

Hearing on “United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa”

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Chair Bass, Ranking Member Smith, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to testify on United Nations peacekeeping in Africa. Your leadership on this issue is critical for the United States. I am a Managing Director at the Henry L. Stimson Center, a Washington-based nonpartisan international security think tank. From 2009-2017, I served as U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the International Organization Affairs Bureau, which included responsibility for policies on United Nations peace operations.

For this testimony, I am drawing on my 25 years working as a diplomat, researcher, and policymaker involved in improving United Nations peace operations, both from inside and outside of the U.S. government. I first visited peacekeeping missions in the mid-1990s, in Haiti and the Balkans, places where the United States supported deploying UN peacekeepers after U.S. military and political interventions. Over the last decade, I have visited UN peace operations in Africa, including in Mali, Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan, Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo multiple times. Many of these operations also deployed after military interventions (primarily by African and French forces), and all were supported by the United States.

Having travelled both as a researcher and as a U.S. diplomat with responsibility for these issues, I am keenly aware of the gap between the peacekeeping debates that happen in New York and in capitals, and the reality in the field for the thousands of civilian, police, and military personnel working to implement UN mandates. Understanding both worlds is the basis of good policy. I know members of this Committee are committed to bridging that gap, including through today’s discussion.

Today I offer observations on the role of United Nations operations in Africa, how they serve United States interests and values, the current momentum behind UN modernization and reform, and key issues that deserve the attention of this committee and Congress. I will also address how U.S. policies and funding positively influence missions and reforms, but highlight the negative impact of growing U.S. arrears for peacekeeping. Both issues deserve attention.

UN Peacekeeping in Africa

Overview. As this Committee knows, the core function of the UN Security Council is to address threats to international peace and security. Actions by the Security Council offer international credibility and legitimacy, as well as galvanize political and material resources. Peace operations, one of the Security Council's most visible and important tools, deploy to address conflicts and crises that pose a threat to international peace and security. The goals of peace operations are to increase stability, support political resolutions to conflicts, protect civilians, strengthen governance and the rule of law, and support human rights, among other objectives. These civilian-led operations tap a wide range of assets – including military and police contingents, engineers and medical hospitals, as well as civilian experts and diplomats – to operate in austere conditions with little infrastructure in fragile states. Missions are reliant on capacities provided by member states, which are reimbursed for their participation.

Today, roughly 100,000 uniformed and civilian personnel from more than 120 countries are deployed to United Nations-led peace operations.¹ Most UN peacekeepers serve in Africa, including in: Mali, the Central African Republic, Western Sahara, South Sudan, Sudan (Darfur), Abyei, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Security Council has increasingly given peacekeepers authorization under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to use force to carry out their mandates. The United States deploys diplomatic and military personnel worldwide, but few to UN missions (roughly 40 personnel).² UN missions are estimated as much less expensive than an equivalent United States-led operation.³

The United Nations also supports political operations in Somalia, Libya, and Guinea-Bissau; regional offices in Central Africa, the African Union, and West Africa/the Sahel; and special envoys for the Great Lakes, Sudan and South Sudan, and Western Sahara. These political and peacebuilding efforts aim to strengthen security and uphold peace agreements. UN expert teams monitor targeted sanctions regimes and counter-terrorism efforts in Somalia, Libya, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Many peacekeeping missions work alongside these political UN actors, as well as UN humanitarian and development agencies, to reinforce each other's work, share capacities, and coordinate activities. In South Sudan, the UN peacekeeping operation provides physical protection to roughly 180,000 civilians in their compounds, while humanitarians provide the

¹ Countries providing their uniformed personnel for peacekeeping missions are reimbursed at a standard rate of \$1,428 per soldier per month as of July 1, 2018. As of March 31, 2019, there are 88,477 uniformed personnel and 122 countries contributing uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping missions (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/data>).

² As of March 31, 2019, the United States is reported as contributing 40 personnel to UN peacekeeping missions. (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>).

