



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**



TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FR: BILL MCINTURFF/LIZ HARRINGTON/GEOFF GARIN

DT: OCTOBER 11th, 2011

**RE: UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION – INDEX OF PUBLIC OPINION ON
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND THE UNITED NATIONS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

National research conducted from October 1-4, 2011 by Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates, on behalf of the United Nations Foundation, shows:

- Voters overwhelmingly believe it is important the United States maintain an active role within the United Nations.
 - More than eight out of ten voters (86%) say it is important that the United States maintain an active role within the United Nations, with a substantial majority (65%) saying it is 'very important' the United States do so.
- Americans support the United States paying our dues to the United Nations on time and in full. Sixty-four percent of voters (64%) favor the United States paying our dues to the United Nations on time and in full, while 31% oppose.
 - Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats favor paying our UN dues on time and in full.

- There continues to be even greater support for the United States paying our peacekeeping dues to the United Nations on time and in full (71% favor/25% oppose).
 - This is also true regardless of party. Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats continue to favor paying our peacekeeping dues to the United Nations on time and in full.

- A majority of Americans (55%) opposes proposed legislation that would cut United States' funding of the United Nations, while 39% favor it. Intensity matters, and there is a higher level of strong opposition (37% strongly oppose) to this proposed legislation compared to strong support (21% strongly favor).
 - Majorities of Democrats and Independents oppose the proposed legislation, while a small majority of Republicans support the proposed legislation.

- There continues to be significant recognition of the contemporary relevance of the United Nations. More than two-thirds of Americans (68%) believe the United Nations is still needed today.
 - Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats agree with this assessment.

- Consistent with past tracks, a majority of Americans perceive the United Nations as an “only somewhat effective” organization (51%).

- Significant majorities of Americans overwhelmingly believe the United States should be supportive of all of the 17 UN programs we tested. The top four programs were:
 - Helping to reverse the spread of HIV and malaria and other major diseases around the world.
 - Improving the access to safe drinking water in poor, developing countries.
 - Working to better the lives of adolescent girls around the world by helping assure girls have access to quality education and health care, adequate livelihoods, and freedom from violence and harmful practices.
 - Improving the health of women and children in poor, developing countries by making sure they have access to vaccines and maternal health care.

DETAILED FINDINGS:

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Answer:</u>
Are Americans supportive of the United States paying our dues and peacekeeping dues to the United Nations on time and in full?	Yes.

- More than six out of ten Americans continue to favor the United States paying our dues to the United Nations on time and in full.

Pay UN General Dues On Time/In Full

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
October 2010	63%	31%
May 2011	60%	34%
October 2011	64%	31%

- Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats favor paying our UN dues on time and in full.

Pay UN General Dues On Time/In Full – By Party

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Republicans	50%	46%
Independents	54%	38%
Democrats	81%	15%

- There is greater support for the United States paying our peacekeeping dues to the United Nations on time and in full.

Pay UN Peacekeeping Dues On Time/In Full

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
June 2009	70%	25%
October 2010	72%	23%
May 2011	69%	27%
October 2011	71%	25%

- This is also true by party. Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats support the U.S. paying our UN peacekeeping dues on time and in full.

Pay UN Peacekeeping Dues On Time/In Full – By Party

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Republicans	62%	33%
Independents	62%	32%
Democrats	83%	14%

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Answer:</u>
Do Americans support legislation that would change the way the United States works with and pays its dues to the United Nations?	No.

- A majority of Americans (55%) opposes proposed legislation that would cut United States’ funding of the United Nations, while 39% favor it.
 - We asked the following question:

“There is currently a proposal before the United States Congress that would change the way the United States works with and pays its dues to the United Nations. Please listen carefully as I read you a brief description of this proposal.

- *It cuts fifty percent of the United States’ funding to the United Nations.*
- *It ends United States’ funding to UNICEF and the World Health Organization.*
- *It ends United States’ funding of United Nations’ agencies that respond and take action after a natural disaster or humanitarian crisis.*

OVERALL, would you would tell your Member of Congress to support or oppose this proposal?”

- Intensity matters. There is a higher level of strong opposition to this proposed legislation compared to strong support. Nearly four out of ten Americans (37%) say they strongly oppose this legislation compared to only 21% who say they strongly support it.

39% TOTAL SUPPORT

55% TOTAL OPPOSE

21% STRONGLY SUPPORT
 18% SOMEWHAT SUPPORT
 18% SOMEWHAT OPPOSE
 37% STRONGLY OPPOSE

- There is a partisan divide on this proposed legislation. Majorities of Democrats and Independents oppose the proposed legislation, while a small majority of Republicans support the proposed legislation.

