

Time for a New Helms–Biden Agreement to Reform the U.N.

Brett D. Schaefer

KEY TAKEAWAYS

History shows that financial leverage, including conditioning payment of U.S. arrears, can help the U.S. secure reforms in international organizations.

The Biden Administration wishes to unconditionally pay U.S. arrears to U.N. peacekeeping. This strategy failed to advance reform in other U.N. bodies.

The U.S. should adopt a new Helms–Biden agreement making arrears payment contingent on a maximum peacekeeping assessment of 25 percent and other reforms.

The Biden Administration entered office convinced that American influence in international organizations declined sharply under the previous Administration and that restoring U.S. credibility and influence required a repudiation of past policies, reengagement, and restoration of U.S. funding. This is both a mischaracterization of the previous Administration’s policy and, as proven over the past year, a misdiagnosis of the problem. The Trump Administration remained active and effective in dozens of international organizations over its entire tenure, focusing its threats and applying leverage on a few situations where U.S. interests were at stake and they believed could be advanced through pressure. While these efforts were not always successful, the United States under Trump was able to secure desired reforms in several instances and reengaged in good faith.¹

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Nonetheless, in the early days of the Administration, President Biden reversed decisions to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC). This reengagement and renewal of funding was done without conditions but failed to reap dividends in increased U.S. influence. To the contrary, the WHO has resisted efforts to thoroughly investigate the origins of COVID-19, condemn China for its lack of cooperation, and is on the cusp of adopting a financing and reform plan opposed by the United States. Meanwhile, an unreformed HRC continues its anti-Israel bias unabated.

The Biden Administration, with eager assistance from the majority in Congress, is poised to double down on this failed policy by unconditionally paying U.S. arrears to the U.N. peacekeeping budget. History shows that financial leverage can help the U.S. secure reforms. President Biden and Congress should not squander the leverage provided by U.S. arrears but, instead, adopt a new Helms–Biden agreement making payment of arrears contingent on a maximum peacekeeping assessment of 25 percent and other reforms.

Vast Discrepancies in Peacekeeping Assessments

The United Nations Charter does not specify a method for paying for the expenses of the organization, even though the United States was concerned about shouldering an excessive portion of the funding even in the early negotiations to establish the U.N.² This ambiguity was a deliberate decision to facilitate drafting of the U.N. Charter but has resulted in numerous budgetary clashes since 1945.

Early on, the U.N. member states agreed to apportion the expenses of the U.N. “broadly according to capacity to pay.”³ This means that wealthier nations, based principally on per capita income, pay larger shares of the budget than poorer nations do. However, as evidenced by their actions in establishing a minimum assessment of 0.04 percent in 1946, they did not believe that membership should be costless or insignificant, even though the original member states included extremely poor countries, such as Haiti.⁴

The United States has been the U.N.’s largest financial supporter ever since the organization’s founding and was assessed 39.89 percent in the first scale adopted in 1946.⁵ However, even in 1946, the United States strongly objected to paying more than 25 percent of the expenses of the U.N. and sought consistently in subsequent decades to reduce the U.S. assessment further.⁶ The objection was based on two concerns: (1) that member states not unduly minimize their contributions and contribute meaningfully to the U.N. and (2) that any one member state not have excessive influence over the organization through its financial contributions.

Both concerns are relevant to the current scale of assessments for U.N. peacekeeping.⁷ Under the current scale methodology, adopted in 2001, the peacekeeping assessment uses the regular budget as its starting point and divides the U.N. member states into a number of levels based on (1) permanent membership on the Security Council and (2) their per capita gross national income. Permanent members of the Security Council, placed in “Level A,” are assessed at a higher rate than their regular budget assessments. This surcharge, called a “premium,” is the total amount of the peacekeeping discounts awarded to other member states in Levels C through J and is distributed on a pro rata basis among the five permanent members. Aside from a few exceptions, the countries in “Level B,” which have a per capita gross national income higher than twice the average for all U.N. member states, receive no discount to their assessment.