³ In 2018, for example, the General Accounting Office (GAO) compared the UN mission in Central African Republic with a hypothetical U.S. operation, and estimated it would have cost twice as much for a comparable U.S. operation. They also found that while U.S. would have greater military capability, the UN brought greater international acceptance. *UN Peacekeeping: Cost Estimate for Hypothetical U.S. Operation Exceeds Actual Costs for Comparable UN Operation*, GAO-18-243; Feb 6, 2018. (<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-243>).

civilians with basic services such as food and education – a measure the mission took after conflict broke out in December 2013 to save lives.⁴

Why peacekeeping supports U.S. interests. During my service for the Department of State, I saw firsthand the U.S. government’s reliance on UN peacekeeping missions to support U.S. national and strategic interests, especially in Africa. The United States has long-standing policies to work with African nations to strengthen governance and security, promote trade and economic prosperity, prevent violent extremism and conflict, increase development, and address humanitarian crises and human rights abuses. Our bilateral skills and tools are immense; yet working with other nations and through regional and international organizations enables us to have greater impact.

That is where peacekeeping missions come in, and contribute substantially to U.S. national and strategic interests, especially in Africa. These missions promote regional stability and security, prevent the spread of violence and extremism, and contribute to atrocity prevention. Missions help democratic governance in a region of the world that represents some of the most promising potential for the future of democracy. They promote the establishment of rule of law, which allows more U.S. investors to invest in the region’s vast natural wealth and human capital. Finally, they respond to some of the world’s most devastating humanitarian crises and help to curb refugee flows, displacement, migration, and further conflict. Peacekeeping missions also robustly support core U.S. values. They protect civilians caught in crossfire or targeted in conflicts. Missions promote participatory governance and strong civic engagement. They protect human rights and promote accountability. They work toward preventing harm to children, preventing sexual violence, and achieving equal rights for all people.

Examples of Real Impact. From a U.S. government perspective, I saw peacekeeping deliver real and credible results in supporting stability, preventing wider conflict, and upholding U.S. interests and values. During the electoral crisis in Côte d’Ivoire in 2010-2011, for example, the country nearly turned to civil conflict. After the leading candidates for president disputed the election’s outcome in late 2010, the peacekeeping mission there played a key, urgent role in validating the election results. The UN mission then offered protection to both sides, despite threats from forces loyal to the prior president, and provided a steadying presence as the crisis was addressed by political pressure, backed by the United States and international community. By May 2011, that brave effort enabled the rightfully elected leader to be sworn in and for democracy to take root. Today, the peacekeepers have returned home and Côte d’Ivoire is secure, prospering with nine percent economic growth, and the president is in his second term.

In 2012, as separatist armed groups and violent extremists threatened Mali and the Sahel, the Malian government faced a coup from within its own military ranks, leaving the country in disarray. The U.S. and other countries supported French and African-led military interventions to prevent the state’s collapse and reverse the spread of violent extremist groups. Shortly thereafter, recognizing the longer-term political, security and humanitarian consequences, the United States supported a new

⁴ According to the UN Mission in South Sudan, UNMISS, 181,891 civilians were seeking safety in six Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites located on UNMISS bases as of March 14, 2019. (https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/2019-03-19_-_poc_population_update.pdf).

UN peacekeeping mission to help stem further instability, bring armed groups to the negotiating table, and implement the peace agreement. Despite unbelievable logistical challenges and direct threats to UN personnel, the UN organized and deployed a new mission that garnered forces from Africa, Europe, and Asia. That mission, MINUSMA, operates today, continuing to navigate tough political and security challenges.

UN peacekeepers have demonstrated flexibility to meet new challenges in dynamic post-conflict environments. They have offered protection to civilians caught in violence and support to those trying to bring peace, even when they originally deployed to support other aims such as promoting governance and the rule of law. The United Nations assisted as South Sudan established itself as a newly independent nation in 2011, for example, providing peacekeepers to help support the young country. That role shifted dramatically after civil war broke out in December 2013, and the UN mission opened up its compounds to protect thousands of fleeing civilians, often coming under attack for doing so, including from government forces. Today, the mission, UNMISS, continues to provide vital aid and shelter to the displaced and war-affected population while supporting efforts to bring about a lasting political resolution to the conflict.

