The U.N. is Losing Staggering Sums to Corruption, Mismanagement and Bad Decision-Making

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Let me take you on a short UN safari around the world, beginning and ending in Washington, D.C., to see just how effectively the United Nations spends our tax dollars.

In 2009 in Washington, the UN’s World Health Organization (WHO) announced that the world was threatened by an H1N1 global flu pandemic. It recommended that almost everyone be vaccinated. Then, in 2010, the British Medical Journal (BMJ) published its evaluation of the WHO. It pointed out that the medical scientists who had advised the WHO to declare this pandemic were also paid consultants of the large international pharmaceutical companies, who stood to make hundreds of millions of dollars on this upsurge in the purchase of global vaccines. There was no subsequent UN financial investigation by the WHO to look into the BMJ’s initial findings.

In Paris, France, UNESCO’s latest campaign is to rewrite Biblical history and to deny any Jewish historical, archaeological or genetic relationship to the land of Israel. Recently, it has been focusing on the old city of Jerusalem, arguing that there is no long-term connection there between Jewish culture and the city.

Somalia is a country engaged in a massive civil war between tribal traditionalists and Islamic radicals called Al Shabaab. As is common in civil wars, simple poor people are often left starving. UN food convoys usually start from the Indian Ocean coast and move inland towards combat zones in the interior. As the government does not control these areas, NGOs and UN workers often have to surrender large amounts of this food to the terrorists. A 2014 audit of this food aid suggested that 80 per cent of it was stolen en route. It is estimated that $100 million of food aid was taken by Al Shabaab during this project, thus rewarding the terrorists and contributing to the escalating violence.

Then let us not forget the Oil-for-Food Program that was established by the UN, which allowed Saddam Hussein’s [Iraq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq) to sell [oil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petroleum) on the world market in exchange for medicine and food for poor Iraqi citizens, without allowing Iraq to use the money for its army. In 2005, Paul Volker led an evaluation that found that about 2,253 well-known companies had made illegal payments totalling $1.8 billion to the Saddam regime during this flawed UN program.

Based in Nairobi, Kenya, the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) is one of those UN organizations that has got a massive boost in popularity because of the climate change controversy. In 2005, the UNEP predicted that climate change would create 50 million climate refugees by the year 2010. There were even predictions that some Pacific islands might disappear because of rising ocean levels.

Clearly none of this happened. So UNEP officials “disappeared” their maps and data from its web site without explanation, until some gifted journalists, who had cached it all, brought it back to the world’s attention. If UNEP was a department in any Canadian college or university, it would have been closed down and its professors fired. But that does not happen at the UN.

Then there is the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which works all over the developing world and, strangely, has more than 637 millionaires among its employees. How can this be? Believe it or not, the UNDP had a program in North Korea during the late 1990s. The Wall Street Journal took an interest in it, pointing out that North Korea and the UNDP had violated all the rules that the UNDP sets up for its projects, and suggested that up to US$100 million of UNDP money was siphoned off by the government of the late Kim Jong Il. Now we know where some of the money for those millionaires may come from.

Finally, as far back as 1997, investigative journalist Catherine Caulfield published her book on the World Bank, called Masters of Illusion. Her goal was simply to see if the World Bank’s promises about its projects are borne out in results. She found that World Bank projects had a 40 to 50 per cent success rate, according to the World Bank’s own internal evaluations, and many critics will say that these internal evaluations are in themselves suspect. I tend to agree. When I was working on a Swiss government development project in East Africa in 2005, I came into contact with a number of young, Western-educated African managers of World Bank projects. Privately, they told me that, on average, 40 per cent of each World Bank project budget was lost to corrupt practices. Caulfield’s evaluation is probably too generous.

Every year, Canadian taxpayers contribute millions of dollars to the UN and there is no sign that this practice will end. Our government leaders ignore the mounting evidence of systemic UN corruption, examples of which can be found all over the media.

Imagine if you gave $1 million a year to a charity that was supposed to feed the homeless and you found that, instead, the staffers of your NGO were using the money to feast at fancy restaurants. That is what the UN is doing, except on a gigantic scale.