Under this formula, the vast majority of U.N. member states receive some sort of discount on their peacekeeping assessment—in fact, approximately two-thirds of the U.N. membership receive discounts of 80 percent or more.

As shown in the table, the United States is the highest-assessed country and is charged 22 percent of the U.N. regular budget and 26.9493 percent of the peacekeeping budget in 2022. In dollar terms, this equates to \$687 million for the U.N. regular budget and \$1.719 billion for the current U.N. peacekeeping budget.

Some member states are assessed shockingly low amounts even as they enjoy the full privileges of U.N. membership. As illustrated in the table, for the regular budget, the United States is assessed more than 178 other U.N. member states *combined* and 22,000 times more than the 29 countries assessed the minimum level of 0.001 percent. For the peacekeeping budget, the United States is assessed more than 186 countries *combined* and over 269,000 times more than the 17 countries assessed the minimum level of 0.0001 percent. When both budgets are taken as a whole, the United States is assessed more than the 184 least-assessed countries *combined*. The difference is underscored when presented in dollar terms:

- The 29 countries charged the minimum assessment of 0.001 percent for the U.N. regular budget are charged \$31,217.
- The 17 countries charged the minimum peacekeeping assessment of 0.0001 percent in 2022 are each assessed \$6,379.

In other words, the least-assessed countries are charged less than \$38,000 each in 2022 for the U.N. regular budget and peacekeeping budget.

As observed by a former president and CEO of the United Nations Association of the USA, “Surely it should not cost a nation less to belong to the UN than an individual to go to college or to buy a car.”⁸ Meanwhile, the U.S. assessment is over \$2.4 billion this year for the U.N. regular and peacekeeping budgets. This imbalance helps explain why the U.S. cares deeply about improving U.N. effectiveness and accountability of the U.N. while many other member states have little interest in those goals. When countries pay a pittance to the U.N. budget, it undermines their incentive to fulfill their oversight role and make sure that contributions are not squandered.

Yet the sheer number of member states being minimally charged lends them great power. Under U.N. rules, the budget can be adopted by two-thirds of the member states. The least-assessed 129 U.N. member states necessary to adopt the U.N. budget—even over the objections of the United States—are assessed less than 1 percent of the combined U.N. regular and peacekeeping budgets.

The primary check on abuse of this power has historically been fear that large contributors, particularly the United States, would not fund overly profligate spending. The United States has used withholding and the threat of withholding to good effect over the years to hold spending in check and leverage reforms to improve transparency and accountability.

The rapid increase in China’s U.N. assessments over the past two decades—increasing from less than 1 percent of the regular budget in the late 1990s to over 15 percent in 2022—has lent it increasing influence in the U.N. China now follows only the United States in its assessments for the U.N. regular and peacekeeping budgets—roughly double Japan’s assessments. However, while the United States has used its financial leverage to improve accountability and effectiveness of the U.N. and focus it on its founding principles, such as promoting human rights, China has increasingly applied its influence to undermining those principles by, for instance, seeking to reduce or eliminate human rights officials from participating in peacekeeping missions.⁹

As China’s contributions increase, so will its ability to advance priorities that are antithetical to the aims of the United States and counter to the principles of the U.N. Charter. Indeed, China’s assessment may exceed the U.S. assessment in the not-too-distant future. Thus, while past U.S. motivations for seeking a maximum peacekeeping assessment of 25 percent were primarily to save taxpayer dollars and encourage other member states to have more financial skin in the game, there is now the added motivation of limiting China’s future financial leverage.

Successes of Financial Leverage

International organizations are notoriously hard to reform because decisions generally require support from a majority or more of the member states, whose interests and priorities vary greatly. Voluntarily funded international organizations tend to be most responsive to U.S. concerns, because they know that funding relies on responding to member state concerns. Organizations funded through assessed contributions tend to be less responsive, because they simply charge governments a set amount that member states generally feel obligated to pay.

