



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

The United States is the single largest financial contributor to U.N. peacekeeping activities, contributing 28.47% of total funding (about \$2.8 billion in FY2016). Congress authorizes and appropriates U.S. contributions, and has demonstrated 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 the establishment, renewal, and funding of U.N. peacekeeping missions.

## U.N. Peacekeeping Funding

**Operations and budget.** The United Nations currently operates 16 U.N. peacekeeping missions worldwide, with about 120,000 military, police, and civilian personnel from more than 120 contributing countries. The Security Council adopts a resolution to establish each operation and specifies how it will be funded. In most cases, the Council authorizes the U.N. General Assembly to create a separate assessed account for each operation to be supported by member states contributions.

**Table 1. Top Financial Contributors to U.N. Peacekeeping, 2017**

Country	Percent	Country	Percent
1. <i>United States</i>	28.47	6. <i>United Kingdom</i>	5.77
2. <i>China</i>	10.25	7. <i>Russia</i>	3.99
3. <i>Japan</i>	9.68	8. <i>Italy</i>	3.75
4. <i>Germany</i>	6.39	9. <i>Canada</i>	2.92
5. <i>France</i>	6.28	10. <i>Spain</i>	2.44

**Source:** U.N. document, A/70/331/Add.1, December 28, 2015.

**Note:** *Italics* represent permanent Security Council members.

U.N. members voluntarily provide the military and police personnel for each mission. Peacekeepers are paid by their own governments, which are reimbursed by the United Nations at a standard rate determined by the Assembly (about \$1,332 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 accumulated approved budget for U.N. peacekeeping operations for 2016-2017 is about \$7.87 billion. Operations with the highest annual budgets are MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo) at \$1.23 billion, UNAMID (Darfur, Sudan) at \$1.04 billion, and UNMISS (South Sudan) at \$1.08 billion.

**Scale of assessments.** The General Assembly adopts the scale of assessments for U.N. member contributions to peacekeeping operations every three years. The scale is based on a modification of the U.N. regular budget scale,

with the five permanent Security Council members assessed at a higher level than for the regular budget. The United States is assessed at 22% of the U.N. regular budget; however, its current peacekeeping assessment is 28.47%. Other top contributors include China, Japan, Germany, and France (see **Table 1**).

## U.S. Contributions

**U.S. Assessment Level and “Cap.”** U.S. policymakers have long debated the U.S. assessment level for U.N. peacekeeping operations. In the early 1990s, the U.S. rate of assessment was over 30%—a level that many policymakers found to be too high. Accordingly, in 1995 Congress set a limit, or “cap,” of 25% for the payment of U.S. assessed contributions to U.N. peacekeeping operations. The 25% cap remains U.S. law; from calendar years 2001 to 2012, Congress included provisions in annual State/Foreign Operations appropriations at the full U.N. peacekeeping assessment rate for each of those years. Since FY2012, Congress authorized payment with appropriated funds at the calendar year 2012 U.N. assessment rate (27.14%), even though the assessed rate increased in calendar years 2013 through 2016.

Opponents of the cap contend that the United States is obligated under the U.N. Charter to pay its dues, and that failing to do so could impact the effectiveness of U.N. peacekeeping operations and possibly limit the United States’ influence within the U.N. system. On the other hand, supporters maintain that other nations can and should pay more for U.N. peacekeeping operations and the cap might play a role in preventing the General Assembly from significantly increasing U.N. peacekeeping budgets.

**Key accounts and recent funding levels.** U.S. assessed contributions to U.N. peacekeeping operations are provided through three accounts funded in annual State Department/Foreign Operations appropriations acts.

- The *Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities* (CIPA) account is the primary funding mechanism for U.N. peacekeeping assessed expenses, currently providing contributions to 14 peacekeeping operations and two international criminal tribunals.
- The *Peacekeeping Operations* (PKO) account, which funds most non-U.N. multilateral peacekeeping and regional stability operations, provides authority and funds to pay the assessed expenses for the U.N. Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS).
- The *Contributions to International Organizations* (CIO) account funds two observer missions, UNTSO (Israel

and the Palestinians) and UNMOGIP (India and Pakistan), that are paid through the U.N. regular budget.

