

Working With International Organizations

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The Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO) was created by Secretary of State Dean Acheson in the aftermath of World War II, as part of the United States' efforts to deal with the emergence of a new international order.

IO was designed to manage the United States' relationship with the newly formed United Nations, which had been founded by the United States and its allies to work, in the words of the U.N. Charter, "to maintain international peace and security ... to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples, and ... to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all."



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An Indonesian soldier says goodbye to his son as his unit prepares to leave for their U.N. peacekeeping assignment in Lebanon in November 2006.

The founders of the United Nations, including the United States, believed that this new institution could play a central role in supporting the growth of freedom around the globe. In the post-9/11 world, when terrorism, intolerance, and hatred threaten the United States and many other countries, a United Nations that lives up to the high hopes of its founders is even more critical. As President George W. Bush said in his second inaugural address, "The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands." He committed the United States "to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture." This is a historic effort that cannot be undertaken by the United States alone. As a result, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has challenged all of us at the Department of State to "work with our many partners around the world to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system."

As an important part of that endeavor, my bureau works with 82 international organizations and programs to promote international peace and security, to spread freedom and defend human rights, to promote development through trade and free enterprise, and to fight poverty and disease. In my role as assistant secretary, I oversee the work of 469 exceptional American diplomats, both here in Washington, D.C., and at our posts in New York, Paris, Rome, Geneva, Vienna, Montreal, and Nairobi, who work everyday to solve some of the most vital foreign policy issues confronting our country.

Peace and Security

As one of five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the United States plays a central role in every significant council action. Within the past year, the United States has led Security Council efforts

to impose sanctions on North Korea in response to its nuclear weapon and missile programs (resolutions 1718 and 1695), to take steps to address the humanitarian crisis in Darfur (resolution 1706), to require Syria to respect the sovereignty and integrity of Lebanon, and to require the Iranian government to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons (resolution 1696). This year, IO also worked in the Security Council to renew the mandate of its 1540 Committee, which oversees implementation of obligations imposed by the council on all U.N. member states to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery (resolution 1673). The council's counterterrorism committees continued their work to help U.N. member states improve their antiterror capacities and to prevent the flow of assets to al-Qaida and Taliban-related individuals and entities. At the instigation of the United States, the Security Council for the first time agreed to put Burma on its agenda, ensuring increased international focus on the grave human rights and humanitarian situation in that country, which has undermined regional peace and stability. And finally, the United States worked with other council members to elect a new secretary-general to lead the United Nations for the next five years.



UN Photo/Sophia Paris

After a devastating storm tore through Haiti, resulting in more than 1,500 dead and 900 missing, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti assisted with the distribution of emergency humanitarian supplies.

Failed States and Peacekeeping

The United States has also worked to help put failed or failing states on a path toward political and economic recovery by supporting United Nations' peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention, and post-conflict stabilization efforts. The United Nations has more than 80,000 military and police personnel and more than 15,000 civilians deployed in 18 peacekeeping missions around the world to provide stability and security in situations where local or regional solutions are inadequate and direct U.S. military engagement is not appropriate. The IO Bureau has worked closely over the last year with the U.N.'s Department of Peacekeeping Operations to shape the U.N.'s response to Hezbollah's attacks on Israel, to promote security in states such as Haiti, and to support the transition from internal armed conflict to democratic governance in countries such as Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The United States also worked within the U.N.'s General Assembly and Security Council to help found the U.N.'s Peace Building Commission, which works to put countries emerging from civil war and natural disasters on the path to long-term recovery.

Democracy and Human Rights

The United States works within multilateral institutions to defend human dignity and to call international attention to egregious human rights abuses. In the General Assembly's Third Committee this year, we helped to pass resolutions on the critical human rights crises in Belarus, Burma, Iran, and North Korea. We've worked with others to highlight the Burmese military's use of rape as a tool of terror. We led the way in highlighting the dangers of anti-Semitism. And in the General Assembly, we called on states to take steps to increase women's political participation.

We also work within international organizations to provide technical assistance to those working to extend human rights and democracy. In 2004, President Bush proposed a new U.N. Democracy Fund, which has now awarded grants to 125 applicants, including Hungary's International Center for Democratic Transition and the "I KNOW Politics" program, which uses the Internet to promote women's political participation.



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A group of children run to receive food at the New Hope refugee camp in Nabuangongo, Angola, 20 kilometers northeast of Luanda, in 2002. Since that time, many refugees have been able to return to their homes. The U.S. government works with the United Nations and other international organizations to feed refugees and to assist in their repatriation.

Development and Humanitarian Relief

The United States, which is the world's largest single donor of bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA), contributes more than \$500 million of ODA annually to the United Nations. By partnering with U.N. organizations, the United States has worked to broaden support for policies and values that underpin development, sound economic growth, and poverty alleviation. In 2005, for example, the bureau negotiated the United Nation's 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, which reaffirmed the view that development depends on trade and private investment, which in turn depend on good governance, the rule of law, freedom, and respect for human rights.

In addition, the United States supports:

- **The World Food Program (WFP)**, which helps to feed 100 million people in more than 80 countries

every year. The United States has been the leading supporter of the WFP since its founding, and continues to provide almost half of WFP resources. Likewise, we work through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to advance sound agricultural science and policies to benefit the many developing world economies that remain fundamentally agrarian;

- **The U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, which helps to feed, vaccinate, educate, and protect children in more than 157 countries;
- **The U.N. Development Program (UNDP)**, the lead U.N. development agency, which works to eliminate poverty and promotes democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, a cleaner environment, and prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. The United States has long been a major donor, providing more than \$100 million in funding each year;



WFP/Marco Selva

During a visit to Mali in December 2006, Ambassador Gaddi Vasquez, the U.S. representative to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, shows journalists how food is stored at a WFP (World Food Program) food storage warehouse.

- **The Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT)**, which grapples with the challenge that 90 percent of the world's population will live in cities of the developing world by 2020, and that one of every three city dwellers today lives in slum conditions;
- **The U.N. Environment Program (UNEP)**, which addresses environmental problems that transcend borders and potentially affect the health and prosperity of U.S. citizens. The United States supports UNEP's core programs of early warning and assessment of environmental threats, the regional seas program, capacity building for domestic environmental governance in developing countries, and the global program of action to combat land-based sources of marine pollution.

This is a busy and challenging time in multilateral diplomacy, but the United States has been able to engage effectively and cooperatively with others to promote a freer, safer, and more prosperous world. We remain committed to strengthening our partnerships with international organizations in the years ahead. ■

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