Nonetheless, the United States has often limited or conditioned U.S. funding to the U.N. to protest actions or activities deemed counter to U.S. interests or to encourage reforms. An example of the first use, first adopted in the 1980s, is the policy of withholding the U.S. share funding to the U.N. regular budget for activities related to the Palestinians.¹⁰ Examples of the second include withholding funding in the 1990s until the U.N. created the Office of Internal Oversight Services (an inspector general equivalent) and ongoing withholding to encourage “Transparency and Accountability” and whistleblower protections.¹¹

Helms–Biden

One of the most successful examples of using financial leverage to secure reforms was the Helms–Biden agreement. Between 1988 and 1994, over 20 new U.N. peacekeeping operations were established. Unlike traditional peacekeeping operations that generally involved deployments into low-risk situations, the new operations were frequently dispatched into conflict situations that required significantly more resources and—as demonstrated in Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia—often exceeded the capabilities of the U.N. and resulted in tragedy. These peacekeeping debacles, combined with questions about the ability of long-standing peacekeeping operations in places like Cyprus and Lebanon to resolve disputes and, more generally, mismanagement and lack of transparency in the broader U.N. contributed to congressional skepticism.¹²

This skepticism was intensified by increasing costs. As the number and scope of U.N. peacekeeping operations expanded, expenditures also rose sharply from \$384 million in 1988 to over \$4 billion in 1994,¹³ and U.S. contributions rose proportionally. The steep increase highlighted the fact that the U.N. charged the United States over 30 percent of the costs of U.N. peacekeeping operations—far more than any other member state.

President Bill Clinton noted before the U.N. General Assembly in 1993 that “the UN’s operations must not only be adequately funded, but also fairly funded.... [O]ur rates should be reduced to reflect the rise of other nations that can now bear more of the financial burden.”¹⁴ When the U.S. requests for a lower assessment were rebuffed, Congress passed legislation capping the U.S. contribution at 25 percent, and President Clinton signed it into law in 1994.¹⁵

The difference between the U.N. assessment and the cap led to a sharp increase in U.S. arrears, placing significant financial stress on the U.N. and raising the possibility that the U.S. might lose its vote in the General Assembly.¹⁶ Instead of simply paying the arrears, Congress passed the Helms–Biden United Nations Reform Act of 1999, which made payment of \$819 million in arrears and forgiveness of \$107 million owed by the U.N. to the United States contingent on action by the Administration, the U.N., and several specialized agencies:¹⁷

- That the United Nations establish a “contested arrearages account” for arrearages incurred before the enactment of the legislation with respect to arrears not paid by the act.
- That the “assessed share of the budget for each assessed United Nations peacekeeping operation does not exceed 25 percent for any single United Nations member.”
- That the assessed share of the U.N. regular budget and the assessed contributions for designated specialized agencies—the International Labor Organization (ILO), the WHO, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)—did not exceed 22 percent for any single U.N. member state.
- That the ILO, WHO, and FAO have zero nominal growth their budgets for 2000–2001.
- That the ILO, WHO, and FAO establish and empower independent offices to receive complaints and “conduct and supervise objective audits, inspections, and investigations relating to the programs and operations of the organization.” In addition, the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the audit offices in the specialized agencies were to be made available to the member states.

- That the U.N. and the designated specialized agencies adopt updated personnel evaluation practices, a code of conduct, and procedures to evaluate and report on the results of programs.

To secure payment of U.S. arrears, the U.N. and the designated specialized agencies complied with the demands laid out in the Helms–Biden Act, including adopting a maximum regular budget of 22 percent, creating oversight bodies, and adopting other personnel and programmatic reforms. However, two reforms were not fully adopted: the contested arrears account and the maximum peacekeeping assessment.

The contested arrears account was never created. As a result, the U.N. still counts over \$250 million in peacekeeping dues dating to the 1990s as arrears, even though the U.S. government does not recognize those arrears. However, the issue remains outstanding as, even when the United States paid arrears accumulated after Helms–Biden and in more recent years, the United States did not pay the contested arrears no matter which party controlled the White House or Congress.

