

THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF CUTTING FUNDING TO THE UN

Benefits to U.S. Adversaries

Funding cuts signal a U.S. retreat from the world stage, creating a vacuum that China, Russia and countries misaligned with American values and interests are happy to fill. In addition to being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China is now the second largest financial contributor to the UN regular and peacekeeping budgets. If the U.S. eliminates funding for the regular budget, adversaries will promote a narrative that the U.S. is an unreliable partner disinterested in international cooperation.

Peacekeeping Reimbursements

Cutting American contributions to the UN exacerbates mounting U.S. arrears, with negative consequences for missions in the field.

It means the UN is unable to fully reimburse countries that voluntarily provide troops, police and equipment to these missions. This would also threaten the ability of countries that participate in peacekeeping – most of which are low- or middle-income nations that cannot afford to float the costs of deployment and instead rely on reimbursement – to sustain their involvement. The U.S. – as a truly globally deployed military force – would suffer the most from the collapse of UN peacekeeping by having to divert resources and deployments to stem the corresponding rise in instability.

UN Agency Leadership

Cutting funding to UN agencies means that the U.S. forgoes the ability to influence and participate in the essential work of UN standard-setting bodies.

Following the withdrawal from UNESCO, for example, programs valued by the U.S. around literacy, freedom of the press and Holocaust education were weakened, as was the ability to advocate for U.S. World Heritage sites that can bring an economic boost of more than \$100 million dollars to individual locations. American departure from the agency also paved the way for China to become the organization's largest funder, using that leverage to push UNESCO to support vocational and job training programs in countries engaged in China's Belt and Road Initiative. The U.S. reentered UNESCO in 2024 because it was manifestly in America's best interest.



Direct Effect

In January 2025, the U.S. announced its intention to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO). Without WHO membership, the U.S. loses access to essential information and early warning systems that monitor more than 100,000 health threats each month. Because infectious diseases know no borders, U.S. collaboration with the WHO protects American communities against the spread of measles, avian flu and other global health emergencies.