



JEAN ZIEGLER'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST AMERICA

*A Study of the Anti-American Bias of the
U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*

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Key Findings

- **Jean Ziegler, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the right to food, is abusing his mandate to further his extreme anti-American political agenda at the expense of addressing the world's food emergencies. He should be removed and replaced with an individual who will impartially, objectively and non-selectively carry out the mandate.**
- **During the first four years of his mandate, Jean Ziegler publicly criticized the United States on 34 occasions. Yet he *never* spoke out for the hungry or criticized any party in 15 of 17 countries deemed by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization to have a man-made food emergency. And of the 2 food emergency countries that he did criticize, he only did so once with respect to one (Ethiopia) and three times with respect to the other (Sudan). (Food emergencies ignored: Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Guinea, Haiti, Liberia, Russian Federation (Chechnya), Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda)**
- **Jean Ziegler frequently appends a food-related pretext to his personal political positions in order to justify employing the prestige of his U.N. office. Thus, his political opposition to U.S. military action in both Afghanistan and Iraq — matters entirely outside his competence as Special Rapporteur — over time evolved into alleged violations of the right to food.**
- **Jean Ziegler almost never criticizes any government other than the U.S. and Israel. When he does, he suddenly dons the gloves of ginger U.N. diplomacy. Hence the Sudanese atrocities in Darfur for Ziegler are merely a cause for “concern,” the role of the Khartoum regime in atrocities only “alleged.” By contrast, the United States is an “imperialist dictatorship” responsible for all the world's misery, President Bush is “the Pinochet who sits in the White House,” the U.S. is committing “genocide” in Cuba, and Israel commits “state terror” and “war crimes” with the U.S.'s blessing. Mr. Ziegler has never used such denunciations against the government of Sudan, or any other country.**
- **Jean Ziegler has repeatedly condemned the U.S. embargo of Cuba as a “flagrant” violation of the right to food and of international law. Yet Cuba has *never*, during the period of Mr. Ziegler's mandate, appeared on the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization's Food Emergency list.**

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Introduction

This report addresses a pattern and practice of anti-American bias by Jean Ziegler, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the right to food, that undermines the credibility of the U.N. human rights apparatus and neglects the world's hungry. In October 2004, we issued a study, *Blind to Burundi*, demonstrating that Mr. Ziegler has used his position to further his own political agenda at the expense of addressing the world's food emergencies. There, we focused on his abuse of mandate to disproportionately criticize one of his favorite political targets, Israel. Mr. Ziegler's other favorite targets are corporations, international financial institutions, and the United States. This paper examines Mr. Ziegler's abuse of his U.N. mandate on food in order to target the United States under various pretexts.

During the first four years of his mandate, Mr. Ziegler publicly criticized the United States on 34 occasions — mostly for its alleged policies or actions vis-à-vis Cuba, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and its purported control of the international financial institutions and thereby the world economy. By contrast, during the same time period, he *never* spoke out for the hungry or criticized any party in 15 of 17 countries deemed by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to have a man-made food emergency. And, of the 2 food emergency countries of which he was critical, he only did so once with respect to one (Ethiopia), and three times with respect to the other (Sudan).

The Special Rapporteur for food is mandated to work toward eradicating the scourge of hunger. Because food problems exist in many countries, the Special Rapporteur must allocate his limited time and resources according to some logical criteria. Yet Mr. Ziegler has failed to respect any objective criteria whatsoever. Instead, he has consistently abused his U.N. position to single out and demonize particular countries — the United States and Israel — to advance his own extreme political views, rather than to advance the right to food.

Our Study

Our conclusions are based on an examination of Mr. Ziegler's statements between September 2000 and December 2004, from three different sources:

- (1) U.N. press release archives, as found on the U.N.'s electronically-searchable website. These contain every U.N. press release issued by Mr. Ziegler, as well as official summaries of Mr. Ziegler's statements and reports from diverse U.N. events and conferences;
- (2) Documents placed by Mr. Ziegler on his own website (www.righttofood.org); and
- (3) Statements made by Mr. Ziegler to the French- and English-language media, as found on a search of the comprehensive Nexis international news database.

By searching these databases and reviewing the retrieved articles, we found 34 statements during the relevant period in which Mr. Ziegler was critical of the United States.¹

Because Mr. Ziegler's mandate is to speak out against hunger in the world, we then compared Mr. Ziegler's treatment of the United States with his treatment of countries listed on the FAO's Food Emergencies list. From the 35 countries on the May 2004 list, we selected a sample of 17 countries. We chose these countries because for all of them, the FAO attributed the food emergency to some human action (*e.g.*, war), rather than a natural disaster, so criticism of one or another party was possible.

