

THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE UNITED NATIONS

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

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CONTENTS

	Page
WITNESSES	
Mr. Philo L. Dibble, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, U.S. Department of State	11
The Honorable Richard S. Schifter, former U.S. Representative to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, and Deputy U.S. Representative to the United Nations Security Council	27
The Honorable Richard S. Williamson, Partner, Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw, LLP, former United States Ambassador and Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs to the United Nations	33
LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC., SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING	
The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida, and Chair, Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia: Prepared statement	4
Mr. Philo L. Dibble, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, U.S. Department of State	15
The Honorable Richard S. Schifter, former U.S. Representative to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, and Deputy U.S. Representative to the United Nations Security Council	29
The Honorable Richard S. Williamson, Partner, Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw, LLP, former United States Ambassador and Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs to the United Nations	35
APPENDIX	
Responses from Mr. Philo L. Dibble to questions submitted for the record by the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen	41

THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE UNITED NATIONS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST
AND CENTRAL ASIA,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:49 p.m. in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, (Chair of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The Subcommittee will come to order.

Today's hearing is entitled "The Middle East and the United Nations," and the Committee is currently engaged in a detailed and comprehensive review of the United Nations' system. The goal is to identify areas of reform and develop legislation that will help insure transparency, accountability, and efficiency in all of the U.N. operations.

Within this context, this hearing seeks to address the United States agenda and our priorities regarding the Middle East at the United Nations, and issues surrounding the United Nations' policies, operations, programs and assistance related to the Middle East.

Our witnesses will address U.N. Security Council activities relating to the region and membership issues; the work of UNESCO, UNDP, and UNICEF in the region; Middle East-related resolutions at various U.N. bodies, regional or country-specific commissions, offices or committees at the U.N.; discrimination of Israel in the U.N. system; membership of countries of proliferation concern in such U.N. bodies as the Conference on Disarmament and on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Through a review of U.N./Middle East-related activities, we hope to gain a better understanding of the overall systemic, programmatic, and budgeting reforms needed to improve the United Nations.

The Commission on Human Rights and its feeder body, the Economic and Social Council, are emblematic of the broader problems in the U.N. system. There remains great difficulty in securing support for condemnations of gross human rights violators when the worst offenders sit on the actual committee, dictate the agenda, and block any meaningful resolution from being adopted.

While such gross human rights offenders such as Syria, Libya, Iran, and Saudi Arabia have been members of this U.N. human rights body, these regimes have not been censured, condemned or

held accountable in any way for their deplorable human rights record.

Notably, reformist countries in the Middle East such as Jordan, Kuwait, or Bahrain, who have made great strides in providing for the rights of their citizens, and are making progress toward political and economic liberalization, are not afforded a prominent role in the Commission on Human Rights.

Does this illustrate a need to reform the regional grouping structure? Should the groupings be based on common goals, interests, and agenda, or on geographical considerations? Does the growing strength of the Non-Aligned Movement indicate the growing need for a formal U.N. democracy caucus that includes reforming countries in the Middle East?

Further, should the United States take into consideration the voting patterns and activities at the U.N. of countries in the Middle East when determining the level of assistance to be provided to these recipients?

There are many other U.N. bodies and issues that need to be evaluated as well. Countries that are in noncompliance of their obligations under international agreement and in violation of the rules that serve as the basis for individual U.N. bodies cannot and must not be entrusted with the enforcement of those very rules and obligations.

A few years ago proliferators, such as Iran and Iraq—an Iraq that was under Security Council sanctions at the time—were scheduled to serve as Chairs of the Conference on Disarmament. Iran, a nation that continues to be under investigation by the IAEA due to its breaches and failures of its safeguards obligations, served on the Board of Governors of the IAEA.

We welcome recommendations from our witnesses on how we can strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency by preventing countries that are in breach or noncompliance to serve on its board.

In that vein, we look forward to receiving your input on the priorities and expenditures of the Conference on Disarmament and the International Atomic Energy Agency relating to the Middle East.

Some have argued that United States contributions to the IAEA should focus on enhancing safeguards and inspections, and efforts relating to nuclear safety and security rather than providing technical assistance in the agricultural sector, for example, to countries such as Iran and Syria.

One of the legislative proposals under consideration is to provide this nuclear watchdog agency with separate enforcement mechanisms out of the Secretariat rather than have it depend solely on referral to the Security Council, and we welcome the panelist views on this matter.

I am particularly interested in the programmatic and funding issues at the U.N. For example, in a recent statement, the U.N. Commission for the Middle East announced its upcoming ministerial session in Damascus to discuss socio-economic policies, peace, and security matters in the region, and the achievements of the Millennium Development goals, while the U.N.'s Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which includes the countries in the region, will hold its ministerial session in early May to sign a

memorandum of understanding on maritime transport cooperation in the area.

What percentage of U.N. funds go to these types of conferences? Would the funds used for these discussions not be put to better use for the implementation of specific in-country programs?

For such economic development efforts, for example, how much is contributed by the U.N. and how much are individual countries in the region required to invest in these efforts and their own populations?

The United Nations Children's Fund recently released a report stating that 7.5 million Arab children are still out of school; 13.5 million are working; and several million are affected or threatened by armed conflict or violence. The report also calls for increased investment in children and refers to the need to strengthen measures in the Arab world to protect against abuse, sexual exploitation, honor killings, et cetera.

This review conducted by UNICEF was done at the request of the Arab League. What are UNICEF's current activities in the Middle East and would United States goals relating to children's issues, such as trafficking, torture, child labor, slavery and child soldiers, be better served by expanding U.S. bilateral assistance programs to the region rather than by working through the U.N.?

What is the interrelationship between UNICEF's activities in the Middle East and the work of the special rapporteurs of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights?

And turning to the U.N. Development Program, critics charge that UNDP, like other international donors, provides mostly technical assistance to government ministries. This serves to strengthen the region's autocratic regimes which routinely emphasize economic liberalization over political reform.

Although UNDP programs are regularly monitored for their effectiveness and transparency by third party organizations, there is little conditionality on this aid program, particularly in the government sector.

The *Arab Human Development Reports* have served as useful blueprints for promoting freedom, good government, education, and economic liberalization in the Arab world. However, we remain concerned with the ability and willingness of UNDP to ensure that governments in the region undertake the needed reforms to tackle the problems identified in the reports and provide for the well-being of their people.

We look forward to the input of our witnesses on the best way to address these issues.

Concerns also exist with respect to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East. UNRWA has provided relief and social services to registered Palestinian refugees living mostly in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but also in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. UNRWA accounts for 2 percent of the U.N. budget for a single refugee group, yet the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees receives 3 percent to address the needs of the rest of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons.

Ninety-five percent of the UNRWA budget is funded through voluntary contributions. The U.S. contributions to UNRWA usually covers 20 to 25 percent of the UNRWA total budget.

For fiscal year 2004, U.S. spending for both accounts was \$127 million. The functions of UNRWA and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees appears duplicative and the funding does not appear to correspond to the needs of these organizations.

Should one be merged onto the other? Is this symptomatic of the need to eliminate or consolidate other U.N. committees, offices, and commissions related to the region, or more broadly?

Furthermore, for years many in Congress have been concerned regarding the possibility that UNRWA assets and facilities are utilized or could be utilized by terrorist organizations. UNRWA's former Commissioner-General admitted that members of the terrorist group Hamas were on the UNRWA payroll adding:

"I don't see that as a crime. Hamas as a political organization does not mean that every member is a militant and we do not do political vetting and exclude people from one persuasion as against another."

This raises questions of oversight and accountability by the U.N. over its program and its operations. It also raises concerns about the extent to which the U.S. monitors how the U.N. uses our contributions. Some would argue that the United Nations is a far cry from the institution that its founders envisioned.

Israel is denied the ability to serve or run for leadership positions in multiple U.N. bodies and affiliated agencies. While Israel was accepted as a temporary member of the Western European and Others Group it is not allowed to present candidacies for open seats in any U.N. body, is not able to compete for major U.N. bodies, and is excluded from consultations.

Therefore, a critical component of our efforts to promote reform at the United Nations must include measures to insure that Israel is afforded equal treatment and representation while addressing the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic component that is pervasive in many U.N. bodies and its affiliated agencies.

So in summary, for the U.N. to fulfill its mandate and become a viable organization once again, it must become a leaner, less duplicative, transparent, and most importantly, accountable institution. Reform in the United Nations is necessary for its survival, and it is long overdue.

I would like to thank our witnesses for appearing before the Subcommittee today, and I am so pleased to turn to our Ranking Member, the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Mr. Ackerman, for an opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ros-Lehtinen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA, AND CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA

The Committee is currently engaged in a detailed and comprehensive review of the United Nations system.

The goal is to identify areas of reform and develop legislation that will help ensure transparency, accountability, and efficiency in all UN operations.

Within this context, this hearing seeks to address the U.S. agenda and priorities regarding the Middle East at the United Nations and issues surrounding United Nations policies, operations, programs, and assistance relating to the Middle East. Our witnesses will address:

- UN Security Council activities relating to the region and membership issues;
- the work of UNESCO, UNDP, and UNICEF in the region; Middle East-related resolutions at various UN bodies;
- regional or country-specific commissions, offices, or committees at the UN;
- discrimination of Israel in the UN system;
- membership of countries of proliferation concern in such UN bodies as the Conference on Disarmament and on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Through a review of UN-Middle East related activities, we hope to gain a better understanding of the overall systemic, programmatic and budgeting reforms needed to improve the UN.

The Commission on Human Rights and its feeder body, the Economic and Social Council, are emblematic of the broader problems in the UN system.

There remains great difficulty in securing support for condemnations of gross human rights violators, when the worst offenders sit on the actual Committee, dictate the agenda and block any meaningful resolutions from being adopted.

While such gross human rights offenders such as Syria, Libya, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, have been members of this UN human rights body, these regimes have not been censured, condemned, or held accountable in *any way*, for their deplorable human rights record.

Notably, reformist countries in the Middle East such as Jordan, Kuwait, or Bahrain, who have made strides in providing for the rights of their citizens and are making progress toward political and economic liberalization, are *not* afforded a prominent role in the Commission on Human Rights.

Does this illustrate a need to reform the *regional* groupings structure? Should the groupings be based on common goals, interests, and agenda, or on *geographical* considerations? Does the growing strength of the Non-Aligned Movement indicate the growing need for a formal UN *Democracy* Caucus that includes reforming countries in the Middle East?

Further, should the U.S. take into consideration the voting patterns and activities at the UN of countries in the Middle East, when determining the level of assistance to be provided to these recipients?

There are many other UN bodies and issues that need to be evaluated.

Countries who are in non-compliance of their obligations under international agreements and in violation of the rules that serve as the basis for individual UN bodies, *cannot and must not* be entrusted with the enforcement of those very rules and obligations.

A few years ago, proliferators such as Iran and Iraq, that was under Security Council sanctions at the time, were scheduled to serve as *Chairs* of the Conference on *Disarmament*.

Iran, a nation that continues to be under investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) due to its breaches and failures of its safeguards obligations, *served on the Board* of Governors of the IAEA.

We welcome recommendations from our witnesses on how we can *strengthen* the IAEA by *preventing* countries that are in breach or non-compliance to serve on the Board.

In the vein, we look forward to receiving your input on the priorities and expenditures of the Conference on Disarmament and IAEA relating to the Middle East.

Some have argued that U.S. contributions to the IAEA should focus on enhancing safeguards and inspections, and efforts relating to nuclear safety and security, rather than providing technical assistance in the agriculture sector, for example, to countries such as Iran and Syria.

One of the legislative proposals under consideration is to provide this nuclear watchdog agency with *separate enforcement* mechanisms out of the Secretariat, rather than have it depend solely on *referral* to the Security Council.

We welcome your views on this matter.

We are particularly interested in programmatic and funding issues at the UN.

For example, in a recent statement, the UN Commission for the Middle East announced its upcoming ministerial session in Damascus to discuss socio-economic policies, peace and security matters in the region, and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which includes the countries in the region, will hold its ministerial session in early May to sign a memorandum of understanding on maritime transport cooperation in the Arab Mashreq.

What percentage of UN funding goes to these types of conferences? Would the funds used for these discussions not be put to better use for the implementation of specific, in-country programs?

For such economic development efforts, for example, how much is contributed by the UN and how much are individual countries in the region required to invest in these efforts and their own populations?

The United Nations Children's Fund recently released a report stating that 7.5 million Arab children are still out of school; 13.5 million are working; and several million are affected or threatened by armed conflict or violence.

The report also calls for increased investment in children and refers to the need to strengthen measures in the Arab world to protect against abuse, sexual exploitation, honor killings, etc.

This review conducted by UNICEF was done at the request of the Arab League.

What are UNICEF's current activities in the Middle East and would U.S. goals relating to children's issues—such as trafficking, torture, child labor, slavery, and child soldiers—be better served by *expanding U.S. bilateral assistance* to the region, rather than working through the UN?

What is the inter-relationship between UNICEF's activities in the Middle East and the work of the thematic Special Rapporteurs of the UN Commission on Human Rights?

Turning to the UN Development Program, critics charge that the UNDP, like other international donors, provides mostly *technical* assistance to *government* ministries.

This serves to strengthen the region's autocratic regimes, which routinely emphasize economic liberalization over political reform.

Although UNDP programs are regularly monitored for their effectiveness and transparency by third party organizations, there is *little* conditionality on its aid program, particularly in the governance sector.

The Arab Human Development Reports have served as useful blueprints for promoting freedom, good governance, education, and economic liberalization in the Arab world.

However, we remain concerned with the ability and willingness of the UNDP to ensure that governments in the region undertake the needed reforms to tackle the problems identified in the reports and provide for the well-being of their people.

We look forward to the input of our witnesses on the best way to address these issues.

Concerns also exist with respect to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). UNRWA has provided relief and social services to registered Palestine refugees living mostly in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but also in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

UNRWA accounts for 2% of the UN budget for a single refugee group. Yet, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees receives 3% to address the needs of the rest of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons.

Ninety-five percent of the UNRWA budget is funded through voluntary contributions. The U.S. contribution to UNRWA usually covers 22–25% of the UNRWA total budget. For Fiscal Year 2004, U.S. spending for both accounts was \$127 million.

The functions of UNRWA and UNHCR appear duplicative and the funding does not appear to correspond to the needs of these organizations.

Should UNRWA be merged into UNHCR? Is this symptomatic of the need to eliminate or consolidate other UN Committees, Offices, and Commissions related to the region or more broadly?

Furthermore, for years many in Congress have been concerned regarding the possibility that UNRWA assets and facilities are utilized by terrorist organizations.

UNRWA's former Commissioner-General Peter Hansen admitted that members of the *terrorist group Hamas* were on the UNRWA payroll adding: "I don't see that as a crime."

"Hamas as a political organization does not mean that every member is a militant and we do not do political vetting and exclude people from one persuasion as against another."

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Some would argue that the United Nations is a far cry from the institution its founders envisioned.

Israel is denied the ability to serve or run for leadership positions in multiple UN bodies and affiliated agencies.

While Israel was accepted as a temporary member of the Western European and Others Group, it is not allowed to present candidacies for open seats in any UN body and is not able to compete for major U.N. bodies and excluded from consultations.

Therefore, a critical component of our efforts to promote reform at the United Nations must include measures to ensure that Israel is afforded equal treatment and representation, while addressing the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic component that is pervasive in many UN bodies and affiliated agencies.

