

# Countering China’s U.N. Influence: A Blueprint for the United States

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

China uses its influence in the U.N. to advance its political and economic goals—goals that are harmful to the U.S.

Increased financial contributions and demands that Chinese nationals employed by the U.N. support China’s policies and preferences add to Beijing’s influence.

The U.S. needs a strategy that protects the independence of international institutions and includes judiciously applied financial and political pressure.

During the past two decades, the Chinese economy has grown dramatically, taking advantage of access to international markets and foreign investment that has given China the resources to expand its military and advance its political influence through financial programs like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).<sup>1</sup> Western nations hoped that China’s integration into the international system would “normalize” China and lead it to appreciate existing international rules and norms and gradually become freer economically and politically. This did not occur. In retrospect, it is clear that Beijing wishes to continue its domestic repression, dominate its neighbors, and replace the United States as the preeminent global power.

As part of this process, China has sought to reorder the international system to its benefit and influence

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the United Nations and its affiliated organizations from within and without to advance its interests. These efforts have borne fruit to the detriment of the stated principles of the U.N. and the interests and values of the U.S. and like-minded countries. Many diplomatic, economic, and security matters are discussed, negotiated, implemented, and acted upon through international organizations. There is a growing bipartisan recognition that failing to act effectively to advance U.S. interests in these fora will undermine U.S. interests on multiple fronts.

Because Chinese influence is unlikely to decline anytime soon, the U.S. must take proactive steps to counter that influence by:

- Conducting a detailed assessment of Chinese interests and tactics,
- Encouraging U.S. and like-minded leadership in key international organizations,
- Promoting U.S. employment in international organizations, and
- Applying U.S. pressure purposefully and judiciously.

## China's Multifaceted Influence

China has long exerted significant diplomatic influence in the U.N. through its historical relationships with developing countries and influence over ideological and regional U.N. voting blocs. As its economy has grown, however, this diplomatic influence has been supplemented by China's willingness to provide economic investment through the BRI and other mechanisms. Inside the U.N. system, China's economic growth has resulted in higher contributions and financial leverage. This has lent credibility to campaigns by Chinese nationals to lead U.N. organizations and has contributed to the increased employment of Chinese nationals in the U.N. system.

All of these advantages have enabled China to influence the U.N. to its political and economic benefit. Examples include inserting references and phrases like "win-win cooperation" into U.N. resolutions that echo Beijing's rhetoric and statements, securing U.N. cooperative agreements with and endorsement of Chinese initiatives like the BRI, impeding Taiwan's participation in the U.N. system, delaying U.N. reports that it opposes such as the U.N. report on human rights violations in Xinxiang, and blunting criticism of its lack of transparency and international cooperation during the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Beijing has exerted its influence in

TABLE 1

## Top 10 Government Contributors to the U.N. System in 2020

Donor Government	U.N. Regular Budget Assessment in 2022	U.N. Peacekeeping Budget Assessment in 2022	U.N. SYSTEM		
			Assessed Contributions	Voluntary Contributions	Total Contributions
United States	22.000%	26.9493%	\$3,286,226,848	\$8,354,705,199	\$11,640,932,048
Germany	6.111%	6.1110%	\$843,904,431	\$4,827,918,009	\$5,671,822,441
United Kingdom	4.375%	5.3592%	\$708,108,134	\$2,310,324,063	\$3,018,432,198
Japan	8.033%	8.0330%	\$1,173,013,021	\$1,313,005,711	\$2,486,018,733
China	15.254%	18.6857%	\$1,786,863,940	\$190,284,964	\$1,977,148,906
Sweden	0.871%	0.8710%	\$127,752,426	\$1,406,764,801	\$1,534,517,228
France	4.318%	5.2894%	\$695,157,729	\$452,021,754	\$1,147,179,485
Canada	2.628%	2.6280%	\$385,355,404	\$707,885,543	\$1,093,240,949
Norway	0.679%	0.6790%	\$107,332,424	\$955,523,889	\$1,062,856,314
Italy	3.189%	3.1890%	\$460,778,158	\$436,811,625	\$897,589,785
<b>Total (all governments)</b>	—	—	<b>\$13,640,782,625</b>	<b>\$28,662,986,277</b>	<b>\$42,303,768,903</b>

**SOURCES:** U.N. Chief Executives Board, “Revenue by Government Donor and by Financing Instrument,” <https://unsceb.org/fs-revenue-government-donor> (accessed August 31, 2022), and Report of the Secretary-General, “Scale of Assessments for the Apportionment of the Expenses of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Implementation of General Assembly Resolutions 55/235 and 55/236,” A/76/296/Rev.1/Add.1, December 28, 2021, <https://undocs.org/en/A/76/296/Rev.1/Add.1> (accessed August 31, 2022).

the U.N. system through its financial contributions and by placing Chinese nationals in leadership positions and increasing Chinese employment in international organizations.

