

U.N. ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
New York, NY, July 26, 1995.

Hon. CLAIBORNE PELL,
*Senate Russell Office Building,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR SENATOR PELL: I am writing to share with you a policy statement of the United Nations Association of the United States (UNA-USA) on the U.S. stake in the United Nations and U.N. financing, adopted in late June by UNA-USA's national convention on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter.

It is a serious yet succinct statement on an issue of considerable importance, with major implications for the Congress. We hope you will find it of interest. UNA-USA is eager to make a constructive contribution to the policy debate.

We would be pleased to share any reactions with UNA-USA's 25,000 members.

Sincerely,

JOHN C. WHITEHEAD,
Chairman of the Association.

Enclosure.

FINANCING THE UNITED NATIONS

The greatest threat today to the U.N.'s effectiveness and even survival is the cancer of financial insolvency. Countries slow to pay their share include many that are small. But it is the massive delinquencies of the United States that have plunged the Organization into chronic crisis and sapped its capacity to respond to emergencies and new needs.

The services provided by international organizations are, objectively, quite cheap—especially in comparison with the sums we spend on other dimensions of national security, such as the military, as backup in the event that diplomacy and the U.N. machinery fail. The annual U.S. assessments for peacekeeping worldwide are less than the police budget for the nation's largest city. Total American contributions, voluntary as well as obligatory, for all agencies of the U.N. system amount to \$7 per capita (compared to some \$1,000 per capita for the Defense Department).

Some object that U.N. peacekeeping costs have exploded over the past decade, from a U.S. share of \$53 million in 1985 to \$1.08 billion projected for 1995. But the end of the Cold War that sparked that increase, by freeing the U.N. to be an effective agent of conflict management, also allowed for far larger reductions in other U.S. security spending: Over the same decade, Pentagon budgets have fallen \$34 billion. Increased reliance on U.N. collective security operations necessarily complements our defense savings. Moreover, U.N. costs are spread among all member states, and constitute a truly cost-effective bargain for all.

However, at a time of hard budget choices, many national politicians see U.N. contributions as an easy target. They are misguided. In asserting that national parliaments can unilaterally set their nations' assessment levels, claim offsets from assessed obligations for voluntary peacekeeping contributions, and impose policy conditions for payment of their agreed share of expenses, some Washington politicians jeopardize the institutional underpinnings of the world community. No multilateral organization—whether the U.N., the World Bank, or NATO—can long survive if member states play by such rules.

In ratifying the U.N. Charter, every member state assented in law to the financial obligations of U.N. membership. Virtually all of America's allies in the industrialized world fulfill those obligations to the United Nations—in full, on time, and without conditions. Until relatively recently, so did the United States. It must do so again.

America's leaders must recommit this nation to full and timely payment of assessed contributions to the U.N. and related organizations, including prompt retirement of arrears accumulated over the past decade. Financial unreliability leaves our institutions of common purpose vulnerable and inefficient. We must sustain—and, where needed, increase—our voluntary financial support of the U.N. system's many vital activities in the economic and social fields as well as peace and security. We should press for assessment scales that fairly reflect nations' relative capacity to pay, and explore other means, including minimal fees on international transactions of appropriate types, to ensure that funds to pay for the U.N. system budgets that member states approve do, in fact, materialize.

AMERICA'S STAKE IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Fifty years ago we, the people of the United States, joined in common purpose and shared commitment with the people of 50 other nations. The most catastrophic war in history had convinced nations that no country could any longer be safe and secure in isolation. From this realization was born the United Nations—the idea of a genuine world community and a framework for solving human problems that transcend national boundaries. Since then, technology and economics have transformed “world community” from a phrase to a fact, and if the World War II generation had not already established the U.N. system, today's would have to create it.

The founders of the United Nations were clairvoyant in many ways. The Charter anticipated decolonization; called for “respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion”; and set up the institutional framework “for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.” In meeting the Charter's challenges, we make for a more secure and prosperous world.

