

# Issue Brief

21 November 2011



Published by The Center for Sovereignty & Security  
A Division of Freedom Alliance

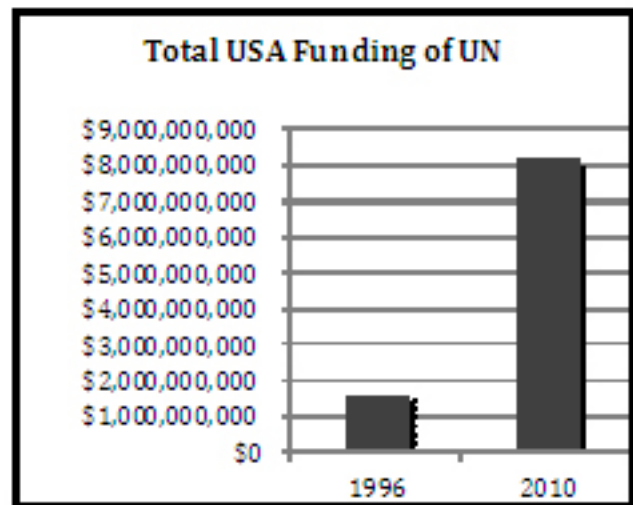
## USA Funding of UN Rises Sharply

by Thomas W. Jacobson, M.A.

Many United Nations budgets have increased dramatically during the past 15 years. The United States remains the top financial supporter of the UN, and its contributions have risen by nearly 500 percent during the same period – from \$1.7 billion to \$8.3 billion. These trends reflect increased US support of the UN, and the elevated stature of the UN globally, contrasted by the troubling decline of influence of individual sovereign nations and groups of nations (except for the European Union) at the international organization.

The UN Regular Budget increased almost 100 percent between 1996 and 2010. Over the same period, UNICEF increased its budget by 120 percent, made possible largely by a 238 percent increase in USA contributions. While the regular budget for the World Health Organization increased a modest 12 percent, USA total contributions increased 383 percent.

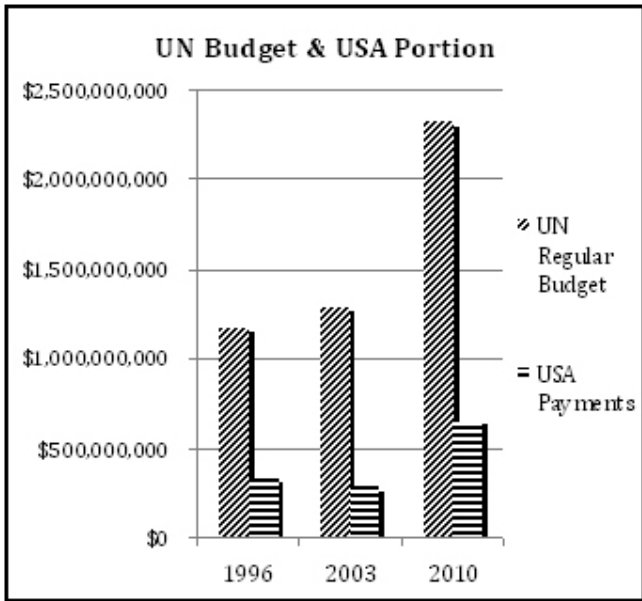
So let's look at the level of increase of a few United Nations budgets, and how much United States contributions increased, between 1996 and 2010. Keep in mind that the cost of inflation (within the USA) was an average of 2.44 percent per year, or a cumulative 36.7 percent, over this 15-year period.<sup>1</sup>



### Total USA Funding of UN increased 493 Percent

United States funding of the United Nations, including peacekeeping and all organizations and agencies, was \$1,675,848,917<sup>2</sup> in 1996, rapidly rising to \$8,263,335,717 in 2010.<sup>3</sup> That is a 493 percent increase.

As documented in the August brief,<sup>4</sup> the USA is currently funding 37 UN programs and agencies: one receives over \$2.8 billion (peacekeeping); one over \$1.5 billion (WFP, see below); and 9 over \$100 million (between \$161 and \$706 million each).