**Financial Contributions.** China has dramatically increased its financial contributions to the U.N. system. According to the U.N. Chief Executives Board, China ranked fifth among all nations with contributions of \$1.98 billion to the U.N. system in 2020, including \$1.79 billion in assessed contributions and \$190 million in voluntary contributions.<sup>3</sup> This is 10 times the amount China contributed in 2010 when it ranked 21st among all government donors with \$190 million in total contributions. Looking just at the core U.N., China now is second only to the United States in its assessments for the U.N. regular and peacekeeping budgets—roughly double Japan’s assessments.<sup>4</sup>

This increase in financial contributions translates into greater influence. Beijing can now use its financial leverage as a counterweight to the U.S.—but with very different intent. The U.S. historically has used its financial clout to press for reforms to improve the U.N.’s transparency, accountability, and effectiveness and focus the organization on its founding principles, such as promoting human rights. China has used its influence to undermine those principles by, for instance, seeking to reduce or eliminate human rights officials’ participation in peacekeeping missions<sup>5</sup> and to advance its political priorities by, for example, securing U.N. endorsement of its Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, while China’s contributions have increased rapidly, the U.S. far outstrips China in terms of total contributions to the U.N. system. The gap is particularly high in voluntary contributions—funding that the U.S. is not obligated to pay and that could be leveraged to greater effect in influencing recipient organizations to support U.S. priorities, advance the core missions of those organizations, and counter harmful Chinese influence.

**Leadership in International Organizations.** The U.N. system encompasses far more than the U.N. headquarters in New York. All told, the U.N. is comprised of dozens of organizations, commissions, funds, and other entities. These entities, while all falling under the U.N. umbrella, have different relationships with the U.N. and levels of autonomy. Least autonomous are the committees and bodies with narrow mandates that have been established by the U.N. Security Council and U.N. General Assembly and report to them. More independent are the U.N. funds and programs like the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)<sup>7</sup> that are created by General Assembly resolutions but have their own governing bodies and are funded mainly through separate voluntary contributions. The U.N. Secretary-General usually appoints the heads of U.N. funds and programs in consultation with the Member States.

The most prestigious organizations in the U.N. system are the 15 specialized agencies, which are autonomous international organizations affiliated with the U.N. Until 2006, a Chinese national had never led a U.N. specialized agency. In recent years, however, China has led more U.N. specialized agencies than any other nation. Specifically, a Chinese national led four U.N. specialized agencies in six of the seven years from 2015–2021.<sup>8</sup> This leadership has given China enormous influence over the agendas and work of those organizations. For instance:

- Director-General Li Yong of the U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) repeatedly praised China’s Belt and Road Initiative and partnered UNIDO with China in related initiatives.<sup>9</sup>

- Secretary-General Houlin Zhao of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) deepened the organization's ties to China, endorsed the BRI, favorably hosted Chinese proposals for changes in Internet governance, and dismissed U.S. warnings about the security threat posed by the involvement of Chinese technology company Huawei in 5G networks.<sup>10</sup>
- Secretary-General Fang Liu of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) advanced policies dictated by Beijing, including new air routes instituted in violation of ICAO procedures and concealed security breaches linked to China that threatened the security of ICAO, its member states, and the aviation industry.<sup>11</sup>
- Director-General Qu Dongyu of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regularly praises Chinese programs, congratulating China on its “complete victory” in the battle against poverty, and has deepened FAO's cooperation with China<sup>12</sup> by expanding its partnership with China on the South–South Cooperation Program with \$50 million in Chinese funding.<sup>13</sup>

Term limits have resulted in Chinese nationals cycling out of their leadership positions in several of these organizations. Chinese nationals currently lead two U.N. specialized agencies: the ITU and the FAO. This will fall to one in the beginning of 2023 as Houlin Zhao ends his second term as Secretary-General of the ITU, but Beijing will continue to seek leadership positions for its nationals in U.N. organizations or support candidates that it believes will support China's goals.

