



## UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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### PRESS RELEASE

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Statement by Ambassador Miller, U.S. Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, on the Explanation of Vote on the Resolution proposed by Belarus and Uzbekistan, in the Third Committee, on promotion and protection of human rights: "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms", November 16, 2006

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The commitment of nations to join together to protect humanity predates even the creation of the United Nations. That commitment, indeed, is what led to the creation of this body. And the commitment is contained in the preamble of the United Nations Charter, which states that all member nations "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."

This resolution before us has much to recommend it. It calls for mutually respectful dialogue, surely something we can all endorse. Its most meaningful paragraph calls for the elimination of "politically motivated or biased" country-specific resolutions. We have all witnessed the perversion of the UN's human rights machinery in repeated politically motivated and biased resolutions that attack a single country, Israel, without balance or any regard for the actual causes of suffering in the Middle East. If this resolution passes, the General Assembly would be on record opposing such politically-motivated actions. That would be a good thing.

On the other hand, there are many occasions when the UN has done a better job and approached grave situations in specific countries with even-handedness and fidelity to our great human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. In these cases, country-specific resolutions have given hope to the oppressed, and encouraged reform by governments. Are such resolutions politically motivated? Yes they are. They attempt to bring about political change. Are they biased? Only against those who violate international agree norms and standards.

So how can we judge the resolution before us? For the United States, the answer lies in the motives of those who are proposing it. In this case, the two sponsors of this resolution are both long-term abusers of human rights. Because of that fact, and because the text

could be misinterpreted to call for limitations on country-specific resolutions, we will vote against it. We hope other countries will join us, and in defeating this resolution preserve one of our best tools for fulfilling the UN Charter's mandate, in its very first article, to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Thank you.