



تاريخ استلام البحث ٢٠٢٥ / ٦ / ٢

تاريخ قبول البحث ٢٠٢٥ / ٧ / ٢٩

تاريخ النشر ٢٠٢٥ / ٩ / ٣٠

رقم الترميز الدولي / ISSN (P): 2710-2653

ISSN (E): 2960-253X /

رقم الايداع الوطني / 2019 / 2375

Political Utilization and the Biden Administration's Approach to United Nations Programs

التوظيف السياسي وتوجهات إدارة بايدن تجاه برامج الأمم المتحدة

Assist. prof. Hayder Zuhair Jasim

ا.م.د. حيدر زهير جاسم

Dr. Elaf Nofal Ahmad

م.د. ايلاف نوفل احمد

Nahrain University / College of Political Science

جامعة النهرين / كلية العلوم السياسية

haider.zaheer@nahrainuniv.edu.iq

haider.zaheer@nahrainuniv.edu.iq

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الملخص

تسعى الدول إلى استخدام التوظيف السياسي كأداة رئيسية في التعامل مع الأزمات، سواء على المستوى المحلي أو الدولي، ويهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف العلاقة بين التوظيف السياسي وتوجهات إدارة بايدن تجاه برامج الأمم المتحدة، ودورها في صنع السياسات الدولية، فمنذ تولى جو بايدن الرئاسة تبنت إدارته نهجًا جديدًا يسعى إلى إعادة بناء التحالفات، وتعزيز التعاون الدولي في مواجهة التحديات العالمية مثل التغير المناخي، التهديدات الأمنية، والتنافس مع الصين وروسيا، واعتمدت إدارة الرئيس جو بايدن على المؤسسات الدولية، وخاصة الأمم المتحدة، كأداة لتعزيز نفوذها في الشرق الأوسط، عبر القنوات الدبلوماسية، العقوبات، المساعدات الإنسانية، وحل النزاعات. واستغلت واشنطن وكالات الأمم المتحدة لدعم استراتيجياتها، سواء عبر الضغط على الأنظمة غير المتوافقة مع سياساتها، أو تعزيز نفوذها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: "التوظيف السياسي"، "توجهات إدارة بايدن"، "برامج الأمم المتحدة"، "إدارة النزاعات"، "الصين"، "روسيا"

Abstract

Countries seek to use political employment as a key tool in dealing with crises, both at the local and international levels. This research aims to explore the relationship between political employment and the Biden administration's approach toward United Nations programs, as well as their role in shaping international policies. Since Joe Biden assumed the presidency, his administration has adopted a new approach aimed at rebuilding alliances and enhancing international cooperation in addressing global challenges such as climate change, security threats, and competition with China and Russia.

President Joe Biden's administration has relied on international institutions—particularly the United Nations—as a means of strengthening its influence in the Middle East through diplomatic channels, sanctions, humanitarian aid, and conflict resolution. Washington has leveraged UN agencies to support its strategies, whether by pressuring regimes that do not align with its policies or by expanding its influence.

Keywords: "Political recruitment", "Biden administration orientations", "UN programs", "conflict management", "China", "Russia"

Introduction

International political utilization refers to the strategic deployment of political resources and tools by governments or international entities to advance their interests within the framework of global relations. This type of utilization transcends national boundaries, encompassing the roles played by states and international organizations in achieving political objectives through diplomatic coordination, treaties, and the operations of institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union.

Often referred to by some scholars as “political manipulation,” the concept is complex in its foundations, functions, and dimensions, involving a diverse array of actors—be they political leaders or the political issues themselves. Political utilization may occur at the domestic level, where public opinion is shaped to reinforce governmental authority and control, or externally, by leveraging foreign issues that influence inter-state relations. This might include the exploitation of economic, social, political, ideological, or religious contexts.

1- Significance of the Study

The study is important for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, it contributes a scholarly and academic perspective to Arabic literature by tackling a contemporary topic: political utilization within the orientations of the Biden administration toward United Nations programs. Practically, it sheds light on how such utilization operates under conditions of global instability and the broader implications for international politics.