Through the U.N. system, many serious conflicts have been contained or concluded. Diseases have been controlled or eradicated, children immunized, refugees protected and fed. Nations have set standards on issues of common concern—ranging from human rights to environmental survival to radio frequencies. Collective action has also furthered particular U.S. government interests, such as averting a widening war in the Middle East into which Washington might otherwise be drawn. After half a century, the U.N. remains a unique investment yielding multiple dividends for Americans and others alike.

The U.N.'s mandate to preserve peace and security was long hobbled by the Cold War, whose end has allowed the institutions of global security to spring to life. The five permanent members of the Security Council now meet and function as a cohesive group, and what the Council has lost in rhetorical drama it has more than gained in forging common policies. Starting with the Reagan Administration's effort to marshal the Security Council to help bring an end to the Iran-Iraq war in 1988, every U.S. administration has turned to the U.N. for collective action to help maintain or restore peace. Common policy may not always result in success, but neither does unilateral policy—and, unlike unilateral intervention, it spreads costs and risks widely and may help avoid policy disasters.

Paradoxically, the end of the Cold War has also given rise in the U.S. to a resurgent isolationism, along with calls for unilateral, go-it-alone policies. Developments in many places that once would have stirred alarm

are now viewed with indifference. When they do excite American political interest, the impulse is often to respond unilaterally in the conviction that only Washington can do the job and do it right. Without a Soviet threat, some Americans imagine we can renounce “foreign entanglements.” Growing hostility to U.N. peacekeeping in some political circles reflects, in large measure, the shortsighted idea that America has little at stake in the maintenance of a peaceful world. In some quarters, resentment smolders at any hint of reciprocal obligations; but in a country founded on the rule of law, the notion that law should rule among nations ought not to be controversial.

The political impulse to go it alone surges at precisely the moment when nations have become deeply interconnected. The need for international teamwork has never been clearer. Goods, capital, news, entertainment, and ideas flow across national borders with astonishing speed. So do refugees, diseases, drugs, environmental degradation, terrorists, and currency crashes.

The institutions of the U.N. system are not perfect, but they remain our best tools for concerted international action. Just as Americans often seek to reform our own government, we must press for improvement of the U.N. system. Fragmented and of limited power, prone to political paralysis, bureaucratic torpor, and opaque accountability, the U.N. system requires reform—but not wrecking. Governments and citizens must press for changes that improve agencies' efficiency, enhance their responsiveness, and make them accountable to the world's publics they were created to serve. Our world institutions can only be strengthened with the informed engagement of national leaders, press, and the public at large.

The American people have not lost their commitment to the United Nations and to the rule of law. They reaffirm it consistently, whether in opinion surveys or UNICEF campaigns. Recognizing the public's sentiment, the foes of America's U.N. commitment—unilateralists, isolationists, or whatever—do not call openly for rejecting the U.N. as they had earlier rejected outright the League of Nations. But the systematic paring back of our commitment to international law and participation in institutions would have the same effect.

In this 50th anniversary year, America's leaders should rededicate the nation to the promise of a more peaceful and prosperous world contained in the U.N. Charter. In that spirit, the United Nations Association of the United States calls on the people and government of the United States, and those of all other U.N. member states, to join in strengthening the United Nations system for the 21st century:

In particular, we call for action in five areas, which will be the top policy priorities of UNA-USA as we enter the U.N.'s second half-century:

Reliable financing of the United Nations system.

Strong and effective U.N. machinery to help keep the peace.

Promotion of broad-based and sustainable world economic growth.

Vigorous defense of human rights and protection of displaced populations.

Control, reduction, or elimination of highly destructive weaponry.

I yield the floor.

RECESS UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 9:30 a.m., August 1, 1995.

Thereupon, at 8:07 p.m., the Senate recessed until Tuesday, August 1, 1995, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate July 31, 1995:

IN THE MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING ANTHONY T. ALAURIA, AND ENDING THOMAS S. WOODSON, WHICH

NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON APRIL 3, 1995.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING DAVID V. ADAMIAK, AND ENDING JOHN G. ZUPPAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 11, 1995.