In summary, for the UN to fulfill its mandate and become a viable organizations, it must become a leaner, less duplicative, transparent, and most importantly, accountable institution.

Reforming the United Nations is necessary for its survival and it is long overdue. I want to thank our witnesses for appearing before the Subcommittee today, and I will turn to the Ranking Member of our Subcommittee, Mr. Ackerman, for an opening statement.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman, for your leadership, and thank you especially for calling today's very important hearing.

I think if we were to ask most Americans what they thought the United Nations should spend its time on, the not unreasonable answer would probably be a list of important global issues like fighting the war on terrorism, or helping to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. Some would mention trying to alleviate hunger and poverty, or attempting to secure global peace and trying to expand and protect human rights for all.

So I think it would surprise many Americans to find out that the United Nations spends a vastly disproportionate amount of its time and money condemning Israel. So much time that one might think that they were obsessed.

I think people would be additionally stunned to learn that the United Nations actually maintains three unique specialized anti-Israel political organs.

The 59th General Assembly of the U.N., which met last September, unfortunately repeated the same sorry performance of the General Assemblies in the recent past. Seventeen of the resolutions that came to a vote were specifically related to Israel, and six of those related to special bodies that perpetuate an anti-Israel bases within institutions of the United Nations.

No other subject and no other nation received, nor has ever been the subject of, this kind of gratuitous and entirely unhealthy obsession.

These special bodies are particularly egregious because their sole purpose is to de-legitimize Israel. For example, the Division for Palestinian Rights within the United Nations Secretariat gives Palestinians the same level of organizational attention as all of Asia.

All people are important, that is for sure, but numerically, do 5 million Palestinians really merit the same level of organizational attention from the U.N. as the billions of people in India, as the billions of people in China, as the billions of people in the rest of Asia, or the hundreds of millions in Africa, or the hundreds of millions in Latin America?

Moreover, why are Palestinian rights more important than, say, Tibetan rights, or the rights of the Black Sudanese who are being murdered in Darfur?

For the U.N., it seems that the ordinary institutions of the High Commission for Refugees and the Security Council will suffice for those issues.

Of course, the Division for Palestinian Rights is not the only specialized U.N. organization dealing with Palestinians. There is the Committee on the Exercise of an Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which created the Division of Palestine Rights, and which spends its time peddling its hard and useless one-sided perspective of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There is also a special propaganda arm of the Division for Palestinian Rights called United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, and then there is the—hold on, I have got to take a deep breath to get this in one breath—the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs in the Occupied Territory.

With all of the state-instituted horrors occurring around the world, this is the only country-specific U.N. body established to investigate human rights. Its singular purpose is to issue reports criticizing Israel that are often turned into resolutions adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

At the U.N., this apparently is what passes for efficiencies.

Unsatisfied with all of the work of the special organizations, the U.N. General Assembly has repeatedly called emergency special sessions on the Arab-Israeli conflict, providing yet another forum for haranguing Israel, not Pol Pot in Cambodia, not the massacre in East Timor, not genocide in Rwanda, not ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and not the ongoing genocide in Darfur. No other subject has ever generated more than one emergency special session. But based on the General Assembly's record, it would appear that since 1950, 6 out of the 10 global crises requiring the U.N.'s immediate attention have been about Israel.

Nor has the General Assembly deemed it fit to pass a resolution condemning Palestinian terrorism and expressing sympathy for the Israeli victims. Where is the resolution condemning the use of Palestinian children as suicide bombers? These subjects are apparently not worthy of consideration by the General Assembly.

Madam Chairwoman, I defy anyone to look at this record and provide a single example of how many of these organizations, paid for in part by the American people, have advanced the cause of peace in even the most fractional or fragmentary respect. The ugly reality is that they have frittered away millions of dollars, thousands of men- and women-hours, and in the end have rendered the U.N. almost completely irrelevant to the subject of Middle East peace.

To add further insult to this list of injuries, Israel, a member state which actually pays its dues, is not even allowed to participate, as you point out, in its natural regional grouping because of hostility from Arab States. This means that Israel cannot fully participate in various U.N. bodies. Even Israel's participation in the Western Europe and Others Group, known as WEOG, is limited. The world's only Jewish State can only participate in WEOG meetings in New York, and still cannot sit on the Security Council or represent candidates for other U.N. bodies.

And because its participation is limited to New York, Israel cannot participate in U.N.-sponsored conferences that originate in U.N. offices in Geneva, Nairobi, Rome, or Vienna. Separate but equal may be gone from the American south but it lives on in effect at the United Nations.

There is a word for this kind of comprehensive, humiliating and disparate treatment. It is called "bigotry," and it should have no place at the United Nations. It is long time past, Madam Chair, for the United Nations to shed its disgraceful anti-Israel bias and for Israel to be allowed its full participation in the U.N., the same accorded to every other member state.

I thank you for scheduling this very important hearing, and I do look forward to hearing from today's witnesses.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. Issa?

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for recognizing me. Thank you for holding this hearing today to examine the interactions between the United Nations and the Middle East as they relate to United States foreign policy.

Today's hearing gives us an opportunity to hear from a distinguished panel, and as we have already begun seeing, an opportunity for Members to express themselves on issues such as anti-Semitism at the United Nations, and the degree to which Arab States and Israel are held equally accountable for violations of Security Council resolutions.

Current efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and the international investigation of the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri of Lebanon, this hearing can give Congress better insight into crafting legislations on both the Middle East and the United Nations.

I might note that it is particularly timely that this hearing comes at a time in which our reform nominee to the United Nations is stalled in the Senate. Something that I think all of us recognize is that it is essential that we have, on a bipartisan basis, a strong reformer sent to the United Nations.

In order to give balance though, I would like to not counter but to associate myself primarily with the first two opening statements with some small exceptions. I do believe that it is appropriate that we spend in the United Nations the level of funding we spend on Palestinian refugees. I have visited these camps and I am very well aware that they live among the worst conditions anywhere in the world.

The fact that it is a lot of money—of course, it is a lot of money. It is also a problem which dates back at least until General Assembly Resolution 194 on December 11, 1948, which even at my elevated age was before I was born, which resolves that:

"Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practical date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss or damage to their property which under principle of international law or equity should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible."

Yes, that was a General Assembly resolution, one that I think, if heeded, would have prevented many of the problems that exist today.

Notwithstanding that, you have Security Council resolutions, one which the United States, either by vote or by omission, has signed on to. One titled U.N. Resolution 242 is practically a buzzword in Middle East politics. "Israel's occupation of Palestine is illegal" is its title. It calls on Israel to in fact withdraw from the so-called occupied territories.

U.N. Resolution 446, again Security Council resolution, "Israel settlements in Palestine are Illegal," 1979. "Palestinian right to self-determination," that is a General Assembly resolution. However, it has been backed up in 2002 under this President and under all of us here being in Congress, which was a security resolution which affirms a vision of a region with two States, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side within secure and recognized borders.

I am the first to say that the United Nations has not always been fair to Israel, and in preparing for this hearing I just looked at an excerpt of the resolutions that have gone on, six pages of small type from 1955—I did not even go back to the earlier ones—and just one after another urges Israel to comply, urges this, demands this, demands that.

There is no question, and I would like to associate myself with the other Members on the dias, there is no question that Israel has paid a high price in constant scrutiny by the U.N.—far greater than in fact it should have.

However, today should be the first day in which we here and everyone involved in this Committee should recognize that there is blame on both sides; that Arabs have demanded Israel obey Security Council resolutions while they have failed to obey them, and if anything is to be gained from this it is a recognition that either we take all Security Council resolutions seriously or we do not.

As of today the record is that both Arab nations and Israel have ignored Security Council resolutions until or unless they were prepared to fulfill them, and that, today, remains one of the perplexing problems or vexing problems in the region.

Last but not least, although it is not on the agenda, it is not directly on the agenda, and that is the continuing problem of Palestinians in the camps in Jordan, in Syria, and in Lebanon, and I certainly hope that if not covered fully today, we will begin to look at our foreign policy with a recognition that there has never been and should never be a delay in dealing with the well-being of refugees, particularly those in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, those outside of what will some day be—God willing—a Palestinian State, opportunities for those people to go to where they can go.

Today the world has always had the assumption that it is a consistent pattern, well, they will be part of the comprehensive peace. In visiting those camps and in analysis—I have even done polling that I have paid for—it is very clear that a majority of people, Palestinians in those camps, after saying they want a right of return to Israel, after saying, "Well, I might take a return to a Palestinian State, not Israel." A majority of them also would happily immigrate to Western countries where their families would have an opportunity.

That has been denied to Palestinians to a great extent for years, and all of us in the Western world and the United Nations should be held accountable for not giving Option 3 to the Palestinian people. It is the reason that one of the most crowded areas that I have ever been in my life are the camps in Lebanon. It is the reason that, today, it is part of the uncertainty about a Lebanese democracy.

I know I have taken a lot of time, Madam Chairwoman, but I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to speak on this.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Issa. Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Yes, Madam Chair. I do not have an opening statement. I thank both you and the Ranking Member and Mr. Issa for a number of the points made, and I agree with them. But on Mr. Issa's last point, I would just sort of remind the Subcommittee that there is also a fourth option. And no less a figure than the current Chairman of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, spoke to that in the 1970s in a speech he gave, where he pointed out that the Arab States in which there are no Palestinian refugees have locked in those refugees to a life of almost permanent refugee status; have refused to allow them to integrate into their own societies without waiving whatever rights they might have ultimately to go back to where they came from, or to a Palestinian State. And that is part of the reason why the funding needs to be so high for the care of those refugees. Because those governments, and particularly the Governments of Lebanon and Jordan and Syria, have kept those refugees as refugees, require them to live in certain areas, refuse to allow them to integrate into both the communities near where they live and into the workforces in those countries in the fashion of the citizens of those countries, and this has been going on for many, many decades.

Mr. ISSA. If the gentleman would yield for just a moment.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. No. No.

Mr. ISSA. I just wanted to—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. No, the gentleman—

Mr. ISSA [continuing]. Agree and associate myself with the comments.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [continuing]. Is not recognized. Thank you, Mr. Berman. Are you done with your opening statement?

Thank you. I am so pleased to introduce our first panelist. Philo Dibble is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. He was appointed Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs in March 2005. He previously served as Deputy Assistant Secretary in Near East Affairs (NEA) from 2003 until 2005, and as Deputy Chief of Mission in Damascus, Syria, 2001 to 2003. Other overseas assignments have included tours in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Tunisia, Italy, and Pakistan.

Thank you, Mr. Dibble, for being with us.

STATEMENT OF MR. PHILO L. DIBBLE, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. DIBBLE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I welcome the opportunity to present the Administration's agenda and priorities regarding the Middle East at the United Nations and with the United Nations.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And your entire testimony will be made a part of the record.

Mr. DIBBLE. I appreciate that. Thank you.

And discuss with you issues surrounding U.N. policies, activities, operations, programs and assistance relating to that part of the world.

I would like to highlight the following three sets of issues: The Middle East peace process, Lebanon and Iraq. These issues reflect current Administration priorities in the Middle East and are examples of constructive engagement with the U.N. in that region.

On the peace process, before discussing the U.N.'s political role as a member of the Quartet, I would like to say a brief word about the peacekeeping itself.

United Nations peacekeeping missions remain a key aspect of U.N. involvement in the Middle East and play an important stabilizing role. Specifically, the U.N. Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), in place since June 1974, has helped to de-escalate tension between Israel and Syria.

The U.N. Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), in place since May 1948, with military observers from 23 nations, contributes to the overall stability in the region.

Finally, the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), in place since March 1978, is seen as a stabilizing influence in reducing tensions between Israel, Lebanon and Syria.

The U.S. contributes to all of these operations either through the international peacekeeping items in the budget or through contributions to the U.N. regular budget. The fiscal year 2006 request, by the way, for UNDOF is \$8 million and for UNIFIL is \$18 million.

On the peace process itself and the U.N.'s role in it, as you know, the United Nations, along with the United States, the European Union, and Russia, make up the Quartet. The Quartet's vision mirrors that of President Bush; that is to say, two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security.

The Roadmap is the way to achieve that goal. It remains the international community's blueprint, endorsed by Israel and the Palestinians, for the way forward to achieving peace. Both sides have their obligations under the Roadmap. The Quartet provides the framework for constructive involvement and engagement of the international community in the peace process.

The United Nations, through the U.N. Special Coordinator for the Middle East, also plays a key role in providing humanitarian assistance—as the Members have already indicated—to the Palestinian people. The U.N. Relief and Works Agency is a U.N. agency chartered with providing for basic education, health, and social services to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan. The United States is the largest national donor to UNRWA. The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration has contributed \$349 million to UNRWA since 2003. In addition, USAID has given UNRWA \$37 million in grants since 2001.

Those are brief summaries of the political process and certain programmatic aspects.

It is impossible to leave this topic without saying something about the status of Israel within the U.N. system, as several of the Members have already discussed, particularly the U.N. General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights, and other less formal groupings.

The United States policy has long been that Israel should have the same standing and be able to play the same role as any other member state of the United Nations. As this Committee knows all too well, however, Israel has regularly been the target of unbalanced, one-sided resolutions in the UNGA and the CHR.

In addition, because of the unwillingness of other members states to allow Israel to play its legitimate role as a member of one of the U.N.'s regional groupings, Israel has not been able to enjoy the full scope for action that its U.N. membership should permit.

We have made redress of this unacceptable situation a top priority of our own diplomacy at the UNGA, the CHR, and elsewhere. Those efforts have borne some fruit. For example, analysis of voting on the three key anti-Israel resolutions at the UNGA over the past 3 years shows a trend away from Israel-bashing. However, the percentage of votes in favor of those resolutions—still close to 60 percent—shows that there is still a long way to go and underscores the need to maintain an aggressive diplomacy with each new session.

Similarly, the United States has continued efforts to promote full and equal Israel participation throughout the U.N. system. In particular, we have supported Israel's membership in the geographically-based consultative groups that are the organizing venues for action within the system.

For example, intensive United States efforts led to Israel being granted, in 2000, full membership in the Western Europe and Other Group in New York for a period of 4 years. Because Israel was unable to obtain membership in the Asia Group—its geographic home—during that period, Israel's WEOG membership was extended for another 4 years in 2004.

Unfortunately, Israel's WEOG membership applies only to New York. It does not have the same level of participation in WEOG activities elsewhere, including, for example, at the Commission of Narcotic Drugs or the U.N. Environmental Program. We will continue our efforts to correct these anomalies.

I would like to shift the focus now to Syria and Lebanon if I could.

An issue currently confronting the international community, on which there has been constructive U.N. engagement, is the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and freedom. The U.N. Security Council and the international community signaled their strong support for these goals last September with the adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559, which calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, the disbanding of militias, and the right of all Lebanese people to express their own political will, free from foreign interference.

The UNSCR 1559 must be implemented fully and immediately. We have seen some progress with Syria beginning to withdraw its

military forces. We will need to ensure, however, that Syria's intelligence forces also are withdrawn and that Syria no longer interferes in Lebanon's internal affairs, including Lebanon's political process. Lebanese elections must be held by the end of May, in accordance with Lebanese constitutional procedures, and elections must be free, fair and credible, and monitored by international observers.

We expect the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on the implementation of UNSCR 1559 shortly. The United States is working very closely with other members of the Security Council to determine next steps within the U.N. forum to ensure verification of the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, and to press for Syrian compliance on other aspects of UNSCR 1559.

