

PROGRAM ON INTERNATIONAL POLICY ATTITUDES

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U.S. PUBLIC ATTITUDES ON UN PEACEKEEPING

PART I FUNDING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the United States has been a strong supporter of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, it has repeatedly underpaid its UN peacekeeping dues, in the current fiscal year by more than half. This inconsistency in US policy is frequently explained as being a result of the American public's resistance to spending money on such foreign activities.

To examine US public attitudes on UN peacekeeping and especially its funding, the Program on International Policy Attitudes carried out a poll with a nationwide sample of 700 Americans (margin of error +/- 4%) as well as open-ended interviews with 24 Americans from across the country. The key findings of the nationwide poll are:

1. The overwhelming majority of respondents supports UN peacekeeping in principle.

2. The majority is ready to support spending substantially more on UN peacekeeping than the US actually now spends. (However, this attitude may not be readily apparent because the majority imagines that the US spends much more than it does and feels that this imagined amount is too high.)

3. A plurality is willing to substantially increase the amount they personally spend on taxes in support of UN peacekeeping.

4. The majority feels the US should pay its UN peacekeeping dues in full.

5. Only a minority is concerned that the US is paying more than its fair share relative to other countries for UN peacekeeping.

6. The majority perceives the average American as less supportive of and more resistant to spending money on UN peacekeeping than they themselves are. This suggests that the public is misperceiving its own attitudes.

In the open-ended interviews respondents were asked to elaborate on the reasons that they support or oppose giving financial support to UN peacekeeping operations. Key arguments presented in support of funding UN peacekeeping were based on the intrinsic value of peacekeeping, the potential for peacekeeping to forestall other economic costs, the special responsibility the US has in the world, and the view that commitment to pay dues, once made, should be fulfilled. Key arguments in opposition to funding peacekeeping were that peacekeeping is intrinsically problematic, that the UN performs poorly, the US is carrying more than its fair share, the resources are needed at home, peacekeeping gives a poor return as an investment, and the UN might become too powerful.

INTRODUCTION

United States policy toward United Nations peacekeeping is remarkably inconsistent. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council the US has regularly supported, if not championed the idea of UN peacekeeping, voting in favor of all current peacekeeping operations. At the same time the US has consistently resisted committing the concomitant blood and treasure to such operations. It has repeatedly underpaid its UN peacekeeping assessments by a substantial margin: for fiscal year 1994 the US has appropriated less than half of its assessments. The US has also resisted contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations.

A common explanation for this resistance to spending money on and contributing troops to UN peacekeeping is based on the widespread assumption that the American public is largely disinterested in foreign affairs and is unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices. The purpose of this two-part study is to examine whether this is in fact the case. The present Part I deals primarily with the issue of funding UN peacekeeping, while a forthcoming Part II will deal with the question of committing US troops.

This inconsistency in US policy toward UN peacekeeping has a long history. During the period immediately following World War II the United States promoted the idea of a collective security system based in the UN. According to this idea the UN Security Council would have substantial armed forces at its disposal as called for in Article 43 of the UN Charter. In 1947 the US planned to contribute to such a force 20 ground divisions (about 300,000 troops), 2,250 fighters, 3 battleships, 6 aircraft

carriers, 15 cruisers, 84 destroyers and 90 submarines.

But with the rise of the Cold War and the resulting stalemates in the Security Council, notwithstanding the anomalous exception of the Korean War, this vision of a UN-based collective security system faded into the background to be replaced by a bipolar system based on alliances.

Nonetheless, a less muscular UN approach to collective security did emerge called "peacekeeping." The first peacekeeping operations, starting in 1948, involved small contingents of unarmed observers who monitored truces. Starting in 1956, though, UN peacekeeping forces were established that were larger, were armed and were meant to keep warring parties apart. By 1988, a total of 13 peacekeeping operations with 7 of them involving armed peacekeeping forces, had been undertaken.

With the end of the Cold War the potential of UN peacekeeping gained new prominence. Not only was the Soviet Union no longer an obstructionist member of the UN Security Council, but with the breakdown of the bipolar Cold War system local conflicts in need of peacekeeping efforts proliferated. Partly in recognition of this emergent potential, in 1988, UN peacekeeping forces were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Indeed, beginning in 1988, peacekeeping operations proliferated, with 20 new operations launched in the last few years. Presently there are 17 peacekeeping operations underway with a total of approxi-

mately 70,000 troops under UN command. Most prominent have been the operations in Cambodia, Namibia and El Salvador which successfully resolved civil wars.

UN peacekeeping operations have also become broadened in scope, including more intrusive actions such as disarming factions or aggressively protecting humanitarian assistance.

Though the US has enthusiastically supported UN peacekeeping operations, it has generally resisted contributing troops. During the Cold War this was widely regarded as appropriate given the politics of the time. Starting in 1991 the US contributed small numbers of unarmed troops to two observer missions. In 1992 the US for the first time contributed a substantial contingent of armed forces to the UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia. At its peak, the US had 3,252 troops under UN command (though over 25,000 U.S. troops participated in the Somalia relief effort outside of the UN peacekeeping structure). And in 1993 the US sent 300 armed troops to Macedonia as part of the peacekeeping operation in Yugoslavia (out of 29,800 for the operation as a whole). Presently other countries, especially NATO allies, have been urging the US to contribute more troops to the UN peacekeeping operation in Bosnia. The US administration, however, has resisted doing so until there is a peace

settlement it considers viable, and many members of Congress have expressed strong opposition.

More starkly, despite its support for peacekeeping per se and for the recent dramatic expansion of peacekeeping activities, the US has repeatedly failed to pay its full peacekeeping dues. For fiscal year 1994 Congress has appropriated only \$402 million though its assessment will be approximately a billion dollars.

So why does the US resist paying its dues for UN peacekeeping operations that it has approved? A widespread explanation that appears, explicitly and implicitly, in the media and in Congressional debate is that, though the administration continues to make commitments based on a concern for international order, Congress will not make the necessary appropriations because the people back home do not want to pay for it. The public is seen as responding to the end of the Cold War by becoming introverted if not isolationist, as having lost interest in the larger world and wanting to focus exclusively on problems at home.

To test this hypothesized view of the public the Program on International Policy Attitudes carried out a poll with a nationwide sample of 700 Americans as well as open-ended interviews with 24 Americans. The findings are reported below.

Results of Nationwide Poll

1. The overwhelming majority of respondents supports UN peacekeeping in principle.

Asked whether they "favor or oppose the idea of UN peacekeeping operations," 84% said they favored it (46% strongly) while 13% were opposed.

Respondents were then asked to evaluate different types of UN peacekeeping operations in principle. The numbers that supported various UN peacekeeping operations were:

in a **civil war** when the combatants want help - 69% (39% strongly) with 24% opposed

in the event of large-scale **atrocities** - 83% (63% strongly) with 14% opposed

in the event of gross **human rights**

violations - 81% (58% strongly) with 15% opposed.

As a kind of test of these positions, respondents were then briefly told about the civil war in the African country of **Burundi** and how the government there has requested UN peacekeeping forces. Though we can likely assume that most respondents had never even heard of the country of Burundi 73% favored sending UN peacekeeping forces there (36% strongly) with 20% opposed.

