



February 2018

UN PEACEKEEPING

Cost Estimate for Hypothetical U.S. Operation Exceeds Actual Costs for Comparable UN Operation

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-18-243](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

To promote international peace and security, the UN had 16 ongoing peacekeeping operations worldwide as of June 30, 2017, with a total budget of almost \$8 billion in UN fiscal year 2017 and contributions of over 100,000 military, police, and civilian personnel from more than 120 countries. The United States is the largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, providing an average of about 28 percent of total funding annually.

The Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017, includes a provision for GAO to compare the costs, strengths, and limitations of UN and U.S. peacekeeping operations. This report (1) compares the reported costs of a specific UN operation to the estimated costs of a hypothetical, comparable operation implemented by the United States; (2) identifies factors that affect cost differences; and (3) identifies stakeholder views on the relative strengths of UN and U.S. peacekeeping operations.

GAO worked with the UN, DOD, and State to generate a cost estimate of a hypothetical U.S.-led operation in the Central African Republic comparable to MINUSCA. GAO developed this estimate using DOD's cost estimating tool for contingency operations and State data on civilian costs, assuming a U.S. operation using roughly the same levels of military and civilian personnel as MINUSCA. The cost estimate should not be construed as suggesting that the United States would likely implement such an operation in the Central African Republic or that it would implement such an operation in the same way.

GAO is making no recommendations.

View [GAO-18-243](#). For more information, contact Thomas Melito at (202) 512-9601 or melitot@gao.gov.

February 2018

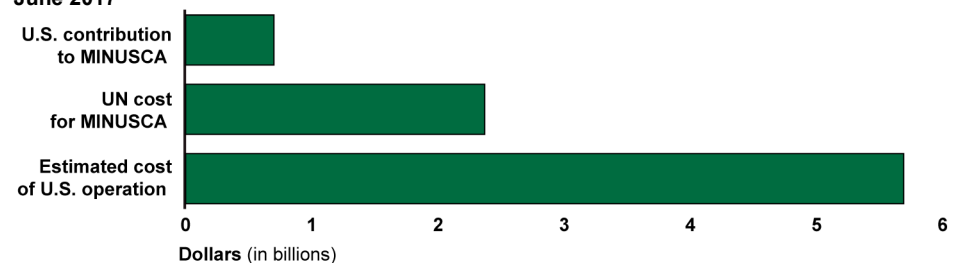
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Cost Estimate for Hypothetical U.S. Operation Exceeds Actual Costs for Comparable UN Operation

What GAO Found

Based on United Nations (UN) and Departments of Defense (DOD) and State (State) data, GAO estimates that it would cost the United States more than twice as much as it would cost the UN to implement a hypothetical operation comparable to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). MINUSCA cost the UN approximately \$2.4 billion for the first 39 months of the operation. GAO estimates that a hypothetical U.S. peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic of roughly the same size and duration would cost nearly \$5.7 billion—almost eight times more than the \$700 million the United States contributed to MINUSCA over the same time period.

Comparison of U.S. Contribution to MINUSCA, UN Cost for MINUSCA, and Estimated Cost of a Hypothetical U.S. Peacekeeping Operation in the Central African Republic, April 2014 through June 2017



Legend: UN=United Nations; MINUSCA=Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

Source: GAO analysis of United Nations (UN) and Departments of Defense and State data. | GAO-18-243

Various factors affect differences between the actual cost of MINUSCA and the estimated cost of a hypothetical, comparable U.S. operation in the Central African Republic. The United States and the UN would source and transport some supplies and equipment differently, affecting the cost of both operations; for example, the United States would airlift water into the Central African Republic, while the UN does not do so to the same extent. The United States also would incur the cost of civilian police and military reservist salaries, while the UN does not pay any troop or police salaries. Finally, some higher standards for facilities, intelligence, and medical services increase the U.S. cost estimate relative to UN costs for similar operational elements.

UN and U.S. peacekeeping operations have various relative strengths, according to U.S. and UN officials. These officials said that, because the UN is a multilateral organization, UN peacekeeping operations have international acceptance and are more likely to be viewed as impartial. Officials also said that the UN enjoys global access to expertise and experience, and can leverage assistance from multilateral donors and development banks. Relative strengths of a U.S. peacekeeping operation would include faster deployment and superior command and control, logistics, intelligence, and counterterrorism capability, according to U.S. and UN officials.

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Abbreviations

CAR	Central African Republic
DOD	Department of Defense
IDA	Institute for Defense Analyses
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
State	Department of State
UN	United Nations

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February 6, 2018

Congressional Committees

To promote international peace and security, the United States supports United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations worldwide. As of June 30, 2017, the United Nations had 16 such operations ongoing with a total budget in UN fiscal year 2017 of almost \$8 billion.¹ These operations deployed over 100,000 military, police, and civilian personnel from more than 120 contributing countries in UN fiscal year 2017. The United States is the single largest financial contributor to these operations, contributing on average approximately 28 percent of total funding annually.

The Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017,² includes a provision for GAO to compare the costs, strengths, and limitations of UN and U.S. peacekeeping operations.³ This report (1) compares the reported costs of a specific UN operation to the estimated costs of a hypothetical, comparable operation implemented by the United States; (2) identifies factors that affect cost differences; and (3) identifies stakeholder views on the relative strengths of UN and U.S. peacekeeping operations.

To compare the costs of a current UN peacekeeping operation with the costs of a hypothetical, comparable operation implemented by the United States, we selected the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) as a case study. Using UN data for MINUSCA, we developed a comparable scenario for a hypothetical U.S. operation. The scenario assumes deployment of roughly the same number of U.S. military, civilian, and police personnel in

¹UN fiscal years begin on July 1 and end on June 30 of the following year. For example, UN fiscal year 2017 runs from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

²Pub. L. No. 114-323, § 313 (Dec. 16, 2016), as amended by Pub. L. No. 115-94, § 6 (Dec. 18, 2017).

³GAO was to include an analysis of the strengths and limitations of peacekeeping operations led by the United States as compared to one led by the UN. In this report, we focus on the relative strengths of each type of peacekeeping operation because many of the strengths of a U.S. operation represent limitations of a UN operation, and vice versa, according to U.S. and UN officials as well as a 2015 UN “High Level Panel” report. United Nations, A/70/95-S/2015/446, *Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People* (June 17, 2015).

the Central African Republic (CAR) as the UN deployment for MINUSCA over the same approximately 3-year period. We did not attempt to determine how many military or civilian personnel the United States would deploy if it implemented a peacekeeping operation in CAR.⁴ We selected MINUSCA because it is in sub-Saharan Africa, where most UN peacekeeping operations established since 2003 have taken place, and has a typical scope and budget compared to other UN peacekeeping operations in sub-Saharan Africa, according to U.S. and UN officials. In addition, established in 2014, MINUSCA is one of the most recent UN peacekeeping operations; thus, initial expenditures for the operation are relatively current.⁵

To identify the costs of MINUSCA, we analyzed relevant UN budget and expenditure data, as well as relevant UN reports related to MINUSCA for the start-up and first 3 full UN fiscal years of the operation, from April 10, 2014, to June 30, 2017. We assessed these data through discussions with cognizant UN officials and a review of external audits of UN budgetary information and found them reliable for our purposes. For the military portion of the hypothetical U.S. operation, we worked with the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) to develop a cost estimate using IDA's Contingency Operations Support Tool (cost estimating tool).⁶ DOD uses this tool to develop cost estimates for all military contingency operations. We assessed the applicability of DOD's cost estimating tool to developing a hypothetical cost estimate for the purposes of this report through discussions with DOD and IDA officials and compared the tool to the accurate and comprehensive characteristics of a high-quality cost estimate, as

⁴We are not suggesting by our selection of MINUSCA that the United States would likely implement such an operation in the Central African Republic in the absence of the UN peacekeeping operation there. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether the United States would implement a peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic—if it deemed such an operation to be in the national interest—in the same way as the UN. We discuss some of these potential differences, and their impact on cost differences, later in this report.

