US Politics and the United Nations: A Tale of Dysfunctional Dynamics

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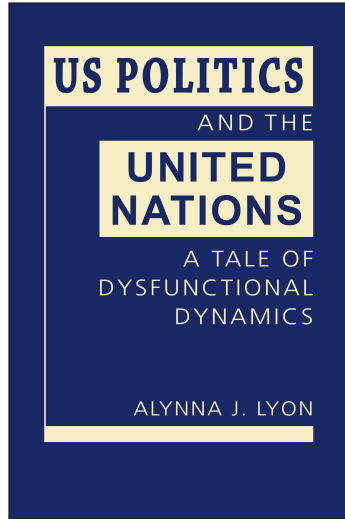
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In December 2012, Senator Robert Dole (R-KS) appeared on the floor of the US Senate to support the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The treaty was negotiated under the George H. W. Bush administration and modeled on the Americans with Disabilities Act. More than 125 countries, including those of the European Union and the United States, had signed the convention, but it needed US Senate ratification. At age eighty-nine, Dole, the longest-serving Republican senator, emerged in a wheelchair to make a personal appeal for the treaty's ratification. However, during Senate deliberations, paranoia about the treaty spread, and several senators claimed it would infringe on US sovereignty, arguing that it would "empower . . . United Nations bureaucrats"[1] to meddle in domestic affairs, including homeschooling and people with disabilities. One senator declared, "I do not support the cumbersome regulations and potentially overzealous international organizations with anti-American biases that infringe upon American society."[2] Despite expectations of bipartisan support, the torrent of accusations won the day, and the final vote of 61 in favor and 36 opposed did not reach the 66-vote threshold needed for Senate ratification.

Many within the United States and across the globe were shocked at this rejection of an international agreement modeled on a US law. Ironically, Dole had been instrumental in laying the foundations for the suspicions about the UN in general and the disabilities treaty in particular. Sixteen years earlier, when he was a Republican presidential candidate in 1996, his stump speeches on the campaign trail often referenced a growing threat of UN intrusions into domestic politics.[3]

The case of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is just one example of the challenges of domestic politics and its impact on US influence abroad. The United Nations, a largely US-fashioned organization, is the subject of debate, derogatory remarks, perpetual lack of funding, and even

obstructionism by the United States. Beginning in the mid-1970s, the US foreign policy community began to voice its mistrust of the United Nations. By 2003, the US-UN relationship had deteriorated to the point at which a sitting president declared the institution "irrelevant" and predicted that the UN was heading toward extinction.[4] In 2012, presidential candidate Mitt Romney echoed this view when he said, "The United Nations has been an extraordinary failure."[5] Some academics also lament the inefficiencies and even pathologies of the UN.[6] Within Congress and state legislatures, policymakers have introduced initiatives to "pull the US out of the UN and the UN out of the US." As one scholar observed, the UN has been "beaten, battered, and abused by its primary creator—the United States."[7] Seventy years after its creation, the United Nations appears to be under attack.

However, this is not just a tale of a dysfunctional organization. Politics within the US play a role in this dynamic. Highly politicized institutions, budget struggles between Congress and the president, declining public support, vocal yet extremist calls for rejecting the UN, and persistent strains of US exceptionalism all serve to impede US multilateralism and support for the United Nations.

The US diplomatic trajectory is inconsistent. On the one hand, the United States serves as one of the greatest advocates of working with others. With its many partners, the United States has been at the ground level in creating several international institutions for the promotion of international peace and security, conflict resolution, economic cooperation, development, and human rights. On the other hand, the United States rejects many significant multilateral efforts. The denial of the Kyoto Protocol and the rejections of the International Criminal Court, the UN Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea Treaty (UNCLOS), and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty all point to instances in which the United States rejected multilateral approaches to global governance. At the time of writing, the United States was the most frequent user of the veto in the UN Security Council, issuing sixteen between 1990 and 2015 (most of which were related to Israel and the Palestinian question). Even casual observers can find US ambivalence and hostility toward the United Nations. Many scholars have joined this chorus, noting the issues may be with the US as much as the UN and identify a "crisis of multilateralism," as the United States appears to choose forceful unilateralism over international cooperative or coordinated policy initiatives.[8]

