



The Devastating Impacts of Cuts to United Nations Funding

The Administration's FY'18 Budget proposal – which aims to cut funds to the State Department by 30 percent and the United Nations by significantly more – would severely jeopardize American national security and foreign policy objectives. As proposed, the White House Budget

- Calls for “reducing or ending direct funding for international organizations”, and the cuts to foreign affairs spending in the overall budget make reductions to the UN and international organizations not only inevitable but far reaching;
- Mandates the reduction of U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping from 28 percent to 25 percent which would put the United States back into arrears at the UN for the first time in nearly a decade; and
- Ends U.S. funding for UN climate change programs, including the Green Climate Fund.

If adopted by Congress, such reductions would cripple vital counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, humanitarian, health and development programs at a time of increased challenges to global security and stability. Slashing U.S. funding to the United Nations would obstruct President Trump's policy priorities to make America stronger and safer, and cede ground to countries that do not share American interests and pose a risk to American values. Furthermore, it would make UN reform much more difficult and greatly weaken the new Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen and streamline the organization.

Although imperfect, no other organization has the reach, scale and impact of the UN. It is the only global convener that can ensure countries around the world share the burden of maintaining international security and stability. Our partnerships at the UN and with implementing agencies on the ground are helping to stamp out violent extremism and stabilize fragile states, while promoting core American interests of democracy and freedom and providing lifesaving aid to millions of innocent people around the world. Through the UN, the world is better equipped to monitor North Korea's nuclear activities, verify Iran's compliance with nuclear weapon restrictions, preemptively respond to escalations from ISIS, fight human trafficking, and effectively respond to global health crises like the Zika virus.

If enacted, the proposed cuts would threaten the UN's most vital programs and efforts, including:

Peacekeeping Operations

- As Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, said: “[United Nations] peacekeepers help promote stability and help reduce the risks that major U.S. military interventions may be required. Therefore the success of these operations is very much in our national interest.”

- Effective peacekeeping and conflict prevention efforts reduce and prevent the spread of transnational risks in the form of migrant flows, corruption and criminal activities, extremist activities, and the likely re-emergence of destabilizing conflict down the road.
- Our financial contributions ensures that the U.S. has a prime seat at the table, shaping UN mission mandates to align with U.S. objectives and values. And it is able to do so without risk to U.S. soldiers. The U.S. contributes very few uniformed personnel to UN missions—currently providing less than 100 soldiers, military advisors, and police out of a total force of more than 100,000. Meanwhile, a range of countries like Bangladesh, Italy, Nepal, Ghana, and Jordan pick up the slack, collectively providing tens of thousands of uniformed personnel. The U.S. is also outpaced in personnel contributions by other permanent members of the Security Council— particularly China, which provides more than 2,600 soldiers and police to UN missions.
- UN peacekeeping missions are cost-effective. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, these missions are eight times cheaper than U.S. forces acting alone. In addition, it costs the United States \$2 million to deploy a single U.S. soldier and \$24,000 to deploy a UN peacekeeper.
- They are also effective in weakening enabling environments for extremists and preventing conflict from reigniting. Steven Pinker of Harvard University noted that research has made clear: “A country is much less likely to fall back in civil war if they’ve got armed peacekeepers. And the better financed and armed the peacekeeping force, the more effective they are.”

Impact of Cuts

- ❖ While other countries pay over 70 percent of the costs of UN peacekeeping missions, the U.S. remains the largest financial contributor. A U.S. decision to slash peacekeeping funding would have far-reaching consequences in the field, making it much more difficult for peacekeepers to effectively manage conflict and protect civilians from harm. Research has clearly shown that in places with a significant peacekeeping presence, civilian deaths fall markedly. In one study, the authors examined monthly civilian death tolls from civil wars in sub-Saharan Africa over fifteen years. Their findings were striking: in instances where no peacekeeping troops were deployed, the monthly average of civilian deaths was 106. In instances where at least 8,000 UN troops were present, by contrast, the average monthly death toll fell to less than two. Drastic cuts in UN peacekeeping would prevent the deployment of the larger and more robust missions sometimes necessary to prevent civilian casualties and unnecessary loss of life.
- ❖ UN peacekeeping missions are authorized by the UN Security Council, of which the U.S. is a permanent, veto-wielding member. As a result, no peacekeeping mission can be deployed without U.S. consent in the first place. If the U.S. unilaterally cuts its peacekeeping payments, we would go into arrears. This, in turn, would negatively impact our ability to advance our key priorities at the Council, as it would impair our relations with other Member states. This would include the U.S. priority, as articulated by U.S. ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, to push for key peacekeeping reforms.

Humanitarian Assistance

- A massive cut from the United States, the world’s single largest humanitarian funder, would have catastrophic consequences on millions of lives and could further destabilize these already fragile countries and populations. These cuts would impact funds that support UN agencies serving the world’s most vulnerable populations in areas of U.S. national security interest, including the World Food Program (WFP), UNICEF, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Development Program, and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). Turning our back on this type of support flies in the face of our American values and ideals. It also makes us less safe.