The matter of the maximum peacekeeping assessment is more complicated. The U.N. never adopted a maximum peacekeeping assessment of 25 percent. Instead, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke worked with other member states to create a new formula that was projected to gradually lower the U.S. peacekeeping assessment to 25 percent as required under U.S. law and as a condition for payment of U.S. arrears under the Helms–Biden agreement.¹⁸ In good faith, the United States paid the arrears that had accrued as specified under Helms–Biden in expectation that the U.S. peacekeeping assessment would fall to 25 percent.

Hope Over Reality

Although the U.S. peacekeeping assessment did fall below 26 percent in 2008 and 2009, it has never fallen to 25 percent.¹⁹ Starting in 2010, the U.S. peacekeeping assessment began to rise again, peaking at 28.57 percent in 2016.²⁰ Currently, as illustrated in the table, the U.S. peacekeeping assessment is 26.94 percent.

After arrears were paid as specified under Helms–Biden, Congress periodically overrode the U.S. law capping U.S. payments at 25 percent to avoid accumulating new arrears. This compromise was broadly acceptable so long as the U.S. peacekeeping declined as Holbrooke predicted, which it did until 2010, albeit more slowly than projected. Congress did, however, maintain the U.S. peacekeeping cap at 25 percent both to underscore its desire to

lower U.S. peacekeeping assessments to that level and to encourage the U.N. to follow through by keeping the threat of arrears plausible.

Since 2017, the United States has chosen not to override the 25 percent cap on U.S. payments for U.N. peacekeeping. Ideally, this decision would have been accompanied by a concerted effort by the U.S. Administration and Congress to work with the U.N. Secretariat and other member states to modify the U.N. peacekeeping scale of assessment methodology to incorporate a maximum assessment of 25 percent. Sadly, Congress was largely disengaged and the Trump Administration's efforts at negotiation were haphazard.

As a result, the United States has accumulated approximately \$900 million in arrears to the U.N. with little to show but disgruntlement in Turtle Bay.

Unsurprisingly, Democrats in Congress and the Biden Administration have proposed paying U.S. peacekeeping arrears unconditionally. The State Department Congressional Budget Justification for fiscal year 2022 proposed paying cap-related peacekeeping arrears in two payments, starting with \$300 million in fiscal year 2022.²¹ The Senate Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act appropriates funds and authorizes payment for U.N. peacekeeping assessments and arrears above the 25 percent cap but not the full amount.²² The House of Representatives version appropriates funds and authorized payments for current assessments and retroactive payments above the 25 percent cap.²³

In addition, the House adopted an amendment to the "America COMPETES Act of 2022" that would eliminate the 25 percent cap on U.N. peacekeeping and instruct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to implement a number of specific peacekeeping reforms, including performance assessments, protecting human rights, increased accountability to prevent misconduct and abuse by peacekeepers, and modification to the "United Nations scales of assessments of the peacekeeping budget to diversify the funding base."²⁴ The reforms outlined in the amendment are useful and in the interests of the United States. Indeed, they underscore the fact that many of Congress's concerns in the 1990s remain in need of fixing.²⁵ The problem of the amendment is in the approach—eliminating the 25 percent cap preemptively removes the key incentive for other member states to support U.S. reform efforts.

This strategy is in line with recommendations from U.N. advocates who often seem more interested in ensuring U.S. payments than in ensuring that U.N. operations and activities are effective and worthy of U.S. taxpayer support. The existence of arrears, they argue, has strengthened China and weakened America in international organizations. Specifically, they argue that "if all U.N. peacekeeping arrears are paid off in two years, as the

administration recommended, and the arbitrary legislative cap on peacekeeping contributions is repealed by Congress, U.S. credibility would be largely restored in the global body.”²⁶