Most immediately, the election for the next Secretary-General of the ITU will take place at the upcoming 2022 ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Bucharest, Romania, from September 26 to October 14. The two candidates are American Doreen Bogdan-Martin and Russian Rashid Ismailov. While the ITU is not well known, it is a critical organization where standards for communications and digital technologies are negotiated and approved. It also plays a crucial role in the allocation of orbital slots for satellites and spectrum for various purposes from communications to navigation. Russia and China have shared interests and objectives within the ITU mandate, and the election of Ismailov—a former Huawei executive—would likely solidify and expand Houlin Zhao's efforts to advance Chinese priorities in the ITU. The U.S. has mounted a strong campaign for Bogdan-Martin, but victory is by no means assured.

In 2023, there will be elections for leadership of several other major U.N. organizations. In some, including the FAO, the International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the U.N. Environment Program (UNEP), current leaders are likely to seek and secure reelection. Leadership changes worth tracking in 2023 include the following:

- **World Food Programme (WFP).** The term of Executive Director David Beasley was extended for a year but will expire in 2023. Since the early 1990s, this position has been filled by a U.S. national as America is by far the largest donor to the WFP, contributing nearly 40 percent of total contributions in 2021.<sup>14</sup> However, in the past, the WFP has been led by nationals from other nations, and the position is not a U.S. sinecure. The Executive Director of WFP is jointly appointed by the U.N. Secretary-General and the FAO Director-General, who is a Chinese national, and it would not be surprising if rising tensions between China and the U.S. played a role in this process.
- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).** UNHCR is a massive organization that assists tens of millions of refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers in 137 countries around the world. In 2021, it had a budget of more than \$9 billion and a staff of 18,879.<sup>15</sup> The original term of UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi was extended by the U.N. General Assembly for two and a half years (until June 30, 2023) upon recommendation by U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres.
- **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).** The president of ITLOS “directs the work and supervises the administration of the Tribunal and represents the Tribunal in its relations with States and other entities.”<sup>16</sup> The current president’s term expires in 2023. Reelection is permitted, but that would run counter to precedent. Both China and Russia have judges on ITLOS and, considering their respective territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the Black Sea, both countries might seek to have their nationals assume the presidency.

In addition, jockeying for advantage often starts a year before the elections are held. Organizations for which competitive elections are expected in 2024—i.e., those where the incumbent is not eligible for reelection—include the International Maritime Organization (IMO), INTERPOL, and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

TABLE 2

## Heads of International Organizations: Leaders, Terms, and Upcoming Elections (Page 1 of 3)

	Title	Name	Nationality	Term	Entered Office	End of Term
<b>UNITED NATIONS</b>	Secretary General	Antonio Guterres	Portugal	5 years	2017	2026
<b>U.N. SPECIALIZED AGENCIES</b>						
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Director General	Qu Dongyu	China	4 years	2019	2023
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)	Secretary General	Juan Carlos Salazar	Colombia	3 years	2021	2024
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	President	Alvaro Lario	Spain	4 years	2022	2026
International Labour Organization (ILO)	Director General	Gilbert Hougbo*	Togo	5 years	2022	2027
International Maritime Organization (IMO)	Secretary General	Kitack Lim	South Korea	4 years	2016	2024
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Managing Director	Kristalina Georgieva	Bulgaria	5 years	2019	2024
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)	Secretary General	Houlin Zhao	China	4 years	2015	2023
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Director General	Audrey Azoulay	France	4 years	2017	2025
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	Director General	Gerd Müller	Germany	4 years	2021	2025
Universal Postal Union (UPU)	Director General	Masahiko Metoki	Japan	4 years	2022	2026
World Bank	President	David Malpass	U.S.	5 years	2019	2024
World Health Organization (WHO)	Director General	Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus	Ethiopia	5 years	2017	2027
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)	Director General	Daren Tang	Singapore	6 years	2020	2026
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	Secretary General	Petteri Taalas	Finland	4 years	2016	2024
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	Secretary General	Zurab Pololikashvili	Georgia	4 years	2018	2026

