[The Palestinian plot to end-run Trump at the UN](http://nypost.com/2017/07/27/the-palestinian-plot-to-end-run-trump-at-the-un/)

July 27, 2017

By Benny Avni

The New York Post

<http://nypost.com/2017/07/27/the-palestinian-plot-to-end-run-trump-at-the-un/>

The Palestinians want your money, and they’re trying to make an end run around Congress to get it.

On Friday, the United Nations General Assembly will vote on a resolution to change the way a Palestinian-centered agency is financed. For years, only a fraction of the funds for the UN Relief and Work Agency, which is dedicated exclusively to benefit Palestinians, came from UN budgets; 90 percent of the agency’s ever-growing needs were financed voluntarily by donor countries.

The resolution, sponsored by a large group of countries sympathetic to the Palestinians, will recommend “a gradual increase in the support provided to [UNRWA] from the regular budget of the UN” by next year. Plus, mandatory fees in the past could only fund the salaries of non-Palestinian workers; the new resolution removes that restriction as well.

Camel nose, meet tent. Eventually the entirety of America’s contribution to UNRWA will be decided by UN members rather than Congress.

In other words, you’ll have little say about how much of your tax money is spent to aid a top Palestinian cause, or in what manner. Instead, it’ll be up to a UN committee where those who pay less than 1 percent of the UN budget have much more power than top contributors like the United States.

Why are Palestinians pushing this resolution now?

One reason is their bad press is multiplying: UNRWA teachers preach anti-Israel propaganda; Hamas uses agency infirmaries and other installations to hide arms; attack tunnels are dug under Gaza schools. And they’re aware that Congress, understandably, is increasingly skeptical about this Hamas-influenced agency.

Plus, Israel just shifted its stance. Jerusalem diplomats have long quietly lobbied on UNRWA’s behalf, fearing Israel would be made to shoulder the agency’s responsibilities if it disappears.

No longer. When UN Ambassador Nikki Haley visited Jerusalem in January, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced, in a first, that it was time to dismantle UNRWA.

Then [there’s President Trump, a UN skeptic](http://nypost.com/2017/05/23/trump-arrives-for-meeting-with-palestinian-president/). The administration has already cut UN peacekeeping funding and is pushing to close redundant missions. The Palestinians suspect UNRWA will be next.

The agency is an anomaly. It exclusively deals with Palestinian refugees, while another UN agency deals with refugees everywhere else on the globe. Unlike that other agency, it defines refugees as endless generations of descendants.

When it was founded in 1949, the agency cared for 750,000 refugees. Now 5 million are interned in UNRWA-run camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan and the Palestinian territories — the latter meaning that UNRWA, in effect, helps finance the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza.

America, by far, is the largest contributor. In 2015, the last year listed on UNRWA’s Web site, Washington voluntarily contributed $380,593,116. Next in line, the European Commission, paid less than half of that, $136,751,943.

Palestinians stand to lose in any congressional re-evaluation of agency funding. No wonder they want countries you never heard of, rather than your representative in Congress, to decide how many of your tax dollars will go to UNRWA.

Haley has repeatedly warned the Palestinians to stop making unilateral UN moves instead of working with the Israelis. She vowed to veto any one-sided resolution against Israel. But this time, it’s US taxpayers getting cheated, and the US has no veto over the General Assembly.

“We’ll pass it,” an Arab diplomat told me this week. And they will.

Congress should fight fire with fire. If the UN wants to make an end run around them, legislators must threaten to freeze all UNRWA funds, and do so before December, when the new UN budget is finalized.

More broadly, Congress should threaten to go full John Bolton: The former US ambassador to Turtle Bay has long argued all America’s UN contributions should be voluntary, rather than having them assessed by UN budget committees.

That’ll scare them.