2- Objectives of the Study

The primary aims of this research include:

- Analyzing the concept of political utilization and its role in shaping international relations and crisis management strategies.
- Investigating the Biden administration’s strategic approach to UN programs since its inauguration in 2021.
- Exploring how the Biden administration utilizes UN agencies as tools of political influence.
- Assessing the extent to which political utilization is embedded within U.S. foreign policy under Biden, particularly in addressing global challenges such as climate change, security threats, and geopolitical rivalry with China and Russia.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of political utilization in advancing U.S. interests through diplomatic channels, sanctions, humanitarian aid, and UN-based conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Validating the hypothesis that the Biden administration has intentionally employed strategic political practices within UN programs to reinforce its global leadership and influence.

3- Research Problem

The core problem addressed by this study lies in the constraints and parameters governing Biden's political utilization and its impact on the policies of other states. It posits that such utilization may affect international stability and security. The central question driving this inquiry is: What role does political utilization play in shaping the Biden administration's orientation toward United Nations programs?

4- Research Hypothesis

The study is grounded in the hypothesis that political utilization is intrinsically linked to variations in international positions and interests, as well as the obligations that states must fulfill. Therefore, the Biden administration has employed political utilization as a tool within UN programs to pursue its own strategic objectives.

5- Research Methodology

Given the nature of the topic and the diversity of political phenomena across different U.S. administrations, the study adopts an inductive methodology. This allows for a nuanced analysis of each phase, emphasizing historical variation and contextual relevance.

6- Study Structure

The research is divided into two main sections:

- The first examines the concept and significance of political utilization.
- The second explores how the Biden administration employs UN programs for strategic purposes.

The study concludes with a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter One: The Concept of Political Utilization and Its Role in International Relations

The concept of political utilization stands as one of the most critical issues in political and social science research due to its intersection with related notions such as power, authority, influence, and humanitarian intervention. Its levels, foundations, and functions are multifaceted, and thus, perceptions of political utilization vary depending on the principles and values held by different actors, often positioned in stark contrast to one another.

Section One: Definition of Political Utilization

Political utilization refers to the strategic use of international institutions or programs to advance a government's political agenda, influence global governance, or exert pressure on other states. This often involves leveraging diplomatic channels, aid programs, sanctions, and multilateral platforms like the United Nations to serve national interests. Presidents, for instance, set political agendas and appoint allies to key positions to implement their policies. Accordingly, political utilization is a process aimed at achieving political or economic goals on a global scale by employing tools of foreign policy such as negotiation, alliances, sanctions, or economic aid to reshape or influence the structure of the international system or the policies of other countries.

Other interpretations suggest that political utilization involves states or international actors exploiting events, crises, issues, and institutions to achieve specific political objectives on the global stage. This includes employing humanitarian, economic, security, and cultural issues to boost influence or secure diplomatic or strategic gains. At its core, political utilization is directed toward advancing political or economic interests internationally by reshaping global governance or steering the policies of other nations.

Section Two: The Role of Political Utilization in International Relations

Political utilization is a fundamental tool in international relations, employed by states to pursue their national interests on the global stage. Through political utilization, states influence global decision-making, forge alliances, allocate resources, and manage conflicts in ways that fulfill their strategic aims.

International political utilization serves as a vital instrument that empowers countries and global actors to strengthen their strategies on the world stage. Its role in international relations can be illustrated as follows:

1. States use political utilization to expand influence and assert political dominance, whether by shaping decisions within international organizations or deploying soft power—such as culture and media—to achieve their goals.
2. Governments may leverage political and economic circumstances to secure trade and financial advantages. Economic or geopolitical crises, for instance, can be harnessed to foster cooperation or exert pressure on rival states.
3. Political utilization is often used to shape domestic public opinion, with international issues or crises framed to align with internal political objectives.
4. Political and military crises are exploited to project military or economic strength or to negotiate sensitive issues on the global agenda, such as regional security or international treaties.