There is no evidence to support this claim. Firstly, the concern about China is convenient but of recent vintage. These same advocates²⁷ argued for full payment of U.S. peacekeeping assessments long before Chinese influence raised alarms. Secondly, while the United States has a long history of paying its assessments late, the current state of U.S. peacekeeping arrears is a relatively recent issue—accruing since 2017—yet America’s influence at the U.N. was not appreciably greater under President Obama when the United States was reasonably current on its peacekeeping payments. Indeed, when Congress sought U.N. reforms during the Obama Administration, it did not rely on the “goodwill” engendered by being current on peacekeeping assessments but felt compelled to use financial withholding as leverage.²⁸

The reality is that the U.N. and other international organizations are not kumbaya playgrounds. They are realpolitik venues where the varied and conflicting interests of the world’s governments are represented. Even when the interests of all nations would seemingly converge, such as responding to a global pandemic and investigating the origins of the disease, consensus action is often elusive. In these environments, unconditional concessions seldom yield gratitude or increased influence. Two recent examples illustrate the point.

One of the first actions of President Biden was, without condition, to reverse Trump’s decision to withdraw from the WHO and restore U.S. funding.²⁹ This did not revitalize U.S. influence. To the contrary, the United States failed to get the WHO to condemn China’s refusal to cooperate with a thorough, independent WHO investigation into the origins of COVID-19.³⁰ WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who abetted China’s obfuscation about COVID-19 at the outset of the disease, is running unopposed for a second term. Meanwhile, the United States has failed to rally allies in support of a new fund focused on pandemic preparedness and health emergencies and in opposition to a proposed increase in assessed contributions for the WHO.³¹

Likewise, Biden announced early on that the United States would reengage with the HRC and seek a seat in 2022.³² This decision was made despite acknowledging the flaws of the HRC, including anti-Israel bias and insufficient membership standards. Nonetheless, the Biden Administration did not condition reengagement on any commitments for reforms, arguing, “To address the Council’s deficiencies and ensure it lives up to its mandate, the United States must be at the table using the full weight of our diplomatic leadership.”³³ While the United States won the election to the HRC by

convincing Italy to withdraw—an action that will, ironically, undermine U.S. efforts to improve membership standards in the future—the United States has made no evident progress on reform.³⁴ Indeed, the anti-Israel bias of the HRC is undimmed as illustrated by the adoption of a new, permanent International Commission of Inquiry to investigate Israel.³⁵

A New Helms–Biden

Lessons are there to be learned. Paying peacekeeping arrears and overriding the 25 percent cap unconditionally will not result in reform or increased influence. Other countries will pocket these payments and pursue their interests. To better advance reform, Congress should link payments to specific, articulated reforms and instruct the Administration to report on a strategy and progress in achieving a maximum peacekeeping assessment of 25 percent in the upcoming scale of assessments for 2025–2027. Specifically, the United States should:

- **Authorize payment of arrears only if the U.N. adopts a maximum peacekeeping assessment of 25 percent and other reforms.** The United States has sought since the founding of the U.N. to limit the financial burden on American taxpayers and ensure that the costs of the organization are spread reasonably equitably among the member states. American taxpayers would have saved over \$2 billion over the past decade if the U.S. assessment had been 25 percent. In fact, based on the current budget and scale, the arrears would pay for themselves over the next decade if a 25 percent maximum peacekeeping assessment were adopted. The costs of the 25 percent maximum assessment would have to be redistributed among other member states.³⁶ Although difficult to convince other member states to assume this additional burden, it would benefit the U.N. by incentivizing them to be better stewards of the U.N. budget. Congress should require the U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. to develop a strategy to achieve a maximum peacekeeping assessment of 25 percent and brief Congress periodically on progress. In addition, Congress should require the U.N. to establish a contested arrears account for U.S. arrears dating to the 1990s that would not be included in calculations for Article 19 purposes.³⁷ Finally, Congress should require the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to reform peacekeeping, including performance assessments, increased accountability for misconduct, protecting human rights, and matching mandates to resources.

