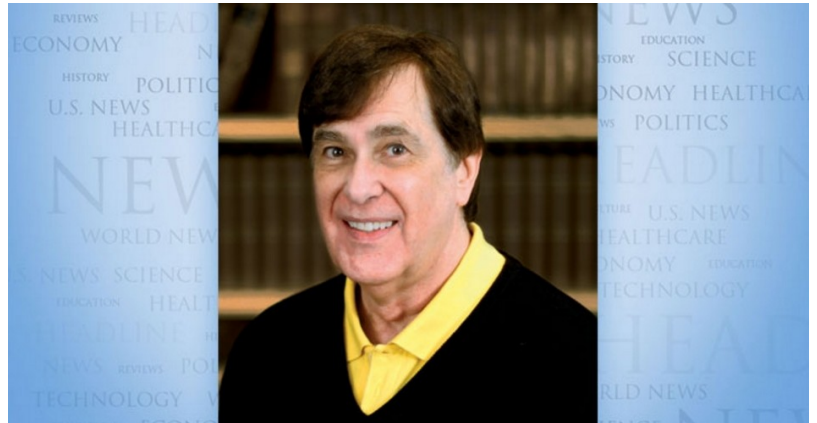




Written by [Tom DeWeese](#) on December 5, 2013

## The Alamo: Hallowed American Ground or UN Captive?

In 1836, 150 courageous and dedicated men died defending the Alamo. They fought in opposition to the rise of authoritarian big government as Mexico abandoned its Republic. The men of the Alamo were essentially betrayed and sacrificed by their own Texas government because of indecision and bickering by its political leadership.



Such a betrayal is about to happen again as our government is moving forward with plans to place the Alamo, a symbol of American freedom, into the hands of the United Nations as a World Heritage Site.

As usual, when government bureaucrats attempt such a move they know will bring criticism and anger, they start their denials in advance. We are always assured that a UN designation to American historic sites means nothing. "It's just an honorary designation that could help tourism to the site, and thus help the local economy," we are constantly assured by government officials. And so it begins: Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson assures Texans that if the Alamo and several other former Spanish missions in San Antonio are added to UNESCO's World Heritage list, the Alamo will remain under the control of the state of Texas and the Texas Land Office. Well, Commissioner Patterson, perhaps you don't have all the facts on your desk.

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Many Americans have been disturbed to find that there are 22 areas in this nation that have been designated as United Nations World Heritage Sites. As a result of a UN treaty called "The Convention Concerning Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," such sites come under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Such designations have been the source of major debate as to whether the UN has gained control of sovereign American territory.

These 22 U.S. sites include such important American historical landmarks as Independence Hall (where the Declaration of Independence was signed), Thomas Jefferson's home "Monticello," the entire University of Virginia, and even the Statue of Liberty. Also designated are such vast areas of land as Yellowstone National Park, Yosemite National Park, the Great Smoky Mountains, and Everglades National Park (which UNESCO has now labeled as "endangered"). Fully 68 percent of American national parks, preserves, and monuments are included in the current UN designations, including vast areas of park lands and wilderness areas such as the Aleutian Islands in Alaska, Joshua Tree National Monument in California, and the Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas.

Supporters of the UN Heritage Sites say such designations are nothing more than a great "honor" to the nation. They assure us that there is no threat to American sovereignty and that all designated sites remain firmly under control of the United States government.



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If true, then the question must be asked, why is an international treaty with the United Nations necessary? The United States has already designated most of the UN Heritage Sites as United States parks. The land is already being preserved and protected for AMERICAN heritage purposes. These lands are valuable for their historical significance to this nation. REPEAT: WHY DO WE NEED AN INTERNATIONAL TREATY TO DO WHAT THE UNITED STATES HAS ALREADY DONE FOR ITSELF?

But what about the Alamo? In 1905 the Texas State Legislature entrusted the care and maintenance of the Alamo to the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT), which under Texas law preserved the historic site “as a sacred memorial to the heroes who immolated themselves upon that hallowed ground.” The DRT received no funds from state or federal sources and maintained the site purely with voluntary contributions. In 2011, the Alamo website explains, “the Texas Legislature granted authority over the Alamo to the Texas General Land Office,” which “signed an agreement to keep the DRT in charge of the *daily operation* of the Alamo.” (Emphasis added.) Is it a coincidence that Texas Land Commissioner Patterson is now pushing for the UN World Heritage Site designation?

Obviously the UN has no great feel for the “hallowed ground” of the Alamo or what it means to the people of Texas, or the citizens of the United States. The UN apparently considers the Alamo to be just part of a grouping of historic buildings in the San Antonio area which it refers to as the “San Antonio Franciscan Missions.” Just another historic curiosity.

### **Who Owns World Heritage Sites?**

So, is a World Heritage Site designation just an honorary program that will help local tourism? Or is it a direct threat to national sovereignty? Those supporting the programs correctly point out that UN documents specifically state that each nation maintains its own sovereignty.

It is also true that you will not find any UN documents clearly stating that the world body controls or owns American soil through the World Heritage Site Treaty. And you will not find blue-helmeted UN soldiers standing guard over any of the sites.

However, closer examination reveals that there is a direct threat to national sovereignty, just the same. The problem stems from the program mandates and implementation — and how they link to other treaties and agreements. If those mandates are accepted by Congress, they could lead to direct loss of American sovereignty.

Dr. Michael Coffman of Environmental Perspectives, Inc., explains, “when an international treaty or agreement is signed, we agree to the terms and conditions of the agreement, and by default we have given up a portion of our national sovereignty in order to meet those terms and conditions. And while the agreements do not specifically state that the United Nations has sovereignty, they do permit ‘partnerships’ and other forms of cooperation between the U.S. and the UN.”