Chapter Two: The Biden Administration's Approach to Employing United Nations Programs

Since taking office in 2021, President Joe Biden's administration has adopted a foreign policy based on active re-engagement with international organizations, foremost among them the United Nations, viewing it as a strategic platform for bolstering U.S. global influence. These UN programs have been utilized as political instruments to strengthen alliances and steer international policies in favor of U.S. interests, particularly in regions of conflict and tension such as the Middle East. This orientation is evident in the administration's use of diplomatic channels, humanitarian aid, and sanctions mechanisms within an organized multilateral framework. Moreover, Biden's administration has sought to leverage these institutions to address global challenges such as climate change, international security, and strategic rivalry with major powers like China and Russia—reflecting a clear pattern of political utilization of multilateral organizations.

Section One: The Impact of Biden's Orientation Toward UN Programs on International Relations

President Joe Biden's administration has employed the United Nations as a critical instrument in advancing its foreign policy objectives—through imposing sanctions, managing crises, providing aid, and solidifying alliances. This approach has shaped international positions on key issues such as the war in Ukraine, competition with China, and conflict management in the Middle East and Africa.

1. The Impact on Western Allies and Partner States

Biden's administration has pursued a multilateral foreign policy agenda, utilizing UN programs as a means of rebuilding trust with Western allies. By supporting UN initiatives in areas like climate policy, global security, and public health, Washington has sought to reaffirm its global leadership and harmonize Western positions in response to common challenges. This effort has strengthened traditional alliances and improved policy coordination with the European Union, Canada, and Australia, while also enhancing the United States' capacity to confront Chinese and Russian influence through legitimate international platforms.

- **Strengthening Alliances in Europe (EU and NATO):** The Biden administration employed both the UN Security Council and the General Assembly to rally European support against Russia following the invasion of Ukraine. These efforts intensified coordination between NATO and the European Union. Additionally, U.S. support for agencies such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme facilitated aid to Ukrainian refugees, thereby increasing pressure on European nations to accept refugee flows. Through collaboration with the World Trade Organization and the World Bank, the United States also

contributed to sanctions targeting Moscow—measures that influenced the European economy amid an energy crisis and rising prices.

- **Bolstering Strategic Ties with Japan and South Korea:** The United States supported UN resolutions condemning North Korea's missile tests, thereby reinforcing military cooperation between Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul. Working through the World Health Organization and the UN Development Programme, the administration also promoted economic recovery in Japan and South Korea from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Concurrently, it imposed restrictions on the export of advanced technologies to China.

2. The Impact of Biden's Policy on Rival States: China and Russia

The Biden administration has actively employed United Nations programs as diplomatic tools to reinforce Western alliances and counter the growing influence of China and Russia. By backing UN initiatives focused on human rights, cybersecurity, and climate change, Washington has leveraged international platforms to politically and economically isolate its adversaries. In response, China has strengthened its regional ties and reduced dependence on the U.S. economy, while Russia views such moves as a threat to its vision of the global order—escalating tensions among major powers.

1. Diplomatic and Economic Isolation of Russia

The United States succeeded in passing resolutions through the UN General Assembly condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and diplomatically isolating Moscow. Sanctions were implemented via the Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, impacting Russia's economy and prompting it to deepen its alliances with China and Iran. Washington also supported UN-led investigations into alleged Russian war crimes in Ukraine, intensifying legal pressure on the Kremlin. Notably:

- In March 2022, the General Assembly adopted a resolution by overwhelming majority that condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and called for the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces.
- In October 2022, another resolution condemned Russia's annexation of Ukrainian regions, including Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia.
- By February 2023, the Assembly passed a resolution calling for a comprehensive and just peace in Ukraine and reaffirmed Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

2. Pressure on China in the Areas of Human Rights and Trade

The Biden administration used reports from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to condemn China's treatment of Uyghur Muslims, aggravating tensions between Washington and Beijing. Through the World Trade Organization,

the U.S. pushed for formal criticism of China's trade practices, fueling an escalating trade war between the two powers. The administration also supported the International Atomic Energy Agency's monitoring of China's expansion in nuclear energy.

Key developments included:

- The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, signed by President Biden on December 23, 2021, which presumed that all products originating from the Xinjiang region were made with forced labor unless proven otherwise—effectively banning imports from the region into the United States.
- A December 2021 resolution from the U.S. House of Representatives that condemned the “genocide and crimes against humanity” committed by China against the Uyghur population and called for international measures, including within the United Nations.

