Nikki Haley: Joe Biden Is Going Backward at the United Nations

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If China, Russia, and Cuba started an organization that celebrated their tyranny in the name of human rights, would the United States want to join?

If an organization that claimed to help refugees actually hurt them, while spreading antisemitism, would the United States want to fund it?

The obvious answer to both questions is no. But if you put the words “United Nations” in front of these two groups, suddenly people — including President Joe Biden — think they deserve US support.

After less than two months in office, Biden has already rejoined the UN Human Rights Council and is set to renew US funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). These are bad and dangerous decisions. They insult the American taxpayer, injure American interests, and harm one of America’s closest allies — Israel.

These actions speak to Biden’s naïve approach to engaging with the UN. He’s prioritizing feel-good actions over results and reforms. In an organization in which unfree countries outnumber free ones, it’s a great way to accomplish little and lose much.

In 2018, the US withdrew from the UN Human Rights Council and cut all funding for UNRWA. As I said at the time, these actions were more than justified. They were plain common sense. They still are.

Consider the Human Rights Council, which doesn’t deserve the name.

The council’s membership is a who’s who of communist dictatorships, socialist regimes, and run-of-the-mill tyrannies. When I was Ambassador, the Democratic Republic of Congo was elected as a member, even though its government had a truly barbaric human rights record. It joined Venezuela, which was actively destroying its democracy and starving its people. Last year, communist China, communist Cuba, and Vladimir Putin’s Russia were all given seats, even though they oppress their people in horrific ways.

The dictators who run these countries use the Human Rights Council to protect themselves from criticism. They point to their membership as proof of their innocence and respectability. And instead of going after real human rights abusers, the Council targets one country above all others: free and democratic Israel. It has a standing agenda item to criticize Israel, and no other country. It routinely passes more resolutions against Israel than against North Korea, Iran, and Syria combined.

As I said when the US withdrew, the Human Rights Council has become a cesspool of political bias. By rejoining this broken body, Biden thinks he’s standing up for human rights. He’s really sending the message that human rights don’t matter.

Then there’s UNRWA.

The relief agency’s mission is to support Palestinian refugees, but it doesn’t do that. To start, UNRWA vastly inflates the number of refugees. It says all Palestinians and their descendants living in other countries, even if they have citizenship in those countries, are refugees, instead of just those who were originally displaced more than 70 years ago. No other refugees in the world are counted that way. This feeds a perpetual grievance machine that treats millions like helpless victims regardless of their circumstances.

Like the Human Rights Council, UNRWA also hates Israel. It distributes textbooks that glorify jihadists and refer to Israel as “the Zionist Occupation.” Grammar exercises include sentences like “Jihad is one of the doors to Paradise” and “the Palestinians are lions in fighting the enemies.” That’s not refugee relief, it’s pro-terrorist propaganda. Teaching children to hate Israel and its people makes Middle East peace harder to achieve.

The US was right to stop spending taxpayer dollars on this harmful organization. President Biden is wrong to throw the American people’s money back down the drain.

The United States is at its best when it pushes the United Nations to advance freedom, equality, and justice. These principles are enshrined in the UN’s founding charter, though it rarely lives up to them.

Now President Biden’s actions will ensure the UN continues to fall short. Rejoining the Human Rights Council and renewing funding for UNRWA will make neither organization better. It will only give heart to our enemies and cause pain for our allies, all while wasting American money.

We wouldn’t do that in any other context. We shouldn’t do it at the United Nations.