THE VALUE OF THE UN

PARTNERS IN PROGRESS
THE U.S. AND THE UN IN 2020
The United Nations was created in the aftermath of World War II at the initiative of the U.S. and the other Allied Powers, tasked with maintaining international peace and security, promoting social progress, and supporting universal human rights.

Now in 2020, as the international community commemorates seventy-five years since its establishment, the UN remains more relevant than ever. As the only international organization capable of bringing 193 countries together under one roof to address an array of issues critical to humanity, the UN is at the center of efforts to promote conflict prevention and peacekeeping, sustainable development and environmental protection, nuclear non-proliferation, humanitarian relief, gender equality, and good governance.

Since its founding, the UN’s work in these and many other areas has directly advanced U.S. values and interests around the world. The U.S. has enjoyed a uniquely prominent status within the UN, serving as a veto-wielding permanent member of the UN Security Council, host of UN headquarters in New York City, and its largest financial contributor.

As such, the U.S. has been in a prime position to shape the UN’s agenda to advance its national security interests, foreign policy objectives, and values, including through:

**PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

UN peacekeepers are deployed to some of the most dangerous conflict zones in the world, tasked with protecting civilians from violence, facilitating humanitarian assistance, supporting democratic elections, and helping to lay the foundation for sustainable peace. While the U.S. itself provides very few troops to these missions (just several dozen out of a total force of more than 85,000), its seat on the Security Council ensures that it plays a decisive role in determining where peacekeepers should be deployed, for how long, and what responsibilities they should be required to undertake.
EFFORTS TO COUNTER TERRORISTS AND ROGUE STATES
The UN Charter empowers the Security Council to impose legally-binding sanctions as part of its overall responsibility for addressing threats to international peace and security. From its seat on the Council, the U.S. has successfully pushed for the adoption of robust sanctions—including asset freezes, travel bans, arms embargoes, trade restrictions, and other measures—targeting the malign activities of terrorist groups (Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and the Taliban) and rogue states that seek to obtain weapons of mass destruction (North Korea).

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS
Since its founding, elevating and advancing human rights has been a key pillar of the UN’s work and a longstanding priority of the U.S. government as well, particularly Congress. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) conducts fact-finding missions and provides support to independent investigative mechanisms established by the UN Human Rights Council that probe serious violations in specific countries. In recent years, OHCHR has aided efforts to uncover and report on abuses in Syria, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Iraq, Belarus, Myanmar, Eritrea, and Ukraine, among other places. These activities help raise public awareness of human rights violations, magnify the voices of dissidents and civil society organizations on the ground, and provide a tool for pressuring repressive governments and holding abusers accountable.

ADDRESSING HUMANITARIAN CRISSES
Armed conflict, political instability, climate change, and other factors have led to an unprecedented growth in humanitarian needs around the world. UN agencies like the World Food Programme (WFP), UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and UN Population Fund (UNFPA) are leading the global response, providing food, shelter, medical care, education, maternal health care, and other forms of life-sustaining aid to tens of millions of people in countries in crisis, including Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Afghanistan. Because the U.S. does not have the capacity or reach to lead every humanitarian response, it works closely with the UN, which brings together Member States, NGOs, faith-based organizations, the private sector, and others to address crises.
RESPONDING TO INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Diseases do not know borders, and in our highly interconnected world, a public health emergency in one country can quickly spread across the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) works to meet this challenge by serving as a multilateral coordinating body on international health issues, responsible for monitoring and leading the response to outbreaks of infectious disease, spearheading vaccination efforts, and developing campaigns to combat life threatening illnesses like polio, malaria, and HIV/AIDS. In recent years, WHO has played a leading role in efforts to combat the Ebola outbreaks in West Africa and DRC and Zika virus in the Western Hemisphere. WHO is also working to coordinate the international response to the Coronavirus outbreak in China.

While the UN is not a perfect institution, calls for the U.S. to dramatically scale back its engagement or financial support are strategically unsound. In 2020, the world faces an array of seemingly intractable challenges that transcend national borders—from climate change and extreme poverty, to increasing forced displacement and violent conflicts in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. None of these issues exist in a vacuum, and no single country—even one as rich and powerful as the United States—can tackle them alone. By providing a framework for countries to work out their differences peacefully and respond to common threats and challenges collectively, the UN is critical to making the world a more secure, healthy, and humane place. Moreover, by marshalling the resources—financial or otherwise—of the entire international community, working through the UN ensures that neither American taxpayers, nor soldiers, will have to bear the full responsibility for addressing these challenges.

