

Better World Campaign Candidate Survey 2008
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1. *Does the United States advance national interests and security by working through the United Nations?*

- YES. I fully support a strong U.S. commitment to the UN. From health to disaster response to peacekeeping, the UN has made invaluable contributions to the international community and helps advance U.S. objectives by working toward a more stable world.

Do you support paying off US debt to the UN? Will you work to ensure that the US honors its treaty commitments to the United Nations by paying our UN dues on time, in full and without conditions?

- YES. Some have suggested that the U.S. withhold its dues or avoid payment of its debts to pressure the UN to initiate reforms. While I believe the UN is in need of certain reforms, particularly in the composition of the Human Rights Council and its responsiveness to humanitarian crises, the U.S. can ill afford to withhold contributions from the UN during a time in which we face monumental challenges with international public health, nuclear proliferation, and humanitarian relief. I have been a strong proponent of restoring funding so that we can meet our operating budget and peacekeeping assessments and pay back arrearages. I am pleased that the Congress has taken some steps to fulfill these commitments – for example, last year Congress increased the cap on U.S. contributions to peacekeeping – but more work is needed. I believe we must increase our contributions in the short-term and begin paying back our long-term debt.

2. *Do you support an increased role for the United Nations to help strengthen the US-led effort to stabilize Iraq?*

- YES. Since the debate leading up to the Iraq war began, I have urged President Bush to involve the international community more substantially in efforts to stabilize and rebuild the Iraqi nation. The United States simply cannot bear the burden alone, and international involvement is needed now more than ever. The United Nations is uniquely well suited to help address the tremendous needs for humanitarian aid, conflict resolution, refugee assistance, and protection of women and children, among other things. Increased UN participation could not only give U.S. efforts a tremendous boost, but encourage Iraq's neighbors to increase their involvement as well.

Do you support providing the necessary US resources for an enhanced UN presence?

- YES. The U.S. bears a distinct moral burden for helping to resolve the conflict in Iraq, and has a commitment to supporting UN activities around the world. Moreover, as the United States has discovered in previous peacekeeping and other UN missions, American taxpayers save significantly when the U.S. contributes to UN efforts instead of carrying the load alone.

3. Do you support collective action through the United Nations to address international terrorism?

- YES. Terrorism is an international challenge that demands an international solution. The UN is a critical forum for uniting the international community in action toward the common goal of eradicating terrorism. Additionally, the UN can marshal international tools for disrupting terrorist financing, prosecuting terrorist suspects in court, and addressing the conditions that give rise to new generations of terrorists.

4. Do you support the development of a new international agreement for addressing climate change under the auspices of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change?

- YES. I believe greenhouse gas emissions are the greatest threat to our environment and have been ignored by the U.S. government for far too long. The Bali Roadmap, initiated through a UN-hosted conference, is a pivotal first step toward developing a new international agreement to address the threat of climate change. International agreements on mandatory, enforceable caps on greenhouse gas emissions are essential, and the U.S. should lead other nations to take action while simultaneously enacting laws to meet our own obligations in this regard.

5. Do you support Security Council reform?

- YES. I am concerned that, too often, decisive UN action can be derailed by a single Security Council member acting in contravention of international interests. We have seen this pattern repeated in recent months as we have sought to address the genocide in Darfur, Iran's nuclear proliferation, and the violent repression of dissent by the Burmese military junta. I hope that the U.S. can work for Security Council reform that will enhance our ability to address urgent crises such as these. However, I would caution that Security Council reform must be undertaken with the goal of improving UN agility and effectiveness, not simply for the sake of reflecting a new international order of status.

6. *Do you support UN peacekeeping operations as ‘force multipliers’ that can complement US efforts to stabilize conflict zones around the world?*

- YES. I believe we must facilitate a more robust UN peacekeeping presence in conflict regions such as Darfur and Southern Sudan. Stabilization in areas of conflict can prevent the need to send U.S. troops, thus providing high returns for our national security on a minimal investment.

Do you support full US funding for UN peacekeeping operations?

- YES. The U.S. must fully fund our peacekeeping obligation. As mentioned above, such investment is usually in our own financial self-interest: A UN peacekeeping mission is eight times less expensive than sending American military troops to a region in conflict.

7. *Should the United States support and join the International Criminal Court?*

- YES. Issues central to fundamental U.S. national security interests – terrorism, narco-trafficking, and war crimes, for example – require vigorous international legal action. We must work to prosecute perpetrators of such crimes whenever and wherever possible, and often their crimes do not fall under U.S. jurisdiction. The International Criminal Court has proven its importance by seeking to prosecute war criminals and genocidaires in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, including Sudan’s president, Omar al-Bashir. U.S. participation would greatly augment these efforts, and would provide an important forum for us to extend our efforts to combat global terrorism.

8. *Do you support US efforts to help meet the Millennium Development Goals?*

- YES. The U.S. should honor the commitment made in 2000 to address poverty and lack of opportunity in the developing world. Helping developing nations confront intractable poverty, invest in education and public health, and develop sustainable economies is ultimately in our own interest, since achieving these goals often helps to prevent conflict and develop new markets for U.S. businesses. I agree that the federal government's foreign assistance budget should be significantly higher, though Congress and the new Administration must work toward more responsible fiscal policies than the deficits of the past eight years if we are to make greater investments both at home and abroad.