There are many other examples. When sectarian violence in the Central African Republic (CAR) threatened to escalate into ethnic cleansing and mass atrocities in 2013, the UN again stepped in to set up a new mission to halt such extreme violence, alongside African and French forces, backed by the United States. In a country facing extremists on its borders, near state collapse, and a humanitarian crisis that affected nearly the whole population, the UN mission, MINUSCA, helped re-establish stability, support the election of a new government, and halt atrocities. Likewise, UN troops stepped in to keep the disputed territory of Abyei between Sudan and South Sudan from becoming a flash point. That mission, UNISFA, continues to play a useful role in preventing violence.

Other missions achieved their goals and departed, such as in Sierra Leone, where peace is stabilized, and former militia have disarmed and no longer threaten to amputate the limbs of civilians. Instead, Sierra Leone today provides UN peacekeepers to *other* nations. In Liberia, the UN has also completed its mission after helping that nation move from a devastating conflict – and an outbreak of Ebola – to a country where justice and security institutions are rebuilt, people have returned home, and peaceful democratic elections have elected new leaders.

Challenges for Peacekeeping. While this record is impressive, peacekeeping missions face serious challenges. Fundamentally, missions need to have the capacity to deliver on their mandates and to perform as required. Many areas deserve attention, but I will highlight four challenges that peace operations often face: the erosion of weak political agreements, the inconsistent ability to protect civilians, weak consent by host nations and local parties, and critical capacity gaps.

A central goal of UN peace operations is to support political solutions and processes. Efforts to intervene in complex conflict environments and support peace – even with the best-designed peace agreement – can face reversals in the field. Weak or ineffectual peace agreements can undermine the ability of these missions to succeed. In countries like Mali, South Sudan, the Central African

Republic, and Western Sahara, parties to the conflict have signed peace agreements that they lack the capacity or intention to implement in good faith. These political agreements need reinforcement and diplomatic strengthening from the international community, even after peacekeeping missions deploy, to complement the missions' efforts.

A second major challenge is protecting civilians from violence. The lessons of earlier mission failures led the Security Council to emphasize more robust, multidimensional mandates, with clear direction to protect civilians under threat. Indeed, 95 percent of peacekeepers today are mandated to protect civilians – a role that involves anticipating and preventing physical violence, including atrocities, as well as efforts to create a more secure environment and support local capacity to ensure protection once the mission leaves. Challenges include inadequate consideration of threats to civilians in the analysis and planning of the mission, lack of political will or caveats on contingents that restrain peacekeeper response, insufficient links between early warning and early action, and restrictions by host governments on the mission's actions to protect. UN practices and leadership must also uphold the highest standards and prevent harm to others, including sexual exploitation and abuse.

Missions continue to face issues regarding host state consent and cooperation. Although the Security Council obtains the consent of a host state before deploying a peacekeeping mission, that consent does not always translate to full cooperation in the field. Host governments may obstruct peacekeepers from carrying out specific activities to which the government is opposed, or may decide that they do not share the same vision for the country outlined in the peace process that the mission is mandated to support. In some cases, governments may deliberately attack their own populations, putting them in direct confrontation with peacekeepers mandated to protect civilians. Governments in Darfur and in South Sudan have restricted peacekeepers' access and ability to move around the country, for example, and have deliberately delayed critical materials and equipment for the mission. These restrictions severely inhibit the ability of missions to deliver on their mandates and protect the most vulnerable people. Moreover, without host state cooperation, peacekeepers are unable to help build local capacity for the government to provide security and maintain the rule of law, leaving missions without an exit strategy.

Finally, gaps in the capacity of a mission can undercut its function and success. Traditionally missions need aviation assets, medical personnel and hospitals, and engineers and logistics capacities, which can be in short supply. In the past, sufficient numbers of female military and police officers were a challenge, as was medical and casualty evacuation. Some needs depend on the mission. Today more UN peacekeepers operate in complex, high-risk environments, for example, and have experienced increased hostile attacks, such as deliberate attacks against UN peacekeepers by violent extremist groups in Mali. Without the right equipment or counter-IED training and awareness, peacekeepers are at a disadvantage, cannot protect themselves and often are restricted in their ability to access vulnerable populations and unstable areas.

The U.S. and other members of the international community that support peacekeeping missions need to make sure that missions are better prepared and equipped to protect civilians from violent parties; address gaps in equipment and capabilities; use carrots and sticks to ensure that host

governments abide by their commitments to support peacekeeping missions; and make sure that political agreements that need diplomatic reinforcement receive it.