We were confronted once again with the need for real change in the region on February 14 with the assassination of Lebanon's former Prime Minister Hariri. Shortly thereafter, the United Nations conducted a fact-finding assessment of the Lebanese Government's investigation into Hariri's assassination, and the Secretary-General reported its findings and recommendations on March 24, 2005.

The U.S. strongly supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that an independent international commission be entrusted with conducting an investigation. The U.S. also co-sponsored UNSCR 1595, which established that commission. The U.N.'s fruitful efforts in Lebanon in this respect and with respect to UNSCR 1559 are a testament to its potential for balanced influence in the region.

Finally, I would like to say something about Iraq.

Democracy is our priority for Iraq. The January 30 elections opened a new chapter in Iraqi history. These elections were an essential step in the Iraqi people's path toward stability and democratic self-governance. Now begins the process of drafting and ratifying a Constitution that will be the basis of a fully democratic Iraq.

The U.N. has played an important role thus far in Iraq's political transition process, particularly in the formation of the Iraqi Interim Government, and then with the important assistance provided to the Independent Electoral Commission for Iraq.

Under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, the U.N. Assistance Mission for Iraq, as requested by the Government of Iraq, shall play a leading role to, and I quote: "[P]romote national dialogue and consensus-building on the drafting of a national constitution by the people of Iraq." The U.N. has said it would play such a role and help coordinate other international technical assistance. We urge the U.N. to prepare in advance to do so, given its broad expertise and experience in that field.

In addition to constitutional and electoral assistance—for the October referendum and the December elections—the U.N. also has a mandate to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. In the past months, the U.N. has deployed personnel to Baghdad to work with the Iraqis and the international community in coordinating such assistance.

In addition, the U.N. has deployed liaison detachment teams, essentially advance teams, to Basra and Erbil where they are work-

ing toward the future deployment of additional substantive staff. We urge the U.N. to expand implementation of its humanitarian and economic reconstruction activities, and a robust presence in Basra and Erbil would serve that purpose. In addition, we expect offices in Basra and Erbil will be necessary to support the Iraqis in the next phase of the political transition.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, let me thank you again for this opportunity to engage on a variety of issues relating to the Middle East and the United Nations. As you are aware, these are difficult issues and much remains to be done. We must continue to take a strong stand and to press for action with the U.N. system, and I welcome comments and questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dibble follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. PHILO L. DIBBLE, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Madame Chairman, I welcome the opportunity to present the Administration's agenda and priorities regarding the Middle East at the United Nations and discuss with you issues surrounding UN policies, activities, operations, programs and assistance relating to that part of the world.

I would like to highlight the following sets of issues: the Middle East Peace Process, Lebanon and Iraq. These issues reflect current Administration priorities in the Middle East, and are examples of constructive engagement with the UN in the Middle East.

Middle East Peace Process

Before discussing the UN's political role as a member of the Quartet, I would like to say a brief word about peacekeeping. United Nations peacekeeping missions remain a key aspect of UN involvement in the Middle East and play an important, stabilizing role. Specifically, the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), in place since June 1974, has helped to de-escalate tension between Israel and Syria. The UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), in place since May 1948, with military observers from 23 nations, contributes to the overall stability in the region. And finally, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), in place since March 1978, is seen as a stabilizing influence in reducing tensions between Israel, Lebanon and Syria. The U.S. contributes to all of these operations through the international peacekeeping item in the budget. The FY06 request for UNDOF is \$8 million, and the request for UNIFIL is \$18 million.

The United Nations, along with the United States, the European Union and Russia, make up the Quartet. The Quartet's vision mirrors that of President Bush, i.e., two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The Roadmap is the way to achieve that goal; it remains the international community's blueprint, endorsed by Israel and the Palestinians, for the way forward to achieving peace. Both sides have obligations under the Roadmap. The Quartet provides the framework for constructive involvement and engagement of the international community in the peace process.

The United Nations, through the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East, also plays a key role in providing humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. For example, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is a UN agency charged with providing for basic education, health, and social services to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. The United States is the largest national donor to UNRWA. The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration has contributed \$349 million to UNRWA since 2003. In addition, USAID has given UNRWA \$37 million in grants since 2001.

It is important to say a word about the treatment of Israel in the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the Commission of Human Rights (CHR), and other, less formal UN-related groupings.

U.S. policy has long been that Israel should have the same standing and be able to play the same role as any other member state of the United Nations. As this Committee knows all too well, however, Israel has regularly been the target of unbalanced, one-sided resolutions in the UNGA and the CHR. In addition, because of the unwillingness of other member states to allow Israel to play its legitimate role

as a member of one of the UN's regional groupings, Israel has not been able to enjoy the full scope for action that its UN membership should permit.

We have made redress of this unacceptable situation a top priority of our own diplomacy at the UNGA, the CHR and elsewhere. Those efforts have borne some fruit. For example, analysis of voting on the three key anti-Israel resolutions at the UNGA over the past three years shows a trend away from Israel-bashing. But the percentage of votes in favor of these resolutions—still close to 60 percent—shows that there is still a long way to go and underscores the need to maintain an aggressive diplomacy with each new session.

Similarly, the U.S. has continued efforts to promote full and equal Israeli participation throughout the UN system. In particular, we have supported Israel's membership in the geographically-based consultative groups that are the organizing venues for action within the system. For example, intensive U.S. efforts led to Israel's being granted in 2000 full membership in the "Western Europe and Other Group" (WEOG) in New York for a period of four years. Because Israel was unable to obtain membership in the Asia Group—its geographic home—during that period, Israel's WEOG membership was extended for another four years in 2004.

Unfortunately, Israel's WEOG membership applies only to New York. It does not have the same level of participation in WEOG activities elsewhere, including, for example, at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs or the UN Environmental Program. We will continue our efforts to correct these anomalies.

Syria-Lebanon

An issue currently confronting the international community, on which there has been constructive UN engagement, is the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and freedom. The UN Security Council and the international community signaled its strong support for these goals last September with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1559, which calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, the disbanding of militias, and the right of all Lebanese people to express their own political free will free of foreign interference.

UNSCR 1559 must be implemented fully and immediately. We have seen some progress with Syria continuing to withdraw its military forces. We will need to ensure, however, that Syria's intelligence forces also are withdrawn and that Syria no longer interferes in Lebanon's internal affairs, including Lebanon's political process. Lebanese elections must be held by the end of May, in accordance with Lebanese constitutional procedures, and elections must be free, fair and credible, monitored by international observers.

We expect the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on the implementation of UNSCR 1559 shortly. The U.S. is working very closely with other members of the Security Council to determine next steps within the UN forum to ensure verification of the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon and to press for Syrian compliance on other aspects of UNSCR 1559.

We were confronted once again with the need for real change in the region on February 14 with the assassination of Lebanon's former Prime Minister Hariri. Shortly thereafter, the United Nations conducted a fact-finding assessment of the Lebanese government's investigation into Hariri's assassination and the Secretary-General reported its findings and recommendations on March 24, 2005. The U.S. strongly supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that an independent international commission be entrusted with conducting an investigation. The United States also co-sponsored UNSCR 1595, which established said commission. The UN's fruitful efforts in Lebanon are a testament to its potential for balanced influence in the region.

Iraq

Democracy also is our priority for Iraq. The January 30 elections opened a new chapter in Iraqi history. These elections were an essential step in the Iraqi people's path towards stability and democratic self-governance. Now begins the process of drafting and ratifying a constitution that will be the basis of a fully democratic Iraq.

The United Nations has played an important role thus far in Iraq's political transition process, particularly in the formation of the Iraqi Interim Government, and then with the important assistance provided to the Independent Electoral Commission for Iraq. Under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, as requested by the Government of Iraq, shall play a leading role to "promote national dialogue and consensus-building on the drafting of a national constitution by the people of Iraq." The UN has said it would play such a role and help coordinate other international technical assistance. We urge the UN

to prepare in advance to do so, given its broad expertise and experience with constitutional assistance.

In addition to constitutional and electoral assistance (for the October referendum and December elections), the UN also has a mandate to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. In the past months, the UN has deployed personnel to Baghdad to work with the Iraqis and the international community in coordinating such assistance. In addition, the UN has deployed Liaison Detachment Teams, essentially advance teams, to Basra and Erbil where they are working toward the future deployment of additional, substantive staff. We urge the UN to expand implementation of its humanitarian and economic reconstruction activities, and a robust presence in Basra and Erbil would serve that purpose. In addition, we expect offices in Basra and Erbil will be necessary to support the Iraqis in the next phase of the political transition.

In conclusion, Madame Chairman, let me thank you again for this opportunity to engage on variety of issues relating to the Middle East and the United Nations. As you are aware, these are difficult issues and much remains to be done. We must continue to take a strong stand and to press for action within the UN system. I welcome your comments and questions.

U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS INVOLVING MIDDLE EAST PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES:

UNRWA's 2005 regular cash budget is \$339 million; its 2005 emergency appeal for West Bank and Gaza is \$186 million.

USG Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA

Fiscal Year	Regular Budget	Emergency Appeal
2003	\$88 million	\$46 million
2004	\$87.4 million	\$40 million
2005	\$88 million	

- The UN regular budget for the UN's Regional Economic Commission's Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the 2004–2005 biennium is \$50.9 million (roughly a U.S. contribution of \$11.20 million given that the U.S. contributes 22% of the UN's regular budget).
- The UN regular budget for the International Court of Justice for 2004–2005 is \$34.9 million (roughly a U.S. contribution of \$7.68 million given that the U.S. contributes 22% of the UN's regular budget).
- The UN regular budget for UNTSO (UN Truce Supervision Organization) for the 2004–2005 biennium is approximately \$56 million (roughly a U.S. contribution of \$12.32 million given that the U.S. contributes 22% of the UN's regular budget).
- The UN regular budget for UNAMI (UN Assistance Mission in Iraq) for 2005 is \$145 million (roughly a U.S. contribution of \$ 31.9 million given that the U.S. contributes 22% of the UN's regular budget). In 2004 it was nearly \$35 million (roughly a U.S. contribution of \$7.7 million given that the U.S. contributes 22% of the UN's regular budget).

Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities

(\$ in thousands)

Account	FY05 Supplemental	FY05 Enacted	FY05 Total	FY06 Request
UNDOF (Golan Heights)	3,897	5,740	9,637	8,020
UNIFIL (Lebanon)	11,831	1,719	13,550	18,042
MINURSO (Western Sahara)	4,156	5,848	10,004	8,325

The supplemental FY 2005 funding has not (as of 4/18/2005) been passed by Congress. Actual spending in FY 2004 was UNDOF (\$10.810 mil), UNIFIL (\$10.460 mil.), and MINURSO (\$10.043 mil.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Well, thank you so much. What do you see as the most crucial role for the United Nations in the Middle East? What should be the priorities for programs and funding?

For example, would you support changes such as performance-based budgeting so that we do not release the aid until countries reach a certain benchmark of actually fulfilling their obligations?

Mr. DIBBLE. I think there is one set of questions that applies to the U.N. system itself and another set of questions that applies bilaterally to countries.

Obviously, when we talk about bilateral assistance we fully consider the broad range of issues that goes into the bilateral relationship, whether it is political, or internal economic, or internal governance questions.

We do monitor the assistance we provide through the U.N. system, whether through UNRWA or UNHCR to countries in the Middle East. It is certainly the priority of the President to make the U.N. system internally accountable, transparent, and responsive to good principles of management.

We are not there yet but this is one of the things that we are pressing very hard for.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Do you see some progress? Do you believe that you can—

Mr. DIBBLE. I think it is too early, frankly, to say that there is progress. The Secretary-General's report, some of the recommendations in that report are very useful and worth considering. We hope the Secretary-General will act himself on the areas where he has that freedom to do so without further reference to the Security Council or the General Assembly, and we are hoping he does so quickly.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. On the issue of the anti-Israel bias, the State Department's report to Congress on U.N. voting practices list the three resolutions that authorize the anti-Israel propaganda apparatus among the 10 votes "which directly affected United States' interests."

So how do these votes undercut United States policies designed to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace? And do you believe that our U.S. allies who abstained on these resolutions are fully aware of how U.N. forums are used as a propaganda apparatus directed against U.S. policy?

Mr. DIBBLE. On the first part of your question, I think what these votes do is they both reflect and contribute to an unacceptable atmosphere surrounding questions about the Middle East. I think Congressman Ackerman has correctly pointed out that the UNGA and the Commission on Human Rights both spend an unacceptable portion of their time on this question. It makes no sense either from a position of principle or a position of efficiency of the organization for either body to spend so much time on the question.

So I think in answer to the first part of your question, the effect of this vote is to maintain an unacceptably biased atmosphere. Certainly they do not contribute in any way to advancing Middle East that anyone has been able to describe to me.

I am sorry. The second part of your question?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. That is all right. Someone, I am sure, will follow up on that.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. I would like to follow up on that.

This unreasonableness that contributes in a negative fashion to what we have described as U.S. interests as well, what do we do about that besides mention it here? Is there a price these countries pay? What do we do to lobby them?

Mr. DIBBLE. We do lobby them. They are targets of a significant diplomatic effort with every new session of the UNGA, with every new session of the Commission on Human Rights.

I wish I could say that we had been more successful. I am personally—I do not quite understand completely, for example, why Central African Republic would care, let alone not respond to our diplomacy on this question. There are others like that.

And I do not want to speculate about why any particular country votes one way rather than another. I am presuming that these are deliberate actions taken by responsible governments.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Is there a price we try to extract from them? Do they pay a price—

Mr. DIBBLE. It is a diplomatic price because our emphasis has been on what we can do on the ground in the Middle East and to mobilize.

Mr. ACKERMAN. They are not responsive to the diplomatic price, whatever that might be?

Mr. DIBBLE. They are moderately responsive. We cannot take anything for granted and we cannot take for granted the record of the previous year—that the record of the previous year will apply the following year, so it is a question of intensive diplomacy every time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I just wanted to spend a minute thanking my friend from California for his remarks, much of which I agree with, but I do not know if I was misconstrued, or if the Chair was, in having anybody think that I disagreed with providing aid to Palestinian refugees regardless of where they were. That is not my objection.

I think we should spend as much on refugee aid for refugees anywhere in the world. My objection was the inequity of the treatment.

The gentleman from California referred to like a six-page list of resolutions that he had since 1955 rather than going back to 1950. If there was a resolution that the U.N. passed congratulating a country that provides the highest standard of living, the Palestinians, if that resolution were passed, and I do not think he has that in his list of six, what country would they be congratulating?

Mr. DIBBLE. It should be us.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Except for the few Palestinians who are actually in the United States.

Mr. DIBBLE. No, I am thinking of our contributions to UNRWA.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Yes, I meant to exclude Western countries. But anywhere within the Arab world, within the Middle East, let me amend that, where is the standard of living of Palestinians the highest?

Mr. DIBBLE. I do not have the numbers in front of me, sir.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Would you be shocked if it were Israel?

Mr. DIBBLE. I would not be shocked if it were Israel.

Mr. ACKERMAN. But they did not pass that resolution. With all the time they spent, they forgot to take a look at the atrocious con-

ditions under which Palestinian refugees live in some of the countries that my good friend did rightfully mention.

And would there be a resolution in that package of six pages of resolutions condemning those people who are religious fundamentalists and zealots who would use the lives of children as political tools?