Respondents were also asked to rate a series of arguments, two in support of and two in opposition to UN peacekeeping in terms of how convincing they found them. Arguments in support of UN peacekeeping were found convincing by 62% and 76%, while arguments in opposition to UN peacekeeping were both found convincing by 36%. (See Table 1)

Support for UN Peacekeeping

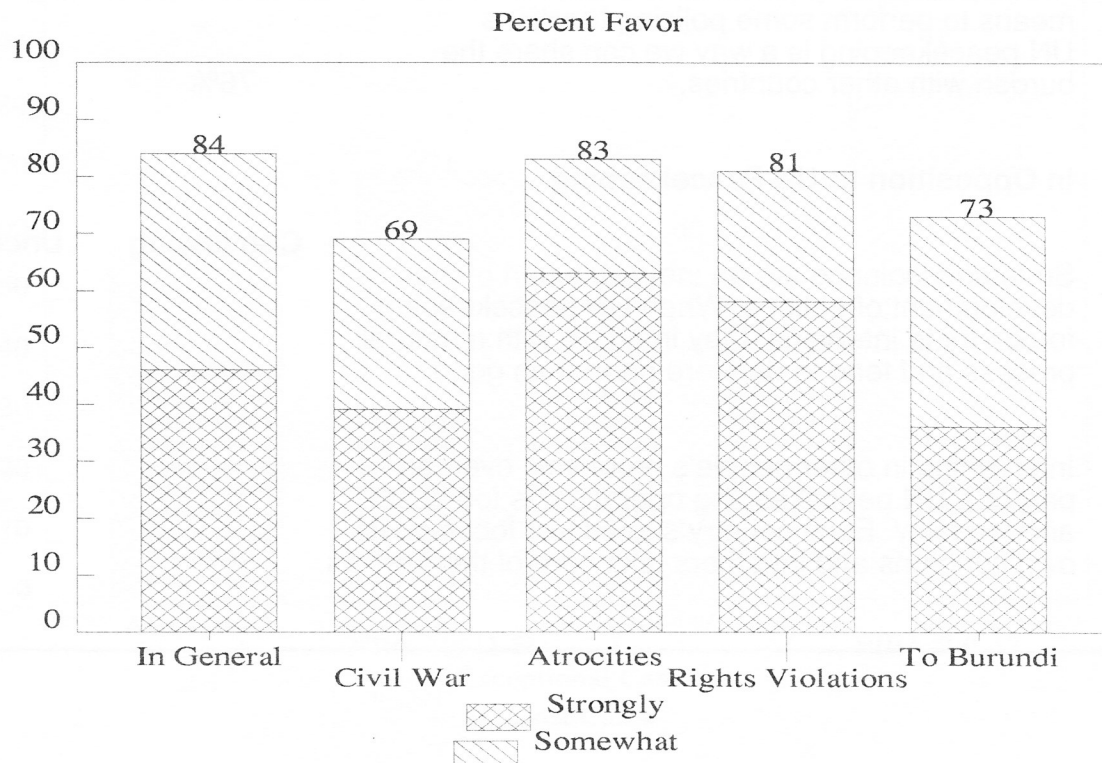


Table 1
Ratings of Arguments For and Against UN Peacekeeping

In Support of UN Peacekeeping

	Convincing	Unconvincing
UN peacekeeping operations have been very effective in resolving conflicts in a variety of countries including Cambodia, El Salvador and Namibia. Ending UN peacekeeping efforts would be immoral because war and suffering would go on longer than they would have to and many innocent people would die.	62%	35%
The only way for the US to not always be the "world policeman" is to allow the UN the means to perform some policing functions. UN peacekeeping is a way we can share the burden with other countries.	76%	21%

In Opposition to UN Peacekeeping

	Convincing	Unconvincing
Strife and violence are an inevitable part of the development of nations. When UN peacekeeping forces try to intervene, they interfere with a natural process and tend to do more harm than good.	36%	60%
Intervening in other people's problems, even as part of a UN peacekeeping operation, is too costly and too risky. Each country should just focus on its own concerns and let others take care of themselves.	36%	61%

Consistent with these principles, 91% favored contributing US troops to UN peacekeeping operations, with 49% favoring it "in most cases" and 42% "only in exceptional cases that directly affect US interests." This is consistent with other polls. Three different polls conducted by ABC News and NBC News in October and November of 1993 found support ranging from 58-71%. (The higher level of support found in the PIPA poll can be attributed to the fact that the PIPA poll offered three response options while the other polls only offered two.)

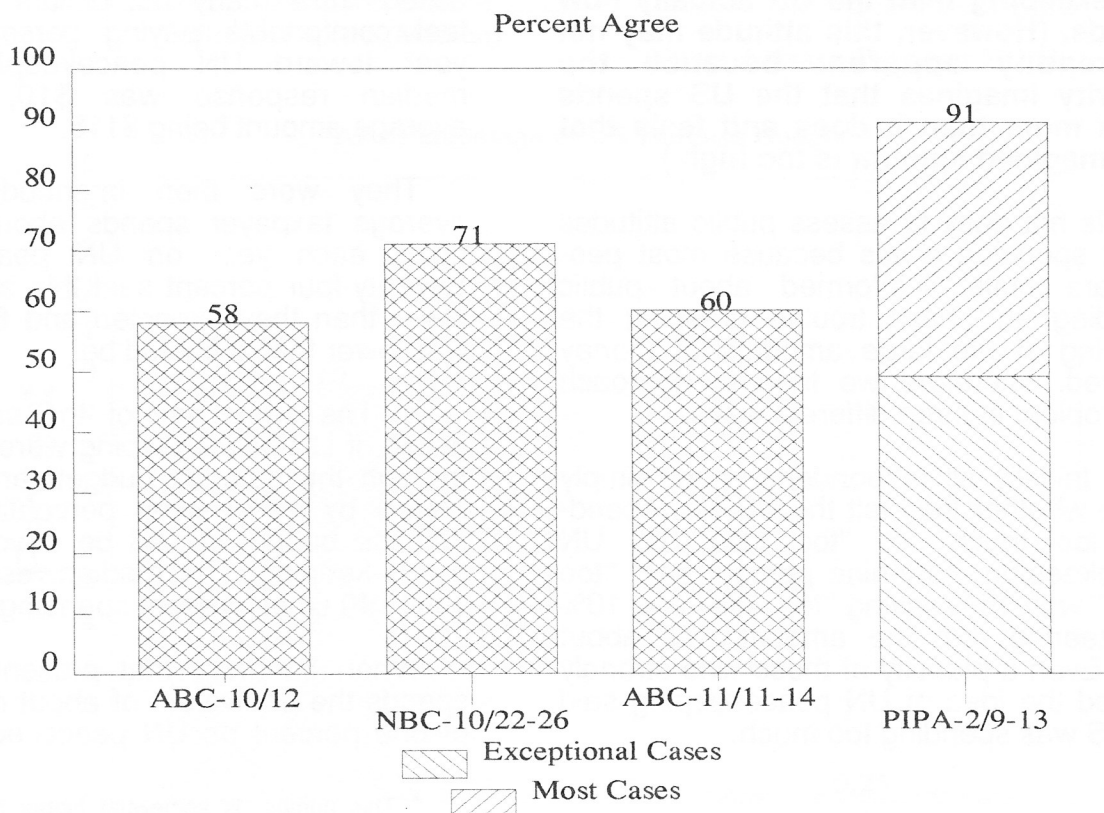
Interestingly, an overwhelming majority mistakenly believes that the US is already contributing troops to at least most UN peacekeeping operations. Eighteen percent believe the US has contributed troops to "all" UN peacekeeping operations, 61% to

"most" operations, with only 18% correctly believing that the US has contributed to "just a couple" of UN peacekeeping operations.

