

# **THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY: PERSPECTIVES FROM UNITED STATES-NEW ZEALAND RELATIONS**

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The United Nations (“UN”) is an organization close to my heart, as immediately prior to coming to New Zealand, I was Counselor for Political Affairs at the United States Mission to the UN in New York. This lecture provides insights into why I believe the UN remains a key institution for protecting and improving how we live together as a global society.

To frame the topic of international relations using a local context, I’ll begin with an overview of the United States-New Zealand bilateral relationship and how it applies to regional issues.

## **WORK OF MISSION: NEW ZEALAND AND SAMOA**

The United States has had a diplomatic presence in New Zealand since 1838 when the U.S. Secretary of State commissioned James R. Clendon to be the first United States consul here in the Bay of Islands, north of Auckland (my predecessor 54 times removed). In 2013, we celebrated the one-hundred-seventy-fifth anniversary of America’s diplomatic presence in New Zealand.

The year 2012 also marked the seventieth anniversary of *formal* U.S. diplomatic relations with independent New Zealand, established in the dark days of World War II when this country faced invasion. In 1942, amid those transformative events, the Honorable Walter Nash was sent to Washington as New Zealand’s first ambassador to the United States (and indeed New Zealand’s first diplomatic envoy anywhere overseas).

Today, the American diplomatic presence in New Zealand is represented by an Embassy in Wellington and a Consulate-General in Auckland. The United States Embassy is staffed by officials

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representing a number of United States agencies including the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, and Agriculture.

The Consulate General in Auckland focuses on commercial support to United States businesses operating in New Zealand and the wider Pacific. All consular services—visa, immigration, and American Citizens' Services matters—are carried out at the Consulate General. The Consulate General, along with Embassy Wellington, also works on public diplomacy efforts, including media and cultural relations, university outreach, educational advising, and Maori and Pacific community engagement.

Another important aspect of our work is the commercial support we provide to U.S. businesses operating in New Zealand and the wider Pacific.

The United States Ambassador to New Zealand is also accredited to the Independent State of Samoa. The United States established a diplomatic presence in Samoa in 1856 when our first American Consul arrived in the capital, Apia.

#### THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

There is a long history of diplomatic relations between the United States and New Zealand. Our two nations have worked together as partners and friends for almost two centuries—and the foundation of our relationship is rock solid because it is based on shared values. However, in the mid-1980s our countries' relationship hit a bump in the road with the suspension of commitments under ANZUS, our trilateral alliance security relationship, which included Australia.

In recent years, Washington and Wellington have taken significant diplomatic strides to strengthen and enhance ties to a point today where the bilateral relationship has been described as the best it has ever been. So what changed? Many years of quiet diplomacy—both traditional and public—based on our continuing shared values and interests, helped to restore the relationship to more of an even footing.

One milestone was then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to New Zealand in November 2010, which showed how powerful—and important—person-to-person diplomacy can be. During that visit, she and New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully signed an agreement known as the *Wellington Declaration*, which provided a useful framework for our newly reinvigorated relationship. It allowed us to reactivate high-level policy dialogues to better understand where we can cooperate and where our differences may

lie. This was followed by the signing of the *Washington Declaration* in June 2012, which provided a framework for cooperation to strengthen our military relationship.

The *Washington Declaration* allowed for the resumption of bilateral military exercises which have been taking place regularly over the past 18 months. The New Zealand Defence Force (“NZDF”) will participate in the large regional Rim of the Pacific Exercise later this year; Royal New Zealand Navy ships recently berthed at United States Naval ports in Guam last year and are programmed for Pearl Harbor this year—a first for many decades.

2014 Exercises in New Zealand include United States Navy participating in the New Zealand Mine Counter Measure Exercise in February and March, a multinational exercise that will include China. The United States Army and Marines will participate in New Zealand Exercise Alam Halfa in May and Exercise Kiwi Koru in October and November, and United States Pacific Command and NZDF will co-host a regional Capacity Building Workshop in February;

Defence Minister Coleman also confirmed during his United States visit last October that New Zealand would provide military instructors to the U.S.-led Global Peacekeeping Operations Initiative in 2014.

