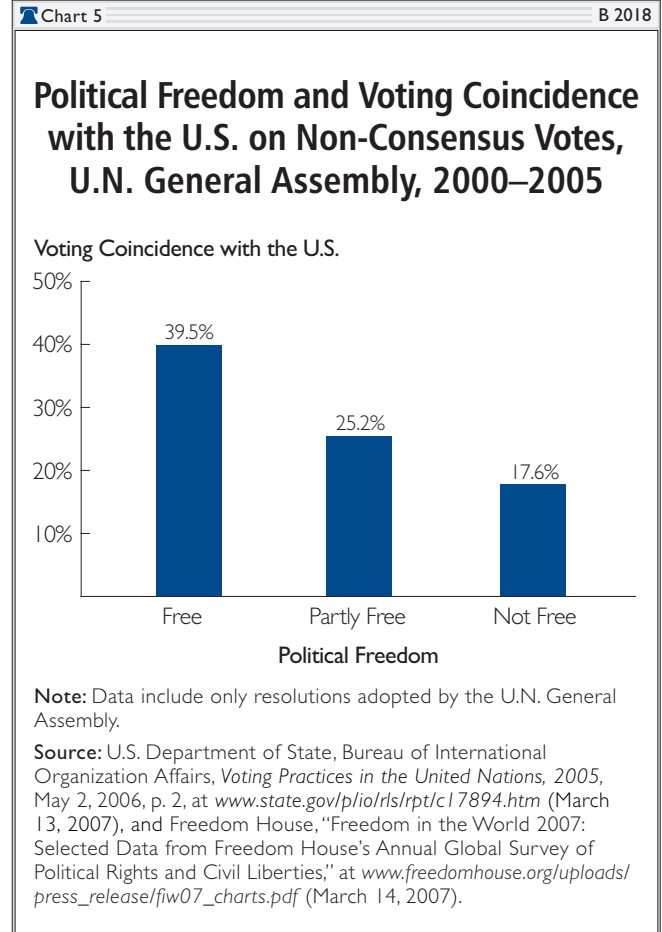
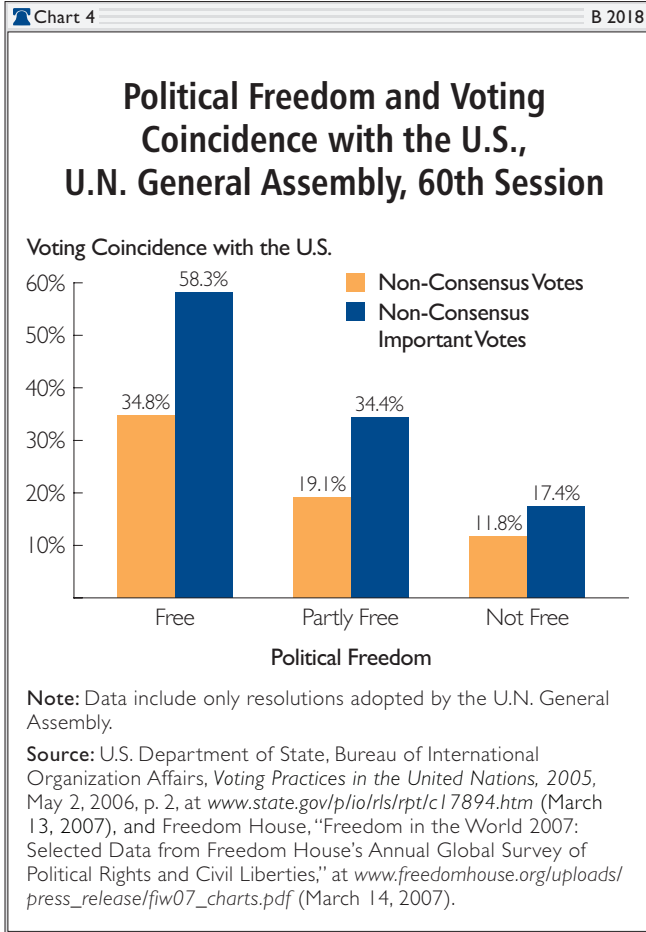
What the U.S. Should Do

The United States has been losing ground in the United Nations. Although expecting every nation in the U.N. to follow America’s lead is admittedly unrealistic—even America’s strongest allies do not agree with the U.S. on every vote—the U.S. could be more effective in championing its positions in the General Assembly. The U.S. should also bolster diplomatic efforts with policies designed to increase receptivity to U.S. positions.

General Assembly voting patterns indicate that U.S. development assistance is neither effectively rewarding countries that support U.S. priorities in the U.N. nor being withheld from countries that consistently oppose U.S. priorities. For instance, Table 2 shows how often the 30 largest recipients of U.S. foreign aid from 2000 to 2005 voted with the U.S. in the 60th General Assembly on all votes, non-consensus votes, all important votes, and non-consensus important votes.