Proposed Legislation That Would Cut U.S. Funding Of UN – By Party

	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Republicans	50%	44%
Independents	41%	51%
Democrats	29%	67%

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Answer:</u>
How do Americans perceive the United Nations today?	<p>1) Voters believe it is important for the U.S. to maintain an active role in the UN.</p> <p>2) Voters believe the UN is still needed today.</p> <p>3) Voters continue to have a favorable opinion of the UN.</p>

- Voters overwhelmingly believe it is important the United States maintain an active role within the United Nations.
 - We asked the following question: “And thinking specifically about the United Nations and the United States...How important do you think it is for the United States to maintain an active role within the United Nations? Would you say...it is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?”

Eighty-six percent (86%) of voters say it is important that the United States maintain an active role within the United Nations, with more than six in ten voters (65%) saying it is *very* important the United States do so.

	<u>Total Important</u>	<u>Total Not Important</u>
June 2009	85%	15%
May 2011	85%	15%
October 2011	86%	13%

- There continues to be significant recognition of the contemporary relevance of the United Nations. More than two-thirds of Americans (68%) believe the United Nations is still needed today. Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats agree with this assessment.

UN IS...STILL NEEDED TODAY/OUTLIVED IT'S USEFULNESS

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independents</u>	<u>Democrats</u>
October 2011	68%/24%	54%/38%	59%/32%	85%/9%

- Consistent, within the margin of error, with our past four tracks, Americans' perception of the United Nations remains at a favorable level.

United Nations Image

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
June 2009	54%	35%
October 2009	50%	36%
April 2010	60%	30%
October 2010	59%	29%
May 2011	59%	28%
October 2011	56%	30%

- The UN's favorable rating continues to be on par with the other international organizations we tested.

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
United Nations	56%	30%
UNICEF	54%	11%
NATO	53%	20%
WHO	52%	17%
The World Bank	21%	43%

- Consistent with our past tracks, the United Nations is perceived as an “only somewhat effective” organization.

Overall, how effective do you feel the United Nations is? Do you think the United Nations is a...(insert response)...organization?

Very Effective	5%
Pretty Effective	19%
Only Somewhat Effective	51%
Not That Effective	13%
Not At All Effective	11%

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Answer:</u>
Do Americans believe the United States should be supportive of programs or functions the United Nations serves?	Yes.

- We tested 17 different programs of the UN and asked respondents to say whether they thought the United States should be very, somewhat, not too, or not at all supportive of each item. All 17 programs received overwhelming support. The table on the following page shows all of the programs tested and the percentage of Americans saying the United States should be supportive of each program.

Summary of Support UN Projects – Ranked by % Very Supportive	Very Supportive	Total Supportive
Helping to reverse the spread of HIV and malaria and other major diseases around the world.	61%	88%
Improving the access to safe drinking water in poor, developing countries.	59%	89%
Working to better the lives of adolescent girls around the world by helping assure girls have access to quality education and health care, adequate livelihoods, and freedom from violence and harmful practices.	58%	88%
Improving the health of women and children in poor, developing countries by making sure they have access to vaccines and maternal health care.	56%	89%
Promoting gender equality, women’s rights, and the advancement of women and girls around the world.	53%	85%
Delivering humanitarian aid around the world.	50%	87%
Strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world and resolving situations of human rights violations.	50%	85%
Helping to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger around the world.	49%	85%
Providing leadership and aid in humanitarian crisis situations.	47%	86%
Improving the health situation in poor, developing countries.	46%	86%
Providing voluntary family planning services such as information about access to contraception for women in poor, developing countries.	45%	77%
Improving the access to clean cooking stoves in poor, developing countries to prevent deaths to women and children from toxic indoor cooking smoke and to help combat climate change.	40%	76%
Preventing and resolving deadly conflict around the world.	39%	77%
Building peace in countries emerging from conflict.	36%	78%
Establishing common standards of practice for international trade, business, and international law.	36%	78%
Taking the lead in efforts to address climate change.	34%	65%
Providing support and oversight for conducting free and fair elections in countries around the world with little or no history of democracy.	32%	73%

METHODOLOGY:

Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates conducted a national telephone survey of 900 registered voters (765 with landline voters; 135 with cell phone dominant voters), from October 1-4, 2011, on behalf of the United Nations Foundation. The purpose of the survey was to track American attitudes toward international issues and the United Nations. The margin of error on a sample of 900 interviews is $\pm 3.27\%$.

We have previously conducted research for the Foundation in 2009, 2010, and 2011 on international issues. This memo references these surveys, but the key findings included in this memo are from the October 2011 research.