In examining the source of declining US-UN relations, it is quite popular to write about the shortcomings of the UN and bemoan its antiquated infrastructure, voting rules, and even membership—for example, former secretary of state Madeleine Albright once asked, "Who broke the United Nations?"[9] Others fault the US approach toward multilateralism as being ambivalent, re-

luctant, and self-serving, with one report even proclaiming, "The United States does not do multilateralism."[10] Organized and vocal campaigns frame the United Nations as a powerful and malicious threat to US sovereignty; the media then amplifies these messages and sends them rippling out into society. Dozens of state legislatures have considered legislation to block global initiatives and oppose even symbolic gestures sponsored by the United Nations, such as Agenda 21 and its commitment to the principles of environmental sustainability. Yet, there are also those who reject this argument and claim that the United States is "guided by a genuine philosophy of engagement."[11] Still others point out that the primary venues for engagement are changing, and the trajectory seems to indicate that the United States is moving farther away from both the UN and international collaboration.[12]

This dynamic presents a growing paradox, as policymakers are grappling with how to operate in a productive and cooperative manner to address many global issues. At this point, there are few alternatives to the UN. When it comes to an organization with almost universal country membership, access for civil society, and connections with the private sector, the UN is the only game in town. As Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, explains, "The United States can achieve few if any of its foreign-policy objectives via unilateral action. It is not simply that there are limits to American power and resources; it is that the challenges themselves are not amenable to being met by anything less than a collective response."[13] Indeed, many of the issues facing the United States—including terrorism, climate change, nuclear disarmament, building stable democracies, and combating mass atrocities—are insurmountable for one nation alone. Thus, many are tracing the development of alternative venues to the UN and increasing US participation in ad hoc coalitions.[14]

Here we find the puzzle of US multilateralism, as the United States pursues spotty engagement—particularly within the United Nations—while, at the same time, facing extensive global threats to security that require multilateral solutions. The United States appears to be avoiding—and in some cases even undermining—the very institutional frameworks it helped create to manage these demands. According to Margaret Karns, multilateralism (that is, instances of several countries working together) is now "the dominant form of diplomatic practice" yet in some cases, the United States is not only rejecting multilateralism but also actually blocking multistate cooperative efforts.[15] The failure to cooperate, particularly through the UN, was most evident during the lead-up to the Iraq War in 2003, when the level of hostility that was building for years reached an apex. Yet, this was not the first time the United States asserted itself unilaterally and rejected institutional multilateralism. In fact, even a quick glance at US-UN relations finds a long pattern of retreat and renewed engagement.

The Pillars of American Power and US Multilateralism

The United States spearheaded the creation of the United Nations. In fact, in many regards, the UN was created by and for the United States. From its location in New York City to weighted voting in the Security Council to the Western/liberal legislative procedures of the main bodies, there is a long list of benefits of UN membership for the United States. The UN also supports several pillars of US power—military capacity, legitimacy, and norm diffusion. First and foremost, multilateralism offers extensive opportunities for burden sharing. For the first pillar of US influence—that is, hard power or military capacity—working through the UN was effective in both Korea (1950) and Iraq (1991), as well as in supporting post-conflict reconstruction efforts in many war-torn countries. The Persian Gulf War of the early 1990s provides a clear example of the benefits of cost sharing, the mantle of international legitimacy, and the increase in US soft power gained through the use of the UN.[16]

The UN also enhances the second pillar of US influence, as participation in the organization can enrich and circulate US appeal and legitimacy.[17] According to Ian Johnstone, UN membership supports US legitimacy, as it provides the "imprint of multilateral legitimacy to escape charges of neo-imperialism."[18] In cases such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and of the Law of the Sea, US ratification would provide a level playing field for international economic competitiveness.[19] As other countries adopt these provisions, America's participation increases its competitiveness in industry and makes the United States more appealing to international business.

The final pillar, which is related to enhancing US legitimacy, is found in American ideas and ideals. The United Nations can provide a vehicle for the international dispersion of US norms and ideological orientations. For decades, the UN has been a channel for norm development and expansion, and it helps disseminate what some might identify as Western values, including rule of law, democratic procedures, institutional methods of conflict resolution, and human rights. Regardless of strategic, economic, or normative orientations, there are advantages to active membership and even leadership within the UN. In recent years, US actions have compromised these pillars of power. A "go it alone" approach is pervasive in dialogue within the United States and cooperative endeavors are often viewed as weak. Furthermore, the growing disparities between what the United States claims it stands for at the international level and the actions it takes also undermine the appeal and credibility of American normative priorities.