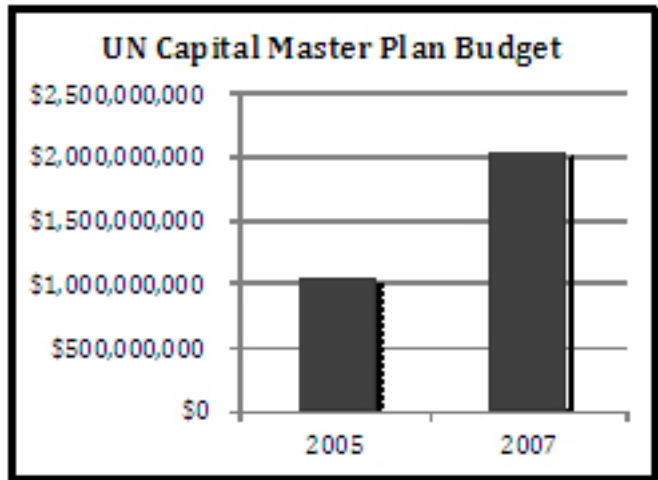


**Regular Budget increased 98 Percent**

The United Nations' Regular Budget<sup>5</sup> for 1996 was \$1,172,592,550, and the United States paid \$328,175,743.<sup>6</sup> In 2003, the UN Regular Budget was \$1,289,424,050, and the USA paid \$279,377,000.<sup>7</sup> In 2010, the UN Regular Budget was \$2,319,503,800, and the USA paid \$650,693,000.<sup>8</sup>

Both the UN Regular Budget and USA portion increased 98 percent.

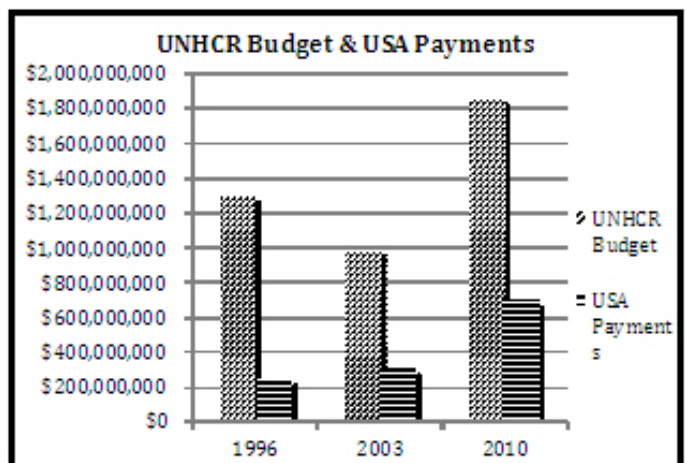
The USA portion in 1996 was supposed to be 25 percent, and for 2003 and 2010 was to be 22 percent. It was 22 percent for 2003, but 28 percent for 1996 and 2010.



**Capital Master Plan increased 97 Percent**

The Issue Brief for July 2011 covered the United Nations Capital Master Plan – the renovation of the Headquarters in New York City.<sup>9</sup> By 2005, the UN estimate for the proposed renovation was \$1.05 billion, but by the time the project began in late 2006, and since then, cost estimates have reached or exceeded \$2.07 billion – a 97 percent increase.

The USA will pay over \$400 million of this cost, which is at least a \$200 million increase over the 2005 estimate.