⁵Because the results of our cost comparison are based on a single case study, they cannot be generalized to all UN peacekeeping operations.

⁶IDA is a non-profit corporation that developed and maintains the Contingency Operations Support Tool. IDA operates three Federally Funded Research and Development Centers and is sponsored by DOD and other federal agencies. One of these three centers oversees IDA's Cost Analysis and Research Division, which maintains the tool.

described in the GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide.⁷ While we found the DOD cost estimating tool generated a sufficiently reliable cost estimate for a hypothetical U.S. peacekeeping operation, we did not assess the overall reliability of the tool or its capability to generate accurate or comprehensive estimates for future U.S. operations.

For the civilian portion of the U.S. operation, we determined the number of Foreign Service officers, locally employed staff and civilian police based on deployment levels of UN international and national civilian staff, and individual UN civilian police officers serving in CAR as part of MINUSCA. We based the costs of U.S. civilian personnel on average salaries published by the Department of State (State) and the Office of Personnel Management and various allowances, published by State, for serving in CAR, such as cost-of-living adjustments, danger pay, and post hardship differential. We also met with State officials to estimate other costs, including for housing, administrative support, and travel, but did not assess the reliability of these costs provided by State.

To identify factors that affect cost differences between MINUSCA and the hypothetical U.S. operation, we identified cost categories where differences between MINUSCA and the U.S. estimate were significant and interviewed U.S. and UN officials regarding UN standards and policies that explain these differences.

To identify stakeholder views on the relative strengths of UN and U.S. peacekeeping operations, we reviewed UN reports on peacekeeping operations and interviewed U.S. and UN officials. In addition, we reviewed GAO's 2006 report comparing the costs and relative strengths of a UN peacekeeping operation in Haiti with those of a hypothetical U.S. operation.⁸ See appendix I for a complete description of our objectives, scope, and methodology.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2017 to February 2018 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for

⁷GAO, *GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide*, [GAO-09-3SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: March 2009).

⁸GAO, *Peacekeeping: Cost Comparison of Actual UN and Hypothetical U.S. Operations in Haiti*, [GAO-06-331](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 21, 2006).

our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

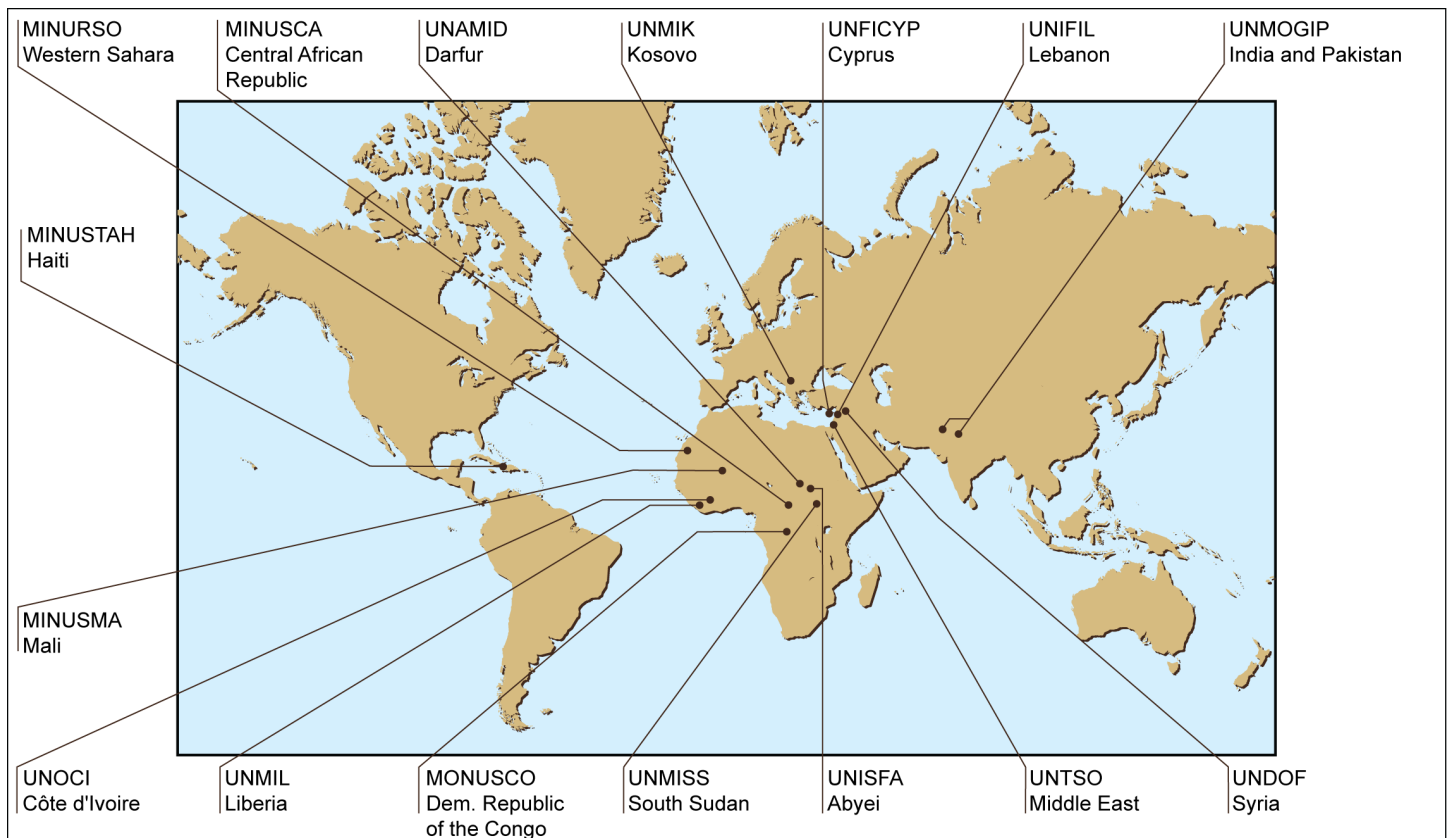
Overview of UN Peacekeeping Operations since 1948

As of June 30, 2017, the UN had carried out 71 peacekeeping operations since 1948, and had 16 active UN peacekeeping operations worldwide.⁹ Eight of these UN peacekeeping operations were in sub-Saharan Africa (see fig. 1).¹⁰

⁹The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire completed its mandate on June 30, 2017. The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti ended on October 15, 2017, and transitioned to a follow-up peacekeeping operation focused on supporting government efforts to strengthen rule-of-law institutions, further developing the Haitian National Police, and promoting and protecting human rights.

