

ways to use American resources and clout in the advancement of human rights.

[From the Omaha World-Herald]
U.N. ENTITY COURTS IRRELEVANCE

It's been interesting to note the reactions of various groups of Americans to a U.N. committee's vote to remove the United States from the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

A writer for the liberal Nation magazine used the incident to go off on a riff about America the Arrogant. "A little more self-criticism and a lot less self-righteousness would go a long way," he wrote in a passage the irony of which is compounded by the fact that U.S. reelection hopes were aborted by such humble, self-effacing nations as France and China.

Another columnist suggested that maybe America was being punished for its Cold War practice of backing unsavory dictatorships that happened to be anti-communist. If so, that would be a double standard, too, considering what China was up to during some of those same Cold War years.

The New York Times editorial page said the Bush Administration was caught by surprise, apparently because it thought it had the votes locked up. The Times appropriately recommended that the administration find out who betrayed it. Knowing who broke promises of support may be useful later, the Times suggested.

The Washington Post, forthrightly torpedoing Sen. John Kerry's approving claim that the action was related to U.S. rejection of the Kyoto Protocols, pointed out that China has been steamed because of American criticism of that country's abysmal human

rights record. The Post said the United States was done in by China, Cuba and French diplomats who were trying to curry favor with African dictators. The Arab world also resents the United States for siding with Israel in a number of U.N. confrontations.

Additional action by the subcommittee a few days ago provided insight into the prevailing thought process. Having denied continued membership to the United States, some members of the voting panel have turned their attention to private organizations that maintain United Nations accreditation to promote human rights. The Washington Times reported that some of these groups are now in danger of losing their credentials.

They include Freedom House, founded by Eleanor Roosevelt to monitor freedom around the world, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, which tracks down and exposes perpetrators of the Holocaust who have tried to hide their past.

The time is ripe, it seems to us, for the little boy to stand up and say that the emperor has no clothes. If the likes of Cuba and China, or haters of Israel, are setting the moral tone in the dealings of this commission, there can be no moral tone to speak of, and serious-minded diplomats lower themselves to take its yammerings seriously.

Generations of Americans have been raised with the notion that the United States, by failing to get on board the League of Nations in 1920, weakened an institution that might have prevented World War II. Accordingly, active participation in the United Nations, the League's successor, has been regarded a

sort of sacred responsibility since 1945, as well it should continue to be.

And, indeed, the U.N. has done considerable good, with its peacekeeping and relief operations as well as its provision of a forum for talking about things—including human rights—that in earlier decades might have ignited conflict.

However, Americans shouldn't expect that their interests will always coincide with those of the global organization and all its various commissions, agencies and committees. We and our government should be prepared to accommodate divergences, using whatever means are consistent with our national interest and, secondarily, the interests of the world community.

What happened on the Civil Rights Commission, though, was not a divergence of interests, as that term is commonly used. It was more like a wholehearted plunge into irrelevance. This is not a situation that calls for American self-loathing. Until the people who are driving the commission regain their moral bearings, to heck with them.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J.D. HAYWORTH

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 126, I was detained due to flight delays. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."