- **Resynchronize U.S. payments to the U.N. regular budget provided the U.N. maintains the 22 percent maximum regular budget assessment and adopts reforms.** In the 1980s, the United States realized a one-time budget savings by, in effect, skipping one payment to the U.N. regular budget. The result was that the United States no longer paid its regular budget assessment on January 1 but toward the end of the year. As the United States increasingly uses continuing resolutions, funding may not be available in the year it is due. Critics of the United States take advantage of this situation by painting the United States as a deadbeat even though everyone knows that the assessment will be paid in time. In fact, there is a general lack of appreciation for the extent of U.S. support for the United Nations system—some \$11.6 billion in 2020 according to the U.N., which was five times the amount provided by China.³⁸ Nonetheless, offering to pay its assessment at the beginning of the calendar year—in essence, doubling the appropriation for U.S. payments to the regular budget for one year—would not cost the United States additional funds in the long run but could incentivize the Secretariat and other nations to support long-standing U.S. reform objectives such as eliminating anti-Israel bias in the HRC,³⁹ strengthening whistleblower protections, and improving the U.N. system of administrative justice.⁴⁰

In the spirit of Helms–Biden, the above carrot-and-stick approach would use U.S. payment of peacekeeping arrears and resynchronization of regular budget payments—both highly desired by the Secretariat and other member states—to advance reform and accountability in the U.N. system. It would also save U.S. taxpayers money in the long run and, ideally, incentivize other governments to pay more attention to U.N. effectiveness, accountability, and performance by diversifying the funding base.

Worth noting, it would also hedge Chinese influence down the road. While the maximum assessments for peacekeeping and the regular budget currently impact only the United States, if China’s economy keeps growing, it will also be affected in the near future. China has very different priorities than the United States and like-minded nations and has demonstrated increased willingness to voice its priorities and press the U.N. to accommodate them. Maintaining the 22 percent maximum assessment for the U.N. regular budget and establishing 25 percent maximum assessment for peacekeeping will help limit Beijing’s future financial leverage.

Conclusion

Advocates for paying arrears unconditionally exploit legitimate concerns over China's increasing contributions and influence in the U.N. by arguing that U.S. arrears undermine American standing and create opportunities for China. There is some basis for this concern, but the logical result would be to eliminate a tool that has been instrumental in advancing reform in the U.N. and other international organizations. Worse, it would commit the United States to always fund and participate in international organizations no matter how despicable their actions or decisions for fear that the United States might cede the field to China.

International organizations and treaties are tools, not ends in themselves. The United States should seek to improve and repair international organizations using pressure, diplomacy, and incentives. Letting fear of China limit U.S. reform efforts does not serve American interests or the millions of people around the world who would benefit from more effective international organizations. History shows that U.S. financial leverage can be effective in advancing U.S. policy priorities if the United States has a specific objective in mind, links funding to that objective, and engages diplomatically with other nations to achieve those objectives. The United States should take this lesson to heart and not cast away leverage to no effect.

Brett D. Schaefer is the Jay Kingham Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs in the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom, of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy, at The Heritage Foundation.

APPENDIX TABLE 1

United Nations Scale of Assessments for 2022 (Page 1 of 2)

