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UN MEMBERSHIP RECONSIDERED

It's anybody's guess what the result would be if we held a national referendum on whether or not the United States should belong to the United Nations. But it's a fact that, when Switzerland held a referendum this year, the voters rejected UN membership by a margin of more than three to one.

Maybe this was because the Swiss know the UN better than any other nation. Many UN specialized agencies are headquartered in Switzerland, and many UN meetings take place there. Even the voters in Geneva, who owe a large share of their economic prosperity to UN gatherings there, decisively rejected UN membership.

The voters turned thumbs down on the UN despite an all-out government effort to put Switzerland into the United Nations. A "yes" vote in the referendum was strongly supported by both Houses of Parliament, all government officials, and the media.

The internationalists who were so keen for UN membership were not gracious in defeat. One leader spoke bitterly about what he called the "hedgehog neurosis." Another railed against what he called the irrational distrust of anything foreign.

The anti-UN majority was also seen as a setback for the Swiss Socialists. They interpreted the vote as being hostile to the Socialist policies of trying to redistribute U.S. wealth to Third World countries under the UN's "New International Economic Order."

The motivation of voters as they mark their ballots cannot be scientifically determined, as everyone knows who has ever counted ballots on election night. But it is possible that one factor in the stunning anti-UN vote may have been a reaction against the UN Human Rights Commission which meets in Geneva each year in February and March.

That Commission is such a farce. It has never criticized the sorry human rights record of the Soviet Union, Cuba, India, Iran, Syria, Romania, or Mainland China. On the other hand, it adopted a resolution this spring condemning Israel.

Actually, it is no surprise that any civilized country would refuse to join the UN today. The UN is a laughing stock, a nest of spies, a platform to harangue at the United

States, and a source for endless parties and tax-free liquor.

What is impressive is that Switzerland had the good judgment to reject UN membership from the very beginning in 1945 when a worldwide euphoria convinced millions of naive people that the UN was the savior of the world, a protection against war, our last best hope for peace, and similar nonsense.

Anyone who is upset about graft and corruption in New York City or other big cities should be similarly concerned about UN racketry. Six countries (the U.S., the U.S.S.R., Japan, West Germany, France, and the United Kingdom) are soaked for 65 percent of the UN budget, while the ruling majority of 100 countries (which call themselves the Group of 77) contributes less than nine percent.

There are no limits on what this ruling clique of anti-American countries can spend. This voting majority (mostly Third World nations) can approve any extravagant spending program whatsoever, and then assess the United States 25 percent. It's just that cut-and-dried. In 1984, the United States paid its assessment of $420 million and in addition contributed about $660 million to the UN voluntary programs.

In that same year, the Soviet Union paid only 10 percent of the assessed budget (refusing to pay some of its assessment). The entire Soviet bloc contributed only one percent of the voluntary contributions.

If a majority of Congressmen haven't got the political courage to end this farce and make long-overdue cuts in the $1.1 billion of U.S. donations to the UN, they can accomplish the same thing by blaming it on the Gramm-Rudman Budget Act, which requires that 4.3 percent be cut from U.S. spending in 1986. The Gramm-Rudman law was expressly designed for the purpose of cutting the budget when Congress lacks the will to do it.

UN and State Department bureaucrats have already started lobbying to get Congress to exempt UN salaries, expense accounts, and programs from the Gramm-Rudman knife. There is no good reason to excuse UN party-goers from the belt-tightening that is scheduled for food stamps, medicare, and student loan recipients.

Hopes and illusions die hard, and they are costly to maintain after they are exposed as unrealistic. Congress should force the United Nations to face the real world where taxes must relate to responsibility.