¹⁰The United States has led and participated in a variety of peacekeeping operations since World War II, including in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

Figure 1: Map of 16 UN Peacekeeping Operations Active Worldwide, as of June 30, 2017



- Legend:
- MINURSO: UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
 - MINUSCA: UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
 - MINUSMA: UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
 - MINUSTAH: UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti
 - MONUSCO: UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
 - UNAMID: African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
 - UNDOF: UN Disengagement Observer Force
 - UNFICYP: UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
 - UNIFIL: UN Interim Force in Lebanon
 - UNISFA: UN Interim Security Force for Abyei
 - UNMIK: UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
 - UNMIL: UN Mission in Liberia
 - UNMISS: UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
 - UNMOGIP: UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
 - UNOCI: UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
 - UNTSO: UN Truce Supervision Organization

Sources: United Nations (UN) (data); Map Resources (map). | GAO-18-243

Notes: The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti ended on October 15, 2017, and transitioned to a follow-up peacekeeping operation focused on supporting government efforts to strengthen rule-of-law institutions, further developing the Haitian National Police, and promoting and protecting human rights. The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire completed its mandate on June 30, 2017.

In their earliest days, UN peacekeeping operations were primarily military in nature and limited to monitoring cease-fire agreements and stabilizing situations on the ground while political efforts were being made to resolve conflicts. Today, in response to increasingly complex situations in which conflicts may be internal, involve many parties, and include civilians as deliberate targets, UN peacekeeping operations are more commonly “multidimensional”—deploying civilian and police personnel in addition to military personnel. Multidimensional peacekeeping operations seek to create a secure and stable environment while working with national authorities and actors to make sure the peace agreement or political process is implemented. According to the UN, multidimensional peacekeeping operations are designed to protect civilians and often assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections; protect and promote human rights; and assist in restoring the rule of law. Figure 2 shows examples of UN peacekeepers serving in different capacities as part of MINUSCA in Bangui, CAR.

Figure 2: Examples of UN Peacekeepers Serving with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic in the Capital City of Bangui



Source: United Nations (UN), photographer: Catianne Tijerina (left), Nektarios Markogiannis (right). | GAO-18-243

Each UN peacekeeping operation, including its mandated size and tasks, is authorized through a UN Security Council resolution. The operation’s budget and resources are subject to General Assembly approval. The UN’s approved budget for global peacekeeping operations in UN fiscal year 2017 was about \$7.9 billion. Individual operation budgets ranged

from about \$36 million for the peacekeeping operation in Kosovo to more than \$1.2 billion for the peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see table 1).¹¹

Table 1: UN Budgets for Peacekeeping Operations, UN fiscal year 2017

Dollars in millions

Operation	Date established	Approved budget
UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo	June 1999	\$36
UN Disengagement Observer Force (Syria)	June 1974	48
UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	March 1964	56
UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	April 1991	57
UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire ^a	April 2004	172
UN Mission in Liberia	September 2003	187
UN Interim Security Force for Abyei	June 2011	269
UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti ^b	June 2004	346
UN Interim Force in Lebanon	March 1978	489
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic	April 2014	921
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali	March 2013	933
African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur	July 2007	1,040
UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan	July 2011	1,082
UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	July 2010	1,236
Other UN peacekeeping support costs	N/A	1,023
Total	N/A	7,893

Source: United Nations (UN). | GAO-18-243

Notes: The total approved UN peacekeeping operations budget for UN fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017) financed 14 of the 16 UN peacekeeping operations active during the fiscal year, supported logistics costs for the African Union Mission in Somalia through the United Nations Support

¹¹The approved UN peacekeeping operations budget for UN fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017) financed 14 of the 16 UN peacekeeping operations active during the fiscal year. Additionally, it supported logistics for the African Union Mission in Somalia through the UN Support Office in Somalia, and provided support, technology, and logistics to all peacekeeping operations through global service centers in Brindisi, Italy, and Valencia, Spain, and a regional service center in Entebbe, Uganda. Two UN peacekeeping operations—UN Truce Supervision Organization (Middle East) and UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan—are funded from the UN regular biennial budget.

Office in Somalia, and provided support, technology and logistics to all peace operations through global service centers in Brindisi, Italy, and Valencia, Spain, and a regional service center in Entebbe, Uganda. This table does not include budgeted costs for two peacekeeping operations—the UN Truce Supervision Organization (Middle East) and UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan—which are funded from the UN regular biennial budget.

^aThe UN Operation in Cote D'Ivoire completed its mandate on June 30, 2017.

^bThe UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti ended on October 15, 2017, and transitioned to a follow-up peacekeeping operation focused on supporting government efforts to strengthen rule-of-law institutions, further developing the Haitian National Police, and promoting and protecting human rights.

The UN reported in June 2017 that it maintained 95,544 uniformed peacekeepers, 5,004 international civilians, 10,149 local civilians, and 1,597 UN volunteers in support of its operations around the world. According to UN documents, civilian peacekeeping personnel are generally recruited to peacekeeping operations as individuals, while police and military personnel are volunteered by member states to participate as part of their country's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations.¹²

U.S. Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations

The United States is the largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping operations. From fiscal years 2014 to 2017, the United States contributed an average of about \$2.1 billion per year to these operations.¹³ The UN General Assembly sets the assessment levels for UN member contributions to peacekeeping operations every 3 years. The United States' assessment has averaged about 28.5 percent of the UN peacekeeping budget; however, Congress has authorized payment with

¹²Such member states are known as troop-contributing countries or police-contributing countries.

¹³The United States also contributes personnel to UN peacekeeping operations. As of October 2017, 56 U.S. personnel were serving in UN peacekeeping operations worldwide, according to UN data.

appropriated funds at about 27 percent for U.S. fiscal years 2014 through 2016, and 25 percent for U.S. fiscal year 2017.¹⁴

Overview of MINUSCA

In April 2014, UN Security Council Resolution 2149 established MINUSCA following escalating sectarian violence in CAR that resulted in the destruction of state institutions, thousands of deaths, and 2.5 million people—more than half of CAR’s entire population—in need of humanitarian aid, according to a UN report. The conflict also resulted in 174,000 people being internally displaced and over 400,000 fleeing to neighboring countries, according to the UN report. MINUSCA’s tasks include

- protecting civilians, given the security, humanitarian, human rights, and political crisis in CAR;
- supporting the implementation of the transition process, including efforts to extend state authority and preserve territorial integrity;
- facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance and promoting and protecting human rights;
- supporting justice and the rule of law; and
- facilitating the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and repatriation processes.

On November 15, 2017, UN Security Council Resolution 2387 (2017) extended MINUSCA’s mandate for a fourth time, through November 15, 2018.¹⁵

¹⁴According to State officials, assessments for UN peacekeeping operations are based on the projected budget for each operation, with “credits” made available to member states for any amounts remaining after the UN 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 UN has applied peacekeeping credits to the United States’ assessed peacekeeping contributions. In part because of the application of these credits, the United States in fiscal years 2014 through 2016 was able to fully pay its UN-assessed peacekeeping contributions and cover the gap between the UN assessments of about 28.5 percent of the total UN peacekeeping budget and authorized U.S. payments of about 27 percent, according to State. For fiscal year 2017, State anticipates that the United States will accrue new peacekeeping arrears as a result of the gap between the UN-assessed peacekeeping contribution for the United States of about 28.5 percent and the U.S. authorized fiscal year 2017 cap of 25 percent.

¹⁵UN Security Council Resolutions 2217 (2015), 2281 (2016), and 2301 (2016) extended MINUSCA’s original mandate through April 30, 2016, July 31, 2016, and November 15, 2017, respectively.

