

# The New York Times

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## New York's Hot Property

It's easy for New Yorkers to be irritated with the United Nations, and not just because of geopolitics. They see high-ranking diplomats who live in the city's fanciest neighborhoods dine out on expense accounts and most annoying of all park anywhere without worrying about rules or tickets.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in a war with diplomatic parking ticket scofflaws, knows he is on politically safe ground when he declares, that he "wouldn't mind" if the United Nations left New York City.

But no matter how New Yorkers feel about the United Nations, they should be aware that it is a vital element in the city's economy.

About 16,000 people (with combined salaries of \$850 million annually) are employed locally by the UN Secretariat, specialized agencies, consulates and foreign missions. The United Nations and its related organizations put more people to work in this city - people who spend some of their salaries here - than do private employers such as Con Edison and Citicorp. At the Secretariat itself, most of these employees are Americans.

What is more, the stream of UN conferences produces \$27 million in visitor spending each year. And even if UN headquarters doesn't draw as many visitors as the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the Broadway theaters, some 420,000 people visited the complex last year.

The mayor has suggested that the sprawling UN site along the East River might be better used for other purposes - housing or office buildings, for example. But the complex has already transformed the area around it.

More than 50 years ago, when New York won the right to serve as UN headquarters, a revitalization began on a decaying portion of the East River waterfront in Turtle Bay. Foreign consulates, missions and international agencies wanted to be close to the site, and today roughly 30,000 people work in the office buildings on First and Second Avenues from 40th to 48th Streets. Many more - restaurant employees, clerical and delivery staffs and maintenance workers - support the UN agencies and missions.

Besides, in a city that has failed to make intelligent use of its waterfront, does anyone believe that the mayor could improve on the United Nations' spectacular blend of offices, open space and waterfront promenade?

Even if the United Nations abandoned New York, the land it occupies would revert to the federal government, not to the city. If the mayor thinks it's tough to negotiate with the United Nations, wait until he tries dealing with Newt Gingrich.

Now that New York, under Mr. Giuliani has become a safer place to live and work, it would seem that UN delegates want to be in our city. Surely the parking conflict can lend itself to a peaceful resolution.

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