This dynamic is driven, in part, by what happens outside the United States or in the halls of the United Nations. The UN often gets caught in the ebb and flow of international events; the Cold War, the failed humanitarian ventures during President Bill Clinton's administration, and the unilateralism of the George W. Bush administration all challenged the capacities of the UN. The situations deemed UN failures often overshadowed the successes. The result is

a view of the UN as ineffective, cumbersome, and unable to corral the relevant stakeholders. Although many of these observations are accurate, when the United States distances itself from the UN, that organization loses the institutional foundations of its international legitimacy and persuasive power. However, many of the tensions and failures are the product of politics within the United States. The United States seems to face a crisis of foreign policy in that its unilateral efforts are failures, and yet its multilateral efforts are not much better. For the United States, multilateralism is problematic, its efforts at cooperation have been spotty and faulty. Although there are moments of international cooperation, overall, there have been serious issues with the United States' consensus about and commitment to working with the UN. Questions about this relationship hold implications for whether the pursuit of solutions through international partnerships are indeed in the interest of the United States. There are larger issues beyond what may appear to be the narrow focus of US-UN relations that concern the future of the UN, its capacities and credibility, and the ability of the international community at large to address the challenges of global governance.

In an apparent swing of the pendulum, in 2009, newly elected President Barack Obama rhetorically embraced the UN, an organization that had been disparaged by his predecessor. Indeed, in a move symbolic of support and engagement, President Obama became the first sitting US president to chair a UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting.[20] Yet, the Obama administration's record is uneven.[21] The March 2011 passage of UNSC Resolution 1973 and the subsequent intervention in Libya presents one example (albeit problematic) of multilateral cooperation. However, in November of that same year, the administration defunded the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), crippling the organization and bringing criticism of the Obama team's commitment to multilateralism. Likewise, in the military campaign against the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS), the Obama administration neglected to even mention the United Nations in its 2014 move to use air power in Iraq and Syria. Thus, although the George W. Bush administration's overt hostility toward the UN has waned, the United States still has major issues in engaging with international partners to face such issues as the atrocities and chaos in Syria; instability in Egypt and Libya; the threats of Iran and North Korea; and the risks of climate change, mass migration, and global epidemics. In this regard, the book is in part an examination of the evolution of dysfunctional politics within the United States that shape and even undermine US efforts abroad.

The Puzzles and Paradoxes of US-UN Relations

Despite the strategic advantages of multilateralism and the productive relations with the UN, the United States often rejects such partnerships. US multilateralism is clearly changeable, with distinct levels of commitment at differ-

ent times.[22] This book seeks to both plot and explain the episodic shifts in US multilateral engagement. Why does the United States sometimes drift away from organizations such as the United Nations, while at other times, it embraces multilateral institutions? Are these fluctuations in engagement simply the whims of the administration, or are larger factors at play?

Few have asked *why* this relationship appears broken. Most scholars and observers do not understand when and under what circumstances the United States effectively engages the United Nations. Very little attention is paid to situations in which there is successful multilateralism. Edward Luck's question remains relevant: "What has led to such a dramatic reversal, as America turned from being the greatest champion to the loudest detractor of the UN and other international organizations?"[23]

As the stalemate of the Cold War illustrates, politics at the international level can create gridlock and influence US multilateralism. Yet, changing dynamics at the international level hardly tell the entire story; domestic politics play a role as well. Within the United States are significant and growing impediments toward engaging the United Nations in many issue areas. Furthermore, the domestic politics surrounding the US relationship with Israel isolates the United States in the chambers of the UN General Assembly and influences relations with many Arab states.

This book provides a focus on the dynamics of US politics that block American multilateralism. It asks: Under what circumstances is it politically feasible for the United States to engage in cooperative endeavors through the UN system specifically and the broader international community more generally? The project examines the US relationship with the UN's primary institutions and several specialized agencies. Furthermore, it seeks to find a causal story: What drives trends in support, or lack thereof, for the United Nations? Why would a hegemonic superpower choose to engage in a complex and politicized venue such as the United Nations?