On the more specific question of sending US troops to be part of a UN peacekeeping operation in Bosnia, should the parties there come to an agreement, 72% favored the idea with 25% opposed.

Apparently the population of hard-core opponents to UN peacekeeping is extremely small. Most respondents took positions in opposition to peacekeeping on some questions but supported it in others. Of the 700 respondents only 1 respondent took positions in opposition to peacekeeping on every question. This was in contrast to 27 respondents (3.9% of the sample) who invariably supported peacekeeping.

Should US Send Troops?



Respondents with a total of 5 pro-peacekeeping responses or fewer (out of a possible 27) was still only 2.7% of the sample, while 48% had a total of only 5 or fewer anti-peacekeeping responses. Also, 33% of those who said the US should never commit troops to a UN peacekeeping operation nonetheless favored contributing troops to a UN peacekeeping operation in Bosnia.

Support for peacekeeping in principle was strong across nearly all demographic groups. Those age 65 and up were 20% below the sample as a whole in support for involvement in civil wars and overall tended to be less supportive of other peacekeeping options and of contributing troops. Blacks also leaned toward lesser support. But in both groups the majority was still generally supportive of UN peacekeeping.

2. The majority is ready to support spending substantially more on UN peacekeeping than the US actually now spends. (However, this attitude may not be readily apparent because the majority imagines that the US spends much more than it does and feels that this imagined amount is too high.)

It is not easy to assess public attitudes about spending levels because most people are quite ill-informed about public spending and have trouble grasping the meaning of the large amounts of money involved. Therefore we tried to approach the problem in three different ways.

a) Initially all respondents were simply asked whether they felt the US was spending "too much" or "too little" on UN peacekeeping. Fifty-nine percent said "too much" with 15% saying "too little" and 10% volunteering that the amount was about right. Even a plurality of those who strongly favored the idea of UN peacekeeping said the US was spending too much.

But this response seems to have been based on a misperception of the actual amount of spending. Respondents were told the actual amount of US spending on UN peacekeeping (about three-quarters of a billion dollars)* and then read a list of five other public spending items to help them grasp the significance of that number. Respondents were then asked whether the three-quarters of a billion was more or less than they expected. Fifty-five percent said it was less than they expected, with 31% saying it was more than they expected.

Respondents were then asked whether this amount was "higher or lower than it should be." Thirty-nine percent said it was higher than it should be, down from the 59% who had initially said the US was spending too much. A plurality of 42% now said that the amount being spent was lower than it should be, up from 15% who had initially said the US spending too little.

b) Half of the respondents were then asked "how many tax dollars would you feel comfortable paying personally each year toward UN peacekeeping?" The median response was \$10, with the average amount being \$115.

They were then informed that the average taxpayer spends about \$4.00 in taxes each year on UN peacekeeping. Seventy-four percent said this amount was lower than they expected and 62% said it was lower than it should be.

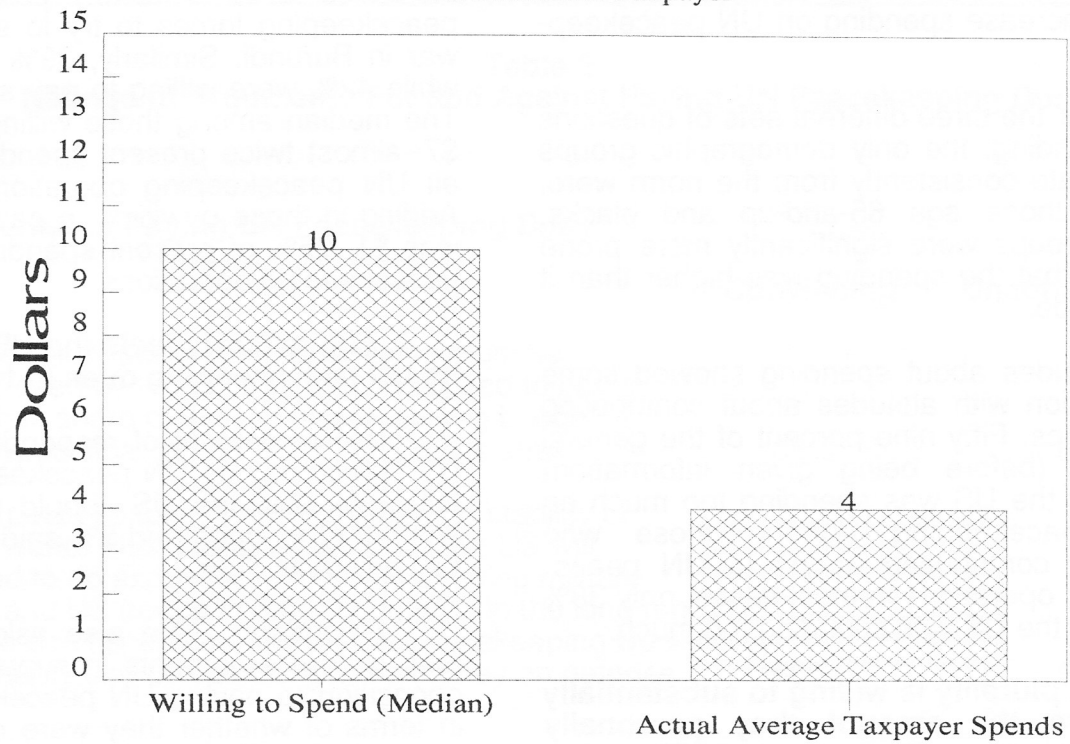
c) The other half of the sample was asked, if UN peacekeeping were to be paid through the defense budget (an idea supported by 61%) what percentage of the defense budget should be devoted to UN peacekeeping. The median response was 10% - 40 times present spending levels.

When informed that presently the US spends the equivalent of about one quarter of one percent on UN peacekeeping, 69%

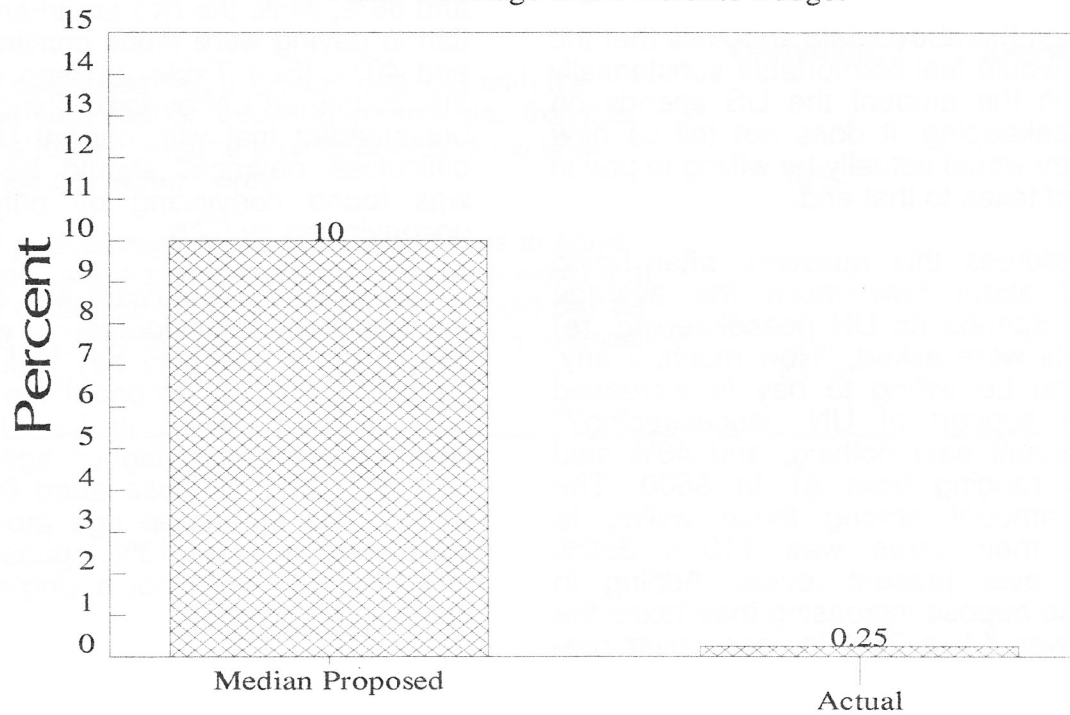
* This number is somewhat higher than the \$402 million the US paid in UN peacekeeping dues because for fiscal year 1994 there are some additional, non-reimbursed costs associated with US efforts in support of UN peacekeeping, particularly in Somalia and Yugoslavia.