#### BEYOND THE DECLARATIONS—SCIENCE & TRADE

Modern international relations have widened from a government-to-government style of diplomacy to a more inclusive system of engaging the public. Through a wide range of *educational and cultural exchange programs*—and by vigorously promoting travel and study in the United States and encouraging Americans to study in New Zealand—the United States Government aims to give people the tools and networks to expand and deepen the bilateral relationship.

*Scientific cooperation* has been one of the strongest areas of our relationship. In fact, it is so consistently productive and successful that it has become commonplace, and it is almost taken for granted.

The most notable example of our scientific collaboration occurs in Antarctica. Central to these efforts is Christchurch, which for over 50 years has served as the deployment hub for personnel of the United States Antarctic Program—Operation Deep Freeze, pumping millions of dollars annually into the local economy.

*Trade* is also one of the most important aspects of our engagement with New Zealand. Together, we are working to

complete the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement (“TPP”), the economic centerpiece of the United States’ rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region.

Including the United States, twelve Asia-Pacific economies representing 40% of global GDP are negotiating the TPP trade deal, which will reflect regional priorities and values, especially in the areas of labor and the environment, and will address new and emerging trade issues and twenty-first-century challenges with respect to the digital economy, cross-border services, state-owned enterprises, and intellectual-property protection.

We see the TPP, with its high ambition and pioneering standards for new trade disciplines, as a model for future trade agreements. All 12 members of the TPP are member economies of APEC and, in turn, the TTP Agreement will serve as a promising pathway to our APEC goal of building a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

During a ministerial meeting in Singapore in December, TPP ministers made substantial progress on outstanding issues. Since then, high-level negotiators have continued to work toward a final package. Achieving an ambitious, comprehensive and high-standard agreement is critical for creating jobs and promoting growth throughout the region.

Some have asked if TPP is in competition with other economic agreements being negotiated in the region. That is a misreading of the situation. There is ample economic growth in the region and numerous efforts underway to tap into it. We do not see these as mutually exclusive. Indeed, some members of TPP, including New Zealand, are also members of the new Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiation, while other TPP members are also negotiating the *Pacific Alliance* on Latin America’s Pacific coast. The United States is also negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Partnership agreement, or “TTP”, with the European Union (“EU”). All of these negotiations represent an effort to expand economic growth through greater commerce.

The TPP is consciously designed to be comprehensive, high-standard, and twenty-first century in its approach. It is also being designed as a platform that can expand to other economies in the region that are prepared to take on its ambitious commitments. By doing this, we hope to work together to use TPP to open markets and raise trade standards throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Some have wondered if TPP is directed against non-members, such as China, or Indonesia, or others. That is clearly not the case—

TPP will be open to Asia-Pacific economies that can demonstrate they are willing and ready to take on its ambitious commitments. Since the start of TPP negotiations, we have welcomed Vietnam, Malaysia, Mexico, Canada, and Japan into the negotiations. As other countries in the region decide they too support the ambitious goals of TPP, we will be ready to talk to them as well. It is and will continue to be in United States' interests, as it is in New Zealand's, to encourage China's continued integration into the global system of trade and investment and adherence to the standards, norms, and commitments that form the backbone of that system.

Both bilaterally and multilaterally we work closely with China on a range of issues. The United States and China have for some time had a Strategic & Economic Dialogue, which has produced a number of outcomes building on the framework for cooperation established at Sunnylands in June last year. These outcomes span a wide range of pressing bilateral, regional, and global challenges, from Iran and North Korea to maritime security, energy, and the environment.

The fifth United States-China-Asia Pacific Consultations took place in Beijing on January 22, where the United States and China announced their intention to pursue several areas of practical cooperation in fields as varied as regional disaster relief; development in Burma and assistance for Afghanistan; food security; global health issues such as monitoring avian flu and resistance to antimalarial medicines; marine conservation; customs cooperation; and many others.

I should make a special mention of Preventive Diplomacy: along with New Zealand and Brunei, the United States will co-host and China will attend an Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum Roundtable on Training Resources for Preventive Diplomacy in Wellington on March 20 and 21, 2014, to review and strengthen preventive-diplomacy training in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Both the United States and New Zealand recognize that the future of our societies lies in leveraging and assisting the growth of the Asia-Pacific region, and doing so in a way that harnesses the economic benefits of our citizens' creativity.