In FY2016, total U.S. funding through CIPA and PKO was approximately \$2.8 billion, compared with \$2.27 billion in FY2015. These amounts do not include the application of U.N. peacekeeping credits (see **text box**.)

**Table 2. U.S. Contributions: CIPA and PKO accounts**

\$ thousands of U.S. dollars

	FY2015 actual	FY2016 actual	FY2017 request
<b>CIPA</b>	2,118,791	2,657,295	2,394,930
<i>of which OCO</i>	0	1,456,664	1,588,000
<b>PKO/OCO (UNSOS)</b>	156,514	135,000	<sup>a</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	2,275,305	2,792,295	2,394,930

**Source:** Department of State, January 2017.

- a. The Administration generally requests funds for UNSOS through the CIPA account; however, Congress usually authorizes and appropriations such funds through the PKO account.

CIPA requests and actual funding levels fluctuate from year to year depending on a number of factors, including discrepancies between the aforementioned U.N. peacekeeping assessment and the enacted U.S. cap, changes to the peacekeeping scale of assessments, timing of U.N. billing processes, application of peacekeeping credits, and changes in individual peacekeeping operations.

#### Role of U.N. Peacekeeping Credits in U.S. Funding

Assessments for U.N. peacekeeping missions are based on the projected budget for each mission, with “credits” made available to member states for any amounts remaining after the United Nations reconciles budgets at the end of each June, and after addressing any outstanding unpaid member state balances. For the past several U.S. fiscal years, the United Nations has applied peacekeeping credits to the United States’ assessed peacekeeping contributions, which are funded primarily through the CIPA account. In part because of the application of these credits, the United States has been able to fully fund its U.N. peacekeeping obligations and cover the gap between the U.N. assessments (28.47%) and enacted U.S. cap (27.14%). For calendar year 2016, the State Department reports that approximately \$2.6 million remains unpaid due to the enacted cap; this amount became U.S. arrears on January 1, 2017.

Since FY2012, many accounts, including CIPA and PKO, have been supplemented by Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO)-designated funding, which has been used by Congress in international affairs appropriations to identify extraordinary and temporary costs that should not be considered part of an agency’s base budget and do not count toward annual budget caps. About 57% (\$1.6 billion) of total FY2016 peacekeeping funding (\$2.8 billion) is OCO-designated funding.

## Selected Issues

**Funding and growth of peacekeeping operations.** A key area of focus in many discussions about the level and extent of U.S. 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 increasingly broad mandates authorized by the 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 became 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 those related to U.N. peacekeeping, were paid. Since the enactment of Helms-Biden, some U.S. arrears remain. The State Department reports that as of January 2017, U.S. arrears for both open (ongoing) and closed (ended) peacekeeping operations total about \$342 million. Most of these result from the gap between the 25% U.S. cap and the U.N. assessment between October 1, 1995, and September 30, 2001. Others amounts are the result of congressional policy holds. (The Obama Administration did not seek funding to pay the prior year arrears.) Some U.S. policymakers disagree about the status of these arrears and argue that they should be addressed, while others do not recognize them as U.S. arrears and claim the United States is under no obligation to pay them.

**Sexual exploitation and abuse.** Congress has sought to link U.S. peacekeeping funding to sexual exploitation and abuse by U.N. peacekeepers and other personnel. The FY2016 State/Foreign Operations appropriations bill (P.L. 114-113) required that no funds appropriated may be obligated 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, sexual exploitation of trafficking victims, or other violations of human rights. (Former Secretary of State Kerry provided the certification and no funds were withheld.) The Department of State Authorities Act, FY2017 (P.L. 114-323), also requires the State Department to report to Congress on U.N. efforts to hold perpetrators accountable for sexual abuse prior to a vote renewing or establishing a peacekeeping mission. More broadly, some Members have proposed withholding bilateral assistance from countries that fail to hold their peacekeepers accountable for sexual exploitation and abuse.

**Luisa Blanchfield**, Specialist in International Relations

IF10597

## Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.