

The United Nations: In Everyone's Interest

Does it matter that about 63 million lives, of which 40 million were civilians, were lost in World War II? Does it matter that at least 80% of the people in the world live on less than \$10 a day? Does it matter that about one billion people live on less than \$1 a day? Does it matter that almost a billion people cannot read this essay or sign their name? Is it in everyone's interest to help address all this?

The main purposes of the United Nations include the need "to maintain international peace and security" and "to achieve international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character" per its charter. Since the United Nations was created in 1945 after World War II, it has helped with 170 peace agreements that have ended regional wars. The United Nations World Food Program every year feeds about 90 million people in 80 countries. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund vaccinates 40% of the world's children, saving two million lives every year. All these facts are available from the United Nations web site.

The United States helped create the United Nations "to defend life, liberty, independence, and religious freedom" (1942 Declaration by United Nations). A majority of Americans support the United Nations per public opinion polls and believe that we should pay our dues, including for peacekeeping, fully and on time. Gus Feissel and Chris O'Sullivan have written in the History News Network that the United States spends less money yearly on United Nations dues than it does every month in Iraq. By paying this nominal fee, the United States can decide to approve or not every United Nations peacekeeping mission and help fund the United Nations work on reducing global poverty, disease, and hunger. Why would it not be in the interest of the United States to work with and support the United Nations, where our leadership can greatly help the lives of people all over the world?

Every Saturday, I have the opportunity to go to a class and learn the Chinese language. On the way to my class in Portland, there is often a person standing in torn clothes with a placard asking for

food near the entrance to Ross Island Bridge while I am eating my favorite Quizno's sandwich in the comfort and security of our Honda Odyssey van. I can not only read and sign my own name in English, I am also learning how to do it in Spanish and Chinese. Why would it not be in my and everyone's interest to support the United Nations, which is trying to help all the people in the world with basic needs like food, education and security that are very important to me and all of us?