3. The Impact of Biden's Policy on Developing Countries and Emerging Economies

- African States: Conditional Aid and Strategic Competition with China

The Biden administration increased its support for UN development and health programs in Africa, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and initiatives coordinated through the World Health Organization (WHO). However, this support was also used strategically to contain China's growing influence on the continent. U.S. financial assistance delivered through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund came with strict conditions regarding governance, transparency, and anti-corruption—prompting several African countries to seek alternative partnerships with China and Russia. Washington also relied on the UN Human Rights Council to apply political pressure on governments deemed incompatible with its policies, such as Ethiopia and Sudan. These efforts included:

- Development and Health Program Support: U.S. assistance to UNDP and WHO focused on improving public health and epidemic response, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this aid was also used to undercut China's influence in African infrastructure projects.
- Conditional Financial Aid: The U.S. allocated approximately \$2.25 billion to the World Bank, unlocking additional funds of up to \$25 billion. These contributions were tied to conditions related to governance, transparency, and anti-corruption policies—leading countries like Zimbabwe and Ethiopia to seek alternative financial sources from China and Russia.
- Political Pressure through the Human Rights Council: Washington supported resolutions to investigate human rights violations in Sudan and Ethiopia,

establishing international fact-finding missions that increased pressure on regimes opposing U.S. policies.

- **Latin America: Political Pressure via Human Rights and Aid**

In Latin America, the Biden administration employed the UN Human Rights Committee to exert pressure on leftist regimes in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba. U.S. economic aid delivered through the World Food Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization was contingent upon governance reforms and economic restructuring—conditions that generated dissatisfaction among several governments in the region.

4. Using UN Programs to Extend U.S. Influence in the Middle East

President Joe Biden's administration has treated international institutions—particularly the United Nations—as strategic tools to consolidate American influence across the Middle East. This includes diplomatic efforts, sanctions, humanitarian aid, and conflict resolution measures. Washington has actively utilized UN agencies to support its geopolitical agenda, by exerting pressure on non-aligned governments, bolstering allied regimes, and managing humanitarian crises in ways that align with U.S. interests.

- **Crisis and Conflict Management Through the United Nations**

- **The Iranian File and International Sanctions:** The Biden administration employed the UN Security Council to apply pressure on Iran regarding its nuclear program, seeking to reinstate international restrictions through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It maintained support for sanctions despite attempts to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement and used the UN Sanctions Monitoring Committee to prevent Iranian arms transfers to groups like the Houthis and Hezbollah. Specific measures included:

1. Continued support for UN Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015), which restricts Iranian exports of weapons and missiles. Although some provisions expired in October 2023, the U.S. issued a joint statement with 48 countries affirming that Iran's missile program posed a threat to global stability and pledged action to block arms transfers.
2. Pressure through the IAEA: The Biden administration backed the agency's investigations into uranium enrichment activities reaching 60% purity—near weapons-grade level. After Iran barred inspectors in September 2023, Washington issued diplomatic warnings.
3. Sustained support for the UN Sanctions Monitoring Committee to prevent Iranian arms from reaching the Houthis and Hezbollah. Together with France and Germany, the U.S. submitted evidence to the UN showing missiles used by Houthis contained Iranian components, in violation of Resolution 2231.