Momentum with Reform Initiatives for Peacekeeping. In recognition of these challenges, the United States has supported a series of high-level reviews and meetings to identify central and emerging issues, including the report of the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) and 2017 Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers (Santos Cruz report). In 2014, the United States kicked off and led a series of high-level member state-hosted summits, and in 2015, hosted a Presidential Summit on Peacekeeping, which required countries to pledge new capacities for peacekeeping missions. This Summit included five regionally led conferences in advance – led by the Netherlands, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Uruguay and Rwanda – that helped garnered pledges. By 2016, when the United Kingdom hosted a summit, more than 50,000 additional troops, police, and key enabling capacities were pledged. The effort continued in 2017, when Canada hosted a defense ministerial on peacekeeping, followed by a ministerial in New York led by the United Nations in March 2019. These efforts succeeded in creating a new pool of capacities to match mission requirements, including a push for rapid deployment; improved operational readiness, planning, threat assessment and force generation; and specialized capabilities, among other goals.

The United States has called directly for a greater emphasis on performance and accountability. Efforts to halt and end impunity for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), for example, have helped change the way the UN and member states operate, an issue rightly championed by this Committee and members of Congress.⁵ In 2018, countries identified priorities to support peacekeeping and embraced the Secretary-General's recent roadmap Action for Peacekeeping (A4P). These reform initiatives, backed by the United States, have produced more capacity, data, and accountability. In the September 2018, the Security Council approved Resolution 2436, led by the United States, calling on the UN Secretary-General to ensure that UN missions have capable and accountable leadership, and that missions report on actions to improve mission performance and accountability.

The United States has played a critical leadership role in supporting reform and modernization, calling for more nations to offer capacity, pressing to protect civilians, engaging in diplomatic efforts to broker and uphold peace agreements and prevent conflicts, and demanding accountability and performance to match the goals of mandates.

Today, that U.S. diplomatic role is still needed: to continue support for implementing the reforms underway; to bolster the efforts of the Secretary-General; to work with troop and police-contributing countries; to engage with missions and to assist host nations. The alternative is worrisome. Important initiatives could be sidelined or lose their impact. In short, the U.S. should press for peace operations to be fit for purpose.⁶

⁵ This included the U.S. marshaling support for UN Security Council resolution 2272 on strengthening prevention and accountability regarding SEA.

⁶ A recent report by the General Accounting Office (GAO) cited areas deserving added attention from the State Department. See, GAO, "UN Peace Operations, State Should Take Additional Steps to Work with the UN to Improve

U.S. Policy and Funding for Peacekeeping: A Growing Mismatch?

Overview. With a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, the United States has substantial influence on the design and review of peacekeeping missions. Often holding the pen on resolutions, we are directly involved in drafting and negotiating UN peacekeeping mandates, as well as participating in regular briefings in the Council with leaders on peacekeeping missions. Bilaterally, the United States provides high-quality training programs, such as the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), launched in 2004. GPOI supports capacity-building and operational readiness for partner nations deploying to peace operations. A wide range of U.S. diplomatic, military and humanitarian assistance has supported the deployment and sustainment of African-led missions in Darfur, Burundi, CAR, and Mali, which then transitioned to UN-led missions. The U.S. has provided expertise in counter-terrorism techniques in the Sahel; assisted with accountability mechanisms for human rights abuse in eastern DRC; and supplied humanitarian relief in South Sudan, just to name a few areas. The United States also has championed consultations with leading troop and police contributing countries and hosted high-level exchanges; participated in war-gaming and simulations; led regional military exercises; trained police for peacekeeping missions; supported senior leadership training; and developed guidance and doctrine for peace operations, among other efforts.

These national efforts, along with the American ability to assess candidly what works, and what does not work, have given the United States robust influence. UN leaders, allied countries and those who serve in these missions respect the U.S. role, and find some inspiration in our support for mission success. Thanks to U.S. engagement, we have bolstered UN leaders in the field, pressed the international community to support missions in resolving conflicts, and urged host nations to do more to protect civilians. That U.S. approach – idealistic and practical, simultaneously can-do and critical – produces results.