Willingness to Spend

As Individual Taxpayer



As a Percentage of US Defense Budget



said this amount was lower than they expected and 58% thought this amount was lower than it should be. Sixty-two percent said they would be willing to cut spending in some other area of the defense budget so as to increase spending on UN peacekeeping.

Over the three different sets of questions on spending, the only demographic groups to deviate consistently from the norm were, again, those age 65-and-up and blacks. Both groups were significantly more prone to say that the spending was higher than it should be.

Attitudes about spending showed some correlation with attitudes about contributing US troops. Fifty nine percent of the general sample (before being given information) thought the US was spending too much on UN peacekeeping. Among those who favored contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations in most cases, only 38% thought the US was spending too much.

3. A plurality is willing to substantially increase the amount they personally spend on taxes in support of UN peacekeeping.

Though the above data suggests that the majority would feel comfortable substantially increasing the amount the US spends on UN peacekeeping, it does not tell us how much they would actually be willing to pay in increased taxes to that end.

To address this question, after being informed about how much the average taxpayer spends on UN peacekeeping, respondents were asked, "How much, if any, would you be willing to pay in increased taxes in support of UN peacekeeping?" Forty percent said nothing, and 46% said amounts ranging from \$1 to \$500. The median amount among those willing to increase their taxes was \$10--a 250% increase over present levels. Adding in those who oppose increasing their taxes the median was \$1--a 25% increase over pre-

sent levels.

Respondents were also asked how much money, if any, they would be willing to pay in increased taxes to make it possible to send peacekeeping forces to try to settle the civil war in Burundi. Similarly, 39% said nothing, while 42% were willing to pay some amount. The median among those willing to pay was \$7--almost twice present spending levels for all UN peacekeeping operations combined. Adding in those unwilling to pay, the median was \$1--25% of present spending on all UN peacekeeping operations.

4. The majority feels the US should pay its UN peacekeeping dues in full.

Fifty-five percent of respondents said the US should pay its UN peacekeeping dues in full, 34% said the US should pay a partial amount of its dues and 5% said it should not pay any of its dues.

Respondents were also asked to rate a total of four arguments in support of and in opposition to paying UN peacekeeping dues in terms of whether they were convincing or unconvincing. The two arguments in favor of paying dues were found convincing by 65% and 66%, while the two arguments in opposition to paying were found convincing by 21% and 40%. (See Table 2) Even an argument that confirmed UN peacekeeping in principle, but pleaded that with current US economic difficulties payment should be postponed, was found convincing by only 40% and unconvincing by 57%.

There was a significant age difference on the question of paying dues, with younger people more willing to pay in full and older people less willing. Among those aged 18-25, 67% favored paying in full. This amount declined with each higher age population, with only 25% of those aged 65-and-up so willing. The 65-and-up age group also had the highest number, 13%, opposed to paying any UN dues while not a single 18-25 year old took this position.

Table 2
Ratings of Arguments For and Against Paying UN Peacekeeping Dues

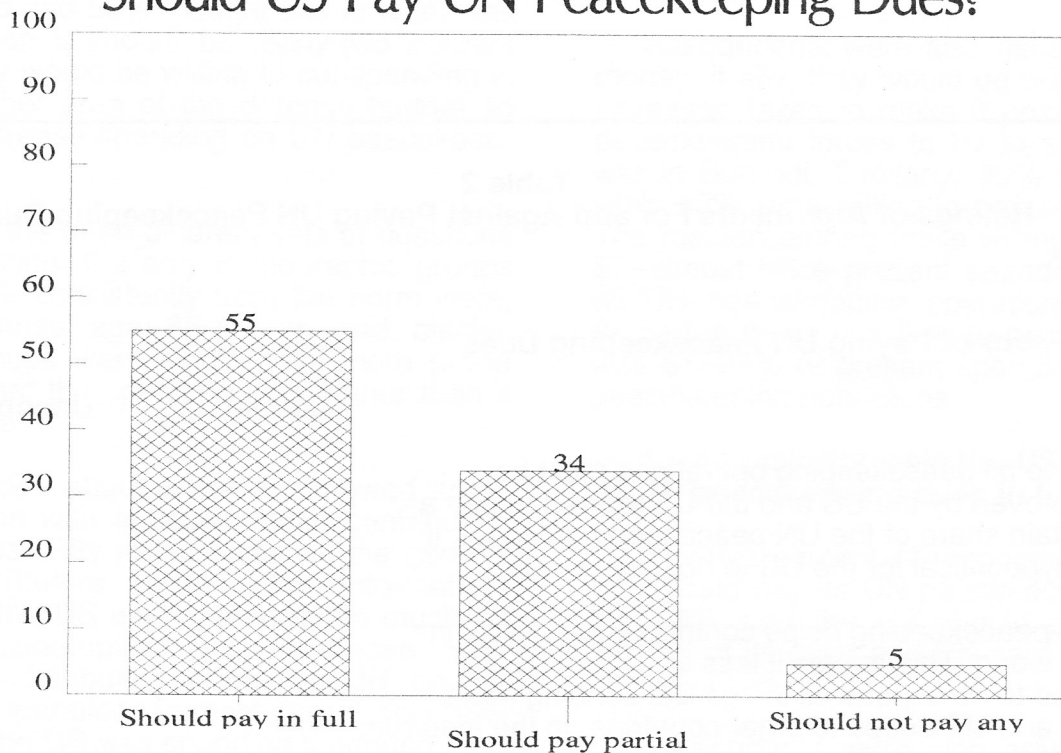
In Favor of Paying UN Peacekeeping Dues

	Convincing	Unconvincing
Since all peacekeeping operations must be approved by the US and the US agreed to pay a certain share of the UN peacekeeping budget, it is hypocritical for the US to not pay its dues.	65%	32%
UN peacekeeping helps contribute to stability in the world. This makes it less likely the US will need to do expensive things like sending military aid and US troops to other countries. In the long run, if we don't spend money on UN peacekeeping we will probably end up spending more money on defense.	66%	32%

In Opposition to Paying UN Peacekeeping Dues

	Convincing	Unconvincing
UN peacekeeping is a nice idea, but with the American economy having the troubles that it is, we should postpone paying our full dues until things get better here.	40%	57%
UN peacekeeping is a bad idea. It tries to solve other people's problems in parts of the world that are of little concern to the US. We should pay as little as possible for UN peacekeeping--preferably nothing.	21%	78%

Should US Pay UN Peacekeeping Dues?