Would there be a condemnation of that anywhere from the U.N.?

Mr. DIBBLE. I would be surprised if there were any.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I do not think the U.N., you know, remembered to take that up either.

What is the budget for the Division of Palestinian Rights?

Mr. DIBBLE. I do not have the figures in front of me.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Will you get that for us?

Mr. DIBBLE. I can get it for you, yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. How much harm to the peace process would you say has been done by the constant Israel-bashing at the U.N.?

Mr. DIBBLE. I think what drives the peace process, and here I am in danger of doing my old job, but—

Mr. ACKERMAN. You did it well.

Mr. DIBBLE. Thank you.

I think what drives the peace process are the actions by the principal actors on the ground and the international community secondarily, meaning the Palestinians and the Israelis; secondly, the United States and the members of the Quartet as members of that process.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I think we can debate whether the language and the atmosphere in the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights is a result or a cause of a sour atmosphere with regard to the Middle East.

Mr. DIBBLE. But I think the key is still what happens on the ground, and my own personal view is that the atmosphere will not change until we fix the fundamentals.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I would like to change the subject just slightly. Am I reading this morning's press correctly that our Administration is extremely disappointed with Secretary-General Annan's decision to withhold the U.N. report concerning Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon?

Mr. DIBBLE. That is correct. Yes, we are.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Are you aware of any reason that the Secretary has given for that decision?

Mr. DIBBLE. We are not aware of any particular reason. We understand the report has been written. It should be released. We also hope, though, that the focus not be so much on the report as on the implementation of the resolution and on things happening on the ground. We do not want the report to become the issue. We want 1559 to be implemented.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Lastly, what impact, if any, do you think that that decision will have on Syria's commitment to withdraw troops from Lebanon?

Mr. DIBBLE. I cannot say what impact it will have. Obviously, what matters with respect to the report is the content of the report, and we are hoping, certainly, that it contributes to what it is supposed to contribute to, which is implementation of the mandate.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I thank the Chair for a general allocation of the time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. Crowley of New York.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am so sorry. I was looking this way. I am so sorry—

Mr. CROWLEY. No, no, problem. I can understand why you were looking this way.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. No, I was taken by Mr. Ackerman's good looks, and it just threw me for a loop. [Laughter.] I am sorry.

Mr. CROWLEY. That happens to all of us, by the way.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Would you please repeat that? I think the gentleman—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You are recognized for 2 extra minutes for that indiscretion on my part. I am sorry.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I have got to ask, Mr. Secretary: Do you regret that you are not number two in Syria? [Laughter.]

Mr. DIBBLE. No, I do not.

Mr. ISSA. Everything is timing. You could have the top spot, well, at a bad time, but I thank you for your service there because you were there during almost equally difficult times.

First of all, I would like to associate myself very formally with what Mr. Berman said. Howard is always good to pick up what I forget, and I appreciate it. The fact is that there is no question—and I am sure the Secretary, if he wants to comment, and could—that the countries surrounding Israel have gone out of their way to retain a non-absorption package, and Lebanon, in particular, does not even allow work, which is pretty unthinkable and unfortunate.

Having said that, I was only concentrating on the fact that the entire world should share—and hopefully you will comment on this—on the alternate assimilation, but by no means should, and I think Mr. Berman and I would join in asking that every Arab nation, if there is an effort for assimilation over and above “the right of return,” however that is ultimately defined, that that alternate assimilation is a global problem which includes the Arab world.

I will tell you in the polling that I have done there were not a lot of Arab countries high on the list of places that Palestinians wanted to go to, but mostly because I found that Palestinians are very smart people who can figure out where economic opportunity is for their families, and unfortunately it is seldom within the Arab world.

A couple of questions, though, that I am very interested in. One of them: In light of the emerging democracy movement or re-democracy, depending upon how you look at the history of Lebanon's democracy, how much does the effect of Hezbollah in the South make that difficult to truly get there?

What efforts can or will the Administration take to displace the \$100 million-plus that Hezbollah can throw around toward “humanitarian” or vote-buying efforts that they do, which has gotten them 12 seats in the parliament? And my estimate from having

been over in the region is that they will pick up seats in any kind of a fair election to be held in May or so. So they are going to be a formidable problem, and I would like to know what the Administration plans to do to displace that economically.

Anything you would like to say on the Administration's view on those camps, and particularly the camps in Lebanon, and as you can imagine—I have just returned from an extended stay in Lebanon, and I am most concerned about whether or not Lebanon can ever be a real democracy while it has Hezbollah in the south with arms, and the Palestinians who have very little chance of disarming those camps without a great loss of life, both of which are large populations.

The last but not least, I am very—I want to join with my colleagues. I am very concerned about full implementation of 1559, and would certainly ask for your comments on what role we might play in the Congress in forcing the issue.

I said last, but I have one more, and this is a very specific question. As far as I know, we have not, or Lebanon has not extended the obligatory invitation for international supervision, and if that is true, is the United States in the normal course as we would ask for that invitation to be extended so that there would be proper observance of their upcoming election?

Those are sort of my opening salvo.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If the gentleman would yield.

Mr. ISSA. Absolutely.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I am just interested before the wonderful witness testifies about the polling that you have referred to.

Mr. ISSA. I will be glad to share it with you. I actually had Zogby International do it. They are about the only people that can do—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. When was this done?

Mr. ISSA. About a month ago.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And what issues, what questions?

Mr. ISSA. Mostly on Palestinian camp residents' self-determination. A good point for a colloquy. My observation in Lebanon and in Syria and in Jordan is that regardless of the past injustice, we still have a constant problem, which is the Palestinian State, and this may be something that is very appropriate for you to respond to too, the Palestinian State is going to have a very difficult time in the short run absorbing and imploring its own people that are already there.

So however you look at it, the 750,000-plus—that are really still refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan—if they try to absorb them in the Palestinian State in any reasonable time frame, they will not be able to employ them, so you will simply be moving them from one welfare situation to another. And that got me, as a former businessman, realizing, well, wait a second, the real success of a Palestinian State is economic success.

Economic success says do not burden them with 750 to a million additional refugees if, in fact, there can be absorption in the countries where they are, and in the rest of the world. And after doing some study, more and more I am beginning to realize that the truth is the right of return and actually Mr. Ackerman said it very well, it is a right to go to the place in which Palestinians have the highest standard of living.

It is not without some notice that if you go to Gaza, you are going to live on \$800 to \$2,000 a year, and if you go to Tel Aviv, you are going to live on \$26,000 to \$28,000 a year or more. It is a no-brainer for somebody to say I would rather go there regardless of all the other characteristics, so that is sort of the genesis of it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Sorry.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Not to be misconstrued, I did not say they had a right to go there. I just said that is where the higher standard of living happened to be.

Mr. ISSA. No, no, nor am I. For the record, whenever I talk about the right of return, my assumption has always been the right of return is first and foremost to a Palestinian State. I think anything else is ludicrous to suggest.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Issa. Thank you.

Mr. DIBBLE. I will try and take your questions in order then.

On the question of how to deal with Hezbollah either politically, economically or militarily, I will have to defer that to my former colleagues in the Near East Bureau.

Clearly the spending and disarming of the militias in Lebanon is an element of 1559. We have to do it. It has to be done. There are tactics and strategies to do that. I do not know what they are at this point.

On the camps, we all know what the history of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon has been over the past decades. Again stepping outside my current role, I think I am very encouraged by the fact that there is a kind of political movement in Lebanon that there has not been before, and to the extent the Lebanese body politic is coming together, my hope is that Lebanon will be much better able to manage the kind of potentially disruptive force that the camps represent than they have in the past, let me put it that way.

On how Congress could force the issue on 1559, speaking for the Administration, we want your support, and in any way you care to express it. I think it would be very helpful.

You mentioned that Lebanon had not yet extended a request for international—

Mr. ISSA. Yes, as far as I know.

Mr. DIBBLE [continuing]. I have not seen any either, but the Lebanese Government has just started to form under Prime Minister Mikati, and I would expect that process to precede any consideration of what, if any, technical help they need from the international community.

Obviously, we think they do need it, and we will be pressing on that question.

You had a fifth question, the ability of the Palestinian State to absorb others?

Mr. ISSA. Yes, I mean, particularly because Mr. Ackerman, rightfully so, picked up sort of this 50-year camp support system. The transfer of roughly 750,000, I mean, we obviously know the numbers get up into the million-plus, but even if you assumed the lowest number based on current aid that they are trying to use for those presently in the camps, you know, the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza are both relatively populated, Gaza being incredibly populated. Both economically and pure geography, putting a million people into the West Bank—is that, in your opinion, feasible? Or

should the U.N., the United States, all the members of the Quartet be seriously exploring how to deal with refugees outside Palestine's West Bank and Gaza today so that we not wait and say, "Well, now we have this comprehensive peace but we have got nowhere for a million people to go."

Mr. DIBBLE. I can answer that question only indirectly by pointing to the fact that the Quartet has appointed Mr. Wolfensohn, former head of the World Bank, to manage the humanitarian and economic aspects of Gaza disengagement. I expect that creating economic opportunity in Gaza is a major priority for him.

As we know, the question of refugee return is a final status issue in the context of the Middle East peace process, and I do not think it would be appropriate for me or the Administration to start planning one kind of return or another kind of return for fear of prejudicing what the outcome of those negotiations will have to be between Israel and Palestine.

Mr. ISSA. Well, but that was not the question. If I can focus the question better.

Mr. DIBBLE. Sure.

Mr. ISSA. Assuming that final status had been completed, there is no room in Gaza, so you have got a million Palestinians that now have a right to return to Haifa—excuse me, please—a right to return to Ramallah or to Bethlehem or anywhere within the new Palestinian State's West Bank region. What would really be the effect today? This is an economically depressed area. Is there any ability to absorb and fully employ a million people from surrounding areas on a practical basis within, let us say, a 5-year period? Or are you just transferring them from one camp to another?

Mr. DIBBLE. I would suspect the latter, but I would have to take the question and get back to see what planning may have been done.

Mr. ISSA. I appreciate that.

Mr. DIBBLE. Thank you.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Crowley.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Dibble, I do not know if this subject matter was touched before I came in or if you made comment about it as well, or if one of my colleagues did, but the status of Israel within the United Nations in terms of a regional grouping would naturally find its place in the Asia subdivision, but because of the alienation by many nations within that region, Israel was finding its way through the United Nations with the support of the United States and other countries, and eventually after much negotiation and backroom dealing found its way onto the WEOG regional grouping. The others, aside from the European Nations, being Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and I think Israel.

Even as a member of WEOG, it does not have all the rights of a nation. Could you maybe for our—if you have any insight as to this—as to which countries stand in the way of giving Israel its equal standing to any other nation in the U.N. in WEOG?

Mr. DIBBLE. To be honest, sir, I would prefer not to identify those countries in open session. I will be happy to brief on it. It is, I

think, going to be a priority, as it has been in the past, to expand the WEOG members that Israel now has in New York to the other sites, and to ensure that pending Israel's integration into the Asia group where it belongs, that it enjoys the same membership rights in WEOG as everybody else does.

Mr. CROWLEY. Fair enough. Well, maybe we can get that in private.

Mr. DIBBLE. Okay.

Mr. CROWLEY. Is Israel still the only nation that does not enjoy full membership in any regional grouping?

Mr. DIBBLE. As far as I know, yes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Still is. Could you answer—another subject matter—this Subcommittee has, not just the Middle East, but Central Asia as a sphere of interest. Can you explain the change in votes on Israel-related issues from abstentions in 2003 to yes votes in opposition to the State of Israel, I guess you could say, in 2004, and such countries as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan?

Mr. DIBBLE. I cannot explain the specific decisions by those governments. Perhaps one of the subsequent panelists can do that. But it illustrates the points which I think I made earlier that we cannot take for granted the results of any particular session of either the General Assembly or the Commission on Human Rights, and we need to go at it diplomatically as aggressively with each new session as we would in the past one, and obviously those countries will be target to that diplomacy.

Mr. CROWLEY. Diplomatically, as best I can, I think it is a concern to the Members of this Committee that we see a trend being—

Mr. DIBBLE. We do not want it to be a trend. We want it to—

Mr. CROWLEY. That is why I raised it as a concern, that we are taking note of the fact that we are seeing a change, and not necessarily for the better, in terms of a relationship between those nations and the State of Israel.

And lastly, in terms of the U.N. Web site and the amount of time, I guess you can say, or space dedicated to Israel, who makes the decision as to the design of the Web site of the U.N.?

And is it not the responsibility of U.N. to deal with all matters of international concern in a fair and even-handed fashion? And does any other nation get as much attention as the State of Israel does?

Mr. DIBBLE. Well, I confess I have never looked at the U.N. Web site. I will do that. I will take the question and get an answer.

Mr. CROWLEY. As we are more and more getting—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I have seen it.

Mr. CROWLEY [continuing]. Into the cyber world, I think it is important that we do every—you know, not just textbooks and newspapers and other periodicals, the Web site has become much more an important part of the U.N. and its message. So I thank you and I yield.

Mr. DIBBLE. I will take the question back.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Crowley.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And I will just leave you with—yes, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. If I can just take a moment—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN [continuing]. From the regular run of business, I just wanted to, on behalf of the entire Subcommittee, congratulate you, Madam Chair, on obtaining your doctorate in education from one of America's most prestigious universities, something very well deserved. We knew you were smart. Now you've got the papers to prove it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Dr. Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Thank you my good friend.

Mr. Dibble, we will be submitting further questions in writing for the record, and would greatly appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that the responses are submitted in an expeditious manner.

Mr. DIBBLE. Absolutely.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And we are still waiting for some of the responses about the Palestinian assistance hearing, and you are not responsible for that, but just FYI, pass that along.

Mr. DIBBLE. I will pass that along.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. To do their homework.

Mr. DIBBLE. Right.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. No doctorate for them. Thank you so much, Mr. Dibble.

Mr. DIBBLE. Thank you, ma'am.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And we are so happy to introduce our next two panelists, the Honorable Richard Schifter, who was born in Vienna, Austria; moved to the United States in 1938. Ambassador Schifter served as the U.N. Representative in the U.N. Human Rights Commission; Deputy U.S. Representative in the United Nations Security Council; and Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, among many other posts, and it has always been a pleasure of mine to have the opportunity to meet with Ambassador Schifter. Welcome again.

And also Richard Williamson, who is a partner in the Chicago-based international law firm of Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw. He has served in government service since the 1980s as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Office in Vienna; Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs; U.S. Ambassador for Special Political Affairs to the United Nations in New York; and Ambassador and a U.S. Representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, and we welcome you as well, Ambassador. Thank you so much. Always a pleasure to see you.

We will be glad to submit your testimony in full in the record, and please feel free to be concise in your testimony as you present it.

Ambassador Schifter.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD S. SCHIFTER,
FORMER U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, AND DEPUTY U.S. REP-
RESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUN-
CIL**

Mr. SCHIFTER. Madam Chairwoman, first of all, we greatly appreciate everyone who is concerned about this issue, greatly appreciate the time that you took, took the trouble to really focus on the question that is now going to be before us.

When I served at the U.N., we used to say that only if one spends time in the U.N. does one realize how the anti-Israel cause dwarfs all other issues taken up by the General Assembly, as Congressman Ackerman has pointed out. To be sure, under the provisions of the Charter, the General Assembly merely makes recommendations. It does not render binding decisions, but it is the body that sets the tone for the U.N. headquarters operation. It is the tone that orchestrates the work of such offshoots as the Economic and Social Council and the U.N. Human Rights Commission, and most particularly, it powerfully influences the bureaucracy of the U.N. Secretariat.