MINUSCA’s approved personnel levels for UN fiscal year 2017 comprised 10,750 military personnel, 400 individual police officers, and 1,680 formed police unit personnel,¹⁶ as well as 790 international civilian and 696 national civilian personnel, 238 UN volunteers, and 40 government-provided personnel, according to a UN Secretary-General report.¹⁷ Table 2 shows average annual personnel deployment for MINUSCA and the number of authorized positions for the first 3 full fiscal years of the operation.

Table 2: Personnel Deployment for the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, UN Fiscal Years 2015-2017

	UN fiscal year 2015	UN fiscal year 2016	UN fiscal year 2017
Military personnel	6,761	9,930	10,443
Individual police officers ^a	152	348	330
Formed police unit personnel ^b	912	1,481	1,472
International staff	306	591	614
National and local staff	141	334	437
UN volunteers and government-provided personnel	53	202	279
Average annual deployment total	8,325	12,886	13,575
Maximum authorized total	14,344	14,577	14,594

Source: GAO analysis of United Nations (UN) data. | GAO-18-243

Notes: UN fiscal years begin on July 1 and end on June 30 of the following year. For example, UN fiscal year 2017 runs from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. Personnel deployment levels are annual averages. As of October 2017, eight U.S. personnel were serving in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, according to UN data.

^aIndividual police officers are responsible for community policing, mentoring, and training national police officers, providing assistance in investigations, and, in some countries, helping law enforcement agents address transnational crime.

^bA formed police unit is a mobile police unit deployed from a single country with three core duties: public order management, protection of UN personnel and facilities, and support to police operations that require a concerted response but do not respond to military threats.

¹⁶A formed police unit is a mobile police unit deployed from a single country with three core duties: public order management, protection of UN personnel and facilities, and support to police operations that require a concerted response but do not respond to military threats. Individual police officers are responsible for community policing, mentoring and training national police officers, providing assistance in investigations, and, in some countries, helping law enforcement agents address transnational crime.

¹⁷United Nations General Assembly, A/71/819, *Budget for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic for the Period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018* (Feb. 28, 2017).

Cost Estimate for a Hypothetical U.S. Operation in CAR Exceeds Actual Costs for a Comparable Ongoing UN Operation in CAR, as Well as U.S. Contributions to That UN Operation

Based on data and other input from the UN, DOD, and State, we estimate that it would cost the United States more than twice as much as it would cost the UN to implement a hypothetical operation comparable to MINUSCA, the ongoing UN operation in the Central African Republic (CAR). In addition, the estimated cost of a U.S. operation in CAR far exceeds U.S. contributions to MINUSCA.

Estimated Cost of a Hypothetical U.S. Operation in CAR Is More than Twice the Cost of a Comparable Ongoing UN Operation in CAR

Based on an estimate we developed in conjunction with DOD and State officials, a hypothetical, comparable U.S. operation would likely cost nearly \$5.7 billion, more than twice as much as MINUSCA, the ongoing UN operation in CAR. Our comparison covers the time from which MINUSCA was established in April 2014 through the end of UN fiscal year 2017, which ended on June 30, 2017—a total of 3 years and 3 months, the first 39 months of MINUSCA. Over this time period, UN costs for MINUSCA totaled approximately \$2.4 billion. Using roughly the same basic parameters for MINUSCA, including similar deployment levels of military and civilian personnel over the same time period, in consultation with DOD and State officials, we estimate that a comparable, hypothetical U.S. operation would likely cost nearly \$5.7 billion, more than twice the UN cost for MINUSCA (see table 3 for a detailed comparison of estimated U.S. costs and actual UN costs). This estimate does not include, among other things, the cost for State diplomatic security and office space for

civilian staff, the inclusion of which could further increase the total estimated U.S. cost for such an operation.¹⁸

Table 3: Comparison of Estimated U.S. Costs and Actual UN Costs for a Peacekeeping Operation in Central African Republic (CAR), April 2014 through June 2017

Dollars in millions

Major cost categories	Examples of costs in each category	Estimated U.S. cost	Actual UN cost ^a	Difference between estimated U.S. cost and actual UN cost
Military personnel and support	Allowances, food, delivery of equipment, travel to and from CAR; reserves salaries (U.S.); troop-contributing country reimbursements (UN)	\$1,876	\$1,059	\$816
Transportation	Airlift of water, ice, and other materials into CAR (U.S.); transit within CAR, such as shuttles (UN)	\$1,342	\$261	\$1,081
Facilities and related costs	Maintenance and facility operations; residential leases (U.S.)	\$1,137	\$292	\$845
Civilian personnel	Salaries, allowances (e.g., danger pay)	\$750	\$435	\$315
Miscellaneous	Communications, information technology, other supplies; intelligence collection and dissemination (U.S.); quick-impact projects (UN)	\$285	\$273	\$13
Civilian police ^b	Allowances or danger pay, travel to and from CAR ; salaries (U.S.)	\$167	\$41	\$126
Medical	Medical services and supplies, hospitals	\$132	\$8	\$123
Total cost		\$5,690	\$2,370	\$3,320

Source: GAO analysis of Departments of Defense (DOD) and State and United Nations (UN) data. | GAO-18-243.

Notes: Numbers may not sum to totals because of rounding. We did not include the following costs in the estimated U.S. cost: civilian office space and furnishings; diplomatic security and other security costs for civilians, other than residential guards; and U.S. equivalents for UN volunteers, government-provided personnel, and quick-impact projects. Additionally, in consultation with Department of Defense and Institute for Defense Analyses officials, we selected “military contingency” as the U.S. operation type for the cost estimate based on the operating conditions in CAR. The alternate selection of a “long war” operation type—which would signify a U.S. operation more intensive than the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic—would

¹⁸We did not include the following costs in the estimated U.S. cost: civilian office space or furnishings; diplomatic security and other security costs for civilians, other than residential guards; and U.S. equivalents for UN volunteers, government-provided personnel, and quick-impact projects. Additionally, in consultation with DOD and IDA officials, we selected “military contingency” as the U.S. operation type for the cost estimate based on the operating conditions in CAR. The alternate selection of a “long war” operation type—which would signify a U.S. operation more intensive than MINUSCA—would introduce additional costs for logistics-related contracts and contribute to an even greater total estimated U.S. cost.

