

Forum: Disarmament Commission

Issue: Reducing global military expenditure

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Introduction

In a world where potential threats to national security are increasingly seen, global military expenditure is rising. The powerful nations of the world are showing less commitment to reducing their budgets in pursuit of national interests, which has led/can lead further to: an increase in hate for them, other nations feeling threatened to increase their own military expenditure, and an arms race and in turn insecurity.

In consequence, more nations around the world possess or have the means to obtain weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical, biological, or other types. There have been many movements and treaties in attempts to control the flow and deployment of weapons, in order to promote security. However, there are no legally binding international treaties or agreements on the reduction of global military expenditure today.

Definition of Key Terms

Military Expenditure

Expenses of a nation's defense ministry and other ministries on the recruiting and training of military personnel, in addition to the purchasing or constructing of military equipment and supplies.

Arms race

A continuing competition between two or more nations to have the most powerful weapons.

General Overview

The increase in global military expenditure

In recent years, global military expenditure has been rising. As of 2008, it stands at over \$1.46 trillion in annual expenditure at current prices. This means that there has been a 45 percent increase in expenditure over a ten-year period since 1999. Additionally, this means that 2.4 % of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) is used for military expenses.

Nations with the highest military expenditure

Some nations have noticeably larger military expenditures than others. This is illustrated by the fact that the 15 countries with the highest spending account for over 81% of the world's total expenditure. More specifically, the United States of America accounts for 41.5%, China accounts for 5.8%, France accounts for 4.5%, the United Kingdom accounts for 4.5%, and the Russian Federation accounts for 4%.

Factors behind the increase of global expenditure

There are various factors as to why many nations have recently increased their military spending. Prominent ones are: foreign policy objectives, the increased availability of economic resources, real or perceived threats to national security, or armed conflicts and policies to contribute to multilateral peacekeeping operations.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
June 26, 1945	Signing of the Charter of the United Nations.
December 15, 1989	<i>Principles that should Govern Further Actions of State in the Field of the Freezing and Reduction of Military Budgets</i> are published in the resolution (A/44/114).
November 10, 2008	The Permanent Representative of Costa Rica address a letter, pertaining to "strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments: the safest road to peace and development", to the President of the Security Council.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Although the United Nations is not entirely against military expenditure with its main objective being to maintain international peace and security, it seeks to cut it down as much as possible. Such a perspective is shown in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, which reads that "In order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, the Security Council shall be responsible

for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments." This was recently reaffirmed by Security Council representatives in a letter dated November 10, 2008 on "strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments: the safest road to peace and development."

Thanks to resolution 35/142 B, the United Nations introduced a system for standardized reporting of military expenditures, in means to monitor each nation. In late resolutions, namely 48/62 and 47/54 B, Member States were called upon to volunteer in such reporting while guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters were published.

However, the United Nations has not taken fully operative actions in terms of reducing global military expenditure. Nonetheless, relevant documents have been published promoting the decrement of global military expenditure such as:

- Principles that should Govern Further Actions of States in the Field of the Freezing and Reduction of Military Budgets, 15 December 1989 (**A/RES/44/114**)
- Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures, January 6, 2006 (**A/RES/60/44**)

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