By searching the sources discussed above, we found that during the relevant period, of the 17 countries with man-made food emergencies, Mr. Ziegler criticized the government or another party in only two, Ethiopia and Sudan. We found one instance of criticism related to Ethiopia, and three instances related to Sudan. By comparison, as mentioned above, there were 34 instances during the same time period in which Mr. Ziegler criticized the United States.²

Conclusions

Under international law, U.N. independent human rights experts are obliged to act with impartiality, objectivity, and non-selectivity.³ Mr. Ziegler has repeatedly flouted these standards. He has neglected the world's real food emergencies, where millions are dying from starvation, in order to focus on his favorite political targets, one of which is the United States.⁴

Mr. Ziegler is a former Swiss Socialist party politician who in 1989 — shortly after Libya bombed Pan Am flight 103, killing 270 people from 21 countries, including 189 Americans — helped to found the Moammar Khadafi Human Rights Prize.⁵ Mr. Ziegler himself was then awarded the prize in 2002.⁶ In 2004, he was a contributor to the inaugural issue of *L'Empire* ("The Empire"), Europe's first magazine dedicated to anti-Americanism, providing an article criticizing American imperialism and the war on terror.⁷ In both the article and his 2005 book, *L'Empire de la Honte* ("The Empire of Shame"), Mr. Ziegler used his U.N. Special Rapporteur title.

Mr. Ziegler frequently takes one of his personal, preexisting political positions that does not concern food and appends to it a food-related pretext, in order to justify employing

¹ See Selected Quotes from Jean Ziegler and Bibliography of Jean Ziegler's Statements, pp. 9 – 12 *infra*.

² See Table: A Comparison of Jean Ziegler's Treatment of the United States and Food Emergency Countries, p. 8 *infra*.

³ General Assembly Resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993.

⁴ We are not the first to raise this complaint. In 2004, the United States requested that the Commission on Human Rights reprimand Mr. Ziegler for his "irresponsible and unfounded statements and for abusing his mandate to generate misleading polemics on issues beyond his competence and expertise." U.S. *Explanation of Vote on Commission Resolution on the Right to Food*, 16 April 2004.

⁵ See http://www.unwatch.org/pdf_files/Ziegler_creates_Khadafi_Human_Rights_Prize.pdf

⁶ See http://www.unwatch.org/pdf_files/UN_position_prohibits_prize.pdf

⁷ See <http://www.empire-american.com> and http://www.unwatch.org/pdf_files/Lempire2004.pdf

the prestige of his U.N. office. For example, in the fall of 2001, less than two weeks after Al Qaeda's September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States, Mr. Ziegler announced his political opposition to any potential U.S. military response against the Taliban regime that hosted Al Qaeda, saying it would have "apocalyptic" consequences and cause "the end for the Afghan nation."⁸ Within weeks, Mr. Ziegler's political opposition to the war metamorphosed into a "food" objection, with his claim that food drops by the Allies were prohibited — first on the ground that they compromised "the key principles of humanitarian organizations and international law" (a fallacious proposition), and then on grounds that they might end up feeding the Taliban. All along, of course, the Special Rapporteur was transparently acting out of his political opposition to the war itself — a matter *entirely outside his competence*. A similar evolution occurred with respect to the Iraq war.⁹

Mr. Ziegler is a great admirer of Cuba who believes that that the island's economic system can provide a counter-model to the capitalist system which he so opposes. Not surprisingly, much of his criticism of the United States centers on its economic boycott of Cuba, which he characterizes as the sole reason for the country's problems and as a "flagrant" violation of the right to food and of international law in nearly every report he submits to the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly. According to his most recent report to the Commission, he is planning a visit to Cuba. (Cuba apparently welcomes Mr. Ziegler's visit, although it has consistently denied entry to Christine Chanet, the Personal Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Cuba.¹⁰) Yet Cuba has *never*, during the time period of Mr. Ziegler's mandate, appeared on the FAO's food emergency list.¹¹ Why has the Special Rapporteur for food paid so much attention to a country without a food emergency when, during his tenure, the FAO's food emergency lists have comprised between 31 and 45 other countries? The only possible explanation is Mr. Ziegler's personal politics.