	REGULAR BUDGET		PEACEKEEPING BUDGET	
	Assessment (Percent)	Dollars	Assessment (Percent)	Dollars
Approved Budgets, Total		\$3,121,651,000		\$6,378,783,200
Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council				
China	15.254	\$476,176,644	18.6857	\$1,191,920,292
France	4.318	\$134,792,890	5.2894	\$337,399,359
Russian Federation	1.866	\$58,250,008	2.2858	\$145,806,226
United Kingdom	4.375	\$136,572,231	5.3592	\$341,851,749
United States of America	22.000	\$686,763,220	26.9493	\$1,719,037,421
Non-Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council				
Albania	0.008	\$249,732	0.0016	\$102,061
Brazil	2.013	\$62,838,835	0.4026	\$25,680,981
Gabon	0.013	\$405,815	0.0026	\$165,848
Ghana	0.024	\$749,196	0.0048	\$306,182
India	1.044	\$32,590,036	0.2088	\$13,318,899
Ireland	0.439	\$13,704,048	0.4390	\$28,002,858
Kenya	0.030	\$936,495	0.0060	\$382,727
Mexico	1.221	\$38,115,359	0.2442	\$15,576,989
Norway	0.679	\$21,196,010	0.6790	\$43,311,938
United Arab Emirates	0.635	\$19,822,484	0.5874	\$37,468,973
Total All Current Security Council Members	53.919	\$1,683,163,003	61.145	\$3,900,332,503
Other Highly Assessed Countries				
Australia	2.111	\$65,898,053	2.1110	\$134,656,113
Canada	2.628	\$82,036,988	2.6280	\$167,634,422
Germany	6.111	\$190,764,093	6.1110	\$389,807,441
Italy	3.189	\$99,549,450	3.1890	\$203,419,396
Japan	8.033	\$250,762,225	8.0330	\$512,407,654
Netherlands	1.377	\$42,985,134	1.3770	\$87,835,845
Republic of Korea	2.574	\$80,351,297	2.5740	\$164,189,880
Saudi Arabia	1.184	\$36,960,348	1.0952	\$69,860,434
Spain	2.134	\$66,616,032	2.1340	\$136,123,233
Switzerland	1.134	\$35,399,522	1.1340	\$72,335,401

APPENDIX TABLE 1

United Nations Scale of Assessments for 2022 (Page 2 of 2)

	REGULAR BUDGET		PEACEKEEPING BUDGET	
	Assessment (Percent)	Dollars	Assessment (Percent)	Dollars
Large Peacekeeping Troop Contributors				
Bangladesh	0.010	\$312,165	0.0010	\$63,788
Ethiopia	0.010	\$312,165	0.0010	\$63,788
Nepal	0.010	\$312,165	0.0010	\$63,788
Pakistan	0.114	\$3,558,682	0.0228	\$1,454,363
Rwanda	0.003	\$93,650	0.0003	\$19,136
Notable Groupings				
Lowest assessment (29 countries regular budget, 17 countries peacekeeping budget)	0.001	\$31,217	0.0001	\$6,379
129 least-assessed countries (regular budget)	1.713	\$53,473,882		
178 least-assessed countries (regular budget)	20.796	\$649,178,542		
186 least-assessed countries (peacekeeping budget)			26.3835	\$1,682,946,266
Geneva Group (18 countries)	66.294	\$2,069,467,314	71.9659	\$4,590,548,739
G-77 + China (133 countries)	27.270	\$851,274,228	23.2882	\$1,485,503,789
G-77 without China	12.016	\$375,097,584	4.6025	\$293,583,497
NAM (119 countries)	9.140	\$285,318,901	4.0092	\$255,738,176
OIC (56 countries)	5.836	\$182,179,552	2.9185	\$186,164,788

NOTES:

- The regular budget amount is the approved budget appropriations for 2022. The peacekeeping budget amount is the approved resources for July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.
- The Geneva Group is comprised of 18 countries that share a common view on administrative and budgetary matters. Members are Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the U.S., and the U.K. The U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Geneva confirms that there are 18 members but does not list them: U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations, Geneva Switzerland, “Integrated Mission Strategy,” March 10, 2021, <https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/RD8iC0RXzNCmL37DcDy3hp?domain=state.gov> (accessed February 28, 2022). A State Department source confirmed the members.
- The G-77 is comprised of 132 countries plus “Palestine.” China is sometimes included in the G-77, but not always. For a membership list, see The Group of 77, “The Member States of the Group of 77,” <https://www.g77.org/doc/members.html> (accessed February 28, 2022).
- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is comprised of 119 countries plus “Palestine.” There are 17 NAM observers and 10 NAM observer organizations. For a membership list, see Non-Aligned Movement Disarmament Base, “About NAM,” <http://cns.miis.edu/nam/index.php/site/about> (accessed February 28, 2022).
- The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is comprised of 56 countries plus “Palestine.” For a membership list, see Organization of Islamic Cooperation, “Members,” <https://www.oic-oci.org/states/?lan=en> (accessed February 28, 2022).