Cooperation is not easy. Even in the best cases, when there is general agreement about goals, the process can be challenging and time consuming and can require compromise. The chapters that follow explore the sources of cooperation when it happens and attempt to establish whether cooperation is driven by the sitting administration's perspectives and normative priorities or whether multilateralism is influenced by larger systemic trends within the international system as great power rivalries are played out in the chambers of the Security Council.[24] Another possible explanation may lie with the United States and the United Nations, as institutional changes within the US government or the UN system make multilateralism less likely. Finally, some of the tensions may be attributed to political theater and rhetoric. The chapters that follow map the predominant factors that promote cooperative US global leadership and engagement through the UN system and identify the primary impediments to multilateralism at their source.

This book proposes several answers to the questions posed above. First, when considering domestic politics, presidents and their party affiliation are significant, but the answer is not just whether a president is conservative or liberal. The US-UN relationship is often influenced by partisan struggles and the dysfunctional dynamics between Congress and the president. When one party controls the White House and another dominates the legislative branch, US commitments to the UN become highly politicized. In addition, the UN tends to take a beating on the campaign trail, as politicians' efforts to pander to ideological views contribute to misinformation and misrepresentation about the UN's mandates and capacities. This, in turn, affects public opinion and civil society, which, despite some support, often adds another domestic hindrance to US engagement at the UN. In fact, at first glance, it would appear that many US presidents, members of Congress, and US citizens do not find the UN effective or even pertinent. Finally, normative orientations pull the United States away from collaboration, as strains of American exceptionalism can dominate the domestic rhetoric about multilateralism and may impede cooperation through the UN.

The international dynamics have changed in the past seventy years, and US policymakers are increasingly presented with issues that require engagement through the UN system. As the chapters that follow illustrate, when we dig a bit deeper, several areas of continued commitment to the UN appear. The United States is actually a consistent participant at the UN, and levels of engagement are really a matter of degree. However, recent US engagement at the UN is often quiet and even concealed. Seldom is the UN's utility discussed in the US domestic political environment. Through the analysis, interesting patterns emerge that capture the multilayered dynamics within US-UN relations that have been present since the organization's founding. Although domestic politics have always been a contributing factor to this relationship, more and more, the dysfunctional dynamics at the domestic level are *the* contributing factor in US relations with the UN. Politicized executive-legislative relations, divided government, and an increase in partisan politics are all undermining the ability of the United States to participate in global governance.

Intermestic Politics, Surrendering Sovereignty, and Rhetoric vs. Reality

Several themes carry through the following chapters, which highlight a number of dynamics that are evident across eras. First of all, from the founding of the UN to the Obama administration, the domestic landscape is an increasingly relevant factor as domestic politics and international politics have become more interconnected.[25] The politics of multilateralism are now more "intermestic,"[26] as domestic actors—including Congress, the US Department of State, the US Department of Defense, public opinion, civil society, and the

media—influence the operational context that impedes or supports collaborative initiatives. Partisan politics and interest groups influence not only US funding of the UN but also voting patterns in both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

A second theme explores the discrepancy between domestic rhetoric about US engagement with the UN and actual levels of US participation. Presidents and Congress must operate domestically and appease constituents, while also addressing the needs of allies and strategic partners abroad. The two are not always mutually compatible. This tension often produces bifurcated rhetoric in which presidents claim a particular approach to the UN, even as the evidence reveals inconsistencies in that posture. In fact, despite the vocal loss of support from many within the United States, presidents continue to work with the UN—albeit in a rather subdued and quiet fashion. Franklin Roosevelt, Nixon, Reagan, Clinton, both Bush administrations, and Obama all provide moments that illustrate these dynamics.

This book also highlights two normative traditions that undermine US-UN relations. Long before the creation of the UN, Americans were wary of institutionalism. Despite this, the United States is clearly a leader in both the creation and use of global institutions. Thus, there is a paradox as US internationalism meets US withdrawal. Tied into this normative tradition is American exceptionalism. The discussion in the chapters that follow provides a focus on the rhetoric about the United Nations used by presidents and their administrations, as well as the narratives coming from the legislative branch and civil society. Language has an impact on the public's understanding and support of the UN. In some regards, this portion of the analysis borrows from the constructivist theories of international relations.[27] The chapters examine the language of policymakers and explore areas in which perceptions may construct the parameters of political relationships. It is in this context that the negative rhetoric emanating from Washington, DC, and state capitals around the United States may be instrumental and damaging to US efforts at the United Nations and beyond. Pervasive negative rhetoric within the domestic context undermines the plausibility of international cooperation. In fact, the language is so toxic that Franklin Roosevelt's hope for "world collaboration" may no longer be feasible.

