

‘Astonished and appalled’: World Health officials shocked by US opposition to breast feeding resolution

A resolution to encourage breast-feeding was expected to be approved quickly and easily by the hundreds of government delegates who gathered this spring in Geneva for the United Nations-affiliated World Health Assembly.

Based on decades of research, the resolution says that mother’s milk is healthiest for children and countries should strive to limit the inaccurate or misleading marketing of breast milk substitutes.

Then the United States delegation, embracing the interests of infant formula manufacturers, upended the deliberations.

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When that failed, they turned to threats, according to diplomats and government officials who took part in the discussions. Ecuador, which had planned to introduce the measure, was the first to find itself in the cross hairs. The Americans were blunt: If Ecuador refused to drop the resolution, Washington would unleash punishing trade measures and withdraw crucial military aid. The Ecuadorean government quickly acquiesced.

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“We were astonished, appalled and also saddened,” said [policy director] Patti Rundall.

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“What happened was tantamount to blackmail, with the U.S. holding the world hostage and trying to overturn nearly 40 years of consensus on the best way to protect infant and young child health,” she said.

In the end, the Americans’ efforts were mostly unsuccessful. It was the Russians who ultimately stepped in to introduce the measure — and the Americans did not threaten them.

Read full, original post: [Opposition to Breast-Feeding Resolution by U.S. Stuns World Health Officials](#)