Consistent with this support for paying dues, 63% agreed that "the UN should be able to charge countries interest on the amount they owe for back dues so as to encourage them to pay sooner rather than later." Thirty-seven percent disagreed.

5. Only a minority is concerned that the US is paying more than its fair share relative to other countries for UN peacekeeping.

Asked about the amount the US is assessed for UN peacekeeping relative to other countries, only 34% felt the US is being assessed "too much." Fourteen percent said the amount the US is being assessed is too low, 32% said it is "about right" and 20% did not answer.

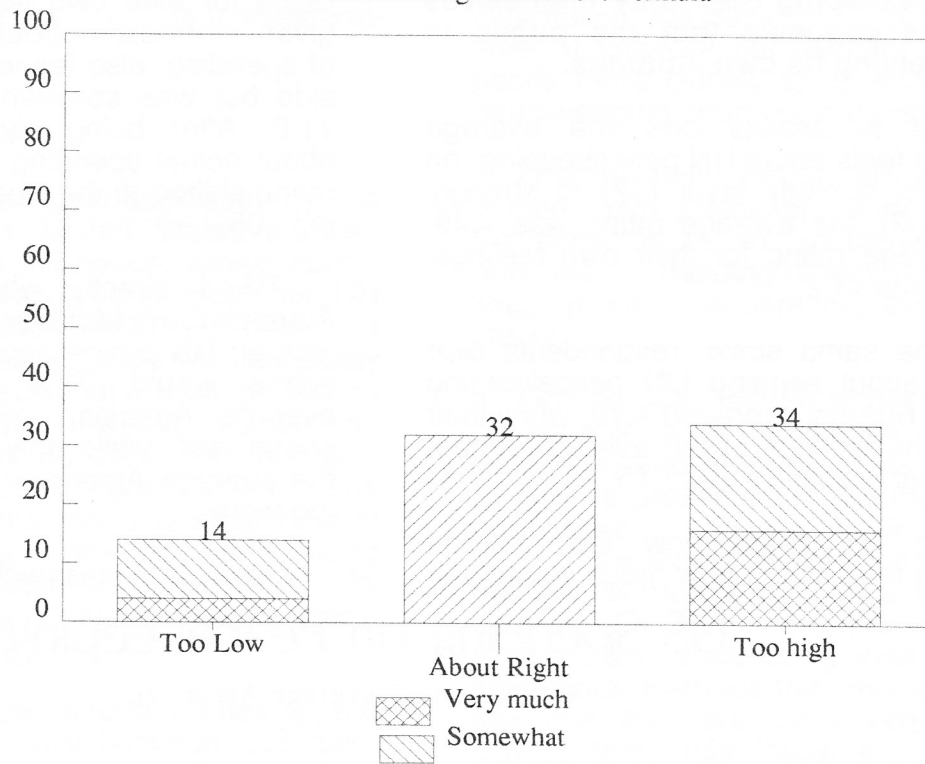
When respondents were told the percentage of the UN peacekeeping budget assessed to the US (just over 30%) and the principles by which this amount is calculated, the number feeling the US was being

assessed too much stayed nearly constant (33%). However the number saying the amount was "about right" jumped to 58%.

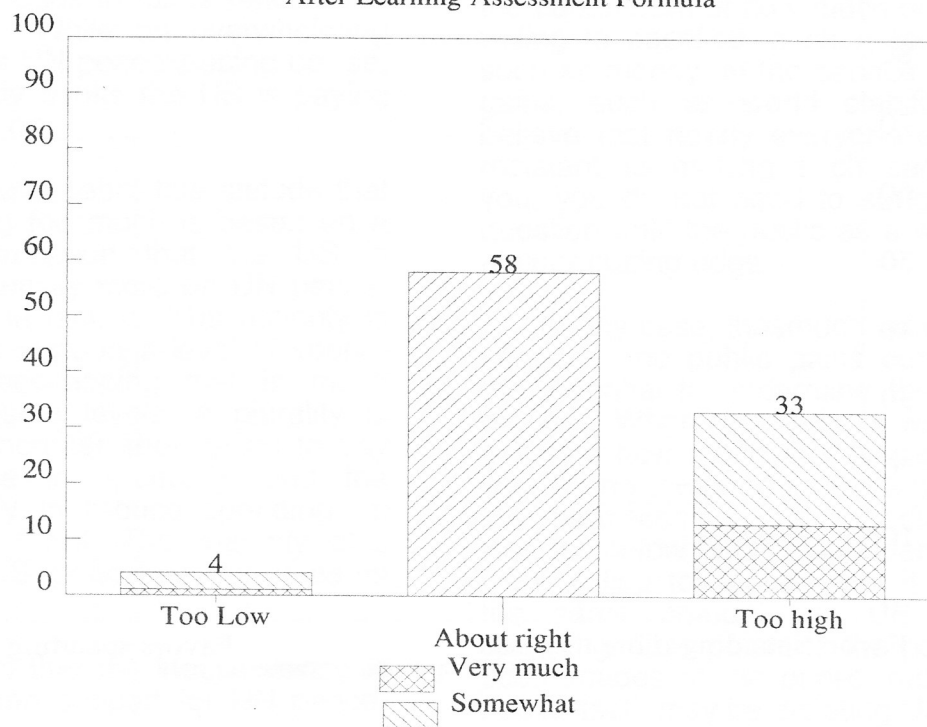
This information did not, however, influence attitudes about whether the US should pay its peacekeeping dues. Half of the sample was asked the question about paying dues before, and half after, being presented the information about how peacekeeping dues are assessed. There was no significant difference between the two groups. This may seem a somewhat surprising result because, as we will discuss below, in the interviews, when respondents explained why they opposed paying peacekeeping dues in full, they frequently mentioned feelings that the US was paying more than its fair share. Apparently, unlike some others, those who resist paying dues because of fair share concerns continue to feel that the US is paying more than its fair share after receiving information about how dues are assessed.

Is US Paying More Than Its Fair Share?

Before Learning Assessment Formula



After Learning Assessment Formula



6. The majority perceives the average American as less supportive of and more resistant to spending money on UN peacekeeping than they themselves are. This suggests that the public is misperceiving its own attitudes.

Asked to assess how the average American feels about UN peacekeeping, on a scale of strongly favor (+2) to strongly oppose (-2), the average rating was +.49. The average rating for their own feelings, though, was +1.2.

On the same scale, respondents own feelings about sending UN peacekeeping forces to Burundi averaged +.79, while their view of the feelings of the average American on this possibility was -.15.