- **The Palestinian Issue and UN Engagement:**
Washington restored financial contributions to UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) after the Trump-era suspension but used this funding as leverage. Through the Security Council and General Assembly, it worked to block resolutions condemning Israel, particularly during recent Gaza conflicts, and played a prominent role in neutralizing efforts by Arab states to hold Israel accountable within UN forums.
- **The Yemen Conflict:**
The administration backed UN mediation efforts between the Yemeni government and the Houthis, using negotiations to pressure Saudi Arabia into scaling down its military involvement. It also exploited humanitarian aid through the World Food Programme (WFP) to influence dynamics within Yemen. The U.S. pressured the Houthis via the UN Human Rights Council to impose additional sanctions, while maintaining their role in peace talks. In February 2023, the U.S. announced \$1.1 billion in humanitarian aid for Yemen, conditioned on support for a UN-brokered truce and Houthi de-escalation at key port sites. Washington additionally supported Security Council efforts to lift restrictions on aid operations, criticized the Houthis publicly, and threatened further sanctions.
- **The Syrian Crisis and UN Instruments:**
The Biden administration used the Security Council and humanitarian programs to pressure the Syrian regime and its allies—especially Russia and Iran. It advocated for continued UN aid deliveries through border crossings to opposition-held areas, despite Russian objections in the Council. Washington strengthened the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to document alleged chemical attacks by the Syrian government, providing a legal basis for new sanctions. It supported the extension of Resolution 2165, which authorizes cross-border humanitarian access into northern Syria, and carried out airstrikes against Iranian-affiliated groups in Syria and Iraq. These actions were discussed within the Security Council as part of counterterrorism efforts.
- **Counterterrorism Strategy:**
In October 2023, Secretary of State Antony Blinken addressed the Security Council, emphasizing U.S. cooperation with Arab partners in combating armed groups such as ISIS and the Houthis, with a focus on safeguarding allied governments. Additionally, the U.S. appointed a Special Envoy to coordinate humanitarian aid for Gaza, reflecting its broader efforts to reshape the regional order.

5. Enhancing U.S. Influence Through United Nations Programs

The United States has employed aid diplomacy as a mechanism to exert strategic pressure and extend its global influence. This strategy has been reflected through the following channels:

- **Targeted Support for Strategic Allies:**
Washington utilized the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to provide direct support to allied states such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. At the same time, it imposed conditional requirements on assistance to countries misaligned with U.S. interests. Reconstruction efforts in Iraq, for example, were structured in ways that consolidated American influence and limited Iranian presence.
- **Counterterrorism Oversight and Coalition Building:**
The Biden administration engaged the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee to monitor the financial flows to armed groups, particularly those backed by Iran. It reinforced international coordination under the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, legitimized by Security Council resolutions, to ensure continued American military presence in Syria and Iraq.
- **Financial Governance via IMF and World Bank Mechanisms:**
The United States supported efforts by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank—coordinated with UN programs—to implement economic reforms in countries such as Lebanon and Sudan. These reforms aligned with U.S. priorities and were designed to restrict Chinese and Russian investment in regional infrastructure projects, with Washington exerting influence over UN committees responsible for development financing.

Section Two: The Impact of Biden's Policy on Major Powers and International Decisions

The foreign policy of the United States underwent a significant transformation with the inauguration of President Joe Biden in January 2021. His administration focused on rebuilding international relationships and promoting multilateral cooperation. Central to Biden's strategy were global decisions related to climate, international security, relations with allies, and tensions with major powers such as China and Russia. The administration played an active role in shaping the international system by prioritizing diplomacy and multilateralism, though persistent challenges remained—particularly in dealings with global powers and stability in the Middle East.

1. Return to Diplomacy and Multilateral Engagement

One of the earliest acts of the Biden administration was to restore U.S. participation in the Paris Climate Agreement. On his first day in office, President Biden signed an executive order rejoining the accord, which officially came into effect on February 19, 2021. This reversed President Trump's 2017 withdrawal, which was justified on economic grounds and concerns over unfair burdens on American businesses and workers. Biden's return to the Paris Agreement was driven by:

- **Restoring American Leadership on Global Climate Issues:** The administration sought to repair the damage to U.S. credibility caused by Trump's withdrawal and reaffirm its commitment to climate diplomacy.
- **Supporting a Green Economy:** Biden's team viewed climate action as a strategic opportunity to generate employment through renewable energy initiatives and clean technology sectors.

2. Strengthening Alliances and International Partnerships

Biden's administration prioritized repairing relationships with NATO and the European Union, deepening cooperation on cybersecurity and international trade, and reinforcing strategic partnerships in Asia to counter China's expanding influence. The transatlantic relationship had been strained under previous unilateralist policies and nationalist slogans like "America First." In response, Biden pursued a renewed approach to alliance-building and global coordination in confronting challenges such as climate change, security threats, and geopolitical competition.