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	Title	Name	Nationality	Term	Entered Office	End of Term
<b>MAJOR U.N. FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES</b>						
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	High Commissioner	Filippo Grandi**	Italy	5 years	2016	2023
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Executive Director	Catherine Russell	U.S.	Appointed by U.N. Secretary General	2022	
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)	Secretary General	Rebeca Grynspan	Costa Rica	4 years	2021	2025
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Administrator	Achim Steiner	Germany	4 years	2017	2025
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Executive Director	Inger Andersen	Denmark	4 years	2019	2023
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat)	Executive Director	Maimunah Mohd Sharif***	Malaysia	4 years	2018	2024
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	Executive Director	Natalia Kanem	Tanzania	4 years	2017	2025
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)	Commissioner General	Philippe Lazzarini	Switzerland	3 years	2020	2023
World Food Programme (WFP)	Executive Director	David Beasley****	U.S.	5 years	2017	2023
<b>UNRELATED ORGANIZATIONS</b>						
Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)	Executive Secretary	Robert Floyd	Australia	4 years	2021	2025
International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEA)	Director General	Rafael Marioano Grossi	Argentina	4 years	2019	2023
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Director General	António Vitorino	Portugal	5 years	2018	2023
International Seabed Authority (ISA)	Secretary General	Michael W. Lodge	United Kingdom	4 years	2017	2024
International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)	President	Albert J. Hoffman	South Africa	3 years	2020	2023

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	Title	Name	Nationality	Term	Entered Office	End of Term
<b>UNRELATED ORGANIZATIONS (CONT.)</b>						
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)	Director General	Fernando Arias	Spain	4 years	2018	2026
World Trade Organization (WTO)	Director General	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala	Nigeria	4 years	2021	2025
<b>OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>						
International Criminal Court (ICC)	President	Piotr Hofmański	Poland	3 years	2021	2024
INTERPOL	Secretary General	Jürgen Stock	Germany	5 years	2014	2024

\* Elected. Term starts October 1, 2022.

\*\* Original term extended by the U.N. General Assembly for a further two-and-a-half-year-period (until June 30, 2023) upon recommendation by U.N. Secretary General Guterres.

\*\*\* Original term extended by the U.N. General Assembly for a further two-year period (until January 19, 2024) upon recommendation by U.N. Secretary General Guterres.

\*\*\*\* Original term extended by one year (until April 2023).

**SOURCES:** Heritage Foundation research based on publicly available information from the United Nations and the international organizations listed in the table.

**Chinese Nationals Employed by the U.N.** The number of Chinese nationals working in the U.N. system has grown substantially. In 2011, the U.N. system employed 888 Chinese nationals.<sup>17</sup> Ten years later in 2021, it employed 1,471 Chinese nationals<sup>18</sup>—an increase of 66 percent. In addition to the U.N., where China’s increased assessments would logically lead to increased employment under U.N. practices, the increases tended to be higher in organizations that had been led by Chinese nationals during the past 10 years like the FAO, ITU, and WHO; organizations that had a substantial presence in developing countries like the U.N. Development Program and UNICEF; or organizations that had the potential to provide economic or technological advantage such as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).<sup>19</sup>

In the abstract, an increasing number of nationals working at the U.N. from a particular nation is not objectionable. U.N. employees are expected to be impartial and independent in fulfilling their responsibilities, and this

includes not seeking or receiving instructions from governments. The problem is that Beijing demands that its nationals place China's interests above the principle of neutrality enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

There are numerous reports of Chinese staff at international organizations using their positions to advance Chinese priorities and harassing nongovernmental organizations that are critical of Chinese policies.<sup>20</sup> Former U.N. Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo, for example, admitted that Beijing required him to act in the interests of China as a U.N. civil servant and cited how he had instructed U.N. security to remove a "Xinjiang separatist" from a U.N. seminar. "I think being a Chinese diplomat means one can't be careless, when it is about protecting China's national interest and safety," he said, "We have to strongly defend the motherland's interests."<sup>21</sup>

Individuals who do not heed Beijing can face severe consequences. Even high-level international officials are not immune, as former INTERPOL President Meng Hongwei found out when he was arrested on a trip home to China and charged with abuse of power and refusing to "follow party decisions."<sup>22</sup>

## What the Administration Should Do

There is bipartisan concern over Chinese influence in international organizations and the need for the U.S. to take steps to counter that influence. In 2020, former National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien warned:

The Chinese Communist Party seeks total control over the people's lives. This means economic control, it means political control, it means physical control, and, perhaps most importantly, it means thought control....

