



Don't Forfeit American Leadership at the United Nations

BWC Opposes H.R 2829, the United Nations Transparency, Accountability, and Reform Act of 2011

At a time when the United States and United Nations are working together to address some of the world's most pressing challenges—from the humanitarian needs of those in the Horn of Africa and Haiti, to political crises and violence in Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and Afghanistan—it is more important than ever that America maintain its longstanding commitment to global leadership and engagement. Unfortunately, enactment of H.R. 2829 would jeopardize that commitment by forfeiting our standing at the UN, thereby undermining America's national security, foreign policy, and economic interests. Reform, transparency and accountability at the UN are critical to its success, but this legislation does not bring us any closer to achieving those laudable goals. H.R.2829 not only undermines progress toward reform at the United Nations, but would also return us to an era of debt and ineffective American leadership. We cannot afford to turn our backs on the world.

The Real Effects of H.R. 2829

- **Erodes America's leadership at the United Nations and cripples a vital tool of U.S. national security.**
- **Establishes a moratorium on new or expanded peacekeeping missions.**
- **Handicaps ongoing peacekeeping operations in places like South Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire and Haiti.**
- **Increases costs to U.S. taxpayers for political missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.**
- **Curbs vital efforts to combat terrorism, monitor sanctions, and prevent WMD from getting into the hands of rogue states and terrorists.**
- **Slows the critically important process of reconstruction in Haiti.**
- **Undermines America's leadership on matters of international security and humanitarian crises.**
- **Jeopardizes free and fair elections in countries like Liberia, DR Congo, Haiti and Cote d'Ivoire.**
- **Defunds efforts to combat global pandemics.**
- **Removes our voice from the only agency monitoring Iran's nuclear ambitions.**
- **Undercuts U.S. ability to push for new UN reforms and removes funding for ongoing reforms, like internal oversight and ethics.**

Reforming the UN means being at the table and effectively using our influence, not walking away. Driving the U.S. back into debt at the United Nations will undermine our ability to press for greater accountability. The US will not foster change at the UN by walking away from it. Some of the most significant reforms undertaken by the UN in recent years have occurred because we are current on our dues and willing to use our place at the table to press for improvements. Efforts to strengthen UN oversight, the creation of a new ethics office, the consolidation of four disparate entities into UN Women, and the recently-proposed three percent reduction in the UN's budget

have all come at a time when the U.S. is constructively engaged with the body and up to date on its financial obligations. Reforms and accountability come from engagement, not estrangement.

- **Cutting UN funding undermines U.S. national security by jeopardizing UN programs that serve critical U.S. interests, and severely erodes U.S. legitimacy and respect abroad.** The legislation would cut U.S. assessed contributions to the UN by 50% unless it moves to a system of voluntary funding. This proposed cut would undermine U.S. national security, severely erode U.S. legitimacy abroad and cause massive new U.S. debt to the UN. It would seriously impact UN political missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and potentially result in the U.S. paying significantly more for these initiatives than it currently does. These missions are paid for out of our assessed dues and are effective because they are funded by all UN member countries and therefore carry international legitimacy. A move to voluntary funding would lead countries to cherry pick which UN activities they want to support, potentially leaving certain initiatives—including counter-terrorism and sanctions-monitoring work as well as the UN Iraq and Afghanistan missions—devoid of funding.
- **Failing to meet our obligations will diminish our ability to leverage the UN in support of vital U.S. national security objectives.** Just within the past year, the UN Security Council has authorized military action to protect innocent lives in Libya and to impose a fourth round of sanctions on Iran to stop its illicit nuclear program. Why would we retreat from the UN when we have seen effective action on issues that are central to our foreign policy interests? This legislation would cause us to turn our back on our allies at the UN, thereby jeopardizing our ability to advance those crucial foreign policy goals.

Crippling UN peacekeeping will compromise global security.

- **Working together so the U.S. does not have to go it alone.** With over 120,000 boots on the ground in four continents, UN peacekeeping efforts account for one of the world's largest military deployments, second only to U.S. military operations. The U.S. plays a central role in authorizing UN peacekeeping operations to support peace and security in 16 hotspots around the globe, including bolstering U.S. efforts in Lebanon, Haiti and South Sudan.
- **Onerous reforms and certifications will prevent future or expanded peacekeeping missions and handicap current operations.** The legislation conditions future US support for any new or expanded UN peacekeeping missions on the achievement of unrealistic goals, such as a yearly audit of each mission with no additional resources to actually conduct them. While some of the legislation's proposed reforms are laudable, preventing or ending an operation until a certain oath is sworn or class is taken undermines US national security interests. If this legislation had been enacted this year, there likely would have been no new missions in South Sudan or Abyei, both of which the U.S. championed. In addition, this bill would handicap existing missions by not allowing them to expand *by even one soldier* to address a crisis on the ground unless the same set of unreachable goals were met. In reality, the U.S. has worked hand in hand with the UN to ensure that all peacekeepers are held to a high standard of personal conduct.

Establishing preferential treatment is not *transparency*, and would likely lead to funding being cut off to vital UN organizations such as UNICEF, the World Food Program, and the World Health Organization.

- The legislation would suspend funding to any UN entity that did not agree to sign a “transparency certification” with the U.S. Comptroller General for the UN. While UN agencies already provide extensive oversight information to the U.S., our key partners for reform in the UN system would never agree to the U.S. receiving *preferential* treatment for oversight information.

The legislation adds a layer of bureaucracy and new functions at the Government Accountability Office without authorizing one dime to actually undertake that work.

The legislation would cede the playing field to countries seeking to criticize Israel and undermine human rights.

- The legislation would withhold contributions for the UN Human Rights Council. This is an extremely ineffective strategy that would only serve to reverse the important gains the U.S. has made over the past two years at the Council. The U.S. rejoined the Human Rights Council in 2009 with a mandate to improve the Council's work by refocusing attention on the worst abusers of human rights and eliminating the disproportionate attention paid by some of its members to Israel. Since the U.S. has rejoined, the body has voted to establish a UN human rights investigator for Iran, adopted a groundbreaking resolution to address violence, discrimination, and incitement to religious hatred without reference to "defamation of religions," established Commissions of Inquiry to investigate gross and systematic violations of human rights in Libya and Syria, and overcome Chinese and Cuban objections to the establishment of a new monitor for implementing freedom of assembly and association.

H.R. 2829 undermines America's ability to lead on international security and humanitarian issues by eliminating funding for specific UN entities tasked with protecting civilians who have been uprooted by conflict or natural disasters.

- The bill cuts support to finding long-term solutions for refugees in places like Darfur and Haiti, much of which is funded by our assessed contributions.
- The UN's coordination of humanitarian assistance in all parts of the world, including Japan, Haiti, Pakistan and elsewhere, all of which is funded by our assessed dues, would also be undermined.

The legislation cuts funding to UN entities tasked with implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. One of our most cherished values as Americans is the idea that everyone is equal under the law. When nations around the world uphold that fundamental principle, we are better off. But the legislation requires the U.S. to withhold from its dues the amount the UN spends on these important UN conventions. Rather than sanctioning these initiatives, we should support the President's efforts to ask the Senate to move forward with ratification of both treaties in the near future.