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United Nations Issues: U.S. Funding of U.N. Peacekeeping

The United States is the single largest financial contributor to U.N. peacekeeping activities. Congress authorizes and appropriates U.S. contributions, and it has an ongoing interest in ensuring such funding is used as efficiently and effectively as possible. The United States, as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, plays a key role in establishing, renewing, and funding U.N. peacekeeping operations. For 2019, the United Nations assessed the United States share of U.N. peacekeeping operation budgets at 27.89%; however, since 1994 Congress has capped the U.S. payment at 25% due to concerns that the current assessment is too high. For FY2019, total enacted U.S. funding for U.N. peacekeeping is $1.65 billion.

U.N. Peacekeeping Funding

The United Nations currently operates 13 U.N. peacekeeping missions worldwide, with about 100,000 military, police, and civilian personnel from more than 120 countries. The Security Council adopts a resolution to establish each operation and specifies how it will be funded. In most cases, it authorizes the U.N. General Assembly to create a separate assessed account for each operation to be supported by member states contributions.

The General Assembly adopts the scale of assessments for U.N. member contributions to peacekeeping operations every three years. The peacekeeping scale is based on a modification of the regular budget scale, with the five permanent council members assessed at a higher level than for the regular budget. For example, the United States is assessed at 22% of the regular budget; however, its current peacekeeping assessment is 27.89%. Other top contributors include China, Japan, and Germany (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Top Financial Contributors to U.N. Peacekeeping, 2019, by Assessment Rate

Country	Percent	Country	Percent
1. *United States*	27.89	6. *France*	5.61
2. *China*	15.22	7. Italy	3.31
3. Japan	8.56	8. *Russia*	3.05
4. Germany	6.09	9. Canada	2.73
5. *United Kingdom*	5.79	10. S. Korea	2.27
Rest of Membership, Total Percent: 19.48			

Source: U.N. document, A/73/350/Add.1, December 24, 2018.
Note: *Italics* represent permanent Security Council members.

U.N. members voluntarily provide the military and police personnel for each U.N. mission. Peacekeepers are paid by their own governments, which are reimbursed by the United Nations at a standard rate determined by the Assembly (about $1,428 per soldier per month).The U.N. peacekeeping financial year runs from July 1 to June 30; the Assembly usually adopts resolutions to finance peacekeeping missions in late June. The total approved budget for the current peacekeeping year is $6.51 billion. Operations with the highest annual budgets are UNMISS (South Sudan), at $1.18 billion; MINUSMA (Mali), at $1.13 billion; and MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), at $1.01 billion.

U.S. Policy

Background and Context: The Enacted U.S. Cap

In the early 1990s, the U.S. peacekeeping assessment was over 30%, which many Members of Congress found too high. In 1994, Congress set a 25% cap on funding for all fiscal years after 1995 (P.L. 103-236). Over the years, the gap between the actual U.S. assessment and the cap led to funding shortfalls. The State Department and Congress often covered these shortfalls by raising the cap for limited periods and allowing for the application of U.N. peacekeeping credits (excess U.N. funds from previous peacekeeping missions) to fund outstanding U.S. balances. For several years, these actions allowed the United States to pay its assessments to U.N. peacekeeping missions in full. However, since FY2017 Congress has declined to raise the cap, and in mid-2017, the Trump Administration allowed for the application of peacekeeping credits up to, but not beyond, the 25% cap—leading to the accumulation of additional U.S. arrears.

Key Accounts and Recent Funding Levels

U.S. assessed contributions to U.N. peacekeeping operations are provided primarily through the *Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities* (CIPA) account, which is funded through annual State Department-Foreign Operations (SFOPS) appropriations acts. CIPA funds 12 of the 13 U.N. peacekeeping operations, as well as the U.N. criminal tribunals and mission monitoring and evaluation activities. The *Peacekeeping Operations* (PKO) account, which funds most non-U.N. peacekeeping and regional stability operations, provides assessed contributions to the U.N. Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). In addition to CIPA and PKO, the *Contributions to International Organizations* (CIO) account funds two observer missions, UNTSO (Israel and the Palestinians) and UNMOGIP (India and Pakistan), which are funded through U.S. contributions to the regular budget.

For FY2020, the President requested $1.13 billion for U.N. peacekeeping through the CIPA account, a 27% decrease from the enacted FY2019 CIPA level of $1.55 billion (**Table 2**). In its request, the Administration highlighted its "commitment to seek reduced costs by reevaluating mandates, design and implementation" of peacekeeping missions and sharing the funding burden "more fairly" with other U.N. members.

U.S. peacekeeping funding may fluctuate year-to-year depending on a number of factors, including discrepancies between the aforementioned peacekeeping assessment and

the enacted U.S. cap, changes to the scale of assessments, timing of U.N. billing processes, application of peacekeeping credits, and changes to individual operations.