International organizations are also part of China's plan. China has sought leadership positions within many global bodies.... The PRC uses these leaders to force the international bodies to parrot Beijing's talking points and to install Chinese telecommunications equipment in their facilities.<sup>23</sup>

In a speech outlining the Biden Administration's China policy, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken explained why Chinese influence in international organizations is cause for serious concern:

China is the only country with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it. Beijing's vision would move us away from the universal values that have sustained so much of the world's progress over the past 75 years.<sup>24</sup>

The Biden Administration has responded by focusing its efforts on engagement, including providing funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), seeking unconditional payment of arrears to the U.N., and rejoining the Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization, and the Paris Climate Agreement.<sup>25</sup> But countering Chinese influence requires a broader, multifaceted strategy beyond offering the carrots of engagement and funding. Sticks, including financial leverage and confrontation, must be part of the strategy. Specifically, the U.S. should:

- **Analyze Chinese influence in international organizations.** As it did during the Cold War in dealing with Soviet influence in the U.N., Congress should require the U.S. intelligence community to conduct a detailed assessment of Chinese objectives, tactics, and progress in influencing international organizations and use that report to adjust U.S. policy and resources appropriately.
- **Support well-qualified, independent candidates for leadership of international organizations that will rebuff pressure from China and other authoritarian governments.** The U.S. should create a regularized process of tracking openings and soliciting good candidates for them. If a qualified American is interested, the U.S. should nominate and support his or her candidacy vigorously as it is currently doing with Doreen Bogdan-Green in her campaign for Secretary-General of the ITU. However, it would be unrealistic to expect an American to lead more than a few international organizations at any one time. Where a U.S. candidate is not available or is unlikely to win, the U.S. should support individuals from other nations who are well qualified, support the organization's core purposes and mission, are not beholden to governments whose priorities are antithetical to U.S. interests, and are committed to ensuring that the organization operates efficiently, accountably, and transparently.
- **Use U.S. financial leverage to counter Chinese influence.** Chinese contributions to international organizations, though rising, remain far less than U.S. contributions, particularly voluntary contributions. If U.S. funding is seen as an entitlement, pressure to respond to U.S. criticism will be less effective. Moreover, past unwillingness to modify its funding patterns has limited America's ability to influence the organizations in a positive direction and blunt Chinese influence. This

needs to change. In addition, Beijing has skillfully used China's historical relationship with developing countries and economic incentives to advance its efforts to influence international organizations. Major recipients of U.S. assistance are among the countries that support America the least at the United Nations.<sup>26</sup> While U.N. voting should not be the sole driver of aid allocation, it should be a factor given the evidence that China has been using investment and assistance to elicit support from recipient nations in international organizations.<sup>27</sup>

- **Focus U.S. engagement on the most important organizations.** Having a “seat at the table” is not a strategy, nor is it sufficient to achieve positive results. Not all international organizations are equally important, and the U.S. should not squander finite time, effort, and resources on international organizations of dubious merit like the U.N. World Tourism Organization, from which the U.S. withdrew in 1995, or those where U.S. engagement would undermine other U.S. foreign policy interests like the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which granted the Palestinians full membership in 2011.<sup>28</sup> The U.S. should focus its effort and resources on organizations whose responsibilities affect key U.S. interests.
- **Seek a maximum assessment of 25 percent for U.N. peacekeeping.** As China's contributions increase, so will its ability to advance priorities that are antithetical to the aims of the United States and counter to the principles of the U.N. Charter. While there is a maximum assessment of 22 percent for the U.N. regular budget, there is no maximum assessment for U.N. peacekeeping. If its economy continues to grow, China's assessment may exceed the U.S. assessment in the not-too-distant future, giving it even more financial influence. Past U.S. motivations for seeking a maximum peacekeeping assessment were to save taxpayer dollars and encourage other Member States to have more financial incentives to ensure that U.N. activities were suited to the organization's purpose. Limiting China's future financial leverage is now a third motivation.<sup>29</sup> Payment of U.S. peacekeeping arrears should be tied to adoption of a maximum peacekeeping assessment of 25 percent.
- **Support Taiwan's participation in international organizations.** Across the U.N. system, China has succeeded in ostracizing Taiwan. For instance, Taiwan has not been able to participate as an observer

in meetings of the U.N., the WHO, the ICAO, and other international organizations despite the many equities Taiwan has in matters considered by those organizations. In June, Tuvalu pulled out of a U.N. Ocean Conference after China blocked the participation of three Taiwanese citizens on its delegation.<sup>30</sup> The extent of this effort goes to ridiculous lengths, including successfully pressuring the U.N. to deny private citizens access to U.N. offices and conferences because they have Taiwanese passports.<sup>31</sup> The U.S. should continue to demand that Taiwan be allowed to participate as an observer in international organizations and insist that its citizens, media, and civil society organizations be allowed the same access to facilities and opportunity to participate that is available to citizens and private organizations from other nations and territories.