Key steps included:

- **Reviving NATO Relations:** Biden reaffirmed U.S. commitment to collective defense under NATO—reassuring European allies unsettled by Trump's rhetoric.
- **Resolving Trade Disputes with the EU:** The administration worked to end tensions over tariffs on steel and aluminum imposed by Trump, and repaired diplomatic ties with France following the fallout from the AUKUS pact between the U.S., Australia, and the UK. Biden emphasized strengthening the partnership with Paris and supporting European efforts to counter Russia, particularly by providing military aid to Ukraine and bolstering Europe's defensive posture.
- **Deepening Strategic Partnerships in Asia:** Biden activated the Quad alliance—comprised of the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia—to enhance regional security and economic cooperation. He also launched the AUKUS agreement, which included a plan to supply Australia with nuclear-powered submarines in response to maritime challenges in the Indo-Pacific. Furthermore, the administration reinforced diplomatic and military coordination with South Korea and Japan, especially regarding North Korea's growing threat.
- **Repairing Bilateral Ties with Canada and Mexico:** Following tensions over the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline, the administration strengthened cooperation with Canada in areas of trade and clean energy. Regarding Mexico, Biden pursued a more collaborative approach to managing migration, reversing several of the hardline border policies implemented under Trump.

3. Navigating Relations with China and Russia

Since assuming office, President Joe Biden has adopted a firm stance toward both China and Russia, viewing them as strategic competitors to the United States. His administration has focused on reinforcing international alliances, enforcing economic and political sanctions, and asserting technological and military superiority—while keeping diplomatic channels open when necessary.

- U.S. Policy Toward China

- Economic Confrontation:

The Biden administration maintained tariffs imposed by its predecessor and introduced new restrictions on advanced technology exports, particularly semiconductors. It also launched initiatives aimed at reconfiguring global supply chains to reduce dependence on China, encouraging domestic manufacturing and attracting technological investment within the United States.

- Strengthening Regional Alliances:

To counter China's influence in the Indo-Pacific, Biden bolstered partnerships in security and defense through multilateral frameworks. This included the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) involving the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia, and the AUKUS pact with Australia and the United Kingdom, which involves supplying Australia with nuclear submarines. U.S. naval operations intensified in the South China Sea, heightening tensions with Beijing. Military cooperation with Japan and South Korea was also expanded.

- Support for Taiwan:

Washington provided diplomatic and military backing to Taiwan through arms sales and official visits—actions that angered Beijing. While reaffirming its adherence to the “One China” policy, the U.S. signaled that military intervention could be considered in the event of a Chinese invasion.

- U.S. Policy Toward Russia

- Sanctions and Political Pressure:

The administration imposed wide-ranging sanctions on Russia over election interference, domestic repression (including the Alexei Navalny case), and the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. These included restrictions on Russian banks, oil exports, and critical technologies.

- Military Support for Ukraine and Diplomatic Isolation:

Following the invasion of Ukraine, the Biden administration provided extensive military assistance, including advanced weapons systems like HIMARS and Patriot missiles. It also increased U.S. troop presence in Eastern Europe to reinforce NATO and worked to isolate Russia diplomatically from international forums, including the G20.

- Strengthening NATO:

Washington pushed for NATO expansion by supporting the accession of Finland

and Sweden—further straining Moscow and reinforcing Article V commitments regarding collective defense.

- **UN Diplomacy and Strategic Leverage**

The Biden administration has used UN platforms to isolate Russia and challenge China. At the Security Council, the U.S. introduced resolutions condemning Russia's aggression in Ukraine, although these were repeatedly vetoed by Moscow. Emergency sessions were used to highlight violations such as the targeting of civilian infrastructure. Meanwhile, in the General Assembly, the U.S. successfully passed resolutions condemning Russia's war, strengthening its global isolation and suspending its UN Human Rights Council membership over alleged abuses in Ukraine.

Although the U.S. is not a member of the International Criminal Court, it supported war crimes investigations into Russia's conduct in Ukraine. The United Nations was instrumental in documenting human rights violations in Russian-occupied territories.

Additionally, the administration leveraged programs like the World Food Programme and the UN Refugee Agency to assist Ukrainian refugees—reinforcing allied support and pressuring Russia on grain exports from the Black Sea, a corridor developed jointly by the UN and Turkey.