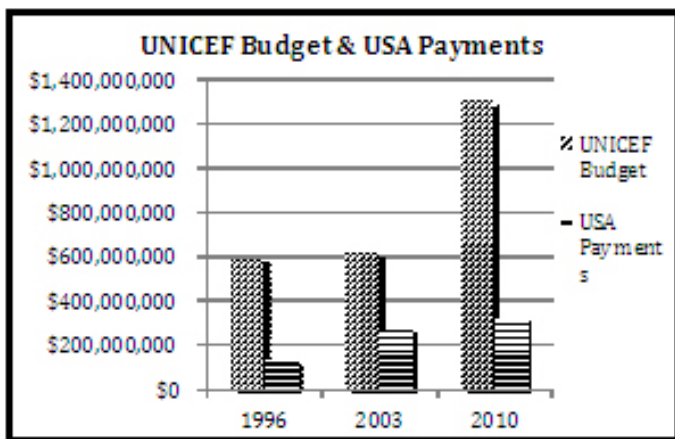


## UNHCR increased 43 Percent (USA part increased 280 Percent)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) works under a UN mandate “to lead and coordinate international action for the worldwide protection of refugees,” including safeguarding their “rights and well-being” when they seek asylum or safe refuge in another nation. UNHCR tries to help refugees either “return to their own country or to settle permanently in another country.”<sup>10</sup>

The UNHCR is funded almost entirely by 18 nations (USA, Japan, Canada, Australia, and 14 European countries) and the European Commission, with the USA as the largest contributor.

The UNHCR budget for 1996 was \$1,300,000,000,<sup>11</sup> of which the USA paid \$253,950,000,<sup>12</sup> or 19.5 percent. For 2003, the budget decreased to \$982,993,159,<sup>13</sup> of which the USA paid \$308,694,127,<sup>14</sup> or 31.4 percent. For 2010, the budget increased to \$1,863,832,284,<sup>15</sup> of which the USA paid \$712,220,805,<sup>16</sup> or 38.2 percent. Overall, the UNHCR budget increased 43 percent from 1996 to 2010, and USA payments increased 280 percent.

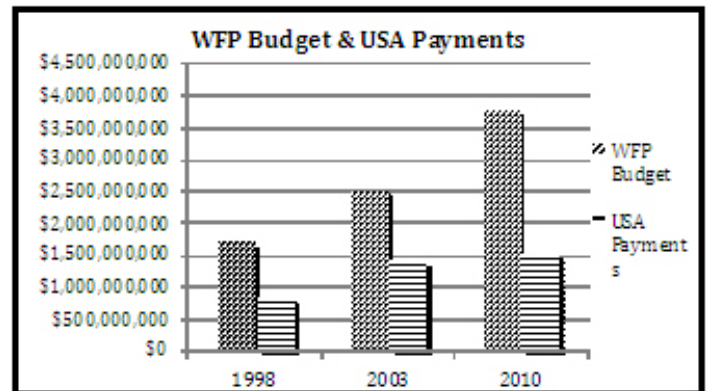


## UNICEF increased 120 Percent (USA part increased 238%)

The United Nations Children’s Fund, or UNICEF, is perhaps the most respected of all UN organizations. It works globally to promote child survival, primary health-care, nutrition, education, and prevention of HIV transmission. Yet inconceivably, it has also at times promoted the legalization of abortion.<sup>17</sup>

UNICEF’s budget increased 120 percent. For 1996, its budget was \$600,050,000, and for 2003 it was \$626,100,000, and for 2010 it was \$1,318,300,000.<sup>18</sup>

USA payments increased by 238 percent over the same period: from \$143,233,666<sup>19</sup> in 1996, to \$288,126,600<sup>20</sup> in 2003, to \$340,671,000<sup>21</sup> in 2010.



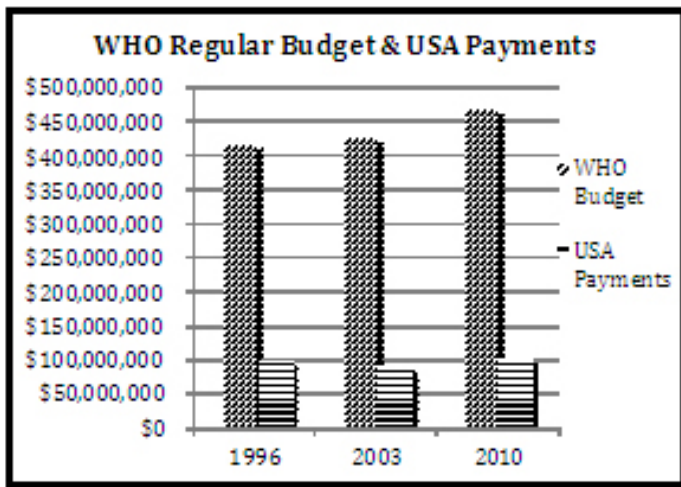
## WFP increased 222 Percent

The World Food Programme (WFP) seeks to save human lives by providing food and other resources during emergencies, and where malnutrition or chronic hunger exist. For 2011, they hope to serve 90 million people in 73 countries.