The vitriol of Mr. Ziegler's anti-American statements is striking, particularly when compared to his mild criticism of other countries. He has accused the U.S. of committing "genocide" in Cuba.¹² In his view, "American imperialism and its guilty arrogance are solely responsible for" all the world's misery.¹³ He has said that the American government is an imperialist dictatorship that uses "predators" and "mercenaries" to

⁸ "U.N. Swiss envoy warns of apocalyptic consequences of U.S. strikes on Afghanistan," *Swiss Radio International's Swissinfo website*, 22 September 2001, cited by *BBC Morning Europe*, 23 September 2001.

⁹ In February 2003, Mr. Ziegler publicly stated that war in Iraq should be avoided at all costs, and even proposed that Switzerland offer exile to Saddam Hussein. See "Swiss rights campaigner urges Swiss exile for Saddam," *Agence France Presse--English*, 5 February 2003. By April 2003, he was accusing Coalition forces of violating the rights to food and water in Iraq. See "Un expert de l'ONU denonce les violations du droit a l'alimentation en Irak," *Agence France Presse*, 3 avril 2003, "UN rights expert demands aid agencies get access to feed Iraqis," *Agence France Presse--English*, 3 April 2003.

¹⁰ See, e.g., "Cuba, U.S. claim U.N. victory," *UPI*, 15 April 2005.

¹¹ See FAO lists of countries facing food emergencies from September/October 2000 to June 2005 at <http://www.fao.org/giews/english/fs/index.htm>.

¹² See <http://www.radioangulo.cu/english/diarioingles/2005/march/190305/unrapporteur.htm>.

¹³ "Le sentiment anti-americain grandit dans la nouvelle Allemagne de Gerhard Schroeder," *Le Temps*, 22 mai 2002.

implement its world domination.¹⁴ He has called President Bush “the Pinochet who sits in the White House.”¹⁵ With respect to Sudan, by contrast, Darfur is merely a cause for “concern”; the role of the Khartoum regime in atrocities only “alleged.”¹⁶

To be sure, the United States is not above criticism. Like every other country — and perhaps more as the country that sees itself as the leader of the free world — the United States must be held to account for its human rights record. There is no question that the U.S. war on terror has occasioned a number of serious human rights violations. Even President Bush has acknowledged abuses that were abhorrent and “a stain on our country’s honor.”¹⁷ We also recognize that in his private capacity, Mr. Ziegler is entitled to his own opinions. But Mr. Ziegler is not entitled to use his U.N. position as Special Rapporteur as a platform to express his personal, political views having nothing to do with the right to food. Mr. Ziegler’s actions cause grave damage to the integrity of the Special Procedures, the mechanism under which the U.N. appoints independent experts for country-specific or thematic rights issues. Indeed, Mr. Ziegler’s frivolous statements and abuse of mandate weaken the ability of other independent experts to credibly critique the record of the United States or that of any other country. Worst of all, he has deprived the world’s hungry of the benefit of the mechanism that the U.N. created for them in 2000.

¹⁴ J. Ziegler, “Le maelstrom de la mondialisation,” *Le Temps*, 28 octobre 2002.

¹⁵ “Jean Ziegler s’attaque aux Etats-Unis, au FMI et a l’OMC,” *SDA*, 27 janvier 2003.

¹⁶ *U.N. Press Release AFR/873, HR/CN/1065*, 29 March 2004. See also “Nearly twice as many Iraqi children going hungry since Saddam’s ouster, U.N. expert says,” *Associated Press*, 30 March 2005 (condemning coalition forces, but not insurgents, for causing malnutrition in Iraq, while only expressing “concern” about hunger in other countries including Sudan and North Korea).

¹⁷ See, e.g., “Bush apologizes for abuse of Iraqis,” *Agence France Presse – English*, 6 May 2004.

Recommendations

In light of Mr. Ziegler's repeated and continuing abuse of mandate, we are requesting:

- That **U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, President of the U.N. General Assembly Jan Eliasson, and Chair of the General Assembly's Third Committee Francis K. Butagira** condemn Jean Ziegler for bias and for undermining the U.N.'s human rights mechanisms;
- That **Makarim Wibisono, Chairman of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights**, should remove Jean Ziegler from the position of Special Rapporteur on the right to food for abuse of mandate and replace him with an individual who will impartially, objectively and non-selectively carry out the mandate;
- That, if the Chairman does not do so, the **53 State Members of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights** should convene to adopt a resolution terminating Jean Ziegler's term for abuse of mandate and replace him with an individual who will impartially, objectively and non-selectively carry out the mandate;
- That, failing action by the Chairman or the State Members of the Commission, **Jean Ziegler** should resign the position of Special Rapporteur on the right to food to allow for the appointment of an individual who will impartially, objectively and non-selectively carry out the mandate.

