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UN FUNDS FOR TERRORISTS

It's bad enough that the long-suffering American taxpayers have their tax dollars handed out to special-interest political pressure groups, including those lobbying hard against President Reagan's economic and national defense programs. But what about American tax dollars going to terrorist and guerrilla groups in foreign countries?

Oh, it doesn't go directly; it is "laundered" by being funnelled through a middleman otherwise known as the United Nations. A recent research study made by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think-tank based in Washington, discovered that the UN is actively supporting Soviet-backed guerrilla movements all over the world.

Since 1975, the United Nations has spent $116 million on "national liberation movements," of which 24 percent has come out of the pockets of U.S. taxpayers. An even larger percentage has come from other Western democracies.

Funny thing, all the so-called national liberation movements (NLM) to which the UN gives money are anti-American and anti-Western. Most are Marxist and have ties to the Soviet Union.

The United States contributed about $97 million to the World Food Program in 1980, or 28 percent of the budget. Between 1974 and 1981, the World Food Program gave $44 million in cash, commodities and services to national liberation movements, most of them Marxist. The Soviet Union regularly gives arms and military training to those same national liberation movements, but gives nothing at all to the World Food Program, and never has.

As one case in point, look at the longtime, substantial UN aid given to SWAPO (Southwest African People's Organization), which has been trying for years to take over Southwest Africa (Namibia).

When SWAPO's leader, Sam Nujoma, spoke to the UN in 1973, he said: "I pledge here and now that we will continue to talk to South Africa in the only language they understand, and that is intensification of armed liberation struggle. SWAPO will continue to mobilize the masses and intensify and expand military operations until all the objectives of the struggle are realized."

SWAPO has a record of terrorist attacks against civilians going back to the late 1960s. A favorite SWAPO terrorist tactic is the planting of land mines at random on public roads in Namibia. SWAPO also assassinates officials of rival political parties.

SWAPO relies heavily on the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries for military equipment, supplies and military training. But a guerrilla movement needs food, medicines and civilian supplies, too, and SWAPO gets those mostly from the UN.

In 1981, SWAPO had access to $28 million worth of UN food, education, medical and vocational training. Since 1979, the UN High Commissioner of Refugees gave $10 million for the Namibian refugee camps, mostly in Angola. Since 1974, SWAPO has received $5.4 million from the World Food Program, $7.7 million from the UN Development Program; $256,000 from the World Health Organization; and $90,000 from the Food and Agriculture Organization.

When you add it all up, the UN and its specialized agencies have allocated at least $40 million in aid, directly or indirectly, to SWAPO since 1977. The U.S. taxpayers contributed about 30 percent of this.

Through a UN resolution, SWAPO was even given a free international public relations service. This enables SWAPO to distribute its propaganda over UN-sponsored radio.

Many observers believe that the mantle of political legitimacy which is conferred by the UN on national liberation movements is just as important as the cash. In 1976, SWAPO was granted "permanent observer" status in the UN General Assembly. The UN recognized SWAPO as "the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people." SWAPO has been invited by the Security Council to participate in its meetings on Namibia.

When the UN gives official UN recognition to a Communist-oriented guerrilla group, this "UN seal of approval" gives the NLM a tremendous advantage over its political rivals in its home country. The pro-Communist, UN-backed NLM then appears to be the true representative of the people when, in reality, it may be only one of several warring factions.

The General Accounting Office should conduct a full investigation into how U.S. tax funds find their way, directly or indirectly, into guerrilla or terrorist organizations. That would also be a good target for the curiosity of investigative reporters.