The following briefing book delves into a full suite of issues, including those outlined above, where the U.S. benefits from the work of the UN.
American investments in the United Nations help achieve U.S. foreign policy goals, but the return on investment goes well beyond advancing global peace and security. We also see a tangible economic benefit here at home.

Research conducted by the Better World Campaign found that American companies were awarded $1.64 billion in procurement contracts with the United Nations in 2018 (the most recent year for which data was available), by far the most of any country around the world. Since 2010, U.S. companies have received more than $10 billion in contracts with the UN overall.

American businesses working with the UN provide a range of goods and services, including telecommunications, financial services, construction, food production, medical care, and armored vehicles. Likewise, the economic impact of these contracts is immensely diverse, benefiting firms from Alaska to Alabama and Connecticut to Colorado. In fact, 84 Senators and 217 members of the House of Representatives have at least one company headquartered in their state or district doing business with the UN.

Below is a small sampling of some of the American companies that rely on a strong U.S.-UN partnership to employ thousands of hard-working Americans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>COMPANY</th>
<th>VALUE OF CONTRACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>Lyden Air Cargo, LLC</td>
<td>$9,636,363.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Sundanzer Refrigeration, Inc.</td>
<td>$5,099,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Build Change</td>
<td>$1,234,990.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Technology Dinamic, Inc.</td>
<td>$17,727,242.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Caterpillar Inc.</td>
<td>$728,315.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>SRD Foundation</td>
<td>$1,817,642.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Schuyler Line Navigation Company, LLC</td>
<td>$18,600,580.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>LR Architects P.C.</td>
<td>$546,100.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>Books of Hope LLC</td>
<td>$408,442.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Reliance Bulk Carriers LLC</td>
<td>$10,937,911.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The UN not only benefits thousands of American workers from coast-to-coast, but it also generates billions of dollars in revenue each year for New York City. A 2016 report by the New York City Mayor’s Office for International Affairs found that the UN boosts the local economy by $3.69 billion annually—the equivalent of hosting more than seven Super Bowls each year.
The latest poll, conducted in June 2019, found that voters support the UN with the highest favorability rating in 10 years (68 percent favorable, 23 percent unfavorable, 8 percent neutral). Majorities of Republicans (69 percent), Democrats (96 percent), and Independents (84 percent) also say that it is important for the U.S. to maintain an active role in the UN.

Moreover, Americans overwhelmingly agree that the UN is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars. Majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents all support the U.S. paying our dues on time and in full—the highest support in almost a decade (72 percent favor/25 percent oppose).

Even when disputes arise or the U.S. does not achieve all of its objectives at the UN, a majority of voters still believe there is greater value in the U.S. remaining engaged. Specifically, nearly six in ten (59 percent) Americans believe the U.S. should try to find a new diplomatic strategy and new allies to achieve its objectives whereas only two in ten (22 percent) say the U.S. should leave the negotiating table and go it alone.
RISING TRENDS: HOW AMERICANS VIEW U.S. GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

83% of voters agree the U.S. must remain engaged in the UN

Americans across party lines believe that the U.S. must maintain an active role at the UN.

6/10 voters have a favorable image of the UN

Six in 10 voters have a favorable image of the United Nations (68% favorable/8% neutral/23% unfavorable). This is the highest favorable rating of the UN since our tracking started in 2009.

7/10 voters support paying our UN dues

Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats support the U.S. paying our UN general dues on time and in full.
IMPACT OF THE UNITED NATIONS OVER THE PAST 75 YEARS

Throughout the past seven decades, the UN has:

- Delivered more than 70 million metric tons of food to people in humanitarian emergencies
- Helped more than 50 million refugees successfully restart their lives
- Operated 71 peacekeeping and observer missions
- Provided over 100 countries with electoral assistance
- Supported efforts to lift more than 1 billion people out of poverty
- Procured vaccines for 860 million children
- Cleared landmines in some 30 countries or territories
- Promoted human rights through 80 treaties and declarations

And through all of the good that the UN does, it is a resoundingly good bargain for the U.S.:

- **0.2%**
  
  Funding for the UN amounts to 0.2% of the total FY’20 federal budget

- **$10 BILLION**
  
  U.S. companies have been awarded more than ten billion dollars in contracts with the UN since 2010