Table: A Comparison of Jean Ziegler’s Treatment of the United States and Food Emergency Countries

Country	Instances where Jean Ziegler criticized government or other party
*Burundi	0
*Central African Republic	0
*Chad	0
*Congo, Democratic Republic of the	0
*Congo, Republic of	0
*Cote d’Ivoire	0
*Eritrea	0
*Ethiopia	1
*Guinea	0
*Haiti	0
*Liberia	0
Russian Federation (*Chechnya)	0
*Sierra Leone	0
*Somalia	0
*Sudan	3
*Tanzania	0
*Uganda	0
United States	34

*Country or territory on the Food Emergencies List of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization

(Period covered: September 2000 – December 2004)

Selected Quotes from Jean Ziegler

Africa News, 3 March 2004: “[T]he World Trade Organization, the American government, the Swiss bankers, the Bretton Woods institutions, all the neo-liberals. . . create illegality, exclusion and immense riches in some hands and immense misery. . . .”

J. Ziegler, “Terror and the Empire,” in *Ossietzky 2003* (published in German; English translation at <http://www.sopos.org/autsaetze/3d078e5a987f0/1.phtml>): After the fall of the Soviet Union, “instead of contributing to a system of collective security, the U.S. refused to dismantle the gigantic military machine built during the Cold War. Against the principle of peaceful conflict resolution, the U.S. chose the way of imperial dictation. . . . [I]t established the globalized world market totally ruled by American financial capital. The American capital oligarchy . . . largely dominates the Bush administration. . . .”

Agence France Presse, 3 avril 2003: “[Jean Ziegler] a dénoncé . . . diverses ‘violations évidentes’ [du droit à l’alimentation] commises par la coalition américano-britannique à l’encontre des civils irakiens.” (“[Jean Ziegler] condemned . . . many ‘patent violations’ [of the right to food] committed by the American and English coalition against Iraqi civilians.”)

Agence France Presse--English, 3 April 2003: “People [in Iraq] are dying now from poisoned water, extreme malnutrition, hunger.” Coalition forces are in “clear violation” of Geneva conventions by cutting off water supplies in parts of Iraq.

Agence France Presse--English, 5 February 2003: “[W]ar in Iraq would be a total human catastrophe” that should be avoided at all costs. Switzerland should offer exile to Saddam Hussein in order to avoid war.

SDA (Swiss News Agency), 27 janvier 2003: “Jean Ziegler a profité . . . pour s’en prendre aux Etats Unis. . . . Pour lui, ceux-ci sont responsables de la misère du monde. . . . ‘Le Pinochet qui siège à la Maison Blanche’ . . . absout les actes de terreur perpétrés par le premier ministre Ariel Sharon.” (“Jean Ziegler seized the opportunity to attack the United States. According to him, they are responsible for world misery. . . . ‘The Pinochet who sits in the White House’ . . . absolves the acts of terror perpetrated by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.”)

Le Temps, 13 novembre 2002: “[Les gouvernements passifs] sont ligotés par le ‘modèle macroéconomique néolibéral’ et son marché, qui étouffent les petits paysans au profit de l’agrobusiness. . . . La solution ? Il faut rejeter le ‘consensus de Washington’ Ziegler cite entre autres, Cuba : ‘Si les conditions sont si difficiles dans l’île c’est à cause du blocus américain.’” (“[The passive governments] are caught by the ‘neo-liberal macroeconomic model’ and its market which oppress small farmers to the benefit of agro-business. . . . Is there a solution? According to Ziegler, Cuba can provide a counter-model: ‘If the living conditions are so harsh in the island, it is due to the American embargo’ he asserts”.)