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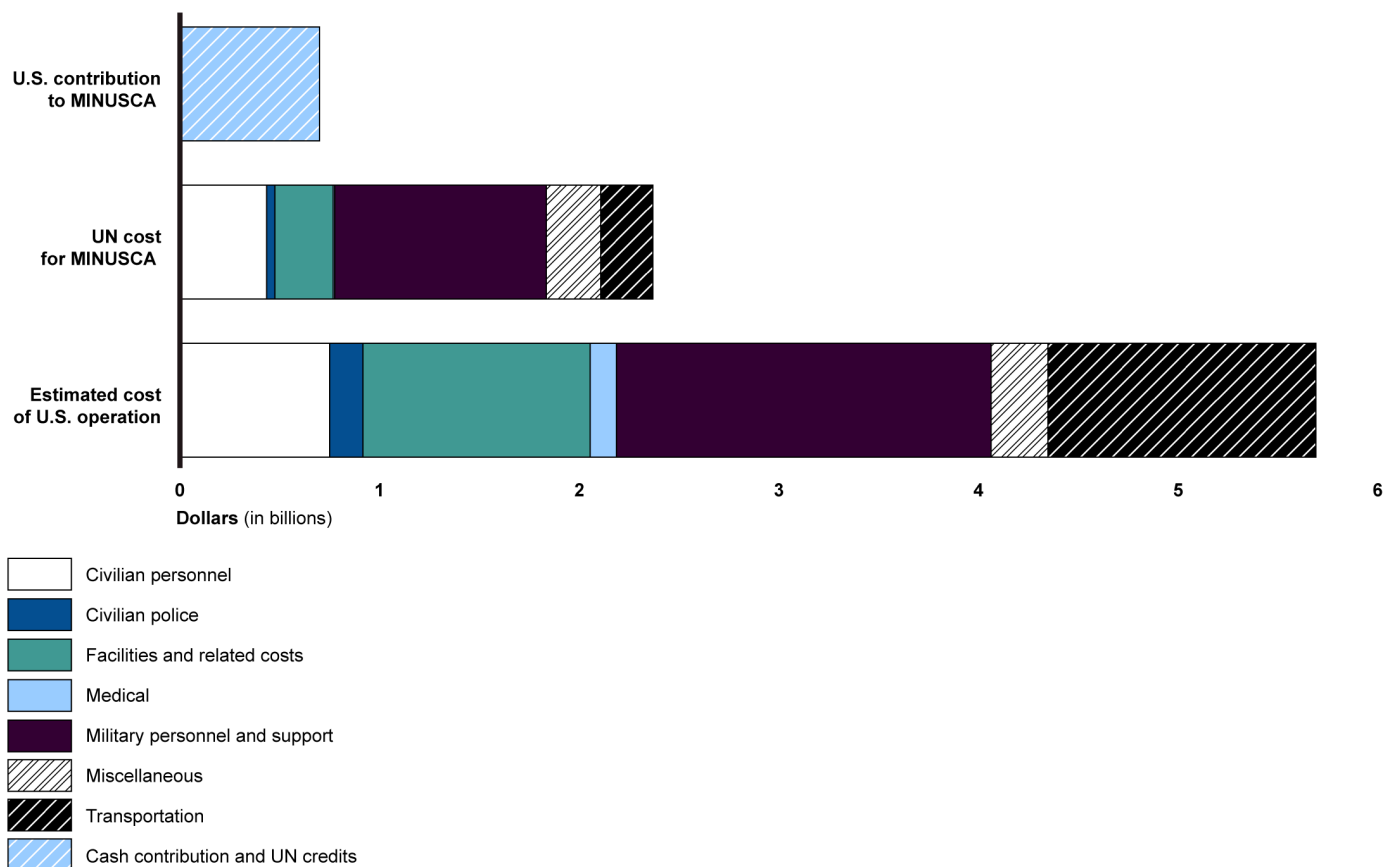
^aUN costs are audited actual costs from April 2014 through June 2016 and unaudited actual costs from July 2016 through June 2017.

^bCosts presented are for the estimated U.S. cost for civilian police as contractors and the actual UN cost for individual police officers.

Estimated Cost of a Hypothetical U.S. Operation in CAR Far Exceeds U.S. Contributions to MINUSCA

During the same time period, from April 10, 2014 through June 30, 2017, the United States contributed approximately \$700 million to the UN to support MINUSCA. Therefore, the estimated cost of a U.S. operation (nearly \$5.7 billion) would be almost eight times greater than the United States' contribution to MINUSCA. See figure 3 for a comparison of these costs with the U.S. estimate.

Figure 3: Comparison of U.S. Contribution to MINUSCA, UN Cost for MINUSCA, and Estimated Cost of a Hypothetical U.S. Peacekeeping Operation in the Central African Republic, April 2014 through June 2017



Legend: UN=United Nations; MINUSCA=Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

Source: GAO analysis of United Nations (UN) and Departments of Defense and State data. | GAO-18-243

Notes: We did not include the following costs in the estimated U.S. cost: civilian office space and furnishings; diplomatic security and other security costs for civilians, other than residential guards; and U.S. equivalents for UN volunteers, government-provided personnel, and quick-impact projects. Additionally, in consultation with Department of Defense and Institute for Defense Analyses officials, we selected “military contingency” as the U.S. operation type based on the operating conditions in CAR. The alternate selection of a “long war” operation type—which would signify a U.S. operation more intensive than MINUSCA—would introduce additional costs for logistics-related contracts and contribute to an even greater total estimated U.S. cost.

Various Factors Affect Differences between the Actual Cost of MINUSCA and the Estimated Cost of a Hypothetical, Comparable U.S. Operation

Various factors contribute to the differences in costs between actual UN expenditures for MINUSCA from April 10, 2014 through June 30, 2017—the first 39 months of MINUSCA—and a hypothetical, comparable U.S. operation over the same time period, including disparities in the cost of sourcing and transporting equipment and supplies, staffing and compensating military and police personnel, and maintaining facilities and communications and intelligence systems. These disparities reflect operational, structural, and doctrinal differences in the way the United States likely would undertake a hypothetical, comparable operation, should such an operation be deemed in the U.S. national interest.

Different Methods for Sourcing and Transporting Equipment and Other Supplies Contribute to Higher Estimated U.S. Costs

High U.S. costs to source and transport supplies and equipment to the Central African Republic (CAR) contribute to the difference between our cost estimate for the hypothetical U.S. peacekeeping operation and the UN’s actual costs for MINUSCA. In the hypothetical U.S. operation, based on input from DOD and IDA officials and the output of the IDA cost estimating tool, the United States would fly in most of its consumable supplies from outside CAR. Specifically, materials such as water, ice, food, and other subsistence items would be airlifted into CAR from Italy, a supply location validated as reasonable by DOD and IDA officials given its proximity to the operation and because MINUSCA relies on a UN global service center there, one of two such UN centers in Europe. The estimated U.S. cost of airlifting water alone over the 39-month time period for the hypothetical operation would total nearly \$700 million. The United States would still deploy its equipment and personnel to CAR from the United States, at a cost of nearly \$600 million. Transportation of equipment and supplies within CAR would cost an additional estimated \$316 million.¹⁹

¹⁹The estimated U.S. cost for water, food, ice, and other subsistence items exceeds \$272 million, not including the cost of transport.

In contrast, the UN does not fly in water or consumables on the same scale as the United States would in the hypothetical operation. Instead, the UN relies on some in-country or local infrastructure and consumables. Military and formed police unit equipment is provided by the troop- and police-contributing countries. The UN reimburses these countries for equipment at set rates. The UN cost of reimbursing countries for deploying their equipment to CAR likely would be less than the amount the United States would spend on airlifting the equipment to CAR alone. For example, the UN cost of freight, deployment, and country reimbursements for military and formed police equipment was approximately \$229 million over a 2-year period (July 2014 through June 2016), while in the hypothetical operation the U.S. cost of deploying equipment alone would be over \$382 million, which is about \$154 million more than the UN cost over a similar 2-year period (September 2014 through August 2016).