Today, the developments of technology, as Congressman Crowley has pointed out, make it possible to experience that U.N. setting virtually. If you check the Web site of the United Nations, you will soon discover how preoccupied, how obsessed that organization is with the State of Israel.

How did all of this come about? What is generally not known is that it goes back to 1986 when the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories was created. Later on the Committee on the Exercise of Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was added, and then the Division for Palestinian Rights in the Secretariat, anti-Israel propaganda apparatus that has no parallel anywhere else in the United Nations.

As far as the Secretariat's Division for Palestinian Rights, you will note from the Chart of Organization we have submitted, and the U.N. Department of Political Affairs, their counterparts, such as the divisions on the Americas and Europe, on Asia and the Pacific, on Africa, and on Security Council affairs, in other words, there is really no counterpart.

Here embedded in the Secretariat of the United Nations is the core of that worldwide anti-Israel propaganda apparatus. What we need to keep in mind is that the propaganda apparatus constituted by the foregoing three entities flies the flag of the United Nations and is paid for by the United Nations, including the taxpayers of the United States.

Let me add at this point that it is my understanding that we really deduct a little bit from our annual contributions because of this situation, but money is fungible at the U.N., so whatever it is, it is our taxpayers' money that continues to support this effort of anti-Israel propaganda.

Let me perhaps also add, as far as this Division on Palestinian Rights is concerned they, in turn, use the propaganda apparatus, actually the information apparatus of the Department of Public Af-

fairs, which is the general information source, and that, in any financial assessment, needs to be considered as well.

In the statement that I have submitted for the record I have spelled out in detail how it was possible to create that anti-Israel apparatus. Briefly, it was just another way in which the Soviet Union, with significant help from Fidel Castro, sought to use the U.N. to embarrass the United States.

And Madam Chair, I am not mentioning this just because you are chairing this meeting. I have for years stressed the role played by Castro's minions at the U.N.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. It is a little point there.

Mr. SCHIFTER. One point that has to be kept in mind is that our people, for example, rotate every few years. The Cubans stay there forever, and what I have been saying is they know the rules the way Senator Byrd knows the rules of the Senate. The fact of the matter is, of all the countries at the U.N., none plays the political game as well as they do, and they have taken this on, not because they are concerned about the Palestinians, but because they really want to attack the United States, embarrass the United States. That is really behind much of what is going on here.

What is particularly sad to note, though, is how the anti-Israel culture fostered at the United Nations has infected the missions accredited there, and how it intertwines with anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism.

I still recall the words of Ambassador Kirkpatrick who said to me shortly after her arrival at the U.N.:

"Dick, I think another holocaust is possible. I am surrounded by a sea of anti-Semitism. Because my name is Kirkpatrick, they think they can talk freely to me. You would be shocked by the sources of some of the remarks."

Later, I had a personal encounter with the problem of the U.N. anti-Semitic culture. In that case, interestingly, it was a representative of the Mission of the Holy See who informed me as to the source of the problem that I had encountered.

It is indeed highly appropriate, Madam Chair, that in House Resolution 54 you called a spade a spade.

When I say that the U.N. culture has infected the missions accredited there, I do indeed mean that the diplomats arriving at the U.N. from various parts of the world do not necessarily get there with an anti-Israel/anti-Semitic bias. They acquire it in New York or Geneva. It does not necessarily reflect the outlook of their governments.

There indeed lies the answer to the question as to what it is that we can do about the problem. It is essential to go over the heads of the New York diplomatic missions to appeal to foreign ministers, and in many instances to heads of government who have no idea of what is being done at the U.N. in the name of their country.

In terms of our administrative structure, this means that the task of changing votes at the U.N. cannot be left to the United States missions to the U.N., and the Bureau of International Organizations, with due respect to them. The missions and the bureau should certainly coordinate the effort, but if we really want to effect change at the U.N., it is essential that the issue of U.N. voting be

placed on the agenda of the regional bureaus of the State Department and ultimately on the agenda of our Embassies.

In the latter setting, the matter should not be relegated to conversations between junior officers and junior foreign ministry officials, but should be taken up by Ambassadors advocating our position to appropriate counterparts.

Let me add a final note here. Quite a number of countries represented at the United Nations and now voting against the United States position are also interested in good relations with the Congress. A message from Members of the Congress to their bilateral Washington Ambassadors will undoubtedly be communicated to their respective capitals, and will undoubtedly be noted there.

Is it really possible to change the climate at the U.N.? I believe it is difficult, but not impossible.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schifter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD S. SCHIFTER, FORMER U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, AND DEPUTY U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

"A Dangerous Place" is what the late Senator Moynihan called the United Nations in his memoir about his experience as U.S. Permanent Representative in the 1970's. I came away with the same impression during my service there in the 1980's and in the early 1990's. I concluded then that I had not theretofore encountered any organization so deeply scarred by intellectual dishonesty, cynicism and make-believe as the General Assembly of the United Nations and some of its offshoots, such as the Economic and Social Council and the UN Human Rights Commission. The condition has not changed since then. On the contrary, it has now turned out that the dishonesty at the UN is not only intellectual but financial as well.

There is a good deal of discussion right now, including suggestions made by the Secretary General, of steps to be taken to reform the UN. That is all for the good. But it is important that reform not be limited to rearranging the deck chairs, but to correcting the system's serious flaws.

These flaws do not encompass the entire UN system. Organizations such as UNICEF, the UN Development Program, the World Health Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, and other mission-oriented organizations play highly worthwhile roles. So, in fact, does the UN Security Council. As I have already noted, it is the UN General Assembly and its offshoots that give the UN its bad reputation.

I was an American soldier in Germany when the San Francisco Conference that established the United Nations took place. The war in Europe came to an end while the Conference was still in session. Those of us who followed the events in San Francisco as the European end of World War II came to an end hoped indeed that the newly-formed organization would advance the causes of international peace and security, friendly relations among nations, and international co-operation, as spelled out in the Charter. For some years, the UN did indeed play that role effectively.

I believe that the turn-around came in the 1960's when the Soviet Union saw an opportunity to use the UN General Assembly as a platform on which it could embarrass the United States. It accomplished that result by co-opting the Non-Aligned Movement. The NAM had been created in the Fifties as an organization that was neither in the Soviet nor the Western camp. But with the death of Nehru in 1964 the role of the NAM in what during my UN years we called "the real world" declined sharply. But it was kept alive at the UN under new leadership, the leadership of Fidel Castro. It was under that leadership that the NAM apparatus at the UN became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Soviet bloc.

During my stay at the UN in New York I once had lunch with an ambassador of a NAM member country. In the course of our conversation, he asked me whether I knew how the Non-Aligned Movement really works. I told him that I did not. He then said: "As you know, we used to be on the other side." He meant by that that his country had been on the Soviet side. He went on to tell me that on the day before every plenary meeting of the NAM delegations to the UN, about 17 or 18 member states that were close friends of the Soviet Union would meet in a closed, confidential session. At that session, assignments were given out for the next day. One delegation was told what resolution it should introduce. Another delegation was told

to speak in support of the resolution. Then the organizers went on to the next resolution and the assignments for it. Thus the entire session for the next day was choreographed. On the following day, each of the delegations performed as instructed and, as the ambassador put it to me, "there sat the silent majority and simply went along."

I also heard in that context about the key role the Castro Cuban operatives played at the planning sessions. By that time I had become fully aware of the role of the Castro's minions at the UN. The Soviets were too ham-handed to do an effective job of organizing for a vote. But the Cubans were masters of the art. Their Mission did not make changes in personnel every few years, as we did. They stayed around for a long time, acquired a thorough knowledge of the process and developed close relations with key personnel from other delegations. Moreover, as another diplomat from a NAM state told me, they frightened those who tried to deviate from the line by calling them "running dogs of imperialism."

One would have thought that with the end of the Cold War, followed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a drastic change would occur at the UN. This has not happened. The attitudes that had been fostered, the personal arrangements that had been made over a quarter century remained in place. Many Permanent Representatives at the UN do not even try to figure out how the UN could serve the national interests of their respective countries. Instead they play the UN game, behaving in a manner that gets them elected to committee chairmanships or causes other honors and benefits to be bestowed on them. That is the setting in which Castro's agents continue to perform their chosen role: that of embarrassing the United States.

It is against this background that the problem of Israel's treatment at the UN can be more readily understood. It started with the "Zionism is Racism" resolution, which some believe originated with the KGB in Moscow. The initial sponsors and supporters were not deeply identified with the Palestinian cause. But in that cause the Soviets saw an issue on which they could pick up the Arab and other Muslim states. By aligning them with the Soviet bloc and then manipulating the Non-Aligned Movement, they could engage in their anti-US campaign.

Israel then became an obsession of the UN General Assembly and its offshoots. Spending many hours on anti-Israel harangues, passing resolutions against Israel, and allocating resources to anti-Israel activity, the UN General Assembly has ignored the real problems which it should address if it were to discharge the role carved out for it in the UN Charter. During the last three years hundreds of thousands of residents of Darfur have been killed and millions have been rendered homeless. The UN has talked about the problem but when it had a chance to take action on a resolution on the subject, a majority voted for a "no-action" motion, the UN equivalent of a motion to table. Numerous other problems that threaten international peace and security and that would deserve the attention of the UN General Assembly are similarly ignored.

By contrast, the UN General Assembly has for years shown its obsession with Israel by going through an annual ritual of adopting numerous resolutions directed against Israel, resolutions on almost all of which the United States votes "no." At the current session, the UN General Assembly has so far adopted twenty-three so-called "country-specific" resolutions. One such resolution criticizes the United States for the Cuban embargo, one resolution criticizes Iran for its human rights record, one resolution criticizes Turkmenistan on the same ground, one resolution dealing with human rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo, is directed against Rwanda and Uganda, and nineteen resolutions deal with Israel. The United States voted "no" on seventeen of them and abstained on the remaining two resolutions.

There are three resolutions among the seventeen that deserve special attention. As distinct from the others, which are essentially declaratory, three resolutions have an operational effect: they re-authorize from year to year the expenditure of funds and resources on the operation of a worldwide, UN-funded propaganda campaign against Israel. They have brought about the embedding in the UN bureaucracy of a staff whose sole full-time, year-round job it is to agitate against Israel. Given their operational effect, to serve as the core of the UN's anti-Israel campaign, these resolutions were quite appropriately listed among the ten UN votes that the United States deemed most important and they appear as such in Part IV of the State Department's annual report.

The oldest of the three resolutions is the one that set up the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. It was adopted in 1968. Apparently assuming that this effort required enhancement, the General Assembly added in 1975 the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. To make sure that that Committee would have full staff support, a Special

Unit on Palestinian Rights was created, to serve as the Committee's secretariat. In 1981 the General Assembly called upon the Secretary General to reconstitute the Special Unit as a Division for Palestinian Rights.

The UN's in-house anti-Israel propaganda apparatus has thus functioned for the last thirty-seven years. The unique character of the committees is underlined by the UN web site. If one proceeds to the listing of the General Assembly, one will find that only three committees seemed to qualify for special mention. In second and third place are two housekeeping committees, the Committee on Information and the Committee on Programme and Coordination. But in first place on the web site under "General Assembly" is the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

An examination of the chart of organization of the UN's Department of Political Affairs, attached hereto, further underlines the unique treatment accorded the Palestinian issue. The chart shows that there are six divisions in the Department. One of them, the Division on Security Council Affairs, has a worldwide mandate. Four of them have regional mandates, one division for the Americas and Europe, one for Asia and the Pacific, and two for Africa. And then there is the sixth division, dealing under the best of circumstances with only a small sliver of the world's problems, the Division for Palestinian Rights. As it is, the Division does not exist for a positive, constructive purpose, but merely to coordinate, from within the office of the Secretary General of the United Nations, a propaganda campaign against Israel. A while ago I showed the chart to a member of the U.S. Senate. He looked at it and then exclaimed: "This is ridiculous." On another occasion I showed the chart to the Foreign Minister of a country with which the United States has good relations. After he had seen the chart, he told me that he had been foreign minister for a number of years, had personally reviewed his country's UN voting record, but was completely unaware of the arrangement created by the relevant General Assembly resolution. He turned to a member of his staff and asked: "Where is the Division on Burmese Rights?"

At the current session of the UN General Assembly, the foregoing three resolutions were adopted by "yes" votes that ranged from 84 to 104, the "no" votes ranged from 7 to 9, but there was a large number of abstentions, ranging from 63 to 80. An abstention at the UN plays the same role as does voting "Present" in the House of Representatives. It means the member state in question is not in favor of the resolution but is not prepared to go so far as to vote "no." The European Union and, with it, almost all the European countries abstain on the three resolutions. All three resolutions raise budgetary questions. Budgetary questions are under the Charter important questions and important questions require a two-thirds vote. This means that if the Europeans were to move from abstention to "no," the resolutions would not have the required two-thirds. Is it likely that they would move? The possibility exists, particularly if high-ranking officials, like the foreign minister that I mentioned, were made fully aware of what it is that these three entities that fly the UN flag and are funded by the UN are really doing. The American Jewish International Relations Institute is now at work to put together a report on that subject.

The result of these annual votes by the UN General Assembly can be summarized as follows. First, they tend to undermine the effort of the United States Government to bring peace to the region. Second, they are an albatross around the neck of the UN Secretary General when he, as a member of the so-called Quartet, wants to help advance the peace process. Third, they provide aid and comfort to the hardliners in the Palestinian camp, who wish to undermine the peace process.

Under a law enacted about twenty years ago, the State Department is called upon to furnish Congress with an annual report that compares the votes cast by the other 190 member states with the votes cast by the United States. Last year Congress amended the law by asking for a special break-out of the votes dealing with Israel. The most recent report, which was completed a few days ago, contains such a break-out

If the State Department report on this pattern of UN voting is given full distribution is there a chance of a change in the Israel-related votes? I believe there is. Many of the member states that vote against the position of the United States are desirous of friendly relations with the United States. In many situations the governmental leadership is not aware of what happens in New York. Thus, a few years ago, I met with the President of a country to discuss the UN votes. He looked at his papers and told me that he did not see why there should be concern about his country's votes. As our discussion progressed, it turned out that his Foreign Ministry had supplied him with information of the voting record of quite a number of years earlier. When he was shown the current voting record, he was shocked and said he would see to it that the votes would change. They did.

There are also cases in which high-ranking officials have not fully realized how the actions of the UN General Assembly damage the peace process. Many are also not fully aware that the annual anti-Israel exercise is the outcropping of the anti-US sentiment that has been fostered at the UN for decades. If the case were made to friendly governments clearly and at high levels, there is a chance that a significant number of member states would switch their votes.

Does this suggest a failing by the US Mission to the UN and our Ambassador to the UN? Most definitely not. Permanent Representatives to the UN fall into essentially two classes, those who vote on instructions from the capital and those who are uninstructed. As to those who are fully instructed, it is clear that the case has to be made by our Embassies in the relevant capitals. As to those who are uninstructed, we need to be concerned that—given the anti-US and anti-Israel climate in New York, and given also the promises and threats that might emanate from the other side—the chances of getting an uninstructed Permanent Representative to change his votes by offering persuasive arguments are very, very slim. In these cases, too, it is necessary to make representations in capitals at high enough levels to be taken seriously and urge that instructions be issued to the New York missions on matters of concern to the United States.