- **UN Channels to Pressure China**

Following the Trump administration's withdrawal from the World Health Organization in 2020, Biden reinstated U.S. funding in January 2021. However, this renewed support was also used to pressure China on the origins of COVID-19, including calls for an independent investigation in Wuhan—firmly rejected by Beijing. Washington pursued UN-backed standards for cyberspace governance, aiming to curb Chinese practices in cyber-espionage and intellectual property theft. It also pressed the World Trade Organization to condemn China's unfair trade policies, such as state subsidies and restrictions on foreign companies.

In summary, the Biden administration effectively utilized UN programs as diplomatic instruments to confront and isolate Russia. Its efforts to challenge China faced greater resistance due to Beijing's deep institutional influence within the UN. As global competition intensifies, the United Nations remains a key battleground for power struggles among major states, with the U.S. seeking to expand its influence amid rising challenges from China and Russia.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Biden administration has employed United Nations programs as strategic instruments to advance U.S. global influence through a multilateral framework. Rather than limiting its engagement to technical and financial support, the administration has utilized these institutions across sensitive domains—such as human rights, cybersecurity, international trade, and development—in ways aligned with its geopolitical objectives.

In the context of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, Washington supported investigations led by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Criminal Court, despite not being a party to the latter. It leveraged Security Council and General Assembly sessions to diplomatically isolate Moscow and highlight violations in occupied territories. Regarding China, the administration employed institutions such as the World Health Organization, the World Trade Organization, and the Security Council to scrutinize Beijing’s handling of the virus outbreak, cybersecurity conduct, and unfair trade practices.

Additionally, U.S. deployment of UN programs across the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America reflected a conditional aid strategy—linking assistance to improvements in transparency, anti-corruption efforts, and alignment with Washington’s political priorities, including normalization agreements and efforts to counter Iranian and Russian influence.

Ultimately, the Biden administration has ushered in a new model of diplomacy via international organizations—one that instrumentalizes global norms and mechanisms to recalibrate power balances and shape a world order more consistent with American standards. While this elevates the role of the United Nations, it also raises critical questions about neutrality and international legitimacy.

Key Findings

1. The United States faced several challenges, notably Russia’s veto power in the UN Security Council, which hindered swift action against Beijing. China’s growing influence within UN bodies—particularly the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization—has also placed unique pressures on Washington. Efforts to divide developing nations in favor of Western positions often faltered, with many African and Asian states maintaining strong ties to Beijing.
2. Biden’s administration encountered numerous obstacles in restoring international relations. The Russia–Ukraine war tested U.S. commitment to European allies and reinforced the strategic importance of NATO amid rising competition with China. Despite collaborative efforts on issues like climate change, trade, and human rights, the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in August 2021 drew criticism, especially from European partners who felt excluded from the decision-making process. Nevertheless, economic initiatives helped accelerate trust-building with key allies, including the European Union.

3. The Biden administration utilized the United Nations as a tool to reinforce its influence in the Middle East—through sanctions, crisis management, and humanitarian assistance. Although it achieved success in specific cases, such as pressuring Iran and supporting regional allies, it faced persistent obstacles from Russian and Chinese opposition, as well as internal divisions among Arab states. Given ongoing global competition, the UN is likely to remain a primary arena for geopolitical contestation in the region.

Recommendations

1. **Enhancing Transparency in UN Funding and Intervention Motives**
Governments and international institutions pursuing political utilization should clearly articulate the objectives behind their support for UN programs—whether in counterterrorism or human rights—to avoid interpretations that undermine the credibility of multilateral organizations.

2. **Safeguarding UN Neutrality in a Multipolar Environment**
As global competition intensifies, effective oversight mechanisms must be established to prevent the politicization of UN institutions. This requires broader participation from developing countries and the involvement of independent observers in shaping operational policies.

3. **Linking UN Aid to Tangible Outcomes Rather Than Political Conditions**
To ensure equitable political utilization, funding for UN programs should be tied to clear performance indicators—including impact on local communities and service quality—rather than mere alignment with dominant international agendas.

4. **Balancing Normative Diplomacy and National Interests**
Governments, particularly the United States, should invest in developing diplomatic narratives that combine a commitment to UN values—such as justice and pluralism—with the pursuit of national interests, without resorting to dominance or exclusionary practices.

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