Differing Staffing and Compensation Practices for Military and Police Personnel Contribute to Higher U.S. Costs

The United States would staff and compensate its military and police personnel differently than the UN, leading to differences between the estimated U.S. costs and actual UN costs. While neither the hypothetical U.S. cost estimate nor UN expenditures include the cost of salaries for active duty personnel or troops contributed by other countries, respectively, the United States would bear the additional cost of salaries for the share of personnel drawn from military reserves.²⁰ According to DOD officials, 10 percent of infantry unit personnel would have been reservist personnel in a hypothetical, comparable U.S. operation, based on the average ratio of active to reserve personnel deployed by the United States in fiscal years 2015 through 2017, roughly the same time period as the first 39 months of MINUSCA. As a result, the total estimated cost of the hypothetical U.S. operation reflects the additional U.S. expense of paying full salaries and hardship duty pay for U.S. reservist military personnel. The estimate also includes the incremental costs the United States would incur for deploying active duty military personnel, including hardship duty pay that is not incurred when those personnel are in the United States. For military troops deployed to MINUSCA, the UN pays a standard troop cost reimbursement to the troop-contributing

²⁰DOD does not include regular pay for active duty personnel in cost estimates of operations because it is not an incremental cost. DOD would incur these costs regardless of whether the personnel are deployed. However, the salaries for reservists deployed for an operation are included in DOD cost estimates as an incremental cost.

countries, which is intended also to cover incremental expenses but not the cost of troops' salaries.

U.S. costs for civilian police also are significantly higher than UN costs. The United States would pay over \$167 million for U.S. civilian police for the duration of the hypothetical operation, while the UN spent \$41 million on its individual police officers over the same time frame. The U.S. estimate includes the cost of police salaries and the additional costs of deployment, whereas UN costs for deploying individual police officers do not include salaries, which are borne by the police-contributing countries.

U.S. Standards for Facilities, Communications and Intelligence Systems, and Medical Capability Contribute to Higher Estimated U.S. Cost

Higher U.S. standards for certain aspects of the hypothetical peacekeeping operation in CAR would contribute to costs that exceed those of MINUSCA.

- *Facilities.* The higher estimated U.S. costs reflect higher U.S. standards for facilities, according to State officials. The U.S. cost estimate includes more than \$1.1 billion for facilities and related costs, which include facility maintenance, food service, laundry, management and administration, and residential leases for civilian personnel. In contrast, the actual UN cost for facilities as part of MINUSCA totaled \$292 million over the same time period.
- *Communications and intelligence systems.* The United States incurs costs associated with meeting U.S. intelligence standards that are not part of UN operations, which lack comparable intelligence capabilities. The U.S. cost estimate includes \$140 million for the cost of Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence Systems, which represents additional operational costs to meet higher U.S. standards for U.S. communications and intelligence capabilities.
- *Medical capability.* Higher U.S. standards for medical care and medical evacuation capability as compared to the UN are another factor that would contribute to higher U.S. medical costs for a hypothetical operation, according to DOD and State officials. Some UN hospitals may not meet U.S. minimum standards for medical care, according to DOD officials. Although medical costs do not constitute a significant portion of the U.S. cost estimate, estimated U.S. medical

costs (\$132 million) greatly exceed actual UN medical costs (\$8 million) over the same time period.²¹

Officials Cited Relative Strengths of UN and U.S. Peacekeeping Operations

UN and U.S. peacekeeping operations have various relative strengths, according to U.S. and UN officials we met with. Relative strengths of UN peacekeeping operations include international and local acceptance, access to global expertise, and the ability to leverage assistance from multilateral donors and development banks, according to these officials. Relative strengths of U.S. peacekeeping operations would include faster deployment and superior command and control, logistics, intelligence, and counterterrorism capabilities, according to U.S. and UN officials.

Relative Strengths of UN Peacekeeping Operations Include Acceptance, Global Expertise, and Ability to Leverage Multilateral Assistance

According to U.S. and UN officials, UN peacekeeping operations benefit from greater international and local acceptance, access to global expertise, and the ability to leverage assistance from multilateral donors and development banks. UN peacekeeping operations also provide indirect benefits to the military capacity of participating countries.

- *International and local acceptance.* As a multilateral organization, the UN benefits from greater international and local acceptance for its peacekeeping operations, according to State, DOD, and UN officials. These officials noted that the UN's multinational character contributes to a reputation for local impartiality. Conversely, the United States acting alone may not be viewed as impartial and could face challenges gaining or maintaining international or local support for peacekeeping operations, according to State and DOD officials.
- *Global expertise.* UN officials noted that the UN has unmatched convening power and access to expertise and experience from across the globe to implement the objectives of multidimensional peacekeeping operations. The UN is able to bring in people with subject matter expertise, native language skills, and knowledge of local customs to work for these operations, according to U.S. and UN officials.

²¹The UN deployed hospital capabilities for MINUSCA starting just before the second year of the operation. However, according to DOD and IDA officials, the United States would likely deploy its full hospital complement from the start of the operation. Therefore, for the hypothetical U.S. operation, we included deployment of a hospital from the beginning of the scenario, rather than match the UN's later deployment, in accordance with DOD input.

-
- *Leveraging multilateral assistance.* U.S. officials told us that the UN is better able to leverage assistance from multilateral donors and multilateral development banks to expand the scope of assistance provided in support of the goals of peacekeeping operations. For example, according to a UN report, MINUSCA is partnering with the UN Development Fund to provide capacity building related to elections, police, courts, and prisons.²² The report also noted that the UN, European Union, and World Bank supported the Central African Republic government in developing a “National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan” while harmonizing humanitarian and development funding to ensure complementarity with the UN peacekeeping operation.
 - *Developing international military capacity.* U.S. officials told us that UN peacekeeping operations provide an indirect benefit of helping to professionalize the military units from many developing countries that contribute troops to the UN. We have previously reported that building military capacity of foreign partners to address security-related threats is an important goal of U.S. national security strategy and foreign policy.²³

Relative Strengths of U.S. Peacekeeping Operations Would Include Faster Deployment and Superior Command and Control, Logistics, Intelligence, and Counterterrorism Capabilities

According to U.S. and UN officials, the relative strengths of U.S. peacekeeping operations would be faster deployment and superior command and control, logistics, intelligence, and counterterrorism capabilities.

- *Deployment speed.* State, DOD, and UN officials highlighted the United States’ ability to deploy troops and police to peacekeeping operations more quickly than the UN. Unlike the U.S. military, which can draw from a ready pool of military personnel, the UN must seek troops from UN member states, which takes time. UN officials told us that the UN faces a shortage of both troops and UN police, which slows deployment. Further, a 2015 report by the UN High-level Panel on Peacekeeping stated that the UN “has struggled to get sufficient forces on the ground quickly enough and relies on under-resourced

²²United Nations Security Council, S/2017/94, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic* (Feb. 1, 2017).

²³GAO, *Building Partner Capacity: Inventory of Department of Defense Security Cooperation and Department of State Security Assistance Efforts*, [GAO-17-255R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 24, 2017).

uniformed capabilities.”²⁴ The report also stated that aviation, medical, and engineering specialists, among others, are difficult to mobilize in advance of infantry units.

