

# Truth About The United Nations

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### **When did the United Nations become the supreme moral authority of the world?**

One might advance such a proposition if most of the organization were represented by democratic governments, but that is not the case. Of the 191 nations in the United Nations only about 40 percent (85 countries) are democratic societies that enjoy political rights and civil liberties. The rest are either controlled by dictators or by a one-party government. In 48 of the nations, dictators wield an iron hand. Thirty-five per cent of the world's population is subjugated by those totalitarian governments. Fifty-nine other countries are controlled by one-party governments in which institutions like the judiciary and the press are not free from government influence or control.

One country with a population of 23 million, which has a free government, is a pariah nation, not allowed entry into the United Nations: Taiwan.

So I ask whether an institution such as the United Nations in which dictatorships outnumber democracies should be looked up to as a moral exemplar.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence: "Governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." How can we say that the United Nations has received the consent of the governed?

To pose this question is not to write off the United Nations. It does serve useful purposes such as expediting postal and telephone service. Its endeavors to help world refugees are commendable.

The U.N. is also a world debating society - where representatives of 191 nations can meet and talk. In the General Assembly every nation is equal. Population giants such as China and India have one vote - the same as little mountain-town republics like Andorra or San Marino, or such island dots such as the Maldives or Mauritius.

So 191 representatives of these big and small, dictatorships and free nations, assemble at the hot house on the East River that is called the United Nations. There they are expected to solve the world's problems. Instead, what often happens is posturing and perorating by the appointed puppets of dictators or one-party regimes at the expense of democracies. Israel is censored for its "racist" genocide policies and compared to Nazi Germany.

The United States is attacked for human rights violations in Puerto Rico, while brutalities in China, Cuba, Syria and Zimbabwe are unmentioned and unexamined.

Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan presided over proceedings in his urbane, soft-spoken manner. But what was his background? Born to a millionaire family, he comes from Ghana, where his family was closely tied to the West-African dictator Nkrumah.

If the General Assembly is at best an empty debating society, what about the Security Council? The five permanent representatives include the United States and its staunch ally, Britain. The others are France, Russia and China. There is a rotating member and we've seen some pretty unworthy nations rotate into the council. Syria, for one.

In dealing with Iraq, I ask by what logic did the blessing of these countries constitute any kind of moral legitimacy? China's leaders are the butchers of Tiananmen Square. France and Russia will make their decision on the cynical calculation of their own national interests (meaning money and oil). They were traders in oil with Iraq. If, privately they would've liked to have seen Saddam Hussein eliminated, publicly they liked it being done with United States bearing all the blame and paying all the cost.

These three countries - France, Russia and China - have been responsible for the toothless and useless inspection operations made in the last few years in Iraq. In the Security Council Resolution of 1999, those countries refused to support even that much-diluted resolution, because it did not make enough concessions to Saddam Hussein.

Yet, Sen. Carl Levin, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, advances legislation that would not authorize use of force without prior U.N. approval. Sen. Edward Kennedy, who also voted "no" on the resolution supporting President Bush on the use of force to eliminate the nuclear threat, said earlier, "I am waiting for the Security Council's approval."

Yet, 40 years ago his brother John Kennedy said, on the Cuban missile crisis: "This nation is prepared to present its case against the Soviet threat of peace . . . in the United Nations or in any other meeting without limiting our freedom of action."

In May 1959, President Eisenhower spent a week with former British Prime Minister Churchill at the White House and Eisenhower's Gettysburg farm. Churchill, still a member of Parliament, had left 10 Downing Street four years before. It was not a state visit by Sir Winston but a private meeting between two old friends. Eisenhower savored the prospect of hearing wisdom from this venerable statesman whose experience encompassed six decades in public life including two world wars and the Cold War.

One matter they discussed was the emerging impotence of the United Nations. In Churchill's last great speech two years before to the American Bar Association, the old statesman lamented the United Nations' inaction in Hungary the year before and questioned the future

value of an institution the majority of whose members were dictators. The word he used to describe the United Nations in 1957 was "feckless."

*"World Justice cannot be a hit-or-miss system. We cannot be satisfied with an arrangement where our system of international laws applies only to those who are willing to keep them."*

Churchill had never been as hopeful as Franklin Roosevelt in the United Nations as an institution to prevent future invasions and wars. In his "Iron Curtain" speech of 1946, Churchill only added a reference to the United Nations at the insistence of Dean Acheson, President Truman's undersecretary of state.

Eisenhower shared Churchill's fears about the United Nations in their Gettysburg discussions in 1959. A year later, when Eisenhower wrote his farewell address, he crossed out in red pencil the paragraph that his White House speechwriter Malcolm Moos inserted about "reliance on the United Nations." Eisenhower, like John Kennedy, did not want to let the United Nations or any others tell the United States how it would defend itself. As President Eisenhower said in his 1953 inaugural address, "We must be ready to dare for our country. For history does not entrust the care of freedom to the weak or timid."