Research Approach

Although there are many important books on the United Nations, the role of the United States is often subsumed into a single chapter or is treated with a brief, article-length examination. Likewise, of the many valuable books on US engagement in multilateralism, the United Nations is typically given limited attention. Among the notable exceptions are *The United States and the United Nations*, edited by Franz Gross;[28] Edward Luck's classic *Mixed Messages*;[29]

Moore and Pubantz's work on presidents and the United Nations;[30] Robert Gregg's work *About Face? The United States and the United Nations*;[31] Rosemary Foot and colleagues' *US Hegemony and International Organizations*;[32] and John Ikenberry's *Liberal Leviathan.*[33]

Yet, even for many of these works, a focus on US politics is a largely underexplored concentration.[34] In Patrick and Forman's survey of the United States and multilateralism, many chapters discuss the United Nations, but only in the broader context of multilateral engagement.[35] A chapter by Karns and Mingst describes the United States as a "deadbeat" in terms of the UN financial crises. The authors point to trends in US relations at the UN and find discernible patterns of engagement and, thus, financial contributions. For example, when actors within the United States (i.e., members of Congress) perceive the UN as hostile, they withdraw financial support.[36] Lise Morjé Howard examines two decades of US-UN relations, highlighting the role of presidential administration attitudes and Congress and presenting a continuum that captures the levels of US engagement at the UN.[37] Overall, these authors provide an impressive foundation for this work.

In researching this book, a mixed-methods approach was used, which included an examination of government documents, voting trends, budget data, and public opinion data, as well as interviews with policymakers and international observers from 2011 to 2016. The historical work is based on primary and secondary sources. Financial contributions and voting patterns in the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council provide indicators of the level of policy coordination between the United States and the UN. To examine when and why the United States does seek engagement at the United Nations, I conducted more than forty interviews with policymakers at the US Permanent Mission to the United Nations and the US Department of State; members of the UN staff and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with a UN focus; interest group representatives; and US news reporters who have covered the UN for decades. These discussions (often under conditions of anonymity) provided a context in which to establish at what point in the policy process the UN is engaged, what issue areas are most conducive to US institutional multilateralism, and whether US presidential administrations find impediments from domestic sources that steer them away from the UN. In several places throughout the text, the themes discussed above are teased out by case studies (e.g., the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the 1999 Kosovo operation, the 2003 Iraq War, and the 2011 Libya and 2013 Syria interventions).

The broader policy issues of engagement, rather than the technical aspects of the relationship, are the focus of this book. In addition, for the most part, the analysis is of the UN system as a whole, rather than individual specialized agencies. Thus, the approach is largely holistic, rather than reductionist. Although some details are lost, the overall trends and patterns are revealed through a more panoramic view.

US Multilateralism and the UN: America's UNdoing

The first task in answering the questions posed above is to provide a framework to guide the analysis. To understand why the United States engages the United Nations in some cases and avoids it in others, this book identifies many of the forces that operate on domestic and international levels. Chapter 2 establishes a conceptual guide and identifies specific international factors (i.e., changes in great power dynamics) and the domestic context (including societal, institutional, and normative) that molds US multilateralism. Chapter 3 explores what turned the US domestic political environment to champion the creation of the United Nations in 1945. It traces those who encouraged this endeavor and how they convinced a reluctant public and obstructionist Congress of the need for an international organization with universal membership. Particular attention is given to the narratives used to coax civil society and Congress to accept an institutional approach to international security.

Chapter 4 traces the early enthusiasm and support for the UN and its decline through the next four decades. The discussion also explores how a faction of conservatives of the 1960s pivoted away from internationalism and illuminates how decolonization and the rise of the developing world diluted and then undermined the sway of the United States at the UN. Peppered throughout the discussion is the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the dynamics of US relations at the UN. Chapter 5 examines the US-UN relationship as it awakens from its Cold War paralysis. It is during the 1990s that leaders from both ends of the political spectrum began a dysfunctional cycle of "UN bashing," which ultimately undermined public support for the UN. During that time, the domestic political environment became more relevant and at times even dictated the qualities of the US-UN relationship.