I need to say that I learned this lesson the hard way. At the UN Human Rights Commission I had experience with colleagues who promised me their vote and then voted the other way. Afterwards they apologized and told me they had made a mistake. Then, in a dialogue we had with the Cuban representative, we were accused of bribing members of the Commission. It got me to wonder whether, as psychologists would say, this was a case of projecting.

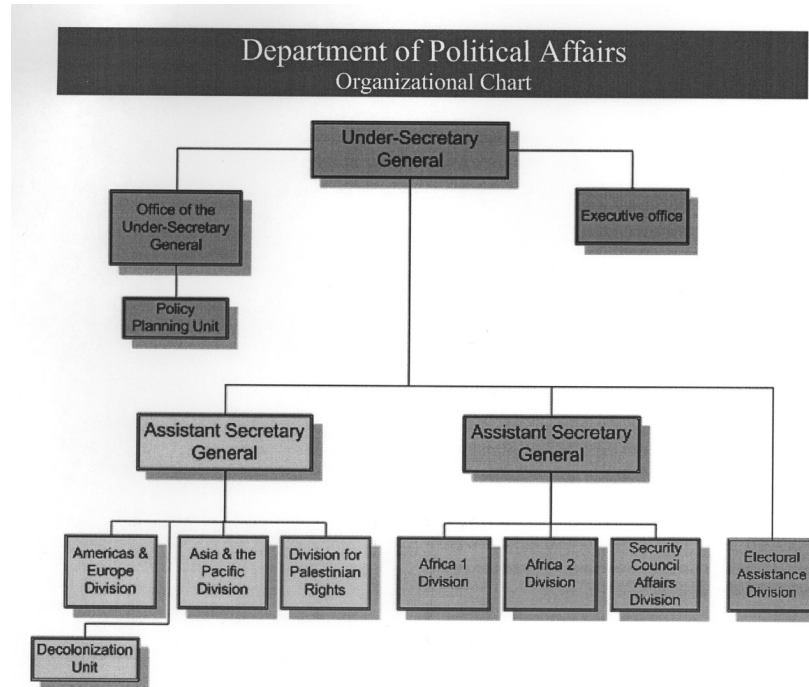
What I learned at the Commission with regard to voting was to collect as much information during the day through conversations with colleagues and then, in the evening, go back to my office and write messages, at the State Department we called them “cables,” asking the appropriate Embassy to make the needed representations to the governments to which they were accredited. That approach did not work all the time but it worked often.

To be sure, so-called demarches in capitals are made regularly. Before every session of the General Assembly or the Human Rights Commission, a message will be sent out asking Embassies to present the US case to the relevant foreign ministries. Often, a junior Embassy official will present our case on a long list of resolutions to a mid-level official in the foreign ministry and the matter would end there. The President of a country friendly to the United States has been quoted to me as having said that if the US sends in a Second Secretary, it means that for the US the matter is a secondary issue.

The issue is, therefore, whether the US ambassadors will take the time to familiarize themselves with the issues posed by the aforementioned resolutions and will be prepared to present them at a sufficiently high level, at least to the foreign minister, perhaps also to a prime minister or president. Many ambassadors are quite understandably preoccupied with bilateral issues and consider the UN in New York as a side show in which they prefer not to get involved. What this means is that, to effect significant change at the UN, a decision will have to be made at a high level in the State Department to the effect that UN performance is sufficiently important to the US National interest for our ambassadors to be instructed to place the UN on their agenda and advance the appropriate arguments for changes in positions at an appropriately high level.

There is one other point that should be added. A number of foreign ambassadors in Washington have told me how much more complicated their job is here than it would be in other capitals. The point they made was that in most countries, the ambassador will talk to the foreign minister of the country to which he is accredited and that would be it. In the United States it is often necessary to stay in touch not only with the State Department but with relevant personnel of the National Security Council and, if one has matters of interest that will come before the Congress, with members of Congress. The other side of this coin is that bilateral ambassadors in Washington and will communicate the concerns of members of Congress to their governments and the governments will take these concerns into account in formulating policies, particularly policies that do not directly involve their national interests.

There are those who will say that there is no chance to attain the result that I have here suggested, that of putting the UN anti-Israel propaganda apparatus out of business. I have heard such statements in similar situations in the past. I submit that it may be difficult to attain the result we seek, but not impossible.



Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I agree. All right, thank you so much, Ambassador Williamson, and I know that all of our times are limited and you are on a time crunch as we are, so thank you. We will get you out of here on time.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD S. WILLIAMSON,
PARTNER, MAYER, BROWN, ROWE & MAW, LLP, FORMER
UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR AND ALTERNATE REP-
RESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS TO THE
UNITED NATIONS**

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for inviting me to be here. And if I could take this opportunity to thank you personally and your staff. Last year when I was serving in Geneva as U.S. Representative to the U.N. Commission Human Rights, there were a number of extremely difficult resolutions which we advocated, and I can say our success at getting a resolution on Cuba would not have been possible without your efforts here and that of your staff who assisted us in Geneva, so thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And we had a great victory again this year.

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Yes, yes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I cannot believe it.

Mr. WILLIAMSON. By bigger margins.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. By a bigger margin.

Mr. WILLIAMSON. And that is encouraging. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I want to praise my long-time friend and former col-

league, Ambassador Schifter for his work on human rights issues in a variety of forum, and thank you for accepting my statement for the record.

Let me just really briefly touch on three different issues: Israel, Syria and Iraq.

On Israel, I associate myself with the comments that others have made and that are detailed more elaborately in my prepared statement about the bias on Israel. I confronted it in my first assignment in 1985 as U.S. Ambassador when the Israeli credentials had been denied at the International Atomic Energy Agency. Fortunately, we were able to reduce it.

When I was Assistant Secretary, we grappled with the pernicious "Zionism is racism resolution," and when I was in New York, let me just elaborate briefly about a discussion at the Security Council. It was on the Middle East. Syria had raised it. I had learned to expect the mischief that would occur in that venue. Yet as often happened, countries who had very similar positions to that of the United States, with respect to moving the peace process and the work of the Quartet, nonetheless used the U.N. Security Council to bash and isolate the State of Israel, to used unbalanced rhetoric to point out the difficulties of security that Israel faced from Hezbollah and others.

When we finished I turned to my British colleague next to me and I asked the Ambassador how he could do this. Yesterday the Prime Minister had made a statement, and his comments in the Security Council were not supportive, and they certainly were biased. To which he said to me, "Rich, this is just U.N. politics. You should not take it so seriously."

And therein lies a great deal of the problem. Even our friends look at it as a free shot, and look at it as a way they can pander to certain non-aligned countries, certain regional countries. And so even if they do not believe it, they pander to that predisposition.

The difficulty, however, is—just as it is with a separate agenda Item A at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights—it is not just rhetoric. It bleeds out, bleeds into other U.N. fora. It bleeds out into the diplomatic community. It is effective at undermining and de-legitimizing Israel, and most troubling, it becomes a real impediment to progress on Middle East peace.

So this is not merely a rhetorical inconvenience or embarrassment, it is an impediment to try to make progress in the Middle East peace process for treaties dealing with the Palestinians. It should be addressed and addressed vigorously, and I align myself with Dick Schifter's comments about the need to make it a higher priority and deal with in regional bureaus, among others.

At the same time, as I think was explained earlier, there are times the U.N. can be useful in the Middle East as it was on Lebanon with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559, passed September 2, 2004, calling for Syria to withdraw. It became a vehicle to add pressure to drive—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. But it also calls for dismantling of them.

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Right.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The Hezbollah, that is the second part that people forget about in that resolution. Sorry.

Mr. WILLIAMSON. No, and I think a fascinating and important process is whether or not Hezbollah will denounce its terrorist past and turn into a political party, but the burden is on them to prove that because their record is one of bloodshed and killing of innocents, and creating havoc and danger and being an impediment to peace.

A third issue—let me just talk about Iraq, because I was at the Security Council when we passed the 17th Resolution 1441 on Iraq. I was there when we failed to pass an 18th resolution.

The story of Iraq shows places where the U.N. can be helpful, as it did with a series of resolutions after Saddam Hussein's illegal occupation of Kuwait, then including, ultimately, authorizing the use of force, then imposing an intrusive arms inspection regime, et cetera.

But by the late nineties, those who held commercial interests more dearly than security interests, here is the Security Council to begin to erode some of those resolutions, to create things such as the Oil-for-Food Program, the corruption of which is being revealed in an ongoing and shocking way, and ultimately despite the 17th resolution, which stated clearly that Saddam Hussein's regime was in violation of U.N. resolution, which stated clearly he had an obligation to proactively comply, and which stated clearly that without that he would face serious consequences, which all knew and understood to be the use of force, in the end the Security Council, because of other political considerations, failed to act.

So I think what we see in the Lebanese situation is the value the U.N. can help bring. In Iraq, a very mixed record. And generally on Israel, it has been a shameful performance——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And embarrassing.

Mr. WILLIAMSON [continuing]. That has undermined and discredited the institution and certainly been inconsistent with the values of the Charter. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Williamson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD S. WILLIAMSON, PARTNER, MAYER, BROWN, ROWE & MAW, LLP, FORMER UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR AND ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

I thank Congresswomen Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairperson of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, for inviting me to testify on "The Middle East and the United Nations."

The United Nations and Israel

I became engaged in working in the U.N. system 22 years ago when I became U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. offices in Vienna, Austria. Among the first issues that I dealt with was Israeli credentials at the 1983 Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The year before Israeli credentials for the IAEA Conference had been denied. Fortunately, due to vigorous work in Washington, Vienna and in capitals, Israeli credentials were not directly challenged at the 1983 Conference nor have they been subsequently. Some years later, as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs I fought the pernicious U.N. resolution that equated Zionism with racism.

As Ambassador to the United Nations for Special Political Affairs in New York, I often confronted double standards in the U.N. Security Council, especially regarding Israel. I remember one meeting of the Security Council that took place right after a meeting of the Quartet. As I'd learned to expect, my Syrian colleague used the meeting to attack Israel. Also as I'd learned to expect, but what nonetheless constantly disappointed me, many other delegations attacked Israel. My British colleague joined in many of the criticisms of Israel, even expressing sentiments that

directly undercut the Quartet statement about the peace process made the day before. After the meeting, when I expressed my disappointment at what he had said, British Ambassador Stuart Eldon said, "Oh Rich, this is just politics. You can't take it so seriously."

Ambassador Eldon was right. For him and most of the Security Council members, posturing on the Middle East and attacking Israel is "just politics." It is the accepted norm within the United Nations. It is just what one does on the Middle East issue. When I would say to the U.N. Security Council that any reference to excessive Israeli force in the West Bank must be balanced by a condemnation of the terrorist attacks by Hamas, I made my colleagues uncomfortable. However great the merits of my demand, it was socially and politically unacceptable. Invariably, the consequence of my demand was that, rather than mention the Arab terrorist activities, the Security Council then issued no press statement whatsoever.

And just last spring, I served as Ambassador and United States Representative to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland. Last year, as in earlier years, the Commission on Human Rights was exploited by some in their relentless campaign to delegitimize Israel, the oldest democracy in the Middle East. While all other country specific concerns are lumped together under UNCHR agenda item 9, Israel is singled out with its own, separate agenda item. The excessive, invective rhetoric assaulting Israel is numbing. The one-sided resolutions are scandalous. On human rights, no nation is blameless. All countries should be vigilant to improve their own human rights records. But the singling out of Israel in this manner reveals more about the double standards and abuse within the U.N. system than it does about alleged human rights failures by the State of Israel.

I believe that over the years the United Nations has marginalized itself in many ways on the Israeli/Palestinian issue. The U.N. lacks moral authority on this matter. To the extent member states believe their rhetoric and actions on the Middle East in the U.N. are "just politics" that should not be taken seriously, is the extent to which the U.N. itself cannot be taken seriously.

Unfortunately, the bias against Israel in the United Nations is significant.

The Arab bloc within the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 has effectively used the General Assembly as a forum for isolating Israel. With their numbers, they have easily passed harsh anti-Israel resolutions in the General Assembly. I already have mentioned the most notorious, U.N. General Assembly Resolution 3379 adopted in 1975 equating Zionism with Racism. It was finally rescinded in 1991 following the Madrid Conference.

Over the past several years an average of 18 resolutions critical of Israel have been adopted by the General Assembly each year. The Arab group and the Non-Aligned Movement often have challenged the credentials of the Israeli delegation at the beginning of General Assembly sessions. The most recent challenge was in May 2002 prior to the U.N. General Assembly Session on Children. No other member state faces such routine attacks.

Of the ten Emergency Special Sessions held by the General Assembly, six have been on the Middle East, four of which have been critical of Israel. Meetings of the tenth Emergency Special Session on Occupied East Jerusalem started in 1997, met most recently in 2002 and remains "suspended" to facilitate the reopening of the issue. Since June 1996, the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, UNIFIL, has become politicized in the Fifth Committee and Plenary as countries hostile to Israel seek to attribute responsibility on Israel for the April 18, 1996, Qana incident and demand Israel's payment for damages.

The U.N. Commission on Human Rights routinely adopts a disproportionate number of resolutions concerning Israel. Over the past three sessions, the Commission on Human Rights resolutions critical of Israel average 6-7% of the total number of resolutions adopted while many rogue states that are among the worst abusers of human rights are not criticized at all. Of all condemnations by the Commission on Human Rights, twenty-six percent refer to Israel alone.

Several divisions of the U.N. Secretariat and U.N. committees established over United States' obligations are critical of Israel. They are discriminatory and one-sided. United States efforts to eliminate them have been unsuccessful. They include the Division for Palestinian Rights of the U.N. Secretariat, the Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices in the Occupied Territories, and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

President Bush has sought to counter this U.N. bias and hostility against Israel. The Administration has sought to prevent U.N. bodies from unfairly targeting Israel. The Bush Administration has not hesitated to vote against resolutions singling Israel out for criticism. In 2002 the Bush Administration announced that the United States would veto any Security Council resolution on the Middle East that did not condemn Palestinian terror attacks and name Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the

Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigade as the groups responsible for the attacks. The Bush Administration also has made clear that any U.N. Security Council resolutions must note that any Israeli withdrawal is linked to the security situation, and that both parties must be called upon to pursue a negotiated settlement.

President Bush has demonstrated leadership on the Middle East issue. He has called for reform of Palestinian governance, and some reform has happened. He has developed a Road Map to resolve the conflict that will ensure Israel's security and allow an independent Palestinian state. Working with the Quartet (the U.S., the European Union, Russia and the U.N.) and working directly with the countries in the region, President Bush will continue to provide leadership in trying to resolve this conflict.

However the United Nations, due to its long history of bias against Israel, has limits on how central a role it can play in these efforts. The U.N. moral authority and standing to contribute significantly to the resolution of this conflict has been compromised.

By distorting the United Nations agenda and using resolutions to relentlessly attack a member state, the majority of U.N. members have contradicted the U.N. Charter, defied its values, and diminished the United Nations as an institution.

Having briefly reviewed this litany of assaults on the State of Israel within the United Nations, let me emphasize that it is not exhaustive. There have been other efforts in the U.N. to delegitimize Israel. But the attacks that I have reviewed provide sufficient justification for proposed House Resolution 54. I believe it would be useful to have such an expression of the House of Representatives regarding anti-Semitism at the United Nations. The attacks on Israel are disproportional, one-sided and wrong. They are impediments to progress in resolving the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. And they bring discredit on the United Nations.