15. For full regression results, see Table 4 in the Appendix.

16. These patterns hold even though the overall voting coincidence with the U.S. on non-consensus decisions has been declining. Freer nations continue to vote with the U.S. more consistently than less free nations do.



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. America should recognize these realities and take several specific steps to increase its chances of garnering support for U.S. positions in the General Assembly. Specifically, the U.S. should:

- **Focus development assistance on countries that are relatively free, both economically and politically.** Since World War II, the United States has provided more development aid to the world than any other country, yet decades of foreign assistance have failed to improve economic growth and development consistently. Moreover, examples of successful development and economic research indicate that the keys to development are good economic policy and a strong rule of law, not foreign assistance. By

encouraging countries to adopt these policies, the United States supports the best means for recipients to escape poverty and increases the probability that recipient countries will increase their economic and political freedom—values that should translate into greater support for the U.S. both in the U.N. and around the world.

The U.S. should focus development assistance on countries committed to promoting economic and political freedom. The Administration has begun to follow this strategy through the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and has incorporated the concept into its Strategic Framework for U.S. Foreign Assistance.¹⁷ Congress should support the Administration's effort to reorient America's assistance programs to support U.S. policy priorities and promote economic and political freedom.

Table 2

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Voting Coincidence with the U.S., U.N. General Assembly, 60th Session

	All Votes		Important Votes	
	Non-Consensus Votes	Consensus and Non-Consensus Votes	Non-consensus Votes	Consensus and Non-Consensus Votes
30 Largest Aid Recipients	22.7%	76.8%	34.2%	67.3%
30 Largest Aid Recipients (excluding Israel)	20.3%	76.1%	31.9%	66.1%
Economic Freedom				
Free	43.1%	83.1%	71.8%	87.2%
Mostly Free	39.0%	82.0%	70.4%	87.3%
Moderately Free	27.2%	78.1%	47.0%	74.0%
Mostly Unfree	18.6%	75.2%	30.3%	64.0%
Repressed	10.9%	72.3%	14.4%	54.4%
Political Freedom				
Free	31.2%	79.3%	52.5%	75.9%
Partly Free	20.1%	75.5%	34.6%	66.3%
Unfree	17.6%	74.9%	28.5%	62.4%

Note: Data include only resolutions adopted by the U.N. General Assembly. Afghanistan, Iraq, Serbia, Montenegro, and Sudan were not included because they were not graded in the 2007 *Index of Economic Freedom*.

Sources: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, *Voting Practices in the United Nations*, 2005, May 2, 2006, p. 2, at www.state.gov/plo/rls/rpt/c17894.htm (March 13, 2007); Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2007: Selected Data from Freedom House's Annual Global Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties," at www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/press_release/fiw07_charts.pdf (March 14, 2007); and Tim Kane, Kim Holmes, and Mary Anastasia O'Grady, *2007 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2007), at www.heritage.org/index (March 13, 2007).

- **Support efforts to coordinate voting by politically free governments in the U.N.** Numerous countries in the U.N. are considered politically free, yet they routinely fail to hold less representative governments accountable for their lack of freedom. Even worse, they frequently permit repressive governments to run roughshod over U.N. bodies and resolutions designed to highlight or curb human rights abuse and political repression.

A case in point is the disappointing new Human Rights Council (HRC).¹⁸ Even though members of the U.N. Democracy Caucus comprise over

75 percent of the HRC, it has ignored ongoing state-sanctioned human rights abuses in Belarus, Burma, Cuba, China, Iran, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe, and other places and instead has focused obsessively on Israel.¹⁹ The only resolutions adopted by the HRC on a specific country situation not involving Israel were two weak resolutions noting "with concern" the situation in Darfur while refusing to hold the Sudanese government responsible in any way.²⁰

The U.S. and its democratic allies should more clearly denounce actions by regional groups that undermine representative government, the rule of

17. See U.S. Department of State, *Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Request*; U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Assistance Framework"; and Millennium Challenge Corporation, "About the Millennium Challenge Corporation," at www.mcc.gov/about/index.php (March 14, 2007).

18. For a description of the failure of politically free and partly free members of the U.N. Democracy Caucus to work jointly to hold human rights violators accountable, see Freedom House, "The UN Human Rights Council at the Halfway Mark: A Report Card," November 20, 2006, at www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/47.pdf (March 14, 2007).

19. Press release, "UN Human Rights Council Fails to Hold Sudan Accountable," UN Watch, November 28, 2006, at www.unwatch.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=bdKKISNqEmG&b=1316871&ct=3269841 (March 14, 2007).

law, or basic human rights. The U.S. has sought to organize these nations by supporting the Community of Democracies and the Democracy Caucus, which are designed to coordinate policy positions among democracies on relevant issues at the United Nations, and the U.N. Democracy Fund, which promotes and funds efforts to develop representative government through the U.N.²¹ The U.S. needs to bolster these efforts to coordinate votes and uphold the efforts through its allocation of foreign assistance.