With the entrance of the second Bush administration in 2001, the US-UN relationship deteriorated to its lowest point in history; Chapter 6 traces this nadir. In the lead-up to the 2003 Iraq War, the UN was branded as irrelevant and useless. Yet, in a twist, the chapter reveals a wide contradiction between what the Bush administration said and what it did. The Bush administration's public scorn ended with a brief period of quiet courtship of the UN to procure its engagement in the peacebuilding process in Iraq. Yet, despite the renewed efforts, severe damage to US-UN relations had been done.

The Obama administration gave new prominence to multilateral policy coordination, though multilateral cooperative efforts were not the defining modus operandi. Chapter 7 highlights how the Obama administration's rhetoric of the first few years was matched by spotty improvement within the UN framework. The chapter also explores US defunding of UNESCO, failures at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (2009), and missed opportunities in Syria (2011–). The final chapter returns to reflect on the dynamics and fluctuations in the US-UN relationship, concluding that many of the tensions and impediments to US multilateralism are not new. American excep-

tionalism, fear of loss of sovereignty, and congressional obstructionism are all deeply rooted factors that can be traced back to before the 1945 ratification of the UN Charter. Yet, the increased partisanship and the dysfunctional legislative-executive relationship that spills over into the international arena have brought a new level of toxicity. The book concludes with a discussion on whether these dysfunctional dynamics suggest the diminished viability of international law and US credibility, a downward spiral of mistrust and American conceit, and an overall weakening of the UN system.

US-UN Relations and Global Governance

The US-UN relationship has important consequences for the United States in terms of the nation's ability to engage with the rest of the world. Sour relations at the UN limit the ability of the United States to rally allies to share the responsibility of promoting international peace and security. In 2003, the United States was not able to convince even Mexico and Angola to cooperate with its efforts against Iraq.[38] In similar fashion, Germany and Brazil both rejected the US-negotiated resolution on Libya in 2011. Without the United Nations, the United States must shoulder the sole cost of promoting stability and forgoes UN resources (personnel, financing, and knowledge). Unilateral military endeavors, in particular, carry greater risk without UN authorization, resources, and the safety net of diffused responsibility and blame. In addition, the reluctance to work within the UN Security Council in situations involving the use of force also carries considerable costs to America's legitimacy and international standing on the global stage.

There are also significant implications for the United States in terms of soft power, as was clearly demonstrated in a comment from the Chinese, criticizing US rejection of China's veto of a 2012 UN Security Council resolution on Syria. The Chinese official, questioning US legitimacy and credibility, declared, "What moral basis does it [the US] have for this patronizing and egotistical super-arrogance and self-confidence?"[39]

The US-UN relationship also holds significant implications for the United Nations. As primary architect and financier, the United States is a key factor in UN viability. US relations with the organization directly affect the payment of UN dues, the support of peacekeeping initiatives, and the organization's capacity for controlling nuclear proliferation, as well as many other multilateral initiatives.

In 1958, Scott and Withey wrote, "The United Nations cannot succeed—cannot even survive in anything like its present form—without the participation of the United States, and American participation would end, or become merely nominal, if the American people turned their backs on the United Nations."[40] Politics within the United States are important in providing a context for UN engagement and may impede funding of both UN and US initiatives.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon seemed keenly aware of these observations when he embarked on a 2008 tour of several US cities to "reach out" to US citizens.[41] Congress's 2011 cut of US funding for UNESCO (22 percent of its operating budget) demonstrates that domestic politics are relevant, influential, and potentially damaging. Assessing domestic actors provides guideposts for understanding US capacities to promote its own national security and to provide assistance to international peace and security, economic development, mitigation of climate change, and a myriad of other issues that the UN seeks to address.

Notes

1. Jennifer Steinhauer, "Dole Appears, but GOP Rejects a Disabilities Treaty," *New York Times*, December 4, 2012.

2. Lindsay Wise and Dave Helling, "Senate Rebuffs Dole's Appeal for Passage of UN Disability Treaty," *Seattle Times*, December 5, 2012.

3. In 1996, Dole's presidential campaign speeches often mentioned a threat of US military personnel serving under the command of the United Nations.

4. George W. Bush, "Remarks by the President in an Address to the United Nations General Assembly," United Nations General Assembly, September 12, 2002.

5. "Romney Slams UN for 'Failure,'" *USA Today*, October 17, 2007.