#### SHARED INTERESTS, GOALS, AND VALUES

The United States and New Zealand work together so effortlessly in areas like trade, science, and peacekeeping, to name but a few, because our core values are largely the same. We share a common vision of a world that is stable, peaceful, and prosperous.

Underpinning this vision is our shared commitment to democratic principles and political empowerment, for universal human rights and democratic governance, and for the rule of law. These are the core values, interests, and ideals that serve to underwrite the United States-New Zealand relationship.

This synergy of interests and values is evident for all to see at the UN. The United States and New Zealand are equally committed to ensuring that the UN retains a position of global leadership and remains an indispensable organization in order to tackle some of the world's most intractable problems—problems which ultimately affect us all.

The United States proudly hosts the headquarters in my hometown of New York. And we are the UN's largest contributor: U.S. contributions to the UN in 2010 totaled \$7,691,822,000. Like New Zealand, we are absolutely committed to the success of the UN.

As never before, our most pressing challenges have become more complex and are truly global. The threats faced today, from climate change to pandemic disease, to man-made and natural disasters, to attacks on freedom and human rights, these pay no attention to national borders and require careful, coordinated action. So international diplomacy becomes increasingly relevant and necessary. United States foreign policy is anchored in our support of multilateral institutions, such as the UN, that provide a collective platform to solve these complex challenges.

#### IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Above the entrance to the UN headquarters at United Nations Plaza on First Avenue between Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth Streets hangs a sign: "Welcome to the United Nations. It's your world." And this is true.

The 18-acre site houses representatives from 193 member states working on a broad range of issues directly affecting the lives of billions of people. The UN World Food Program alone—just one of dozens of UN agencies, bodies, and entities—provides food annually to 90 million people in 75 countries. There are currently more than 100,000 UN peacekeepers in 15 peace operations.

In thinking about where and how the United States, New Zealand, and the UN intersect, it is worth reflecting on beginnings. A 1945 conference held in San Francisco resulted in the creation of the UN Charter—the foundation document of the UN. During the two months of deliberations at the conference, the United States

delegation, led by former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, whose husband President Franklin D. Roosevelt first coined the term *United Nations*, and the New Zealand delegation, led by Prime Minister Peter Fraser, worked with other delegations to build a new global institution that would reflect certain shared values and ideals: ideals codified in the UN Charter.

Since then, the main UN organs, including the General Assembly and the Security Council (“SC”), have had essential roles in supporting the development, promotion, and implementation of international norms and standards, all of which help to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels; provide protection of human rights; sustain economic progress and development; and prevent conflict and affect durable peace in the aftermath of conflict. There are many common causes that the United States and New Zealand work on at the UN.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

The United States and New Zealand have historically been in lockstep on protecting and advancing basic human rights, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such as democracy and the freedom to live one’s life free from fear or persecution.

The struggle to make human rights a reality needs a common voice, and the United States and New Zealand have both found that the UN is one of the best venues for dialogue, open discussion, and frank conversation—even with countries with whom we do not always agree.

#### KEEPING THE PEACE

An effective UN is an effective instrument for peacekeeping. Kiwis and Americans work together keeping the peace around the world. In Timor Leste, New Zealand and American civilian police and military liaison officers worked together to provide security in what was then the world’s newest nation.

In the Sinai Desert that separates Israel from Egypt, a New Zealander is the Force Commander for the Multinational Force and Observers who work with American officials on the ground to monitor the 1979 peace treaty between the two nations.

## NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT

The United States and New Zealand are both committed to global nuclear non-proliferation and arms control efforts. President Obama made it clear in his landmark speech in Vienna in 2009 that the United States is working toward a world free of nuclear weapons. The United States and New Zealand, along with many others nations, work hard to advance non-proliferation and disarmament efforts through the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in the UN.

One of the most pressing nuclear non-proliferation issues before the UN at the moment is Iran. On November 24, 2013, Iran and the P5+1—the United States, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, and China, plus Germany, coordinated by EU High Representative Cathy Ashton—reached a set of understandings outlined in a Joint Plan of Action that, as an initial step, halts progress on Iran’s nuclear program, rolls it back in key respects, and provides additional access to Iran’s nuclear facilities for international inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (“IAEA”). These are the first meaningful limits Iran has accepted on its nuclear program in close to a decade.

