This report is submitted pursuant to the “United Nations Participation Act of 1945” (Public Law 79-264). Section 4 of this law provides, in part, that:

“The President shall from time to time as occasion may require, but not less than once each year, make reports to the Congress of the activities of the United Nations and of the participation of the United States therein.”

In July 2003, the President delegated to the Secretary of State the authority to transmit this report to Congress.

The United States Participation in the United Nations report is a survey of the activities of the U.S. Government in the United Nations and its agencies, as well as the activities of the United Nations and those agencies themselves. More specifically, this report seeks to assess UN achievements during 2006, the effectiveness of U.S. participation in the United Nations, and whether U.S. goals were advanced or thwarted.

The United States is committed to the founding ideals of the United Nations. Addressing the UN General Assembly in 2003, President Bush said,

“The founding documents of the United Nations and the founding documents of America stand in the same tradition. Both assert that human beings should never be reduced to objects of power or commerce, because their dignity is inherent. Both recognize a moral law that stands above men and nations, which must be defended and enforced by men and nations. And both point the way to peace, the peace that comes when all are free.”

The United States believes that the United Nations should be a place where diverse countries and cultures of the world work together for freedom, democracy, peace, human rights, and prosperity for all people. In 2006, the United Nations continued to face many challenges in living up to those founding principles.

This report treats thematically UN activities that most significantly affected U.S. interests. It is divided into six chapters:

Part 1, on Political and Security Affairs, focuses on activities undertaken by the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. Under the UN Charter, the primary responsibility for this task lies in the Security Council, which is empowered to take various actions to maintain international peace and security through the adoption of resolutions authorizing peacekeeping and special political missions, or by employing coercive measures including sanctions. The activities of the UN General Assembly and other UN bodies are also described. This chapter also covers security-related thematic issues, such as disarmament and international terrorism.
In 2006 the United States continued to work in the United Nations for
a resolution to the crisis in Darfur, Sudan. Although the Sudanese government
and a significant rebel faction signed the Darfur Peace Agreement in May, the
conflict in Darfur intensified, led by rebel groups that did not sign the
agreement. In August, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1706,
authorizing a transition of the African Union’s Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to a
larger and more robust UN peacekeeping operation. A meeting convened by
the United Nations and the African Union in November led to an agreement
providing for UN support to AMIS in three phases – a light support package,
followed by a heavy support package, and finally a joint AU/UN hybrid
support operation. In spite of the agreement, Sudan’s President Bashir
continued to resist UN deployment in Darfur.

Faced with Iran’s decision early in 2006 to resume enrichment-related
activities and to suspend its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy
Agency (IAEA), the Security Council adopted Resolution 1696, calling on
Iran to take steps required by the IAEA and to suspend enrichment-related and
reprocessing activities. Iran’s continued refusal to cooperate led the Council
to later adopt Resolution 1747, which imposed a range of sanctions on Iran.

In the Middle East, the Security Council helped broker a cessation of
hostilities after fighting in Lebanon in July and August that resulted from
Hizballah attacks on Israel and the capture of Israeli soldiers. Security
Council Resolution 1701 provided for an expanded UN Interim Force in
Lebanon (UNIFIL), which numbered nearly 12,000 by the end of the year.
The Council also extended the mandate for the International Independent
Investigation Commission (UNIIIC) investigating the 2005 assassination of
former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, and laid the groundwork for an
international Tribunal to prosecute those identified by UNIIIC as involved in
the Hariri killing and related crimes.

Part 2, on Economic and Social Affairs, assesses the work of the
General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and various subsidiary
bodies and commissions on issues that involve economic development, the
status of women, humanitarian aid, and crime prevention and control.

The United Nations’ new Human Rights Council held its first three
regular sessions, as well as four Special Sessions, in 2006. The United States
was disappointed in the Council’s nearly singular focus on Israel, and
remained concerned that the Council lacked the will to address urgent and
serious human rights situations. The United States decided not to run for
election for membership in the Council that took place in May. In contrast to
the Human Rights Council’s weak performance, in the General Assembly’s
Third Committee the United States, Canada and the European Union were able
to pass country-specific condemnatory human rights resolutions against
Belarus, Burma, Iran, and North Korea. While a U.S.-sponsored resolution
against Uzbekistan was blocked from consideration by a procedural motion,
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retaliatory resolutions against the United States by Belarus and against Canada by Iran were soundly defeated.

Part 3, on Specialized Agencies, describes the activities of a host of agencies, from the Food and Agriculture Organization to the World Health Organization, and assesses how they served U.S. interests.

Part 4, on Legal Developments, highlights the work of the judicial bodies, such as the War Crimes Tribunals in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

Part 5, on Reform of the UN System, describes progress on reform of the United Nations, and of the main UN bodies.

Although progress was made on the implementation of reform initiatives agreed to earlier, the United States was concerned about a move by many member states to stall a package of reforms to modernize the UN Secretariat, and by the lack of progress on U.S. priorities for reform, including review of program mandates.

Part 6, on Administration and Budget, provides an overview of the current UN financial situation and resource management issues.

At the end of 2006, the General Assembly adopted new scales of assessments for the UN regular budget and for UN peacekeeping for the years 2007–2009. The United States was successful in maintaining the 22-percent ceiling on its assessment rate for the UN regular budget, and the assessment rate for peacekeeping was reduced from nearly 27 percent to roughly 26 percent.

Finally, the report’s appendices include the President’s 2006 speech to the UN General Assembly. Appendices also include information about the principal organs of the United Nations and their membership and leadership in 2006, a list of U.S. representatives to the United Nations in 2006, and other reference information.

Questions about this report may be directed to the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, U.S. Department of State.