Impact of Cuts

- ❖ Famine has already been declared in parts of South Sudan, with the threat of famine looming across Yemen, Somalia, and Nigeria. Twenty million people are in immediate need of life-saving assistance, including food, water, health care services, sanitation and hygiene, and will starve to death if the UN does not receive the funds necessary to reach them. The UN is also responding to a massive humanitarian crisis in Syria and the humanitarian impacts of the Mosul operation in Iraq.
- ❖ The world is also grappling with the worst refugee crisis in history. Without U.S. support, pressures will increase on frontline refugee-hosting states already bearing the heaviest financial, political, and human costs. Mounting pressures could stoke sectarian tensions, fuel resentment of refugees, and destabilize governments in already vulnerable states, including U.S. allies like Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey.
- ❖ Cuts will likely compel more people who are not getting essential services to risk dangerous journeys at the hands of smugglers and traffickers whose profits often finance terrorist networks, endangering innocent people's lives and posing potential security risks across borders and continents. In 2015, after years of war in Syria, the World Food Program was forced to drastically restrict its food voucher initiative, leaving hundreds of thousands of refugees without a vital lifeline and driving many of them to flee their homes. This was one of the main drivers of the displacement crisis that brought millions of asylum seekers to Europe's borders in 2015.
- ❖ In Iraq, failure to meet basic humanitarian needs will erode the Iraqi people's faith in their government, further destabilizing the country and region. In just one day in December 2016, UN agencies including UNFPA, UNICEF, and the World Food Program delivered desperately-needed aid to 42,000 people in eastern Mosul. UNFPA and the Iraqi government created a survivors' center to meet the needs of women and girls fleeing abuse at the hands of ISIL. The Center is 100% supported by funding from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.
- ❖ In Somalia, cuts will weaken protections against rogue military recruitment. If returns to Somalia are not sustainable and contribute to further political instability, this would create a fertile recruitment environment for al-Shabaab and other insurgent groups, which have already gained hold in the country, leading to increased regional terrorist activities.
- ❖ In Jordan, cuts will likely mean the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) will be forced to drastically reduce its assistance (shelter, core relief items, energy, community services, and health care) to 115,000 Syrian refugees living in camps—more than half of whom are children.
 - Without the critical support of the U.S., the UN's work in supporting women and girls and preventing a "lost generation" would be at risk. For example, at a UNFPA maternal health clinic in a Jordanian refugee camp, 7,000 children have been delivered without one maternal death (even though 60 percent of all maternal deaths happen in humanitarian emergencies).

Global Health

- The UN system is well positioned with the international credibility, convening power, and organizational mechanisms to facilitate and coordinate health work on a global scale in a way that the U.S. cannot do alone and in order to better detect, prevent, or respond to fast-moving pandemics and infectious diseases.

Impact of Cuts

- ❖ In the past, cuts to the World Health Organization (WHO) led to major reductions in their outbreak and emergence response units, elimination of critical staff, and severe scale-backs in disease surveillance. This played a central role in the slowed response to the Ebola crisis, which cost the U.S. nearly \$2.4 billion.
- ❖ The United States has long been a key contributor to UNICEF, which is responsible for procuring vaccines that reach 45 percent of the world's children. Major cuts would have a devastating impact on the agency's ability to deliver cost-effective, high-impact global immunizations. Childhood vaccination is one of the most successful medical interventions in the last 50 years, and is responsible for saving the lives of 2.5 million children each year. Cuts of this magnitude would result in fewer kids being vaccinated, higher child mortality, and greater economic instability in vulnerable countries.
- ❖ The new WHO Health Emergencies Program, requested by Member States and approved at last year's World Health Assembly, is only partially funded. If WHO isn't able to secure full funding, including maintained funding from the U.S. – one of its largest donors – the world is at risk of another major outbreak or worse: a global pandemic. Global collaboration, including the sharing of pathogens and timely reporting of outbreaks, is only possible through a trusted multilateral platform such as the UN and is absolutely critical in preventing health emergencies. A large-scale disease outbreak could cost the global economy up to \$6 trillion.
- ❖ The world has never been closer to eradicating polio. The U.S. is the largest government donor to global polio eradication efforts and has been vital to the work of UN agencies in reducing polio by 99.9 percent, from 350,000 wild poliovirus cases in 1988 to just 37 in 2016. Cuts to WHO and UNICEF's polio programs would curtail progress towards eradication, potentially allowing the disease to spread to polio-free countries and affect as many as 200,000 people across the world per year within five years. The cumulative costs of relying on routine immunization over the next 20 years would exceed \$35 billion, while the net benefit of eradication would be \$19-25 billion over the same period.
- ❖ The U.S. is one of the largest contributors to the Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), which works with and amplifies programs like PEPFAR to coordinate global action on HIV/AIDS. A cut in funding to the UN would have a devastating impact on the efforts of WHO, UNAIDS, and PEPFAR to scale up treatment/prevention for HIV/AIDS and to achieve an AIDS-free generation.
- ❖ Last year, U.S. contributions for international reproductive health prevented an estimated 320,000 unintended pregnancies, 100,000 unsafe abortions, and 10,000 maternal deaths. The loss of U.S. funding to UNFPA for one year would prevent the delivery of services, including sexual and reproductive health assistance and gender-based violence counseling, to nine million people in humanitarian settings.

BY THE NUMBERS

\$630m - U.S. Share of UN Budget (FY'16): Less than the City of Omaha Total FY'14 Budget (\$800m)

\$5.55b - United Nations Budget (CY'16) - Less than U.S. Consumption at Taco Bell in 2013 (\$6b)

\$2.46b – U.S. Share of UN Peacekeeping (FY'16): Slightly more than U.S. Purchases of CDs/Vinyl in 2013 (\$2.2b)

\$8.77b - UN Peacekeeping Total (CY'15): Less than Rhode Island's Total FY'17 Budget (\$8.9b)

0.1% - Funding for our UN dues amount to this percentage of the Total Federal Budget



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