According to Dr. Coffman, “this type of ‘cooperation’ was demonstrated in 1995 when the Department of Interior invited the World Heritage Committee to visit Yellowstone National Park for the expressed purpose of declaring the park a ‘World Heritage Site In Danger.’ Such a designation mandates the U.S. to correct the problem or face withdrawal of the park by the UN as a World Heritage Site, accompanied by much negative publicity and world scorn. And since only the United Nation’s World Heritage Committee can remove the In Danger classification, the United States is forced to abide by the Committee’s recommendations, thereby, indirectly giving up its sovereign right to govern itself.”

According to Professor Jeremy Rabkin, law professor at George Mason University School of Law and author of the book *Law Without Nations?*, “Fundamentally, sovereignty is an answer to the question:



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‘who is in charge?’ There must be an answer to that question to answer the parallel question: ‘who is responsible?’ A sovereign government is ‘responsible’ for the territory over which it exercises its sovereignty. That is the traditional principle in international law.”

However, Rabkin goes on to explain, “The assumption behind the World Heritage program is that a site of special historic, cultural or scenic importance is better protected by an international consortium of governments than by the particular sovereign state on whose territory it exists. In other words, such sites will be better protected by diffusing responsibility for their protection among many different governments.”

As Dr. Coffman makes clear, to fully understand the threat to American sovereignty posed by the UN designation of World Heritage Sites, one must first link this program to a series of other treaties and policies, and how they impact American sovereignty. Above all, one must understand that many in the federal government, such as the Obama Department of Interior, see such programs as another tool to build massive federal land-control programs.

There is strong evidence of close collaboration between the U.S. Park Service and the UNESCO World Heritage Site Committee. There is also strong evidence that the designation of UN World Heritage Sites goes hand in hand with the administration’s Sustainable Development program. That program is nothing less than a massive federal zoning program that dictates property development on the local level, in the name of protecting the environment. The goal of Sustainable Development is to lock up vast areas of American land, and shield it from private use.

The designation of United Nations’ World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves can and does result in the centralization of policy-making authority at the federal level, particularly by the executive branch. Once a UN designation is made and accepted by the federal government, there is literally no opportunity for private American landowners to dispute it or undo the designation.

Private property rights literally disappear, not only in the officially designated area, but worse, in buffer zones OUTSIDE the designated area. Not only has the federal government been using these treaties and agreements to limit access to, and use of, these lands to all Americans, but they also have used the UN designations to limit use of private property OUTSIDE the boundaries of the site.

That is exactly what happened outside of Yellowstone National Park (a World Heritage Site) when UNESCO delegates were called in by the Park Service in an attempt to stop the development of a gold mine — located OUTSIDE the park. The UNESCO delegates declared Yellowstone to be the first “endangered” World Heritage Site and called for a protective buffer zone of 150 MILES IN DIAMETER AROUND THE ENTIRE PARK. Such a buffer zone would stop development and access to millions of acres of private property. Such is the true purpose of the World Heritage Sites.

Moreover, in becoming party to these international land-use designations through Executive Branch action, the United States is indirectly agreeing to terms of international treaties, such as the Biodiversity Treaty — a UN treaty that has never been ratified by the U.S. Senate.

Nevertheless, in 1994, the U.S. State Department published the “Strategic Plan for the U.S. Biosphere Reserve Program.” Taken straight from the unratified Biodiversity Treaty, the State Department program is to “create a national network of biosphere reserves that represents the biogeographical diversity of the United States and fulfills the internationally established roles and functions of biosphere reserves.”

A chief tactic used by the UN and the federal government when designating a biosphere reserve or a



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World Heritage Site is to rarely involve or consult with the public and local governments. In fact, UNESCO policy actually discourages an open nomination for World Heritage Sites. The “Operational Guidelines for the Implementations of the World Heritage Convention” state:

In all cases, as to maintain the objectivity of the evaluation process and to avoid possible embarrassment to those concerned, State (national) parties should refrain from giving undue publicity to the fact that a property has been nominated inscription pending the final decision of the Committee of the nomination in question. Participation of the local people in the nomination process is essential to make them feel a shared responsibility with the State party in the maintenance of the site, but should not prejudice future decision-making by the committee.

In other words, the nominating committee is to hide the fact that a massive land grab is about to take place. Then, at the appropriate moment, the committee is to involve some local yokels to make them think they have something to say about the grab, then send them away, so that the committee can move ahead, unhindered. They aren't to worry about the fact that private landowners have just lost control of their property.

This is not the way the U.S. Constitution says things should be done. This is how despots at the United Nations run things. The federal government is allowing them to do it for the sake of more Federal power.

By allowing these international land use designations, the United States promises to protect the sites and REGULATE surrounding lands if necessary to protect the UN-designated area. Honoring these agreements forces the federal government to PROHIBIT or limit some uses of private lands outside the international designated area UNLESS OUR COUNTRY WANTS TO BREAK A PLEDGE TO OTHER NATIONS.

In a nutshell, here is the real game being played: Through such policies, the federal government is binding our nation to international treaties and agreements that stipulate that the United States will manage these lands in a prescribed manner in order to achieve certain international goals and objectives. In other words, we have agreed to limit our right of sovereignty over these lands.

These are the reasons why it's clear that World Heritage Sites are an infringement of United States sovereignty. You won't find the smoking gun by reading the treaties. It can only be found in understanding the “intent” and the “implementation” of the policies.

Texas, one of the great freedom-loving states in the Union, would do well to reconsider its naïve and misplaced efforts to sentence the Alamo to the UN's web of control. The state may just find that it is once again out-gunned at the Alamo — this time by the UN.

*Editor's note: No one knows how many defenders were killed at the Alamo in Texas. Some sources put the number of defenders killed above 250.*



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