

**Remarks of The Honorable Henry J. Hyde
Before the Full Committee on
United Nations Rhetoric or Reform: Outcome of the High-Level Event
Wednesday, September 28, 2005
2172 Rayburn House Office Building**

Today the Committee will conduct a hearing and subsequent briefing on the outcome of the United Nations' High-Level Event held in New York two weeks ago. In addition to commemorating the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, a central focus of the High-Level Event was reform of the United Nations, a subject that the Committee has been closely following.

This is the third hearing on U.N. reform held by the Full Committee this year. The Subcommittees have held numerous hearings on various aspects of reform of the U.N. And twice now, the House has passed the United Nations Reform Act of 2005; once as a stand-alone bill and the other as an amendment to the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 2006 - 2007. This should send a clear and resounding message to the U.N. on where the House of Representatives stands on reform of the institution.

In addition, earlier this month, the Ranking Democratic Member of this Committee, Mr. Lantos, and I traveled to New York with our U.N. Congressional Delegates, Mr. Royce and Mr. Payne, on the eve of the High-Level Event to conduct meetings and raise Congressional concerns with the Secretary-General and various Permanent Representatives. Although my good friend, Mr. Lantos, and I may differ on the means necessary to implement reforms, we are of like mind on the substance of reforms needed for the United Nations to regain its credibility and live up to its Charter goals.

Two weeks ago, an agreement was reached on an Outcome Document which is viewed as the road map for reforming the United Nations. This document is a consensus document, and, as such, it contains broad statements on reform, but less in the way of specifics.

Certain language is welcomed, such as the call to create a Human Rights Council and the support of the Democracy Fund. Other language, such as the call for the Secretary-General to submit an independent external evaluation of the U.N.'s auditing and oversight mechanisms, the request for the review of and recommendations on all mandates older than five years, and the request for the Secretary-General to submit detailed proposals for the creation of an independent oversight advisory

committee and ethics office, is welcomed, but tempered by the realization that calling for additional input and proposals and actually implementing those proposals are two distinct things.

Despite the yeoman's work of our new Permanent Representative – and he truly deserves our commendation for his tireless work in the run-up to the High-Level Event – there are many items and details that were either unaddressed or left for future General Assembly consideration. The Outcome Document's lack of detail and definitive statements on critical areas such as oversight, accountability, management, and budgeting do not inspire confidence.

For example, on accountability, the document states that, "We emphasize the importance of ensuring the operational independence" of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), but it is silent on budgetary and staffing independence. Without these two critical factors, OIOS is not truly independent.

Regarding the proposed Human Rights Council, the document states, "...we resolve to create a Human Rights Council." Although this is welcomed, the fact that an agreement could not be reached on minimal membership criteria gives me pause.

After reviewing the Outcome Document, I am more convinced than ever that our Congressional efforts are on the right track. We must do everything in our power to ensure that Secretariat reform occurs and that the U.N. agenda in general, and the reform agenda in particular, are not hijacked. The United Nations Reform Act of 2005 that twice has passed in the House must be enacted into law. Good stewardship of the organization is owed, not only to the American taxpayers who fund 22 percent of the organization's expenses, but also to the millions of people who the United Nations serves.

I look forward to hearing from our distinguished guests, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations John Bolton, and Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Chief of Staff to the Secretary-General, on their views of the Outcome Document and the outlook for forward movement on those items addressed in the document and, more importantly, those that were left unaddressed, but which will be pursued in the 60th session of the General Assembly.

I now turn to my good friend and colleague, Tom Lantos, for any remarks he may wish to offer.