- **Hold authoritarian states accountable for their actions.** China has routinely pressured the U.N. system to its advantage. In the early days of the Covid pandemic, China was not transparent and violated its obligations to notify the international community about the disease. Yet Beijing successfully undermined efforts to get the WHO to conduct a truly independent investigation into the origins of Covid.<sup>32</sup> As noted, China also pressured the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to delay the public release of a report on human rights abuses against more than a million Uyghur and other Muslims in the Chinese province of Xinxiang.<sup>33</sup> Yet China has faced no consequences for these actions. As shown by the U.N. General Assembly resolutions to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council, the U.S. and its allies can take steps to hold authoritarian governments accountable and should not ignore China.
- **Demand that Chinese citizens employed by the U.N. observe their obligation “not [to] seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization.”<sup>34</sup>** When there are complaints or evidence of bias and inappropriate acts by Chinese staff in international organizations, the U.S. and like-minded states should demand that these allegations be properly investigated and that, if they are substantiated, the individuals involved are disciplined, suspended, or dismissed.
- **Increase the employment of U.S. nationals in international organizations.** U.S. nationals historically have been underrepresented

in U.N. organizations.<sup>35</sup> This is unfortunate because U.S. citizens, unlike nationals from authoritarian states like China, are free to act independently and neutrally in accordance with the principles of the U.N. Charter. With the support of Congress, the State Department has created a portal to facilitate applications by U.S. nationals for international organization jobs, junior professional officer positions, and federal employee details and transfers.<sup>36</sup> The Government Accountability Office should be tasked with assessing the effort and reporting on whether U.S. employment has increased.

## Conclusion

China's increasing influence in the U.N. and other international organizations threatens U.S. interests. Although Chinese influence cannot be eliminated, it can be countered through a multifaceted strategy that is informed by a detailed analysis of Chinese interests and tactics and includes coordinated action by the U.S. and like-minded governments in key international organizations, the purposeful and judicious application of U.S. pressure, and a willingness to act aggressively to hold authoritarian governments accountable for their actions.

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## Endnotes

1. “By the end of March 2019, the Chinese government had signed 173 cooperation agreements with 125 countries and 29 international organizations. The Belt and Road has expanded from Asia and Europe to include more new participants in Africa, Latin America and the South Pacific.” Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and Other International Organizations in Switzerland, “The Belt and Road Initiative: Progress, Contributions and Prospects,” <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/zywjyh/t1675564.htm> (accessed September 4, 2022).
2. “A Long-Awaited UN Report Condemns China’s Actions in Xinjiang,” *The Economist*, September 1, 2022, <https://www.economist.com/china/2022/09/01/a-long-awaited-un-report-condemns-chinas-actions-in-xinjiang> (accessed September 7, 2022), and Brett D. Schaefer and Danielle Pletka, “What the World Health Organization Must Do to Earn Back U.S. Support,” Heritage Foundation *Issue Brief* No. 5098, August 7, 2020, <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/what-the-world-health-organization-must-do-earn-back-us-support>. For the text of the U.N. report on China’s violations of human rights in Xinjiang, see United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *OHCHR Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People’s Republic of China*, August 31, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/2022-08-31/22-08-31-final-assessment.pdf> (accessed September 7, 2022).
3. 2020 was the most recent year for which revenues from government donors were reported. Table, “Revenue by Government Donor and by Financing Instrument,” UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, <https://unsceb.org/fs-revenue-government-donor> (accessed September 4, 2022).
4. Specifically, in 2022, China is assessed 15.254 percent for the U.N. regular budget and 18.6857 percent for the U.N. peacekeeping budget, while the U.S. is assessed 22 percent and 26.9493 percent, respectively, for those budgets. Annex, “Effective Rates of Assessment for Peacekeeping Operations, 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024, Based on the Scale of Assessments Adopted by the General Assembly in Its Resolution 76/238 and the Composition of Levels Endorsed by the Assembly in Its Resolution 76/239,” in Report of the Secretary-General, “Implementation of General Assembly Resolutions 55/235 and 55/236, Addendum,” A/76/296/Rev.1/Add.1, December 28, 2021, p. 2, <https://undocs.org/en/A/76/296/Rev.1/Add.1> (accessed September 4, 2022).
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