U.S. Funding for UN missions. UN peacekeeping missions are funded by assessed contributions from member states. The assessments rates are set as a percentage of the cost for each peacekeeping operation approved by the Security Council. The United States is the top financial contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, and is currently assessed at 27.88 percent of the budget.⁷ As this Committee knows, Congress is requested by the Administration to authorize and appropriate this funding through the State Department’s *Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities* (CIPA) account, for peacekeeping, which “promotes the peaceful resolution of conflict.”⁸ That is the main way that UN peacekeeping missions are financed. The United States is assessed over the course of the year for individual missions, and payments are expected to be made within 30 days.

Effectiveness and Performance Information,” GAO-19-224, March 2019. (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/697655.pdf>).

⁷ The UN assessment rates were renegotiated in 2018. The U.S. rate shifted slightly from 28.43 percent to 27.88 percent, the rate the United States will be assessed for the next three years. The next negotiations are in 2021.

⁸ “Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities,” *Congressional Budget Justification*, Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs. (www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/FY_2020_CBJ.pdf).

Today, arrears and delayed payments to the United Nations and for peacekeeping missions are growing more severe and impacting cash flow. In March, the UN Secretary-General took the unusual step of issuing a thick report on the financial situation of the United Nations, and urged new measures and authorities to address the shortage of funding for current UN missions. He identified multiple problems for UN missions, including the lack of cash available for active peacekeeping operations and the decision of “one Member State to contribute at a level approximately 3 per cent below its applicable rate of assessment,” a polite reference to the United States.⁹ Only two missions had a “minimum cash reserve of three months of operating costs,” he reported.¹⁰ This gap resulted in a paradox, namely, that the United Nations is now “effectively borrowing for prolonged periods from troop- and police-contributing countries. Many of them are low-income countries for which that imposes a significant financial burden.”¹¹ Further, the delay in reimbursing troop and police contributing countries exposes them to financial hardship and impacts their ability to serve effectively.

The United States’ current financial approach to peacekeeping is to seek cuts in mission budgets; to pay at a rate that is less than the U.S. assessment for missions; and to ask Congress for an amount that is less than necessary even at the 25 percent level. Together, this has contributed to a funding shortfall for missions, hazards U.S. priorities for missions and reforms and could reduce U.S. credibility with other member states. Congress should address these financial and policy problems, realigning U.S. interests and actions.

First, Congress should authorize and appropriate FY2020 funding that meets U.S. requirements to pay our bills in full, and urge the Administration to align their budget request for UN peacekeeping with the actual budget requirements. Starting with the fiscal year 2018 (FY2018) budget, and again for fiscal years 2019 and 2020, the Administration requested annual CIPA funding far below the anticipated U.S. budget obligations. While Congress has mostly restored the funding level to meet current U.S. current assessments, the Administration is again proposing funding levels for FY2020 associated with an assessment rate of 16 percent, not the nearly 28 percent at which we are assessed. For FY2020, the Administration is asking Congress for \$1.1 billion for peacekeeping assessment yet \$1.4 - \$1.5 billion is estimated as the needed amount for the U.S. share of peacekeeping assessments.

There is no clear public explanation from the Administration, including OMB, of how that number was determined or how it will impact missions in the field. The State Department has not presented a strategy to justify the request or how it achieves stated U.S. goals. Despite calls for reform of peacekeeping, the Administration is proposing to Congress that the United States not meet its obligations to pay our dues in full and on time. In turn, that shortchanges the missions and puts the burden on the countries that contribute personnel and equipment, and undercuts our standing with other nations.

⁹ A/73/809, “Improving the financial situation of the United Nations,” Report of the Secretary-General, March 26, 2019.

¹⁰ Ibid. A/73/809.

¹¹ Ibid. A/73/809.

Second, Congress should lift the cap on the U.S. paying more than 25 percent of the peacekeeping budget and prevent further arrears, as it has before. Even when the U.S. supports a peacekeeping mission, the Congressional cap forces the United States to pay less than our UN assessment – now, roughly three percent less – regardless of the overall mission budget. The result is increasing arrears by the United States to UN peace operations with no positive impact. The growing U.S. peacekeeping arrears – funding commitments that are more than a year overdue – stand at roughly \$750 million today.