Asked to assess how the average American feels about how much money the

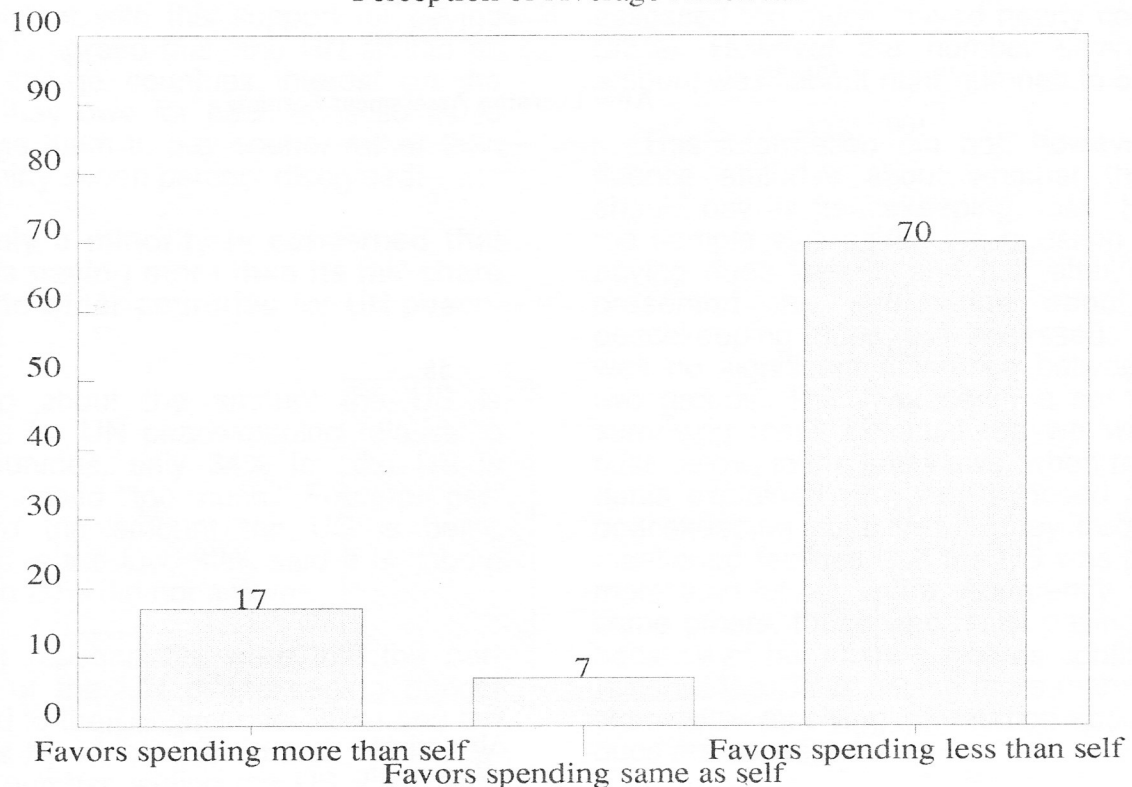
US is spending on UN peacekeeping on a scale of "too much" (+2) to "too little" (-2) the average rating was +1.4. The average rating for their own feelings, before being given information about the actual amounts of spending, also leaned to the "too much" side but was somewhat lower, averaging +1.0. After being given the information about actual spending levels their average rating shifted to the "too little" side, averaging -.05

Asked directly whether the average American would favor spending more or less on UN peacekeeping than they themselves would, 70% assumed that the average American would be willing to spend less, while only 17% assumed that the average American would favor spending more.

Obviously, inasmuch as this sample is

US Spending on Peacekeeping

Perception of Average American



representative of the general public, any discrepancy between its perception of the average American and its perception of itself signifies that the public is misinterpreting itself.

CONCLUSION

The original question addressed by this study is why the United States enthusiastically supports UN peacekeeping operations but substantially underpays its UN peacekeeping dues. While we have not fully answered this question we can safely reject the hypothesis that it is simply due to a recalcitrant public unwilling to make the financial sacrifices necessary to the commitments made by its government. The public is, it appears, not only supportive of UN peacekeeping in principle, but is willing to make a greater contribution to UN peacekeeping than that presently being made.

From one angle, though, it does appear that the inconsistency between U.S. support for peacekeeping operations and its failure to pay its dues in full is reflected in public attitudes. While an overwhelming majority supports UN peacekeeping per se, a modest majority thinks the US is paying too much for it.

But, as we have seen, this attitude that the US is paying too much is based on a widespread assumption that the US is spending substantially more on UN peacekeeping than it, in fact, is. The majority is actually ready to support a level of spending on UN peacekeeping that is much higher than present levels, a plurality is even willing to increase their taxes to pay for the increase in spending, and the majority is ready to reduce spending on defense to pay for it. The majority also favors paying US peacekeeping dues in full.

This suggests that the inconsistency in US policy between support for UN peace-

keeping and the unwillingness to pay for it, is not necessary for the sake of the public. Rather it appears that, given the proper information, the public is ready to support a level of financial commitment that corresponds more closely to its support for UN peacekeeping operations in principle.

One question, though, still lingers. Why is there such a widespread impression that the public is of an isolationist bent and opposed to spending money on UN peacekeeping when, apparently, this is not the case?

One possible reason is that the public is comfortable with this image of itself as isolationist and therefore does not resist it when it is presented in the media and by policymakers. As we found in the poll, on several measures those polled assumed that the average American is less supportive of and more resistant to spending money on peacekeeping than they themselves are. Perhaps this makes Americans feel that they are more virtuous or far-sighted than their fellow Americans. Perhaps it removes them from having to face the conundrum of how much one should be willing to sacrifice in short term interests, such as money, in the service of long term gains, such as world stability. If you believe that nearly everyone else is more resistant to making such sacrifices than you, you do not need to struggle with the question until the public as a whole arrives at your cutting edge.

In any case, inasmuch as this incorrect image of the public gains currency it has the potential to undermine the democratic process. When respondents were asked to estimate how much the average American was willing to spend in taxes personally on UN peacekeeping, the median estimate was far below what respondents said they were willing to spend. But it was exactly the same amount the US is, in fact, spending. This points to the possibility that such images of the public, rather than the public itself, may be dictating US policy.

Open-Ended Interviews

INTRODUCTION

To get a richer understanding of the attitudes that underlie the responses to the poll questions, open-ended telephone interviews were carried out with 24 Americans from across the country in January-February, 1994. These respondents were drawn from a random nationwide sample of 100 respondents who had participated in a preliminary test of the poll questionnaire in December 1993. Respondents were selected based on their questionnaire responses so as to have a balanced array of points of view on UN peacekeeping. Interviews lasted from 10 minutes to an hour. Respondents were read a number of key questions from the poll questionnaire, reminded of their responses and asked to elaborate on why they answered the way they did.

Given the size of the sample and even more so the nature of the interview method, the findings from this part of the study need to be viewed cautiously. Like the findings of a focus group, they give a sense of how average Americans are thinking on a subject, but they do not purport to give a clear picture of the distribution of these points of view across the population as a whole.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF PAYING FOR UN PEACEKEEPING

1. Intrinsic Value of Peace-keeping

Naturally one of the most common arguments in favor of paying for UN peacekeeping was based on the intrinsic value of peacekeeping. As one respondent said, as if it was almost self-evident, "I think it's a necessary element in keeping peace in the world."

In several cases peacekeeping was portrayed as preventing the escalation of conflicts.

I think that, if there's UN peacekeeping, then you can prevent some kinds of problems from getting larger.

* * *

Interviewer (I): ...and if we don't have UN peacekeeping operations, then what might happen?

Respondent (R): It looks like it's a free-for-all.

I: And why would that be bad? What would happen as a result?

R: Lots of lives lost.

* * *

If you use the resources wisely enough, you can handle most situations before they even get out of hand to where they would have other worse problems as in, like, war or whatever.

Others stressed a more humanitarian perspective such as the need to stop genocide:

If you have a country that is pretty much trying to eradicate one faction of people...that's no longer

war, that's slaughter...that needs to be stopped, because there's no reason for that...you really can't have that.

2. Forestalling Potential Economic Costs

Some respondents spoke of spending money on peacekeeping as a kind of investment that would reduce the likelihood of needing to spend even more money in the future. For example, one respondent advocated spending 20% of the defense budget (this would be over 50 billion dollars and about 70 times what the US is presently spending on peacekeeping). When pressed, he defended his position as follows:

I: If we did spend 20% of the defense budget, that would be a pretty dramatic increase in the amount that we spend on peacekeeping...