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Endnotes

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2. For a detailed history of this practice, see Brett D. Schaefer, "The Window of Opportunity to Overhaul the U.N. Scale of Assessments Is Closing," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2701, June 18, 2012, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/06/the-window-of-opportunity-to-overhaul-the-un-scale-of-assessments-is-closing>.
3. U.N. General Assembly, "Scale of Assessments for the Apportionment of the Expenses of the United Nations," A/RES/76/238, January 4, 2022, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/76/238> (accessed February 23, 2022).
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5. U.N. General Assembly, "Scale of Contributions to the Budgets of the United Nations for the Financial Years 1946 and 1947 and the Working Capital Fund," Resolution No. 69 (I), December 14, 1946, [https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/69\(I\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/69(I)) (accessed February 23, 2022).
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8. Edward C. Luck, *Mixed Messages: American Politics and International Organization, 1919-1999* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), p. 253.
9. Richard Gowan, "China's Pragmatic Approach to UN Peacekeeping," Brookings Institution, September 14, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/chinas-pragmatic-approach-to-un-peacekeeping/> (accessed February 23, 2022).
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11. *Ibid.*, pp. 16 and 35.
12. U.S. Government Printing Office, "The Future of U.S.-U.N. Relations: A Dialogue Between the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the U.N. Security Council," Senate Hearing 106-777, January 20-21, 2000, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-106shrg62154/html/CHRG-106shrg62154.htm> (accessed February 23, 2022).
13. Michael Renner, "Peacekeeping Expenditures in Current vs. Real Terms: 1947-2005," Global Policy Forum, https://archive.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/Z/pk_tables/currentreal.pdf (accessed February 23, 2022).
14. President Bill Clinton, remarks to the 48th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 27, 1993, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=47119> (accessed February 23, 2022).
15. Public Law 103-236.
16. Article 19 of the U.N. Charter states, "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member." United Nations, "Charter of the United Nations," <https://legal.un.org/repository/art19.shtml> (accessed February 23, 2022).
17. Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY2000, "Title IX—Arrears Payments and Reform," Public Law 106-113, November 19, 1999, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-106publ113/pdf/PLAW-106publ113.pdf> (accessed February 23, 2022). The Secretary of State had to certify that (1) the supremacy of the U.S. Constitution and U.S. law; (2) the U.N. had not sought to exercise sovereignty over the U.S.; (3) the U.N. had not developed or proposed efforts to apply fees or taxes that would apply to U.S. citizens; (4) the U.N. had not developed or pursued agreements wherein the U.N. could call upon the armed forces of member states; (5) the U.N. had not charged interest on U.S. arrears; (6) the U.N. and the specialized agencies had not exercised sovereignty over U.S. property, parks, or wildlife; and (7) the U.N. and the specialized agencies were not permitted to borrow from external sources.
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36. This could be accomplished in a number of ways, including limiting the size of the premium charged to the permanent members, applying a share of the premium to the non-permanent members of the Security Council, charging the permanent members a minimum peacekeeping assessment of 5 percent, eliminating the peacekeeping assessment discount for countries with a per capita gross national income above the global average, or simply reducing the extent of the discount across levels C to J. Important to note is the fact that, if China continues to grow, so will its assessment, which will lessen the impact of maximum peacekeeping assessment on other member states, because the U.S. peacekeeping assessment should decrease.
37. The U.N. General Assembly established a precedent for this when it accepted the recommendation of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations that "the question of applicability of Article 19 of the Charter will not be raised with regard to the United Nations Emergency Force and the United Nations Operation in the Congo." See U.N. Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations Document A/5916, August 31, 1965, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/846360?ln=en> (accessed March 1, 2022), and U.N. General Assembly, "Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peace-Keeping Operations in All Their Aspects," A/RES/2053(XX)A-B, December 15, 1965, [https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2053\(XX\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2053(XX)) (accessed March 1, 2022).

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