- *Command and control.* State, DOD, and UN officials told us that U.S. operations would enable the U.S. military to have direct command and control, whereas UN operations, which are inherently multinational, face challenges with command and control over troops from several different countries. The UN High-level Panel report noted that UN peacekeeping operations’ weak command and control is a well-known constraint that limits the type of operations the UN can undertake.
- *Logistics support.* U.S. and UN officials told us that U.S. operations have superior logistics systems. U.S. procurement likely would be faster than UN procurement, which lacks a standing supply chain and, therefore, relies on third-party vendors, according to UN officials. In addition, the UN High Level Panel report stated that UN peacekeeping operations’ logistics systems and structures in the field are under severe strain, which can limit the mobility of these operations.
- *Intelligence capability.* U.S. and UN officials agreed that U.S. operations would involve superior intelligence capability. The UN only recently established an intelligence policy—in May 2017—having recognized that some peacekeeping operations had been deployed in fragile political and security environments with asymmetrical and complex threats.²⁵ However, UN officials acknowledged that the scope of UN intelligence capability remains limited.
- *Counterterrorism capability.* DOD officials told us that a U.S. peacekeeping operation would have the capability to include a counterterrorism component and would not be constrained in the use of force, if needed, in response to terrorist threats. UN peacekeeping operations, on the other hand, lack the capabilities and specialized military preparation to engage in counterterrorism operations, according to the UN High-level Panel report. The UN report stated that counterterrorism should be undertaken by the host government, a capable regional force, or an ad hoc coalition authorized by the UN Security Council. According to the UN report, UN peacekeeping operations may engage in proactive and preemptive use of force to

²⁴United Nations, A/70/95-S/2015/446, *Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People* (June 17, 2015).

²⁵United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations /Department of Field Support, *Policy on Peacekeeping Intelligence* (May 2, 2017).

protect civilians and UN personnel from threats; however, offensive force to degrade, neutralize or defeat an opponent is a fundamentally different type of posture that should be authorized by the Security Council only under limited and exceptional circumstances.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to DOD, State, and the UN for review and comment. DOD provided a letter, reproduced in appendix II, which stated that it had no comments. State did not provide comments. The UN provided technical comments, which we incorporated into our report as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretaries of Defense and State, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-9601 or melitot@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made significant contributions to this report are listed in appendix III.



Thomas Melito
Director, International Affairs & Trade

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Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of this report were to (1) compare the reported costs of a specific United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operation to the estimated costs of a hypothetical, comparable operation implemented by the United States; (2) identify factors that affect cost differences; and (3) identify stakeholder views on the relative strengths of UN and U.S. peacekeeping operations.

To compare the reported costs of a specific UN peacekeeping operation to the estimated costs of a hypothetical, comparable operation implemented by the United States, we selected the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) as a case study. We compared the reported UN expenditures for MINUSCA, which included both military and civilian components, with estimated costs for a hypothetical U.S. operation with a similar level of military and civilian personnel. Our comparison covers a total of 3 years and 3 months—from MINUSCA’s establishment in April 2014 through June 30, 2017, the end of UN fiscal year 2017. We selected MINUSCA because it is in sub-Saharan Africa, where most UN peacekeeping operations established since 2003 have taken place, and has a typical scope and budget compared to other UN peacekeeping operations in sub-Saharan Africa, according to U.S. and UN officials.¹ In addition, MINUSCA is one of the most recent UN peacekeeping operations; thus, initial expenditures for the operation are relatively current. Because the results of our cost comparison are based on a single case study, they cannot be generalized to all UN peacekeeping operations.

To determine the UN’s costs for MINUSCA, we analyzed UN budget and expenditure data covering the initial start-up period (April 2014 to June 2014) and the first 3 UN fiscal years (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017). We spoke with officials of the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support, and Management at UN Headquarters in New York, New York, to better understand the characteristics of MINUSCA and the different costs affecting MINUSCA’s budget and expenditures. We assessed UN expenditure data through discussions with cognizant UN officials and a review of external audits of UN budgetary information and found them sufficiently reliable for our purposes. We also analyzed data

¹We are not suggesting by our selection of MINUSCA that the United States would likely implement such an operation in the Central African Republic (CAR) in the absence of a UN peacekeeping operation there. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether the United States would implement a peacekeeping operation in CAR—if it deemed such an operation to be in the national interest—in the same way as the UN.

on U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping operations for fiscal years 2014 through 2017 from the Department of State's (State) Bureau of International Organization Affairs to determine total U.S. contributions to MINUSCA, and UN peacekeeping operations overall.

To estimate the costs of a hypothetical, comparable operation implemented by the United States, we developed a hypothetical scenario for a U.S. operation based on the MINUSCA budget and supporting documents, assuming deployment of the same number of military, civilian, and police personnel in the Central African Republic (CAR) over the same time period (April 2014 through June 2017). To estimate the military portion of the operation, we interviewed Department of Defense (DOD) officials and staff at the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), a DOD-sponsored non-profit corporation involved in developing cost estimates for U.S. contingency operations.² The Office of the Undersecretary of Defense-Comptroller and IDA generated a cost estimate for the military components included in the hypothetical operation using the Contingency Operations Support Tool (cost estimating tool). DOD uses this tool to develop cost estimates for all military contingency operations. The cost estimate included only the incremental costs of the operation—those directly attributable to the operation that would not be incurred if the operation did not take place. For example, the estimate produced by the cost estimating tool did not include the direct salaries of active duty personnel as those costs would be incurred by the United States regardless of a possible decision to undertake the hypothetical operation. We assessed the cost estimating tool's applicability to developing a hypothetical cost estimate for the purposes of this report through discussions with DOD and IDA officials, and compared the tool to the accurate and comprehensive characteristics of a high-quality cost estimate, as described in the GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide.³ While we found the DOD cost estimating tool generated a sufficiently reliable cost estimate for a hypothetical U.S. peacekeeping operation, we did not assess the overall reliability of the

²IDA is a non-profit corporation that developed and maintains the Contingency Operations Support Tool model. IDA operates three Federally Funded Research and Development Centers and is sponsored by DOD and other federal agencies. One of these three centers oversees IDA's Cost Analysis and Research Division, which maintains the Contingency Operations Support Tool.

³GAO, *GAO Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide*, [GAO-09-3SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: March 2009).

tool or its capability to generate accurate or comprehensive estimates for future U.S. operations.

To generate our estimate of U.S. military costs using the DOD's estimating tool, we used UN military deployment numbers as a baseline for the scale of a hypothetical, comparable U.S. peacekeeping operation, while using unit sizes and rotations in deployment that were considered appropriate for the U.S. military, according to DOD and IDA officials. We based the hypothetical U.S. operation, and hence the cost estimate, on the following assumptions, which correspond approximately with MINUSCA's actual UN personnel deployments:

- Theater of operation: Central African Republic (CAR)
- Type of operation: military contingency
- Operation time frame: April 10, 2014 through June 30, 2017⁴
- Military contingents: as of June 30, 2017, 11,495 total personnel⁵ divided as follows:
 - Infantry: 10 units of 630-785 personnel per unit, approximately 90 percent active duty / 10 percent reserves
 - Communication / signals: 1 unit, 124 personnel per unit
 - Engineering: 4 units, 200 personnel per unit
 - Military police: 1 unit, 120 personnel per unit
 - Formed police units (military police):⁶ 12 units, 140 personnel per unit
 - Hospital / medical:⁷ 1 level III hospital, 248 beds, 495 personnel

⁴This is the end date we selected for the U.S. cost estimate; however, MINUSCA's mandate continues through November 15, 2018.

⁵All U.S. military personnel are active duty except where noted for infantry personnel.

⁶U.S. military police and UN formed police units may not have the same skill sets—for example, formed police units require regular policing skills—as some countries contribute personnel to UN formed police units from their national police, rather than their militaries. However, for the purposes of this estimate and in consultation with State, DOD, and IDA, we used U.S. military police units in DOD's cost estimating tool to approximate the cost the United States would incur for the same amount of personnel, albeit in potentially a different capacity. U.S. military police units are sufficiently comparable to UN formed police units to be used for the purpose of estimating an approximate cost, according to DOD and IDA personnel.