We believe this process is the best opportunity for resolving peacefully the international community’s concerns with Iran’s nuclear program and preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon—a goal we know is shared by our friends and partners worldwide.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

When it comes to addressing other global challenges, like climate change, the United States and New Zealand work together to provide strong leadership to address environmental issues through vigorous engagement in UN-sponsored climate negotiations. The UN Framework is working toward creating a future climate-change regime that will be legally binding and apply to all nations, with appropriate commitments from developed and developing nations.

ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST THE VULNERABLE IN CONFLICT  
AND VIOLENCE BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Bringing an end to sexual violence against the vulnerable in conflict and violence based on sexual orientation is another area of convergence between the United States and New Zealand at the UN. This was evidenced in March 2011 when the United States and New

Zealand joined with 83 other countries from every region of the world to endorse the UN Human Rights Council Statement on Ending Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

#### THE SECURITY COUNCIL: OPERATIONS

These issues, and many others, are addressed in the General Assembly, where all 193 representative nations contribute to debate. They often come before the UN Security Council for deliberation and a decision on how the global community will respond. This makes the Council one of the world's most vital decision-making bodies.

As you would expect with an organization with such significance, significant work goes into making sure it runs as smoothly and as efficiently as possible. There are various types of meetings which take place, each of which serve their own purpose. There are public meetings, including open debates, public briefings, and adoption meetings. Much of the work of the UN gets done through a series of private meetings such as informal consultations, private debates, and Troop Contributing Countries' ("TCC") Meetings.

With all these various meeting formats comes a range of outputs and products that the Council can decide to issue. These outputs and products include Resolutions, which require an affirmative vote of nine or more members, including the vote (affirmative or abstention) of the five permanent members of the Security Council ("P5") in a public meeting. Resolutions are "adopted." Presidential Statements are adopted by consensus in informal consultations or by a "no objection" procedure. The President of the Security Council reads out the statement in a public meeting.

The type of activity that one most associates with UN is negotiation; and there are, you will be pleased to know, a lot of these, along with well-defined processes that dictate how they work. Each Council agenda item has a "lead country", also known as the "pen holder". This country has the responsibility for drafting all related Council documents, scheduling, and running all related negotiations, and is the official liaison on the issue with the UN secretariat staff and the countries in question. The P5 divvy up the pen holders each year. While having the "pen" often means much more work, it also gives the pen holder country much more control over the text and negotiations.

On some issues, there may be "Core Group" or "Friends" negotiations before the Security Council ones. The Core Group consists of member states that are not necessarily on the SC but have

strong interests in the issue. Some but not all SC members will be in a Core Group.

When a draft resolution is agreed to by negotiators, the pen holder will put the document into “silence” and will give a deadline. Once silence has passed without being broken, it will then be put into “blue.” It is called blue because the UN has special printers that print the final text in the color blue. At this point, there is no turning back, the resolution is ready to be adopted and issued. Once a draft has been put into blue, occasionally delegations will “co-sponsor” the resolution as a sign of support for the text.

A United Nations Security Council Resolution is made up of two main parts. The first part consists of preamble paragraphs (“pp” for short), followed by numbered paragraphs called the operating paragraphs (“op” for short). Ops are more important than pps because that is the part where the orders are given and followed.

#### ELECTION OF NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS (“NPMS”) TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Every year the General Assembly elects five NPMs for a two-year term. The 10 NPM seats are distributed according to regional groupings: five for Africa and Asia (Asia includes Pacific Small Island Developing States); one for Eastern Europe; two for Latin America and the Caribbean; and two for Western Europe and Other (New Zealand’s group).

There are no Charter-specified requirements for election to an NPM seat, but the Charter directs the General Assembly to consider candidates’ contributions to peace and security, the UN’s other purposes, and to equitable geographic distribution before all else. In practice, NPM candidates are elected on the basis of their record in peacekeeping, security, environment and poverty issues, representation of a significant demographic group, and financial contributions to the UN budget. Status and lobbying power also play a large role.

Negative factors include domestic insecurity, concurrent campaigning for another office or seat, or a record of defying the Security Council (e.g., North Korea and Iran). Of the 193 UN Member States, 68 have never been elected to the Security Council.