The U.N. and other matters in the Middle East

Having discussed the case of efforts within the United Nations to delegitimize Israel, let me briefly touch on a couple of other matters in the Middle East where the U.N. has played a role.

A situation in which the United Nations has been useful has been U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559, adopted on September 2, 2004, and subsequent actions supporting the full sovereignty and independence of Lebanon, free of all foreign forces. The Government of Syria had imposed its political will on Lebanon, and compelled the Cabinet and Lebanese National Assembly to amend its constitution and abort the electoral process by extending the term of the Syrian-backed president of Lebanon by three years. This resolution, introduced by the United States and France with the co-sponsorship of Germany and the United Kingdom, supported the extension of control of the Government of Lebanon. This Security Council resolution also made clear that the continued presence of armed Hizballah militia elements, as well as the presence of the Syrian military and Iranian forces in Lebanon, hinders that goal. Through this Security Council resolution in the United Nations, the international community was able to express the view that it was wrong for Syria to continue to maintain its forces in Lebanon in contravention of the spirit and clear intent of the Taif Accord. And it made known its view that it would be wrong of Syria to continue to interfere in the presidential electoral process in Lebanon.

While the situation in Lebanon has not entirely sorted out, Syrian President Asaad has announced that his troops will withdraw from Lebanon and partial withdrawal has begun. Public demonstrations for an independent Lebanon are animating a political transition in Lebanon. And the international community, working through the United Nations, contributed to push for these positive developments.

Finally, let me briefly discuss Iraq. The United Nations has a mixed record on dealing with Iraq.

After Saddam Hussein's illegal occupation of Kuwait, the United Nations Security Council passed a series of resolutions condemning the invasion and occupation, and demanding Iraqi withdrawal. When Saddam failed to comply with these U.N. Security Council demands, the use of force was authorized to repel the Iraqi occupying forces. And when Saddam's troops had been defeated, the U.N. Security Council imposed the most intrusive arms inspection in history on Iraq in an effort to dismantle Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. The subsequent arms inspections contributed to substantially dismantling and destroying Saddam's WMD stockpiles and capabilities. In each of these stages, the United Nations played a very useful role.

By the late 1990's, some U.N. Security Council members valued commercial opportunities more highly than continued vigorous monitoring of Iraqi arms. Further U.N. arms inspections were prevented by Saddam with little cost to him, and the United Nations Oil-For-Food program was initiated. We now are learning the extent

of the troubling corruption and abuse in the U.N. administration of the Oil-For-Food program. In 2002, President Bush returned the matter of Iraqi non-compliance to U.N. resolutions to center stage. A seventeenth resolution was adopted, U.N.S.C. Resolution 1441, stating Iraq was in violation of prior U.N. resolutions, demanding immediate Iraqi pro-active compliance with the prior arms inspection resolutions, and stating a failure to immediately and fully comply with Resolution 1441 would be met with "serious consequences," which was well understood to be the use of force.

Unfortunately, when Saddam Hussein did not fully comply with U.N.S.C. Resolution 1441, the Security Council was not able to pass an 18th resolution explicitly authorizing the use of force. This demonstrated structural and procedural weaknesses in the U.N. Security Council.

Since the "Coalition of the Willing" led by the United States and the United Kingdom successfully brought down Saddam Hussein's regime, the United Nations has passed a series of resolutions dealing with the occupation, reconstruction and elections. These United Nations actions have contributed to progress in post-conflict Iraq.

So the case of Iraq has demonstrated ways and means where the United Nations has been useful in dealing with a very difficult situation in the Middle East, and instances where the U.N. performance has been disappointing. But going forward in Iraq, the United Nations can play a constructive role. And I anticipate the United States and others will work actively in the U.N. to ensure it does so.

Summary

In the Middle East, the United Nations offers promise and it has displayed disappointment. Like many large institutions, it's a mixed bag. The challenge for the United States Government is to engage the United Nations and work hard to help it realize its promise. If we fail to do so, it will disappoint and opportunities for programs will be missed.

Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. That is an excellent analysis from both of you gentlemen. You have been wonderful spokesmen for the U.S. foreign policy as we try to explain to our allies, especially in international fora like the United Nations, about where we stand, where we would like the international community to help all oppressed people and people who are suffering persecution and oppression and discrimination, and do not have a democracy and respect for human rights, and the rule of law, and transparency and accountability, and how difficult it has been for us because the United Nations has strayed so far from the foundation upon which it was based.

I know Mr. Chabot, who is the Vice Chair of our Subcommittee, shares this view, that for too long the United Nations has been the place where pariah states have been able to get a foothold to even have a place at the table, a seat at the table of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, and the Conference on Disarmament where they have pushed an anti-freedom agenda, and continue to oppress their own people, and we have got to have more transparency.

We have got to have real reforms in the United Nations, and Mr. Chabot has been a leader in that on our Full Committee. And as you know, the Full Committee is going to be looking at U.N. reform legislation, and we all have different ideas about what we would like to see changed in that body that has been used as a rallying point against the call for freedom internationally.

I would like to recognize Mr. Chabot so he can make some concluding remarks about his thoughts about the United Nations, the United States role in the United Nations, and I would like to excuse myself for a meeting that I need to go to, but I leave you gentlemen, you both Ambassadors, in excellent hands with a great diplomat, Mr. Chabot.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. CHABOT. And I will be very brief. I just want to once again complement Dr. Ros-Lehtinen for achieving that great honor yesterday.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. CHABOT. It was an honor to be there, and we will treat you with even more deference and respect than we always have in the past, Madam Chair.

I will keep my remarks, as I say, very brief. I happened to have the honor to be one of two Congressional Representatives to the U.N. in the 56th General Assembly, along with my Democratic colleague, Eni Faleomavaega from American Samoa, and it was a very interesting experience.

I went up to the U.N. a number of times and met with Ambassador Negroponte and many staff people. So I became even more convinced that reforms at the U.N. are long overdue.

I want to apologize for not being here during your testimony. I just came from the signing ceremony at the White House. The President signed the bankruptcy bill, and we toiled around here for almost 10 years on that, and I was on the Conference Committee so was invited to be at the ceremony, so that is why I was not here.

But I can assure you that I will review your testimony, your written testimony, and I appreciate your time here, and I will not belabor it any longer. You all can do important things, and I will get to my other Committees as well.

So, seeing that all the other Members of the Committee have now gone on to other items, if there is no further business to come before the Committee, we are adjourned. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 3:15 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

RESPONSES FROM MR. PHILO L. DIBBLE, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA, AND CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA

Question:

What percentage of the UN Budget goes to cover Administrative costs or to fund offices, commissions and committees relating to the Middle East? What percentage of the total UN Budget and of individual agencies is dedicated to programs in the Middle East? What percentage of those programs benefit directly the people of the region vs. those that benefit the governments?

Response:

Approximately \$255 million, or 7 percent, of the revised 2004–5 UN regular (assessed) budget goes towards activities relating to the Middle East. Of this amount, four activities account for \$239 million, or most of the above total:

- UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI): \$94 million
- UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO): \$56 million
- UN Economic and Social Commission in Western Asia (ESCWA): \$54 million, and
- regular budget support for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): \$35 million

In addition, the UN regular budget includes funding for the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process (\$11 million), the Division for Palestinian Rights (\$5 million) and long-standing political committees devoted specifically to Middle East issues (less than \$1 million).

There is no designated Middle East program in the UN regular budget. All of the above activities are distinct in the UN's program of work and are captured under general headings such as political affairs, peacekeeping affairs, international development, refugees, human rights and public information. The ultimate beneficiaries of these UN activities are supposed to be the people of the affected areas, as opposed to individual governments. This applies particularly to the work of major budget activities such as UNAMI, UNTSO, ESCWA, UNRWA and the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process (in support of the "Quartet").

Question:

Does the current UN budget simply add a layer of resources to the existing one, rather than shift and realign resources from low-impact activities to new priorities? Please elaborate.

Response:

The UN's program planning and budget rules require UN managers to identify obsolete and marginal outputs and activities for possible elimination in the next budget cycle. While some progress has been achieved in eliminating outputs in the current (2004–05) UN budget, we believe more can be done to implement the existing rules and improve overall priority-setting in the UN's program of work. The next UN budget cycle will encompass the biennium 2006–07. The U.S. will continue to work with other like-minded members to press for these and other management reforms in the coming cycle, including further progress in the implementation of Results-Based-Budgeting (RBB) techniques.

The UN Secretary-General has recommended, in the context of his recent reform proposals ("In larger freedom"), that the General Assembly review all UN mandates older than five years to determine their continued relevance and whether the resources devoted to these can be re-deployed to other parts of the UN budget to meet new and emerging challenges. We strongly support this recommendation.

Question:

Does the UN system follow an integrated approach to the Middle East? Is there program and operational coordination among the individual UN agencies to ensure maximum impact and avoid duplication? How can the United States make better use of the UN for a more integrated approach to U.S. efforts to support political, educational and economic reform in the Middle East and other priorities?

Response:

UN agencies work with a great deal of independence in the pursuit of their individual mandates and without a great deal of policy-level coordination. Although there normally is close coordination at the working level between UN agencies in individual countries, the UN does not have a comprehensive or integrated strategy for any geographical region, including the Middle East.

The United States has pressed, with some success, for management reforms in the UN system. These have helped increase the level of policy coordination and reduced the duplication among UN agencies. We continue to press for more such reforms. Within each agency, the United States works to align UN efforts in support of U.S. objectives, including in support of the G-8 Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA).

Question:

How cooperative have European allies been in promoting a Middle East reform agenda in the aftermath of the Sea Island summit and the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative?

Response:

The European Union, European G-8 members, and other European states share our broad reform goals for the Broader Middle East and North Africa. They have been active participants in all of the BMENA efforts including the Forum for the Future in December 2004 in Morocco, Finance and Education Ministerial meetings, the civil society and business dialogues, and the varied activities launched through the initiative.

The U.K., the current G-8 president, has supported the G-8 BMENA Initiatives launched at Sea Island, and has been particularly active on those related to education, civil society, and democracy. The United States, the U.K., and Italy in its role as G-8 partner in the Democracy Assistance Dialogue created at Sea Island, have jointly funded NGOs to lead the work of the Dialogue. At the political level, recent remarks by Javier Solana have emphasized the need for the European Union to align its important Euro-Mediterranean Partnership with the region's indigenous reform efforts. The upcoming US-EU Summit will provide a further opportunity for the U.S. and the European Union to express our shared commitment to support reformers throughout the region.

Question:

Mr. Dibble, would you describe for us the efforts the Administration makes to get other nations in the General Assembly to oppose anti-Israel resolutions?

Response:

Combating one-sided, Middle East resolutions is an important U.S. priority and an integral part of our strategy for each General Assembly. We oppose these resolutions because they address permanent status issues that are properly addressed in negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, advocate activities or language that are incompatible with the Middle East peace process and are generally unhelpful in creating an atmosphere of trust between the parties. Prior to each General Assembly we demarche member states in their capitals on relevant agenda items and do so again, as appropriate, as resolutions come up for a vote. We include this issue on our agenda of consultations with EU, enlisting their support to oppose such resolutions, or at least to abstain. The EU abstains on the worst resolutions and we continue to urge them to shift to our approach. We also vigorously press our views on delegations in New York, both publicly and privately, during debate on the agenda items.

These U.S. efforts have had an increasing measure of success in recent years. We recognize the courageous efforts of those who vote their convictions, including those

small states (e.g., the Pacific Island Forum and some Caribbean states, such as Grenada and the Dominican Republic) that resist the temptation to vote with the so-called “automatic majorities.” Increasingly we are looking for and finding support in new areas, including Africa, where countries like Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have begun to vote critically. In our own hemisphere, we rallied the support of Canada, which, with Australia, has opposed some of the worst resolutions. Other consistent and reliable voices in our hemisphere include Haiti and Uruguay and the CAFTA countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua). Mexico has moved slightly away from its previous anti-Israel stance on these resolutions, abstaining on two.

Question:

Can you comment on reports that Saudi Arabia has quietly begun talks on a U.N.-sanctioned agreement that could curtail any outside probe of its atomic intentions? What reforms is the Administration considering to the IAEA’s small quantities protocol that would exempt the country from most of the Agency’s control authority? Please elaborate.

Response:

Saudi Arabia is a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and has offered public assurances of its commitment to the agreement; as such it is obligated to sign and bring into force an agreement with the IAEA for the application of IAEA safeguards in its country. Saudi Arabia is one of 39 NPT parties that have not yet met this requirement. However, the IAEA Secretariat and Saudi Arabia have agreed to a text that will be submitted to the Board of Governors for approval in June.

It has been accepted practice since the 1970s that for states without nuclear materials or facilities that would require safeguards inspections, a so-called ‘Small Quantities Protocol’ is added to the agreement. Such protocols are in force in over 70 countries, and the proposed agreement with Saudi Arabia has such a protocol. The protocols significantly limit the IAEA’s inspection regime in the state.

The IAEA has, however, been reviewing the adequacy of such protocols in the context of its responsibility not only to monitor declared nuclear materials, but to provide assurance that there are no undeclared nuclear materials and activities. The small quantities protocol limits the IAEA’s ability to perform the latter task. It is expected that the IAEA Secretariat will make recommendations to the Board in June on how to address this problem. We expect that all countries with such protocols—including Saudi Arabia—will accept whatever changes the Board of Governors deems necessary.

Question:

Can you comment [on] the reported decision by Secretary General Kofi Annan to delay a final report on whether Syria is fully complying with a Security Council resolution calling for its withdrawal from Lebanon? What impact could this have on the prospects of dispatching a verification mission? Can you comment on the mandate and composition of this proposed mission?

Response:

Secretary General Annan delayed the release of the report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 from April 19th to the 26th. We were disappointed by the delay, since it appeared that Syria had been able to dictate the UN’s timetable for releasing the report. However, we were pleased with the substance of the final report. The UN mission to verify Syrian withdrawal is currently in place in Lebanon and we look forward to the team’s report within the next few weeks. We remain deeply concerned, however, about widespread reports of Syria’s continued covert presence, interference in Lebanon’s internal affairs and support for armed elements in Lebanon, including allowing the transshipment of Iranian arms to Hizballah through Syrian territory. We expect the verification mission to focus on these reports and to confirm whether or not Syria has indeed fully withdrawn from Lebanon and ceased all interference in Lebanese affairs.

Question:

Mr. Dibble, the resolutions that establish the Division for Palestinian Rights as well as the two committees, all commit the United Nations to spend money in order to establish them. That means that the resolutions must pass with two thirds of the votes. Yet many nations, including many European nations, choose to abstain. If we could change abstentions to nos, then these resolutions wouldn’t pass. What efforts is the Administration making to get nations to vote no instead of abstaining on these particular resolutions?

Response:

As part of our overall strategy for combating one-sided Middle East resolutions in the UNGA, the United States opposes funding for these agencies in the UNGA Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) and vigorously presses others to do the same, both in capitals and in New York. We include this issue on the agenda of our consultations with the EU. While the EU abstains on funding for these committees, we continue to urge them to shift their votes to “no.” In recent years, we have had some increased measure of success. For example, to its credit and on its own initiative, Hungary withdrew from one of these one-sided committees.