- Helicopter units: 2 UH-60 C3 units, 1 MH-60M Assault attack helicopter unit, 100 personnel per unit
- Quick reaction force: 1 unit, 160 personnel per unit
- Special forces: 1 tactical civilian affairs unit, 1 Marine special operations intelligence unit, 160 personnel per unit
- Unmanned aerial vehicle: 1 unit, 84 personnel
- Transportation: 1 heavy transport unit, 120 personnel per unit
- Military parameters:
 - Operational tempo: 1.0 for all phases of operation and units, except aviation units (set at 1.5)
 - Deployment schedule and phasing: phased deployment, including 14 days for predeployment (e.g., training), 5 days for deployment, 180 days for active duty unit sustainment and 270 days for reserve unit sustainment, 5 days for redeployment, and 0 days for reconstitution
 - Housing: contractor-provided semi-permanent housing
 - Transportation: personnel and equipment transported by airlift from the United States (primarily Fort Hood, Texas), material (such as water, food, and other consumables) transported by airlift from Italy

We obtained input on the operational design for the military portion of the cost estimate from DOD officials in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense-Policy, and the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense-Comptroller, and IDA officials. However, the military portions of the scenario and their corresponding cost estimate have some limitations. As a result of rounding for some units, U.S. military personnel numbers do not exactly match the MINUSCA deployment levels. In addition, based on input from DOD officials, we attempted to select military units that would provide an essential function per U.S. common practices while keeping the overall personnel deployment level as close as possible to MINUSCA's deployment level. An actual U.S. military plan may differ significantly from the UN plan as a result of

⁷The UN deployed hospital capabilities for MINUSCA starting just before the second year of the operation. However, according to DOD and IDA officials, the United States would likely deploy its full hospital complement from the start of the operation. Therefore, for the hypothetical U.S. operation, we included deployment of a hospital from the beginning of the scenario, rather than match the UN's later deployment, in accordance with DOD input.

differences between U.S. and UN military operations, structure, doctrine, and circumstances at the time of the operation.

To estimate U.S. civilian costs, we matched the number of U.S. civilian police and personnel to the number serving in MINUSCA. We then estimated the costs of deploying these U.S. civilian personnel in CAR for the same time period as MINUSCA. We did not attempt to determine how the U.S. government would actually implement civilian components of a peacekeeping operation in CAR.

To estimate U.S. civilian police costs, we met with State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) to identify State's costs for civilian police contractors providing police training and technical assistance in sub-Saharan Africa. Based on INL's input we assumed that the base salary of civilian police would be grade 13, step 5 on the Office of Personnel Management's general schedule salary tables for federal employees. In addition to the average base salary, we identified other costs—with input from INL—including, among others, personal equipment, travel from the United States, and State's published allowances specific to CAR for local cost of living, post hardship differential, danger pay, and living quarters. We applied the average cost per officer to the average number of UN civilian police officers deployed in MINUSCA.

To estimate U.S. civilian personnel costs, we met with State's Bureau of Budget and Planning to identify the costs of State Foreign Service officers and locally employed staff, based on the number of UN international and national civilian staff deployed to MINUSCA, respectively. We matched the number of State Foreign Service officers for the U.S. cost estimate to the number of UN international staff in MINUSCA, with input from State to align the grade levels. The estimated costs for Foreign Service officers include average salaries based on State's Foreign Service salary tables and State's allowances specific to CAR, including local cost of living, post hardship differential, and danger pay. We also met with State Bureau of Budget and Planning officials to estimate other costs for Foreign Service officers, which we included in our cost estimate, including post assignment travel, administrative support costs, residential furnishings, and residential guards, among others, but we did not assess the reliability of these additional costs provided by State. In addition, State's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations provided the actual costs of residential leases for Foreign Service officers in CAR in fiscal year 2017, which we

used to estimate the cost of housing Foreign Service officers in CAR.⁸ We also matched the number of State locally employed staff to the number of UN national staff deployed to MINUSCA and added their average salaries and other costs in CAR based on data provided by State's Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services.

While MINUSCA's expenditures also included costs for sending an annual average of up to about 200 UN volunteers to CAR, State officials told us that the United States generally would not send volunteers through its assistance efforts to a high-risk post, such as CAR. Therefore, we did not include any costs related to volunteers in the cost estimate. We also did not include costs related to host-government-provided personnel serving in MINUSCA. In addition, UN expenditures included about \$7 million for "quick-impact projects" to support local government infrastructure and civil society initiatives. We did not include comparable costs for quick-impact projects in our U.S. cost estimate because we did not have a basis for matching these costs.

To identify factors that affect cost differences between MINUSCA and a hypothetical, comparable operation implemented by the United States, we reviewed the U.S. cost estimate generated in conjunction with DOD, IDA, and State officials, and identified significant areas of cost for the United States and the assumptions incorporated in the estimate or factors specified by U.S. officials that drive those costs. We compared the U.S. cost estimate, including these significant areas of cost, to UN costs to identify differences. We interviewed U.S. and UN officials regarding U.S. and UN standards and policies that explain differences between MINUSCA costs and the estimated costs of a U.S. operation.

To identify stakeholder views on the relative strengths of UN and U.S. peacekeeping operations, we reviewed UN reports on peacekeeping operations and interviewed UN, DOD, and State officials. In addition, we reviewed GAO's 2006 report comparing the costs as well as the strengths

⁸Our cost estimate does not include the cost of providing additional office space for civilian personnel in CAR. State officials told us that it was not possible to estimate this cost because there is no comparable situation in the region involving a large number of U.S. civilian personnel on which to base an estimate of office space costs. U.S. civilian staff in Bangui work in the U.S. embassy building where space would be too limited for the number of civilians in the hypothetical cost estimate. Our cost estimate also does not include the costs of providing diplomatic security to civilian staff.

of a UN peacekeeping operation in Haiti with those of a hypothetical U.S. operation.⁹

We conducted our review from February 2017 through February 2018 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

⁹GAO, *Peacekeeping: Cost Comparison of Actual UN and Hypothetical U.S. Operations in Haiti*, [GAO-06-331](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 21, 2006).

Appendix II: Comments from the Department of Defense



SPECIAL OPERATIONS /
LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

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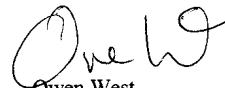
JAN 16 2018

Mr. Thomas Melito
Director, International Affairs & Trade
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Melito:

Thank you for affording the Department of Defense (DoD) the opportunity to review GAO Draft Report, GAO-18-243, "UN PEACEKEEPING: Cost Estimate for Hypothetical U.S. Operation Exceeds Actual Costs for Comparable UN Operation," dated December 15, 2017 (GAO Code 101739).

DoD has reviewed the draft report and has no additional comment. Please accept this as DoD's official response.


Owen West
Assistant Secretary



Appendix III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Thomas Melito (202) 512-9601 or melitot@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the individual named above, Drew Lindsey (Assistant Director), Howard Cott, Juan Pablo Avila-Tournut, Debbie Chung, Martin de Alteriis, Neil Doherty, Jennifer Leotta, Caitlin Mitchell, Elizabeth Repko, and Alex Welsh made significant contributions to this report.

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