

The U.S. versus the World, A Majority of One, A Minority of 192 UN General Assembly Resolutions. “Put Your Vote Where Your Rhetoric Is”

the US continues to vote in opposition to many, if not most of the resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly,

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For decades, and again this year, the United States votes “no” on most United Nations General Assembly resolutions supporting meaningful disarmament and economic justice.

In fact, it has a consistent record of votes contradicting its professed rhetoric of concern for peace and human rights, as the UN General Assembly votes to adopt resolutions crafted to address the urgent need for disarmament, and for a more equitable global economic architecture.

US Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz has supported the adoption of many of these resolutions, and his voice, along with the majority of the member states of the developing world has gone unheeded.

The huge and growing economic inequality both within and among nations is contributing to global destabilization, deadly conflicts, terrorism, the refugee crisis, now threatening to disrupt the core of Europe itself, and an escalation of barbaric violence which threatens to turn the clock of civilization back to the stone age.

Nevertheless, the US continues to vote in opposition to many, if not most of the resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly, where the developing world holds a majority of votes, and the US vote does not hold veto power, as it does in the Security Council, and cannot therefore prevent the adoption of these resolutions.

The resolutions, however, have no enforcement power, as do Security Council resolutions. The US “no” vote is, however, a barometer of how and where it will use its influence to obstruct or prevent actual implementation of these resolutions in any meaningful way, in those venues where the US does have decisive influence. While paying lip-service to “democracy,” “human rights,” etc., the US “no” vote in these numerous developing world sponsored resolutions betrays its actual contempt for these values in any meaningful sense.

An examination of this year’s voting patterns in the UN General Assembly’s First, Second and Third Committees illustrates this pattern, which is a greater indicator of the causes of the stalemate or paralysis at the United Nations than has been the inaction at the UN Security Council, so deplored by the US-NATO faction.

For almost 10 years, China and the Russian Federation have co-sponsored a treaty in the First Committee on Disarmament, on the “Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer

Space.” The US has consistently opposed this treaty, and on November 3, 2015, in the First Committee 70th session Plenary Meeting, Resolution A/C.1/70/L.47 on “No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space,” was adopted by a majority vote of 122 member states, including China, Russia, the DPRK, Iran, Pakistan, India, Kazakhstan, Angola, Kenya, Nigeria and a majority of other member states. China’s vote is consistent with its declaration that it will not be the first to initiate a nuclear attack. The US voted “no” on this resolution, along with only 3 other states, including Ukraine and Israel, which is alarming, since it indicates that the US reserves for itself the “right” to place its weapons in outer space, despite the fact that most other nuclear states, including India, Pakistan, China, the DPRK and The Russian Federation have eschewed the “right” to place weapons in outer space.

The related resolution A/C.1/70/L.3 entitled: “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space” has an equally interesting recorded vote, with 173 UN member states voting “yes,” including all states which supported the resolution on “No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space,” and the US, Israel and Palau abstained. It seems probable that, although most nuclear weapon states pledged not to be the first to place weapons in outer space, and the US reserved to itself the “right” to be the first to place weapons in outer space, the US is hedging its bets, and in the event that another state first places weapons in outer space, the US reserves to itself the “right” to engage in an arms race in outer space.

The very idea of placement of weapons in outer space, or an arms race in outer space, is insane, yet this is consistent with the US military doctrine of “Full Spectrum Dominance,” which asserts the US right to “Control of land, sea, air and outer space.”

On November 5th, the First Committee adopted Resolution A/C.1/70/L.18 on “Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.” The resolution was adopted by a majority of 116 member states, and opposed by only four countries, the US, UK, France and Tuvalu. As usual, the EU abstained, voting as a bloc. This voting pattern reflecting diametrically opposed interests was similarly repeated throughout the entire spectrum of UN General Assembly resolutions from disarmament to development.

On November 23, at the Third Committee Plenary, Resolution A/C.3/70/L.30 “Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order” was adopted by a majority vote of 121. The US which espouses the rhetoric of “democracy” more than any other state, voted “no.” The European Union, voting as a bloc, also voted “no” in opposition to most countries of the developing world, including China, the Russian Federation, the DPRK, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Argentina, etc.

On November 24, the Third Committee adopted Resolution A/C.3/70/L.37/Rev.1 on “The Right to Development.” The resolution was adopted by a majority vote of 136. Only 4 nations voted “no,” including the USA, the UK, Canada and Israel.

On November 23, the Third Committee Plenary adopted Resolution A/C.3/70/L.58 on the “Use of Mercenaries as a Means of Violating Human Rights and Impeding the Exercise of the Right of Peoples to Self Determination.” The resolution was adopted by a majority vote of 121. The US, Ukraine and most of the Europeans voted “no,” which is an appalling revelation of their willingness to adopt unscrupulous measures to suit their perceived “interests,” or the interests of their ruling “elites.”

This is merely a sampling of the voting record of the US and often the EU, which reveals

their readiness to violate the economic, social, civil and political rights of the “developing world,” which comprises the majority of member states belonging to the United Nations. Scrutiny of the majority of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly’s First Committee on Disarmament, Second Committee on Economics, Third Committee on Human Rights reveals the same pattern of the US and EU consistently voting in opposition to the will and the interests of the developing world, many of whose states are former colonies of the EU states, and are currently in a form of “debt bondage” to the US and the West, trapped by IMF demands for “structural adjustment,” “conditionalities,” and other onerous and exploitative arrangements.

These UN General Assembly Resolutions without enforcement mechanisms merely express the gross contradiction between the “interests” of the West’s “1%” and the needs of the huge populace of the other “99%” of humanity. As the income inequality increases, as described by French economist Thomas Piketty and US Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, these voting patterns will most probably continue unchanged, absent a global insurrection to eliminate the gross injustice in the distribution of power and resources that is currently entrenched, globally, and which the huge disparities in these votes reflects.

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