## ELECTORAL PROCESS

The election is held by secret ballot and there are no nominations. Retiring NPMs are not eligible for immediate re-election. An NPM candidate must be elected by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly, or 129 of the body's 193 votes. A candidate must obtain a two-thirds majority even if it is running on a "clean slate"—that is, endorsed by its region and thus uncontested.

New Zealand has been elected three times to the Security Council: 1954–55; 1966 (a one-year term when the Council was enlarged to its current size); and 1993–94. New Zealand will know in October 2014 whether it is successful this time around.

## THE SYRIA CHALLENGE

Arguably the most compelling current security and human rights challenge in the world is the crisis in Syria. On this still unfolding challenge, the United States and New Zealand are of one mind. Syria is a good example of how—based on our common values—we work together on some of the most pressing issues of the day.

Together we are working to advance the protection and the human rights of those innocents affected, to develop an enduring peace, and to ensure that the new Syria will be a secure, stable, tolerant society with a democratic and open government.

*Security Council inertia on Syria*

The rapidity of the deterioration of Syria was, regrettably, not matched by the speed of Security Council action to arrest it. Both the United States and New Zealand have been frustrated by inaction in the Security Council on Syria.

In 2011 Susan Rice, then United States Ambassador to the UN, said the Russian and Chinese veto of an October 2011 Security Council Resolution—which had been re-worded three times to placate Moscow and Beijing, and merely condemned the Assad regime's crackdown on anti-government protesters—demonstrated these countries' willingness to use their veto to "defend dictators" and to "maintain solidarity among a certain group of countries."<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Remarks by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at the Security Council Stakeout, on the Veto of a UN Security Council Resolution on Syria*, U.S. MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS (Oct. 4, 2011), <http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/2011/175028.htm>.

New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully voiced New Zealand's frustration in his September 2012 speech to the General Assembly when he asked, "what does it take" for the Security Council to act over crimes as abhorrent as those of the Assad regime?<sup>2</sup>

International calls for the use of force against the Assad regime following its use of chemical weapons refocused diplomatic attention and led directly to the passage of Security Council Resolution 2118 which required Assad to surrender his chemical weapons—a process which is now underway, with a deadline of destroying all such weapons by June this year.

#### *Humanitarian assistance on Syria*

Resolution 2118 calls on Member States to increase their humanitarian aid contributions for Syria. To date, the United States has given more than NZ\$1.25 billion in humanitarian assistance—more than any other country—to the Syrian people. New Zealand has donated NZ\$12.5 million, with NZ\$5 million of that amount announced just last month.

#### CONCLUSION: THE UN—AN INDISPENSABLE ORGANIZATION

There are pessimists who say that when countries gather at the UN, nothing happens, save the exchange of meaningless words. But the UN serves many practical and noble purposes that benefit all nations. The UN remains the most powerful repository of international legitimacy—and international law—which gives it the credibility needed to address the regional and global challenges of today and tomorrow.

The United States knows this, as does New Zealand, and countless other nations. This is why we work arm-in-arm within the UN to make the world a better place for all its citizens. Solving regional and global problems today requires us to think both regionally and globally, to see the intersections and connections linking nations and regions and interests, to bring people together as only the United Nations can.

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2. Murray McCully, New Zealand Foreign Minister, Address Before the U.N. General Assembly, *in* U.N. GAOR, 67th Sess., 18th plen. mtg. at 21, U.N. Doc. A/67/PV.18 (Sept. 29, 2012).

The United States and New Zealand recognize that the UN is an indispensable institution to address the critical challenges of today and tomorrow. In his address to the General Assembly in 1961 following the tragic death of UN General Secretary Dag Hammarskjold in a plane crash while on a UN mission in Africa, President Kennedy ably summed up both the essential challenge and the essential importance of the organization:

The problem is not the death of one man—the problem is the life of this Organization. It will either grow to meet the challenges of our age, or it will be gone with the wind, without influence, without force, without respect. Were we to let it die—to enfeeble its vigour—to cripple its powers—we would condemn our future.<sup>3</sup>

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3. John F. Kennedy, President of the United States, Address Before the U.N. General Assembly, *in* U.N. GAOR, 16th Sess., 1013th plen. mtg., at 55, U.N. Doc. A/16/PV.1013 (Sept. 25, 1961).