In late 2018, the Administration participated in negotiations at the United Nations regarding the assessment rate. U.S. Ambassador Haley had committed to a goal of negotiating a 25 percent assessment rate, as favored by Congress. Yet the U.S. failed to lead a strong diplomatic campaign in advance, and did not win support from other nations to reduce the U.S. share. Those U.S. arrears are expected to approach \$1 billion by the end of this year. That level of arrears will be difficult to resolve. Such unilateral withholdings undermine our credibility, undercut United States efforts to achieve peace and security, and sideline improving peacekeeping effectiveness and reform.

Congress should request a full briefing from the administration on why their rate negotiation strategy failed to get to 25 percent, direct that the Administration assess its options in advance of the next negotiations in 2021, and ask for their plans for those negotiations to start now. In the meantime, Congress should lift the cap, as it did during most of the Bush and Obama administrations, to prevent further accumulation of arrears, and to increase the U.S. ability to realign the U.S. share in 2021. The U.S. should pay its dues in full, without limitations and on time, which is also the best position for future negotiations.

Third, the United States needs to bolster its leadership in support of peacekeeping missions and for reform initiatives – rather than cede that role. The Administration’s stated goal of pressing for “effective and efficient operations”¹² to “resolve conflicts” is falling short, undercut by its lack of senior diplomats serving in key positions. In New York, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations is awaiting a new Permanent Representative, and operating with only two of its five ambassadorial positions filled. As a result, our diplomats are short-handed, including at the Security Council, the premier venue for addressing international security. The U.S. has reportedly reduced the number of military officers in New York who advise the Mission and liaise with the Department of Defense from seven to two officers, which impacts the U.S. ability to engage with the military side of UN missions and promote reform. The Administration is also dismantling the U.S. Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, a valuable interagency and joint organization at the Army War College, founded 25 years ago to support and lead on trainings, lessons learned and professional education for such complex operations.

This reduced financial and diplomatic posture has diminished the U.S. role in support to peacekeeping reform and objectives. Some have expressed concern that the UN is unwilling to send home contingents in peacekeeping missions that do not perform well, for example; usually the

¹² Remarks by National Security Advisor Ambassador John R. Bolton on the The Trump Administration’s New Africa Strategy, Heritage Foundation, December 13, 2018. (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-national-security-advisor-ambassador-john-r-bolton-trump-administrations-new-africa-strategy/>).

U.S. would work to press for taking such action. The United States also faces competition for a leadership role on peace operations from countries that may not embrace the same values or approach. China's influence has grown, for example, now that it deploys roughly 2,500 peacekeepers in UN missions, is the second largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping (recently increasing from 10 to 15 percent assessed share of the peacekeeping budget), and has expanded its training capacities for international peacekeeping.

Conclusion. Over the last two decades, the United States has played a prominent and substantive role in peacekeeping operations and policies in Africa, as well as advocated for modernization and reforms. The reasons for U.S. engagement are many, as noted earlier: support for stability and security; as a bulwark against terrorism and as a means to prevent and counter violent extremism; as a basis for reducing refugee flows and displacements; and as a tool to constrain illegal trafficking and violators of sanctions. Missions also bolster positive U.S. goals, such as the promotion of democracy and human rights, prevention of atrocities and reoccurring cycles of violence, support to legitimate governance and regional stability, and strengthening the rule of law. In short, peace operations seek to uphold objectives and values that are deeply American, even as they are primarily carried out and funded by other nations.

Yet there is a clear mismatch between the Administration's laudable ambition to strengthen peacekeeping missions, increase accountability and performance, support political solutions, and protect civilians – and the adverse posture toward paying the U.S. share of our assessments. Growing U.S. peacekeeping arrears, especially as it heads toward \$1 billion, has strategic implications for the United States and its efforts to achieve greater peace and security internationally, as well as support peacekeeping effectiveness and reform.

Congress can address this problem and align U.S. objectives and policies.

I urge all Members here to visit peacekeeping missions themselves, to bridge the gap between debates in capitals and what happens in the field. Peacekeeping missions and leaders, and the nations and civilians who seek the support of these operations, will welcome and benefit from your engagement and diplomatic support. Rather than have a U.S. absence from the policy arena, I hope Congress and the leadership of this committee can play an important role in oversight of current U.S. programs and policies, as well as in reversing trends that undermine U.S. interests. This is of both moral and strategic importance to the United States and the region.