Bolton: U.S. Will Also Stop Funding U.N. Human Rights Council

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The Trump administration’s withdrawal from the U.N. Human Rights Council is being accompanied by an end to U.S. funding for both the council and the office of the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, National Security Advisor John Bolton said on Tuesday night.

“We will now no longer fund our share of the cost of the Human Rights Council or the U.N. high commissioner for human rights,” Bolton said on Mark Levin’s nationally syndicated radio talk show.

“And the reason for that is that the Human Rights Council, the high commissioner, we think are just fundamentally misdirected, misguided. They don’t advocate human rights, they’re actually used by human rights abusers against the United States, against Israel. And it’s time to get off.”

Around 40 percent of the funding for the HRC and high commissioner’s office comes from the U.N. regular budget, while “voluntary contributions” from U.N. member-states make up the balance.

U.S. taxpayers account for 22 percent of the U.N. regular budget. American taxpayers also accounted for an additional $17 million in “voluntary contributions” to the U.N. human rights mechanisms in 2016, $20.1 million in 2017, and $1 million so far in 2018.

Bolton characterized the withdrawal decision, [announced earlier](https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/exercise-shameless-hypocrisy-us-withdraws-un-human-rights-council) in the day by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley, as a means of reasserting “American sovereignty,” and said that under Trump, further such moves can be expected.

Bolton served as ambassador to the U.N. during the Bush administration at a time when the HRC was established 12 years ago.

After failing in its [attempts to strengthen mechanisms relating especially to composition and membership](https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/un-us-collision-course-over-new-human-rights-body), the U.S. voted against the resolution that created the body and refused to join it. It also symbolically withheld funding and eventually stopped participating in HRC sessions, even in an observer capacity.

The Obama administration, contending that it could improve the HRC “from within,” chose to engage and was elected to the council. The following year the HRC underwent a five-year review process, but fresh [U.S. attempts to reform its workings were unsuccessful](https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/un-human-rights-council-rejects-us-attempts-improve-it-within).

Asked by Levin why President Obama had “so desperately” wanted the U.S. to be a member, Bolton replied, “because it’s part of the theology of the left in America that, really all nations, they simply are equal.”

“Everybody’s human rights record is fully subject to scrutiny by the international community. You know, Iran, the United States – pretty much all the same thing. Everybody gets to judge performance.”

“I really think that the rejection of that worldview is perhaps the most important aspect of the president’s decision here.”

Citing the two main reasons given by Haley and Pompeo for the decision to withdraw, Bolton said it was true that the HRC is populated by rights-violating nations that “get on the council to protect themselves,” and it was also true that the body has been “used in grossly unfair ways against Israel and indeed against the United States in many respects.”

“But the real issue here, I think, is American sovereignty.”

“Fundamentally here, this is a rejection of the notion that multilateral organizations are in a position to judge representative governments like the United States, or to try to impose their view of what an adequate human rights performance is,” he said.