Trump Administration Holds Off on Issuing U.N. Funding Order

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/28/world/americas/trump-un-funding-order.html?_r=2>

The Trump administration is delaying its plans to issue two executive orders that would reduce funding to the United Nations and begin a process to review and potentially cancel certain multilateral treaties, according to current and former officials briefed on the matter.

Both draft orders were submitted to the National Security Council for approval, but the council’s advisers were granted less than an hour and a half to review them, though this process normally takes weeks. Federal agencies were granted similarly brief windows for review.

Federal officials that were asked to review the documents balked at their contents, warning they required legal vetting.

The draft orders are now being withheld for a more complete review by a number of agencies, including the State Department, which is expected to begin as early as next week.

The draft order on the United Nations funding, according to copies acquired by The New York Times, called for “at least a 40 percent overall decrease” in contributions by the United States to the world body and its agencies. Much of this funding currently goes to international peacekeeping operations and other core United Nations missions. The draft order would have allowed for similar cuts to other international organizations, but it did not name them.

Some provisions in the draft order were either unclear or redundant. For example, one suggested considering cuts in funding toward the International Criminal Court, but the United States does not recognize that body or make contributions to it. Another called for the termination of funding for any United Nations agency that grants full membership to a Palestinian representative, which is already United States law.

Nikki R. Haley, the new American ambassador to the United Nations, said in comments at the United Nations headquarters on Friday, “You’re going to see a change in the way we do business.”

Ms. Haley added, “For those who don’t have our backs, we’re taking names.”

President Trump expressed antipathy toward the United Nations during the campaign.

A second draft order called for establishing a process to review whether some multilateral treaties should be annulled, including current and pending treaties. The order’s text excluded treaties “directly related” to extradition, trade or national security, though it is unclear which treaties would have qualified.

Experts said that permission for the reviews of treaties related to the environment — such as the Paris climate agreement — or to human rights also appeared to be intended in the draft order.