R: Yeah, it would be a dramatic increase, but I think that it's something that's important. I think it would be--it's a preventative and it would prevent us spending a lot of money on other things.

I: On other things?

R: Sort of like preventive medicine. ...If things could be negotiated or worked out more between the UN, it wouldn't come to where we would have to spend so much money on wars or all the things that we do helping the other countries.

Another explained similarly:

We spend so much money on trying to protect ourselves from war...(but by spending money on peacekeeping) we might not have to spend so much money on war. We could spend it on making the world a better place.

3. The US Has a Special Responsibility

Some respondents justified their support for spending US tax dollars on UN peacekeeping by stressing that the US, by dint of its economic and military resources, has a special responsibility in the world. As one respondent said, "Somebody's got to do it (peacekeeping)...I don't think that the small countries can take care of themselves."

In some cases this sense of responsibility was very broad:

I feel we do have...the responsibility to do our share as far as the world and to try to keep peace amongst everybody.

Some emphasized a humanitarian perspective:

I think if we're capable of doing humanitarian things, and virtually no one else seems to be interested in doing them, than we ought to step up to the plate, so to speak.

* * *

My strongest feelings are there are so many children in the world that are dying all over the place. True, we can't afford to take care of our own children right now because we're spending so much money on trying to prepare for war, but if we didn't, if we sent that money in a different manner, we might be able to take care of our own children and other people's. There's just too many people that can't survive without help from someone.

While others stressed US responsibility to contribute to the amelioration of human rights abuses:

Somebody has to protect the rights

of people who can't fight for themselves or defend themselves. And I feel the United States, they have the most resources, and the ability...and financial resources to defend the people who don't have that type of resource.

4. Once Commitments Are Made, They Should Be Fulfilled

Numerous respondents emphasized the value of keeping commitments as a reason for paying UN peacekeeping dues. Sometimes this was put in terms of organization membership:

If we're a member of the UN we really do have a responsibility to pay our dues.

Even respondents who did not support peacekeeping or felt the dues were too high supported paying dues on the basis of the value of keeping commitments.

We owe the money, we might as well--it seems to me if we owe it, we should pay it... (though) I thought we paid entirely too much.

* * *

Even though I don't agree with the commitments, I think once they've been made, unless we can change them, why, I think we have to go ahead and do what we agree to do.

Another respondent--one who felt the dues were too high--expressed concern that non-payment of dues contributed to people's sense that the US government was not good at keeping its word.

[If] you and I in this conversation make an agreement of some kind,

we are bound to honor it. And one of the problems with any governmental organization is the fact that people seem to be more and more skeptical of its commitment to its word, and so if the government of the United States says it's going to pay, it better pay.

ARGUMENTS USED IN OPPOSITION TO PAYING FOR UN PEACEKEEPING

1. Peacekeeping is Intrinsically Problematic

Very few respondents consistently rejected peacekeeping in principle. And when they did they would often eventually shift to other rationales that stressed problems in the achievement of peacekeeping objectives rather than the objectives themselves. Nevertheless, there were several cogent arguments against spending money on peacekeeping that stressed that peacekeeping is inherently a bad idea.

A recurring argument (one that was also rated as convincing by 36% in the poll) was that strife and violence are inevitable and thus peacekeeping efforts interfere with a natural process. One respondent took the fatalistic position that peacekeeping efforts are akin to battling the forces of nature itself:

R: I feel like we waste so much time and money and life in these countries. It's sort of a feeling of let nature take its course.

I: What would that mean, let nature take its course?

R: Well, you know, flood, famine, disease, plague control a great deal of what happens to the world. It always has. So, why don't we just let nature take its course?

I: You feel that war is about the same as flood, famine and plague?

R: In many areas, it's gone on for hundreds of years. Look at slavery starting 5,000 years ago at least. It's been a -- I won't say a natural thing, but it has been an event that occurs over and over.

Some, though, argued more simply that peacekeeping can interfere with the natural process of a civil war by which the majority inevitably asserts its will.

R: I think that if other countries would butt out of other countries' business, everything would probably work out in its natural course. I think that -- the whole thing with UN peacekeeping is that it's kind of a waste of money because it's disrupting the natural system...

I: Can you say more about that natural system or how it's disrupting the natural system?

R: Well, we had a civil war and the blacks got their freedom and stuff like that. It was a war, and everything will kind of work out, I think, on its own course. If you have troops from different countries coming over to fight on one side, then that's kind of giving one side an edge to the other and I see littler chances of that working out for the best because that side is getting aided, you know, and that might -- in almost all wars, the majority will win. You know, whoever's got the most guns, the most people, the most technology and whatnot, and what the majority thinks is probably the best.

Others put the argument in quasi-historical terms, suggesting that

peacekeeping could never alter the role of violence in specific areas of the world.

I think we could have peacekeeping forces in places like the Middle East forever, and there still would be reasons for that area to fight. It has nothing to do with what's going on today. It's the history and all that.

2. The United Nations Performs Poorly

Some respondents in some of their poll responses opposed peacekeeping in principle but when asked to elaborate, they shifted to arguments that stressed that the problem was with the performance of the United Nations. Others embraced peacekeeping in principle but were reluctant to spend money on it due to a lack of confidence in the UN. The performance issues raised varied from the UN showing insufficient forethought and preparation, to a lack of determination and political will.

Why am I unhappy with the United Nations? I think it's pretty obvious. You look at what they've accomplished, and it hasn't amounted to much, and you know, so as a result, if I were in Serbia's shoes, I'd be saying the same thing...These people are not accomplishing a damn thing, and I think that, yeah, they need to show more teeth. They also need to show more organization.

* * *

Basically, they'll jump into a problem without really sitting and

talking the problems out to find out what really the deal is...kind of to get into a situation and solve it without knowing the true reason behind the problem. That's sort of why...they sometimes cause more harm...because they don't really know what they're doing in the first place there.

3. The US is Carrying More Than Its Fair Share

One of the dominant arguments against paying UN peacekeeping dues was based on the assumption that the US is carrying more than its fair share relative to other countries. In a few cases this was directly related to the American contribution to the United Nations.

R: I understand that...statistics [i.e. the assessment formula] may back up their support, but at any rate, I think that others could do more now.

I: Let me ask you what especially gives you that sense that the US is going it alone too much in this?

R: Well, your terminology I think is correct when you say 'gives me that sense' and it's--this I feel more comfortable saying is perception rather than a fact, whether it is a fact or not, I don't know - but I just felt that over the years, every time the UN asks for money, we tend to give it and for all things, and we had to be the main supporter and we've just carried more than our share for years and years and I think it's probably catch-up time now.

However, in most cases when respondents were reminded what the US proportion is and how that percentage was arrived at, they would not reject the assessment formula itself but would shift to other

bases for sustaining the position that the US is carrying more than its fair share.

Some respondents insisted that in the conduct of UN business and especially peacekeeping the US covers numerous costs in addition to paying its assessments.

(We are) supplying most of the weapons for half these other countries when they do get involved. They're driving our tanks, flying our planes and shooting our guns. And to pay 30% of the running cost for the United Nations seems to be a little steep.

* * *

America has the UN headquarters, and everything else like that is here. We bear a lot of burden with the diplomats from other countries and all that...I mean, people with parking tickets and all these things.