Table 2. U.S. Contributions: CIPA and PKO accounts
(in thousands of U.S. dollars)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20 Req.
CIPA	1,907,564	1,382,080	1,551,000	1,136,000
PKO-UNSOS	165,266	101,070	101,074	— [a]
Total	2,072,830	1,483,150	1,652,074	1,136,906

Source: Annual SFOPS appropriations bills, State Department congressional budget justifications and notifications.

Notes: CIPA funding levels are enacted; UNSOS funding levels are based on actual funding levels. The executive branch generally requests UNSOS funding through CIPA; however, Congress usually funds UNSOS through PKO.

a. The FY2020 CIPA request includes $75.9 million for UNSOS.

Selected Policy Issues

Funding and Growth of U.N. Peacekeeping

Associated with debates over the level and extent of peacekeeping funding is the broader issue of the changing nature of U.N. peacekeeping. The concept of peacekeeping has evolved since the first mission was established in 1948. "Traditional" peacekeeping involves implementing cease-fire or peace agreements; however, in recent years, the Security Council has increasingly authorized operations in complex and insecure environments where there is little peace to keep and no clear resolution or outcome. Peacekeepers may be required to protect civilians, disarm violent groups, monitor human rights violations, or assist in delivering humanitarian aid. Such activities can place additional financial demands on U.N. members. Some experts argue that current peacekeeping funding levels cannot effectively support the some of the broad mandates authorized by the Security Council.

The United States and Peacekeeping Arrears

In the mid-1990s, the United States accumulated significant arrears to U.N. peacekeeping operations accounts and the U.N. regular budget. Many U.S. policymakers were concerned that the United States could lose its vote in the Assembly unless it made substantial payments on its outstanding dues. In 1999, Congress and the Administration negotiated what is known as the "Helms-Biden Agreement," which established conditions under which some U.S. arrears, including peacekeeping arrears, were paid. Since the enactment of Helms-Biden, some U.S. arrears remain. The State Department reports that as of August 2019, U.S. arrears accumulated prior to 2001 for both open and closed peacekeeping operations total about $328 million. (Most of these are from the gap between the 25% U.S. cap and the U.N. assessment pre-2001, while others are the result of congressional policy holds. The State Department has no plans to repay these arrears.) In addition, the United States accumulated a combined $521 million in cap-related arrears from the CIO and PKO accounts in FY2017 and FY2018. For FY2019, the department estimates that cap-related arrears will total $204.6 million. Some U.S. policymakers disagree about the status of peacekeeping arrears and argue that they should be paid, while others do not recognize them as U.S. arrears and claim the United States is under no obligation to pay them. Some have also raised concerns about the impact of arrears on the effectiveness of U.N. peacekeeping operations.

Sexual Abuse & Exploitation by U.N. Peacekeepers

Congress has sought to link U.S. peacekeeping funding to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by U.N. peacekeepers and other personnel. Since FY2008, annual SFOPS acts have prohibited the obligation of U.N. peacekeeping funds unless the Secretary of State certifies that the United Nations is implementing effective policies and procedures to prevent U.N. employees and peacekeeping troops from human trafficking or acts of illegal exploitation or other violations of human rights. Since FY2017, SFOPS bills have also prohibited assistance to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if there is credible information that such unit has engaged in SEA until the Secretary certifies the government of the country is taking steps to hold the unit accountable. In addition, the Department of State Authorities Act, FY2017 (P.L. 114-323), requires the Department to report to Congress on U.N. efforts to hold perpetrators accountable for SEA prior to renewing or establishing a mission.

U.N. Peacekeeping Financial Situation

Some experts and observers have expressed concern regarding the financial status of U.N. peacekeeping operations. In a March 2019 report to the General Assembly, U.N. Secretary-General (SG) António Guterres noted an increase in the number of peacekeeping missions that are frequently cash constrained. Causes include member state payment patterns and arrears, and "structural weaknesses" in peacekeeping budget methodologies, including inefficient payment schedules and borrowing and funding restrictions. According to the SG, these issues have led to cash shortages, delays in reimbursements to some troop contributing countries, and increased risks to "not only the functioning of its [U.N.] peacekeeping operations but also the people who serve in difficult environments" (see U.N. document A/73/809). To help address these issues, SG Guterres proposed several reforms that have been adopted or are under consideration by U.N. member states. For example, in July 2019 the Assembly approved, for a trial period, the management of cash balances of all active peacekeeping operations in pool (while maintaining the balances in separate funds for each mission), and requested the SG to issue assessment letters for the full budget period approved by the Assembly (see General Assembly resolution 73/307). The United States has generally supported these efforts, stating that it "continue[s] to support overall improvements to the [peacekeeping] budget methodology."

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