L'Humanité, 5 novembre 2002: “[Les Américains] ont proclamé: ‘Contre le multilatéralisme, nous pratiquerons la raison impériale.’ Et cette dernière a atteint son paroxysme avec l’installation de Bush à la Maison-Blanche. Le crime a été commis. . . .”
(“*[The Americans] proclaimed: ‘We shall develop imperialism rather than collaboration.’ This imperialist logic reached its climax with the installation of Bush at the White House. The crime was committed. . . .*”)

Le Temps, 28 octobre 2002: “Au sommet du système: l’empire nord-américain. . . . Pour l’aider à asseoir sa puissance, il a ses relais: les ‘prédateurs’ et les ‘mercenaires’. . . .”
(“*The North-American empire dominates the system. . . . It uses ‘predators’ and ‘mercenaries’ to implement its domination. . . .*”)

Le Point, 30 août 2002: “Qui sont les maîtres de cette ‘mondialisation globalement positive’? . . . Ce sont les oligarchies détentrices du capital financier mondialisé, appuyées sur la puissance militaire des Etats Unis.” (“*Who are the masters of this ‘overall positive globalization’? . . . Oligarchies who own globalized financial capital and are supported by America’s military power.*”)

Le Temps, 22 mai 2002: “George Bush [est] le valet de l’oligarchie financière américaine. . . . Il n’y a pas de fatalité à la misère. L’impérialisme américain, avec sa coupable arrogance, en est seul responsable” (“*George Bush [is] the valet of American financial oligarchy. . . . Misery is no fatality. American imperialism and its guilty arrogance are solely responsible for it.*”)

The Herald (Glasgow), 18 October 2001: U.S. food airdrops in Afghanistan were “totally catastrophic for humanitarian aid. The man with the gun picks it up, so Americans are feeding the Taliban every night.”

La Tribune, 16 octobre 2001, “[Jean Ziegler] affirme que les largages de rations alimentaires par les avions américains contribuent à nourrir les combattants taliban.”
(“*[Jean Ziegler] believes that American food drops help sustain the Taliban fighters.*”)

Swiss Radio International’s Swissinfo website, 22 September 2001, cited by *BBC Morning Europe*, 23 September 2001: U.S. airstrikes on Afghanistan would have “apocalyptic” consequences and “would be the end of the Afghan nation.”

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“Proche-Orient: reunion a Geneve sur la construction du mur,” *SDA*, 15 avril 2004

“IRIN interview with U.N.'s Rapporteur on food rights,” *Africa News*, 3 March 2004

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“Un expert de l'ONU denonce les violations du droit a l'alimentation en Irak,” *Agence France Presse*, 3 avril 2003

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J. Ziegler, “Le maelstrom de la mondialisation,” *Le Temps*, 28 octobre 2002

“Row grows over GM food aid for Africa, as 14 million starve,” *The Independent (London)*, 19 October 2002

“Development: Food expert says World Bank blocks progress,” *IPS-Inter Press Service/Global Information Network*, 15 October 2002

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About UN Watch

UN Watch is a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Geneva whose mandate is to monitor the performance of the United Nations by the yardstick of its own Charter, and to promote human rights for all. UN Watch was established in 1993 under the Chairmanship of the late Ambassador Morris B. Abram, following his tenure as U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. in Geneva. Chaired today by Alfred H. Moses, former U.S. ambassador in Europe, UN Watch participates actively as an accredited NGO in Special Consultative Status with the U.N. Economic and Social Council.

In 2005, UN Watch led the international NGO coalition for Lebanese freedom at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights; forced Pakistan to account for its brutal arrest of two U.N. experts; and led an international NGO coalition for human rights in Zimbabwe that forced the Mugabe regime to answer before the U.N. for its violations. UN Watch is affiliated with the American Jewish Committee, an NGO founded in 1906 to advance pluralism and defend religious liberty, and which helped formulate the U.N.'s human rights principles at its establishment in 1945.

UN Watch believes in the United Nations' mission on behalf of the international community to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and provide for a more just world. We believe that even with its shortcomings, the U.N. remains an indispensable tool in bringing together diverse nations and cultures. While it would be unrealistic to ignore the U.N.'s weaknesses, we advocate finding ways to build on its strengths and use its limited resources effectively.

UN Watch is foremost concerned with the just application of U.N. Charter principles. Areas of interest include: U.N. management reform, the U.N. and civil society, equality within the U.N., and the equal treatment of member states. UN Watch has been at the forefront of the call to end the unfair treatment applied by the U.N. toward Israel, which offers an object lesson (though not the only one) in how due process, equal treatment, and other fundamental principles of the U.N. Charter are often ignored or selectively upheld.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has recognized the important role of UN Watch: "I deeply appreciate the valuable work performed by UN Watch. I believe that informed and independent evaluation of the United Nations' activities will prove a vital source as we seek to adapt the Organization to the needs of a changing world. I can promise you that I will pay close attention to your observations and views in the years ahead." (*Letter to Amb. Morris B. Abram, UN Watch, Jan. 30, 1997.*)

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