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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

**Israel, the Palestinians and the United Nations:
Challenges for the New Administration**
Christopher H. Smith
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The United Nations is an organization founded on the loftiest of principles, out of the ashes of World War II. Indeed, if we look at the context of the founding of the United Nations – and the great document that is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 which sets forth its animating, aspirational principles – we understand how the world came together to say “Never Again.” Never again would a people be subject to genocide. Never again would military aggression destroy the peace of smaller nations. Rather, a forum would be created for these nations – big and small, old and new – to come together to settle their differences peaceably.

Yet, despite these lofty principles, the State of Israel, finds itself in the crosshairs of a delegitimization campaign mounted by a growing number of United Nations member states and UN institutions.

The great Natan Sharansky twice testified at hearings I have chaired. In his testimony he spoke of the demonization, double standards, and delegitimization – the famous “3 D” test that distinguishes “legitimate criticism of Israel from anti-Semitism.”

The test deserves quoting:

The first "D" is the test of demonization. When the Jewish state is being demonized; when Israel's actions are blown out of all sensible proportion; when comparisons are made between Israelis and Nazis and between Palestinian refugee camps and Auschwitz - this is anti-Semitism, not legitimate criticism of Israel.

The second "D" is the test of double standards. When criticism of Israel is applied selectively; when Israel is singled out by the United Nations for human rights abuses while the behavior of known and major abusers, such as China, Iran, Cuba, and Syria, is ignored; when Israel's Magen David Adom, alone among the world's ambulance services, is denied admission to the International Red Cross - this is anti-Semitism.

The third "D" is the test of delegitimization: when Israel's fundamental right to exist is denied - alone among all peoples in the world - this too is anti-Semitism.

Throughout the anti-Israel campaign we find elements, rhetoric, and deceit that fails the 3 D test. Sometimes it is subtle – often it is not. This offensive against Israel is unparalleled in its intensity and absurdity on the international stage. No other nation on earth faces such a concerted effort to rewrite its history, erase millennia of its cultural heritage, and violate its sovereignty.

Indeed, among the foundational documents of the UN is the Charter, which at its very beginning, sets forth as the basis of the UN the QUOTE “sovereign equality of all its Members.” Yet it is this principle that the UN violates when it comes to singling out and seeking to punish Israel.

United States policy has long maintained that direct, bilateral negotiations are the only path to peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict. When we consider that this is our government’s official policy, we are forced to recognize the UN as its primary opponent. Because of the reckless agenda of the Palestinian Authority and the misguided policies of global elites in New York and Geneva, the UN increasingly serves as a platform for efforts to circumvent negotiations, impose conditions, and isolate Israel.

Palestinian officials manipulate UN institutions to create a parallel reality in which “Palestine” is a recognized state, the Green Line is an international border, and Jewish and Christian heritage in the Holy Land does not exist. The Palestinian Authority has proven to be more interested in scoring pyrrhic victories at the UN—whether through having its flag wave in front of UN Headquarters or gaining full UNESCO membership—than in putting in the hard work to achieve true statehood with its Israeli negotiation partner.

It is clear from many UN decisions that a growing number of member states and institutions prefer to construct an alternate universe rather than build sustainable peace. In one especially unconscionable example, UNESCO in October voted to approve two resolutions that erased every single reference to Judaism and Christianity from the ancient holy sites of Jerusalem’s Old City. And as we are all aware, the UN Security Council in December passed Resolution 2334, papering over decades of agreements concerning the 1949 Armistice Line and essentially declaring it to be Israel’s established border with the Palestinian territories.

The ever growing list of anti-Israel resolutions, reports, and screeds at the UN are not only wrong and counterproductive, they are also absurd. In a world of oppressive dictators, international menaces, and systemic human rights abusers, UN institutions repeatedly cast Israel—the Middle East’s only liberal democracy—as a sort of pariah state. The UN General Assembly in September issued 20 anti-Israel resolutions, more than the total number of resolutions on Syria, Iran, and North Korea combined. Equally astonishing, the General Assembly did not pass a single resolution addressing human rights abuses in China, Cuba, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, or Venezuela.

Clearly the United Nations is an institution that is in need of critical attention and serious reform. This subcommittee, in conjunction with that chaired by my colleague Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, in the last Congress held hearings on corruption at the World Intellectual Property Organization, where its Director-General retaliated against whistleblowers who uncovered his illicit transactions with the rogue states North Korea and Iran.

We have also examined the sidelining of and retaliation against those who blew the whistle on UN Peacekeepers who engaged in serial sexual exploitation and abuse, victimizing those they were supposed to protect.

Sadly, we have even seen indications that the UN Food and Agriculture Organization has sought to silence truth-tellers within that organization while offering a plush diplomatic post to shield a former first lady who was under investigation in her own country for receiving bribes in corruption scandal that touched certain countries in Latin America. This is something that we intend to follow up on in this Congress as well.

Another specific issue that has been of particular concern to this Committee has been the issue of accountability for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The United States is the world's largest contributor to UNRWA, giving \$359 million this fiscal year. And yet there are still many questions about what role employees of this organization play in perpetuating hatred of Israel and anti-Semitism.

Considering the roughly \$10 billion the United States contributes to UN institutions *in toto* annually, it is only right that we hold these institutions to account where they abuse their mandates, retaliate against whistleblowers, condone hatred, and undercut our friends.

To borrow from a phrase we hear a lot from in Washington these days, *we need to drain the UN swamp*.