Question:

Mr. Dibble, what is the annual budget for the Division for Palestinian Rights as well as for the other two anti-Israeli committees? What proportion of those annual budgets represents the U.S. contributions to each of those organizations?

Response:

The UN operates on a biennial budget cycle. For 2004–05, the budget levels for the relevant entities are:

- Division for Palestinian Rights: \$5.1 million
- Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: \$58.6 thousand
- Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs in the Occupied Territories: \$248.3 thousand

The above entities are included in the UN regular budget. The U.S. assessment rate for the regular budget is 22 percent.

Question:

Can you state and elaborate on the basis for the current budgetary and personnel levels of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division on Palestinian Rights, United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs in the Occupied Territory? Does this include our funding from our assessed or voluntary contributions?

Response:

The basis for the budget and personnel levels of the above entities derives from their respective mandates, all of which were established by the General Assembly in the 1970s through various resolutions. Only the budget for the Division of Palestinian Rights includes staff costs in the overall budget level. A total of 116 staff posts are authorized for the Division in the 2004–05 biennium. The budget level for the Division is \$5.1 million.

The budget levels for the other entities in 2004–05 are as follows:

- Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: \$58.6 thousand (relates to meeting costs, as required)
- UN Information System on the Question of Palestine: \$545.7 thousand (provides for the travel of journalists to training programs and to the Middle East on news missions, as well as for associated printing and general operating costs relating to the program)
- Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs in the Occupied Territories: \$248.3 thousand (relates to meeting costs of this 3-member body).

All of the above entities are included in the UN regular (assessed) budget, where the U.S. assessment rate is 22 percent. The overall UN budget for 2004–05, as revised last December, amounts to \$3.608 billion.

Question:

The United States is a member of the Advisory Commission for UNRWA and participates in a semi-annual review of the UNRWA program and its budget. Can you comment on U.S. efforts to ensure financial transparency and accountability within UNRWA? Has the Administration considered using its position to implement an audit function within UNRWA that would provide additional oversight and accountability through independent assessments of UNRWA activities?

Response:

The State Department takes very seriously its responsibility for budgetary oversight of UN operations, both at UN headquarters and at UN agencies, including UNRWA.

UNRWA publishes detailed budgets as well as budgetary reports that are available for all member states to review. UNRWA is in the process of drafting its 2006–2007 biennium budget. As per past practice, UNRWA will use the next semi-annual UNRWA Major Donors Meeting in Amman, Jordan, May 18–19 to explain its proposed budget along with past spending and to allow donors to ask detailed questions. The United States will attend that meeting and will scrutinize UNRWA's proposed 2006–2007 budget. The United States also has a full-time Refugee Coordinator at our Embassy in Amman, Jordan, whose principal responsibility is to monitor UNRWA and to ensure that it is using donor funding wisely and efficiently.

The United States also closely studies the budget of UNRWA's emergency appeals, which have been issued over the past four years to address humanitarian needs of the worst affected of the 1.6 million Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza. In 2004, the Department of State deployed a team of officers to evaluate these appeals, and among other things, we recommended that UNRWA move certain education and psychosocial budget items from its emergency appeal to its regular budget, which UNRWA did.

Like that of IOM, UNHCR, and other international organizations, UNRWA's budget is audited annually by the U.N. Board of External Auditors, whose report is made available to the General Assembly. The Comptroller's office in the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration reviews those audits to determine whether UNRWA is acting on the key recommendations of the auditors.

We believe that the procedures and controls outlined above are adequate to ensure a reasonable degree of financial transparency and accountability regarding UNRWA's budget.

Question:

What do you see as the most crucial role for the United Nations in the Middle East? Would you, for instance, support performance-based budgeting?

Response:

The UN contributes most crucially by helping to maintain and advance the Middle East Peace Process. Three UN peacekeeping missions—UNDOF, UNTSO and UNIFIL—do their best to maintain a tenuous ceasefire along Israel's northern borders and in the Golan. In addition, the UN Relief and Works Agency makes an important humanitarian contribution to the welfare of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees.

Politically, Secretary General Annan's repeated statements that terrorism—no matter how just the cause—is unjustified carry considerable moral weight. Secretary General Annan and his envoy are members of the Quartet and are involved in encouraging implementation of the Roadmap leading to a permanent two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Question:

Would you, for example, support the elimination or restructuring of any particular UN offices, committees or organizations? Please specify.

Response:

The U.S. opposes UNGA Fourth Committee resolutions that extend the mandates of the Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, as well as the Division of Palestinian Rights in the UN Secretariat. The U.S. believes these bodies perpetuate an anti-Israel bias in the UN system and should be eliminated.

Question:

What should be the role of the Security Council in terms of enforcement mechanisms? Should there be reforms to the criteria mechanisms to ensure that regimes such as Syria, who are in violation of UNSCR resolutions, are not permitted to serve on the Security Council?

Response:

As you know, the Secretary General's report has generated a large number of UN reform proposals, including proposals to revamp the Security Council. We are open to considering all proposals on Council reform, including establishing criteria for

Council membership, and would evaluate them against the benchmark of whether they enhance the Council's effectiveness.

Question:

Legislative mandates require that the Secretary of State certify and report to Congress that Israel is being afforded equal treatment at the International Atomic Energy Agency. Should UN reform legislation include a similar requirement for all UN bodies and affiliated agencies? Should U.S. contributions be contingent upon compliance with such a requirement?

Response:

The Secretary is required to determine each year that Israel is not being denied its rights to participate in the IAEA, and to report this determination to the Congress, before making voluntary contributions to the Agency. This determination has been made and reported for years without difficulty.

The Administration does not support additional legislative mandates requiring certification that Israel is accorded equal treatment in other UN bodies. The United States is committed to ensuring equitable treatment for Israel in all international bodies. Across the UN system, U.S. representatives speak out forcefully and frequently in numerous UN bodies to ensure that Israel is not excluded from or isolated at UN meetings and conferences, and that Israeli delegates are given equal opportunity to participate in the informal gatherings, groupings and caucuses where much of the work of international bodies is done. For example, Israel's admission to WEOG in 2000 at the United Nations—with strong U.S. support—made Israel eligible to compete for the first time (in 2002) for election to UN limited-membership bodies. Israel, which will remain a member of WEOG until such time as it is allowed to participate in the work of the Asia Group, now has been elected to all nine UN bodies for which it has sought membership in New York. These include the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, the UN Environment Program's Governing Council and the UN Human Settlements Program.

Such U.S. efforts have reduced support by other member states for these resolutions in the UNGA and have proved to be successful in similar situations in many UN agencies. We believe that U.S. interventions and sustained efforts in individual agencies as these circumstances arise are the best way to gain equal treatment for Israel where ever it seeks to participate in the work of international organizations. Each of these organizations has different negotiation and consultation methods or practices, and may thus require different diplomatic approaches depending on the circumstances to address the possibility of unfair or unequal treatment of Israel.

Question:

Would you agree WEOG should be expanded to afford Israel permanent membership in this grouping? Do you foresee any challenges or objections from other WEOG members to such an effort? What countries, in particular, would object to Israel's permanent inclusion in WEOG?

Response:

The United States strongly supports Israel's membership in WEOG until such time as its application to join the Asian States group, its natural geographic grouping, is accepted. Both we and the Israeli government view this as a temporary expedient and do not believe that Israel's WEOG membership should be permanent. Israel became a full member of WEOG in New York on a temporary basis in May 2000. The United States currently is working to secure Israel's full participation in WEOG in all UN bodies in locations other than New York as well.

Question:

Can you comment on the reported infusion of extra-budgetary funds that has allowed UNESCO to fund more projects? What specific additional programs has that agency funded in the Middle East? Can you comment on U.S. priorities regarding UNESCO budget, UNESCO executive board, establishment of special account, and how they translate into funding requests vis-à-vis the Middle East?

Response:

UNESCO's extra-budgetary resources for 2004–2005 are projected to be about \$244 million, down from the \$334 million estimated for the previous 2002–2003 biennium. Of the 2004–2005 extrabudgetary funds, approximately \$30 million has been budgeted for programs in the Middle East (Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia,

United Arab Emirates, Yemen). A list of specific programs funded through a mixture of extra-budgetary and regular funds that target Middle East countries is attached.

The United States provided \$1.9 million in voluntary contributions in calendar year 2004 to UNESCO. This includes \$671,000 to the World Heritage Committee, which has heritage sites around the world including the Middle East, and \$60,000 to assist the Voice of Afghan Women in Global Media, a privately owned television station in Kabul. Further, U.S. re-entry to UNESCO resulted in a lump-sum payment by the United States of one-quarter of U.S. dues to UNESCO for calendar year 2003. This lump sum of \$15.8 million, although considered dues paid and not extrabudgetary, was put into a special account to allow the funds to be spent outside of the regular budget cycle. Of this amount, UNESCO agreed with a U.S. proposal to use approximately \$10 million to strengthen and expand UNESCO's work in reconstructing educational systems in post-conflict areas, focusing on Afghanistan, Iraq and Africa.

U.S. priorities for UNESCO's budget and program are: to combat illiteracy and advance the goals of Education For All as laid out in the 2000 Dakar Framework; to rehabilitate education systems in post-conflict nations including Afghanistan; to promote capacity-building in the areas of science and engineering; to apply science and engineering in pursuit of the internationally agreed development goal of increasing access to potable water; and to further preservation of cultural objects. All of these programs are carried out on a worldwide basis, including in the Middle East. UNESCO funding for specific Middle East activities includes the initiative for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and activities promoting dialogue within the Middle East. UNESCO's regular program funds that are allocated for reconstruction and rehabilitation activities in the Palestinian Territories are approximately US\$1.1 million per biennium. The U.S. supports these activities in the Middle East.

UNESCO PROGRAMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

UNESCO's programs are designed by topic rather than region, with most programs focusing on several regional areas. The following are some programs that focus particularly on the Middle East, but this is not a comprehensive list of all UNESCO activities in this region. These programs are funded through regular assessed dues with some extra-budgetary resources.

- Education for All programs promoting non-formal, technical/vocational secondary and higher education, notably in Afghanistan, the Middle East, East Africa and the Great Lakes region;
- Water education and capacity-building for sustainable development and security. This included expanded education, training and research in water and sustainable development, primarily targeted to developing countries, but including approximately 400 professionals awarded MS degrees in six jointly implemented programs at partner universities in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East;
- Promoting "Seismology for Peace" and "Disaster Prevention for Peace" in select regions (Middle East, Central America), with particular emphasis on the development of cross-border innovative mechanisms, to enhance disaster preparedness and prevention;
- Capacity-building in the basic and engineering sciences, which includes the development of the International Center for Synchrotron Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME);
- Dissemination of educational tools deriving from the experience of the Histories Project to Member States with a view to reducing stereotypes and prejudice as part of the contribution of intercultural dialogue and pluralism to respect for cultural diversity. Target groups for educational tools were in the regions of Central Asia, South-East Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Safeguarding and restoration of a number of cultural monuments in Afghanistan, including rehabilitation of the Kabul Museum, and strengthening national capacities for heritage conservation and management;
- Management and rehabilitation of multicultural sites in pre- and post-conflict situations at the regional and subregional levels (Central Asia and the Caucasus; South-East Europe; Middle East; Korean Peninsula);
- Supporting independent media in conflict and post-conflict situations to enable them to gather and disseminate non-partisan information (South East

Europe, Angola, the Great Lakes Region in Africa, the Middle East, East Timor, and Afghanistan). UNESCO's action in this area includes the promotion of dialogue among media professionals in zones of conflict and the outside world and provision of advice to the authorities of countries in postconflict situations in drafting new media legislation, which enhances the development of freedom of expression.

Question:

Can you comment on the proposed reduction on the allocation for special political missions? Have there been other proposed reductions for efficiency measures and the phasing out of obsolete mandates?

Response:

The United States strongly supports the reduction and elimination of outmoded or redundant UN missions. During the past year, the Security Council approved the termination of the special political mission on Bougainville and a significant restructuring of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, both to reflect the changed situation there and to save scarce resources. We continue to look for opportunities to reduce or eliminate unneeded UN operations.

Question:

The Administration pledged \$71.49 million in support of UNESCO in 2003. Of our assessed contributions to UNESCO, how much is utilized by that body to fund the Program of Action in Favor of the Palestinian People?

Response:

In 2003, the United States contributed \$15.8 million in regular dues to UNESCO and an additional \$1.75 million in voluntary contributions.

In July 2004, UNESCO adopted the "UNESCO Program of Assistance for Rehabilitation and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," prepared following a broad consultative process with the Palestinian Authority and other stakeholders. The Program supercedes previous programs and defines UNESCO assistance both in the form of emergency assistance and longer-term institutional and human capacity-building. The Program represents a first step towards the formulation of a strategy for UNESCO action in the Middle East on the theme "Rehabilitation, Development and Dialogue". The Program will be funded through voluntary contributions specifically earmarked for this program. It does not draw on other voluntary or assessed contributions. A donor event will be held in 2005 to mobilize funding for the implementation of the Program.

Question:

Although UNDP programs are regularly monitored for their effectiveness and transparency by third party organizations, there is little conditionality on its aid programs, particularly in the governance sector. How can we address this deficiency? At the program level, are there management reviews that compare actual performance to expected outcomes? Would you agree that these are critical elements of effective oversight and accountability?

Response:

UNDP's programs work in five areas that its Executive Board (of which we are a member) has mandated. They are: poverty, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, environment, and HIV/AIDS. The results of these programs are reported and monitored from country offices to the headquarters through the "results-oriented annual report" (ROAR) system that UNDP has implemented. A recent OMB PART (Program Assessment and Rating Tool) evaluation found UNDP program management to be effective.

UNDP's mission and the nature of inter-governmental decision-making within the Executive Board do not lend the organization to the use of conditionality that the World Bank and IMF can impose. For a certain level of donor control, some countries earmark large amounts of contributions to UNDP to address issues of high importance to them. Currently, Congress appropriates our contributions to UNDP with no conditions attached except the "pariah state withholding."

Question:

While UN peacekeeping forces have been stationed along the Lebanese border, terrorist groups have been able to successfully infiltrate their operations, as in the incident when terrorists used UN uniforms, jeeps, and other materials to pose as UN personnel and carry out attacks against Israel. Have UNIFIL's operations and forces been penetrated and or compromised? Does the U.S. consider these forces to be necessary or successful in their mission in Lebanon? How does the U.S. envision their

role changing or expanding with the withdrawal of Syrian and Iranian forces from Lebanon?

Response:

We do not have any information at this time that UNIFIL forces have been infiltrated by any particular armed group.

As recognized by the Security Council, UNIFIL has essentially completed two of three of its mandate tasks: verifying the withdrawal of Israeli forces, and assisting, to the extent possible, Lebanese efforts to return to areas where the IDF has departed. In its remaining task of restoring international peace and security to the region, UNIFIL provides a stabilizing presence and a monitoring capability in a volatile area. The mission's patrolling and reporting provide a measure of transparency, which can prevent incidents from spiraling into wider violence, especially given continued violations of the Blue Line by both sides.

Once the UN has verified the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, the United States and the international community will continue to press for the full restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity. In this context, we will explore ways that UNIFIL, in fulfillment of its mandate, can assist the Government of Lebanon in assuming sole and exclusive authority over the South and in ensuring a calm environment throughout the area, including along the Blue Line. Per UNSCR 1583 of January 28, 2005, the Security Council, with input from the Secretary-General, intends to review the mandate, to ensure that the force is appropriately structured to help restore international peace and security.