- **Seek support for an economic freedom coalition within the U.N.** A key element in increasing support for U.S. positions in the United Nations is to lessen the influence of regional voting blocs over the voting practices of individual member states. These blocs tend to defend the interests of their least free members. A plausible strategy for accomplishing this goal is to create an Economic Freedom Caucus among nations of all regions that have a demonstrable 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
- **Work with Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon to pursue freedom coalitions in the United Nations and to build support for U.N. reform.** The United Nations is charged with many serious responsibilities and tasks. Millions of individuals around the world rely on the U.N. for protection and other assistance, but at times the U.N. has proven unreliable or even detrimental in discharging these duties. The United States should work with Secretary-General Ban to fundamentally reform the United Nations and to work with nations that are committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the U.N. through improved management, human resources, budgetary, and oversight practices. Such nations tend to be the most politically and economically free.²³

20. Brett D. Schaefer, "The U.N. Human Rights Council Does Not Merit U.S. Membership," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 1392, March 12, 2007, at www.heritage.org/Research/WorldwideFreedom/upload/wm_1392.pdf.

21. See Mark P. Lagon, "A UN Strengthened by and Strengthening Democracy," remarks to the New America Foundation, Washington, D.C., September 25, 2006, at www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rm/73128.htm (March 14, 2007); U.S. Department of State, "The Community of Democracies," at www.state.gov/g/drl/c10790.htm (March 14, 2007); U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, "To Promote Democracy in the United Nations," August 27, 2004, at www.state.gov/documents/organization/36467.pdf (March 14, 2007); U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, "The UN Democracy Fund: Promoting Human Rights and Freedom Worldwide," September 14, 2006, at www.state.gov/documents/organization/72348.pdf (March 14, 2007); and U.N. Democracy Fund, Web site, at www.un.org/democracyfund (March 14, 2007).

22. According to the U.S. Department of State, "Like-minded nations have succeeded in gaining some support for the principles of economic freedom, though 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 www.state.gov/documents/organization/75840.pdf (March 14, 2007). See also U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, *Performance Summary, Fiscal Year 2006*, February 2006, pp. 188–195, at www.state.gov/documents/organization/53112.pdf (March 14, 2007). For more information on promoting economic freedom at the U.N., see Kim R. Holmes, "Promoting Economic Freedom at the United Nations," Heritage Foundation *Lecture* No. 823, and "The Challenges Facing the United Nations Today: An American View," remarks before the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., October 21, 2003, at www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rm/2003/25491.htm (March 14, 2007). At the time of the second speech, Dr. Holmes was serving as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs.

Conclusion

President George W. Bush expressed a fundamental principle of U.S. sovereignty and security when he declared that “America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our country.”²⁴ The United States should not subjugate its foreign policy decisions to the vagaries of international support.

However, unilateral action is not always the best avenue for protecting American interests, and the U.S. should do all that it can to strengthen support for America’s policies in the United Nations. Forging freedom coalitions in the United Nations is a practical strategy for working with other nations to promote mutual goals, positions, and policy objectives.

The Administration’s acknowledgement that America’s foreign assistance programs are not achieving their intended outcomes or supporting U.S. priorities as well as they could is welcome. The United States should focus on changing the dynam-

ics of the U.N. by forging coalitions with nations that share the American principles of political and economic freedom, and should also seek to expand the membership of those coalitions by focusing development assistance on countries with demonstrable records of improving political and economic freedom, because economically and politically free nations are more likely to support U.S. priorities in the U.N. While the U.N. will never be an echo chamber for U.S. policies, forging coalitions with nations that share values with the U.S. can go a long way toward advancing American priorities.

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23. See Brett D. Schaefer and Nile Gardiner, Ph.D., “Malloch Brown Is Wrong: The U.S. Should Press Even Harder for UN Reform,” Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 1122, June 13, 2006, at www.heritage.org/upload/wm_1122.pdf.

24. George W. Bush, “State of the Union Address,” January 20, 2004, at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/01/20040120-7.html (March 14, 2007).

APPENDIX: REGRESSION RESULTS

Table 3		B 2018
Economic Freedom Score and Voting Coincidence with the U.S.		
Dependent Variable	Coefficient	(Standard Error)
Voting Coincidence	0.00603	(0.00044)
Constant	-0.06214	(0.02614)
R Square	0.17534	
Number of Observations	901	
Source: Heritage Foundation calculations using linear regression in Microsoft Excel.		

Table 4		B 2018
Political Freedom Score and Voting Coincidence with the U.S.		
Dependent Variable	Coefficient	(Standard Error)
Voting Coincidence	0.05145	(0.00232)
Constant	0.46816	(0.00890)
R Square	0.30775	
Number of Observations	1,110	
Source: Heritage Foundation calculations using linear regression in Microsoft Excel.		