6. Thomas G. Weiss, *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012).

7. Roger Coate, "The John W. Holmes Lecture: Growing the 'Third UN' for People-Centered Development—the United Nations, Civil Society, and Beyond," *Global Governance* 15, no. 2 (2009): 154.

8. For the purposes of this work, *unilateralism* refers to "independent action taken without coordination with other states or international institutions." See Stewart Patrick, "Beyond Coalitions of the Willing: Assessing US Multilateralism," *Ethics and International Affairs* 17, no. 1 (2003): 40; Stewart Patrick, "The New 'New Multilateralism': Minilateral Cooperation, but at What Cost?" *Global Summitry* (2015): 115–134; Helen V. Milner and Dustin Tingley, "The Choice for Multilateralism: Foreign Aid and American Foreign Policy," *The Review of International Organizations* 8, no. 3 (2013); Edward Newman, *A Crisis of Global Institutions? Multilateralism and International Security* (New York: Routledge, 2007); James P. Muldoon Jr., JoAnn Fagot Aviel, Richard Reitano, and Earl Sullivan, eds., *Multilateral Diplomacy and the United Nations Today*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Westview Press, 2005); David Malone and Yuen Foong Khong, *Unilateralism and US Foreign Policy: International Perspectives* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003).

9. Madeleine Albright, "Who Broke the UN?" *Foreign Policy* 195 (September/October 2012).

10. Caroline Bouchard and John Peterson, "Conceptualising Multilateralism: Can We All Just Get Along?" (Mercury E-paper no. 1, Edinburgh Europa Institute, Scotland, February 2010), 2.

11. Richard Gowan, *The Obama Administration and Multilateralism: Europe Relegated* (Brussels: Center for European Policy Studies, 2010), 3.

12. Stewart Patrick, "Multilateralism and Its Discontents: The Causes and Consequences of US Ambivalence," in *Multilateralism and US Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

13. Richard N. Haass, "The Age of Nonpolarity," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2008): 12.

14. Julia C. Morse and Robert O. Keohane, "Contested Multilateralism," *The Review of International Organizations* 9, no. 4 (2014); Haass, "The Age of Nonpolarity"; Patrick, "The New 'New Multilateralism.'"

15. Margaret P. Karns, "Multilateralism Matters Even More," *SAIS Review* 28, no. 2 (2008): 8.

16. Of the $61 billion total cost of the Persian Gulf War, US allies, working through the United Nations, contributed close to 90 percent, or about $53 billion. See US Department of Defense, *Final Report to Congress: Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1992), 59; see Appendix P for full accounting of contributions.

17. Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy* 80 (1990): 153–171.

18. Ian Johnstone, "US-UN Relations After Iraq: The End of the World (Order) as We Know It?" *European Journal of International Law* 15, no. 4 (2004): 814.

19. Scott G. Borgerson, "The National Interest and the Law of the Sea," in *Council Special Report,* no. 46 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2009).

20. As US Ambassador to the United Nations, George H. W. Bush chaired the meetings in May 1972. Vice President Al Gore also served as chair in January 2000. Obama was the first sitting president to chair a meeting in September 2009; he did so again in 2014. See David E. Sanger, "Security Council Adopts Nuclear Arms Measure," *New York Times*, September 24, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/25/world/25prexy.html?_r=1.

21. See David Skidmore, "The Obama Presidency and US Foreign Policy: Where's the Multilateralism?" *International Studies Perspectives* 13, no. 1 (2012): 43–64; Alexandra Homolar, "Multilateralism in Crisis? The Character of US International Engagement Under Obama," *Global Society* 26, no. 1 (2012): 103–122.

22. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

23. Edward C. Luck, *Mixed Messages: American Politics and International Organization, 1919–1999* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 2.

24. Craig N. Murphy, "The United States and the UN: A Return to the Fold?" in *Obama and the World: New Directions in US Foreign Policy*, eds. Inderjeet Parmar, Linda B. Miller, and Mark Ledwidg (New York: Routledge, 2014).

25. Robert Jervis, "Introduction," in *The New American Interventionism: Essays from Political Science Quarterly*, ed. Demetrios James Caraley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

26. Bayless Manning, "The Congress, the Executive, and Intermestic Affairs: Three Proposals," *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 2 (1977).

27. Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989); Brian Frederking, *The United States and the Security Council: Collective Security Since the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

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