Some stressed that the US should not be expected to pay its UN peacekeeping dues in full when other countries are not paying theirs.

I think that we should (pay our dues) if other countries do, but I don't think that we should be the only ones...I don't think we always have to be the biggest and the most. I think it's time that Germany and Japan did their fair share.

* * *

If they're not paying, why should we? ...You know, there's a difference between what you should do and what you do do...And that's what it is in a lot of these cases."

Though some implicitly recognized that the assessment

formula made some sense, they would express instead a more general feeling that the US is carrying more than its fair share in world affairs. The most recent events invoked to justify this feeling were the negotiations with Germany and Japan over financial support for the Gulf War. That both governments eventually did pay has gone unnoticed or forgotten, but their lack of eagerness at the beginning has apparently left a strong memory.

When we had the Persian Gulf war, and all the different countries were supposed to be providing part of the budget...and I remember Japan, I think, was one of the countries, and some others who should have been taking a bigger slice, and I felt they were not paying as much...why should America pay a bigger slice of things?...the other countries are also benefiting from the outcome of whatever happens.

Others sustained the view that the US is carrying more than its fair share by arguing that other countries have major and long-standing debts to the US.

Why should we pay if nobody else does? We're still trying to collect from World War I!

* * *

There are so many countries out there--I think it's Egypt that owes us nine billion dollars. There's so many countries that owe us so much money. I think if you sat down and tallied it all up, they owe us, not the other way around.

4. The Resources are Needed at Home.

The argument that money for peacekeeping should be limited because those resources are needed here at home was made rather infrequently. When it was made, it was often made in conjunction with the "fair share" argument discussed just above.

I think we should pay most of our share, but I think there's a lot more important issues at home that we should be concerned about. And I think that we do give our share, and lots of times I think we give more than our share and forget about the people here and just worry about protecting the world, when we should be worrying about getting guns off the streets and getting parents involved in their children's lives.

* * *

I'm in favor of putting the money more toward education and feeding the children that are starving in our own country...I think a lot of times we contribute more than most countries and that's why we're in debt to everybody.

5. UN Peacekeeping Gives a Poor Return on Investment.

Some respondents felt that funding for UN peacekeeping, as an investment, had given the US a poor return.

In my opinion, we pay a very disproportionate share of the cost to fund operations and so forth, and I think all we get in return is not adequate.

* * *

It's a matter of such a large amount of money, and what it does for us,

if we really get enough out of it, I don't know if we should or not.

On occasion respondents connected this idea with that of bureaucratic wastefulness.

R: Probably the reason I said [the amount was] too much is... [not that] there's probably too much money spent, but it's probably not spent correctly...there's probably a lot of waste involved. ...

I: Does that mean you'd like to see the US spend less?

R: Not necessarily, as long as what they would spend would be as beneficial as possible in the right areas where it's needed the most.

One respondent argued that the likely threats to the US security in the post-Cold War world are from hostile countries, not from the civil wars that peacekeeping addresses.

There are a lot of countries that still have...a grudge against the United States and those are the ones that we're going to have [to defend] against, not the ones that are having a civil war....The money spent at the UN would help the world as a whole, but it may not necessarily mean that the countries that are going to be attacking us, maybe--[that] they're going to stop that.

And here as elsewhere, the "fair share" issue was sometimes brought in, swamping the question of whether investment in peacekeeping gives a good return.

I would hope that whatever money we would put toward the UN, that it would save us money in the end, but I don't know if that's really the case. I think that, any way we look at it, people will expect us to give

more because they think that we have the money and the time and everything to give, and I don't know in some cases if that's really true, and it ends up costing us more.

6. Fear of the UN

Finally there was a type of objection to paying UN dues that is not common but is distinctive enough that it deserves mention--those who hold this view often feel very strongly about it. This is the belief that the UN could eventually serve as the vehicle for a uniform, oppressive world government. Respondents who expressed this belief typically recognized that the UN of today seems a poor candidate for global empire, but, nonetheless, retained the belief.

R: There are folks in the world that would like to have a one-world government instead of having any kind of sovereignty, and they are proponents of giving up all that. One currency, one government, under some organization like the UN, and in principle I hate that idea.

I: Who are the people that you are thinking of...the Secretary General...the staff...the representatives of the different nations...?

R: No, I wouldn't say necessarily people in that organization doing it. I couldn't identify any of them, but there are folks that I've read who are proponents of one-world government... Not necessarily anybody in the organization. I could not give you some good reasons for that. It's just a gut feel.

This attitude has been found by PIPA in interviews for other studies. Even respondents who knew that the

US, as a permanent member, can veto any Security Council action, still expressed fears that the UN would somehow evolve into a form that could pose a threat to the US or impose its will over American objections. Withholding support for the UN was seen as a way to nip this possibility in the bud.

CONCLUSION

Seeing this list of arguments for and against funding UN peacekeeping, it is easy to assume that respondents divided neatly into two schools of thought, one in favor and one opposed. This was not, however, the case. Typically respondents made statements that variously implied support for and opposition to funding UN peacekeeping. As was discussed above, the responses to the poll questionnaire also showed that respondents did not fit into consistent response categories.

In the interviews we often pointed out apparent inconsistencies in the respondent's questionnaire responses, giving them an opportunity to try to integrate them. In some cases respondents would persist in holding seemingly inconsistent positions. But in other cases respondents did manage to pull together a fairly coherent position, sometimes by qualifying or even changing their earlier position on a question.

During the course of the interview, respondent's who had expressed support for the idea of UN peacekeeping in some cases but not

in others, tended to gradually clarify that they did support peacekeeping in principle; their problem was with the way peacekeeping was being performed.

Some respondents consistently supported the principle of peacekeeping but wavered when it came to spending money on it. The effect of deliberation during the interview and the review of the actual amounts being spent on peacekeeping tended to soften the resistance to spending. This does not mean that their reservations about certain aspects of peacekeeping were entirely resolved. Rather it seemed that as the doubts and concerns they had about peacekeeping became clearer (such as that the US was paying more than its fair share or that the UN was not performing well in particular cases) they felt less the need to express those feelings through objections to spending.

Overall what is most striking is how few respondents consistently opposed UN peacekeeping: apparently peacekeeping resonates with deeply held American values. And though there are persistent patterns of thinking in the American public that diffuse the support for paying for it, overall when Americans think about the principles implicit in UN peacekeeping and focus on the actual amounts being spent, the underlying support for peacekeeping in principle tends to assert itself.

APPENDIX 2

HOW POLL WAS CONDUCTED

- 18% Strongly Conservative
- 39% Neither or Middle of the Road
- 4% Don't know/Refused

46. What is the highest level of education that you have had:

- 7% Some High School
- 23% High School Graduate
- 33% Some College
- 22% Year College Degree
- 14% Advanced Degree (Master's Plus)
- 1% Refused

47. What is your ethnic affiliation?

- 82% White/Caucasian
- 7% Black/African American
- 2% Asian American
- 5% Hispanic/Mexican American
- 1% Native American
- 2% Other
- 1% Refused

48. [Determine if respondent is male or female and select appropriate answer.]

- 52% Male
- 48% Female

This poll was conducted on February 9-13, 1994. 700 American adults (52% males, 48% females) were interviewed by telephone by National Research Inc., in Washington, D.C..

Respondents were chosen from all households in the nation by a random digit dialing sample using the Genesys System and was provided by the Marketing Systems Group in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Interviewers observed gender quotas. The margin of error was plus or minus 4%.