The United States is the largest contributor to the WFP, followed by the European Commission, Canada, and Japan, who all currently contribute over \$100 million per year. The WFP budget for 1998 was \$1,724,019,222<sup>22</sup>; for 2003, \$2,555,114,627<sup>23</sup>; and for 2010 reached \$3,825,718,861<sup>24</sup> – a 222 percent increase.

USA payments over the same period rose 79 percent, from \$873,050,525<sup>25</sup> in 1998, to \$1,458,913,241<sup>26</sup> in 2003, to \$1,565,666,000<sup>27</sup> in 2010.

(Data earlier than 1998 was not available.)



**WHO regular budget increased 12 Percent (USA funding increased 383 Percent)**

The World Health Organization (WHO) was set up to provide “leadership on global health matters” within the UN system, including on health-related research and national statistics.<sup>28</sup> It is highly regarded internationally and by all the UN agencies, and diplomats representing their nations to the UN are skeptical of any criticism of the WHO. Yet last year, the Lancet study revealed that the WHO overestimated maternal mortality rates worldwide by 50 percent. WHO claims that over 500,000 women die each year from various maternal causes, but the Lancet authors proved that 342,900 was a more accurate estimate.<sup>29</sup> Pro-abortion advocates have claimed the WHO estimate as factual proof to pressure nations to legalize or remove any restrictions to abortion, especially in developing nations with poor quality health care.

The WHO regular budget *increased by 12 percent* from 1996 to 2010, but WHO did add many other costly projects. In 1996, the WHO regular budget was \$421,327,000; in 2003, \$427,827,000; and in 2010, \$472,557,200.<sup>30</sup> USA payments in 1996 were \$101,068,920<sup>31</sup>; in 2003 were \$93,615,000<sup>32</sup>; and in 2010 were \$106,573,000<sup>33</sup> – a modest 9.5 percent *increase* for the regular budget. However, for 2010, the USA actually contributed an additional \$280 million to numerous WHO projects, the largest of which was \$128.2 million for the H1N1 Influenza Vaccines. Thus, total USA contributions to WHO for 2010 were

\$386,706,000<sup>34</sup>; and the *total increase* was 383 percent over 1996 payments.

**Concluding Comments and Recommendations**

The United States continues to fund the United Nations with billions of dollars every year, and has increased financial support nearly five-fold during the past 15 years, with little to no accountability for use of American taxpayer revenues. Because the Administration and Congress are spending hundreds of billions of dollars above tax revenues each year, it could be said that all USA contributions to the United Nations are made with borrowed money. Further, most of the \$6.6 billion increase in support since 1996 has been given in spite of a declining American economy. It is time to reassess every contribution to every UN budget.

Responsible public leaders should also be asking: Has increased funding brought about increased transparency, accountability, and better results? No! When John Bolton was U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, there was hope for improvement as he labored tirelessly for numerous reforms; but he found it difficult to gain the support of other Member Nations.

Congress is propping up the United Nations as a global welfare agency. That is not what the U.S. Constitution authorizes the USG to do, nor is it wise, or fiscally responsible. It is time to restore our national government to within its constitutional boundaries and financial means.

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*Mr. Jacobson is a Visiting Fellow for the Center for Sovereignty & Security, a Division of Freedom Alliance, and is Executive Director of the Global Life Campaign (www.GlobalLifeCampaign.com).*

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5. "Budgetary and Financial Situation of the Organizations of the United Nations System, Note to the Secretary-General," General Assembly, 65th Session, 3 August 2010, Document A/65/187, Table 1, p. 7.
6. Op. cit., "United States Contributions to International Organizations," 1996.
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