



Forum: 1st Committee on Disarmament and International Security

Issue: The topic of mutual deescalation of military spending, with particular regard to the P5 nations

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Description of the issue:

Global military expenditures are at an all-time high at nearly US\$ 2 trillion in 2020.

Excessive military spending had been a problem since World War 2, when nations increased their expenditure in order to ensure security.

Now however, addressing the issue is of greater importance and urgency than ever, due to the current pandemic, Covid-19, which has negatively contributed to the process of reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, as e.g. the global poverty rate has increased from 7.8 to 9.1 percent, nearly 2.37 billion people lacked access to adequate food and, since more than 5 million people have died.

The consequences partially resulted as a lack of financial resources caused by the global economic recession.

Still, military expenditure increased during the first year of the pandemic, in 2020, by 2.6% while the global gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by 4.4 per cent (October 2020 projection by the International Monetary Fund).

Hence, it is of utmost importance to find measures in order to deescalate military spending, with particular regard to the P5 nations, as these are within the top 8 of military spenders as of 2020, and to redirect the expenditure to drive socio-economic development forward in times like this.



Background information:

Military expenditure was at a high level during World War 2, as well as during the Cold War period, because of the rivalry between the West and the Communist bloc. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, as tensions have settled, military expenditure decreased.

Since 1998, military spending increased, as a result of the newer security challenges such as terrorism and various interstate rivalries. Further, it was caused by the change in trend in Europe, North America and Africa, as economic development took place, although there have also been higher rates of growth in Asia and the Middle East.

International conflicts, such as the Gulf War (1990-1991), civil wars, including the Civil War in Afghanistan (1992-2001) and the ongoing War on terrorism since 2001 caused the increase resulting in excessive military spending throughout the entire world, now further including the Middle East. Because of the terrorist attack 9/11 carried out by 19 militants associated with the Islamic extremist group al Qaeda, killing an estimated 3000 people, on September 11, 2001, US funding related to defense, homeland security and combating terrorism has been increased by some \$145-160 billion.

Due to the global financial crisis of 2007-2008, most of the countries cut their expenditure, which decreases throughout the following years.

However, after the end of the crisis and further economic development, governments decided to increase their military budget, believing that states' security can be guaranteed, when having a strong military. Others might argue that it is about the demonstration of power and an investment in war and conflict.

Key terms:

Military expenditure (Military spending, Military Budget, Defence Budget)

... is the amount of financial resources dedicated by a state to raise and maintain armed forces or other methods essential for defence purposes.

GDP

... is the gross domestic product, meaning that it is a measure of the value of all goods and services newly produced in a country during a period of time, adjusted for changes in prices over time, usually a quarter or a year.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

... is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament, that provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources. Its headquarters are located in Stockholm and it was established in 1966.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

... were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity;

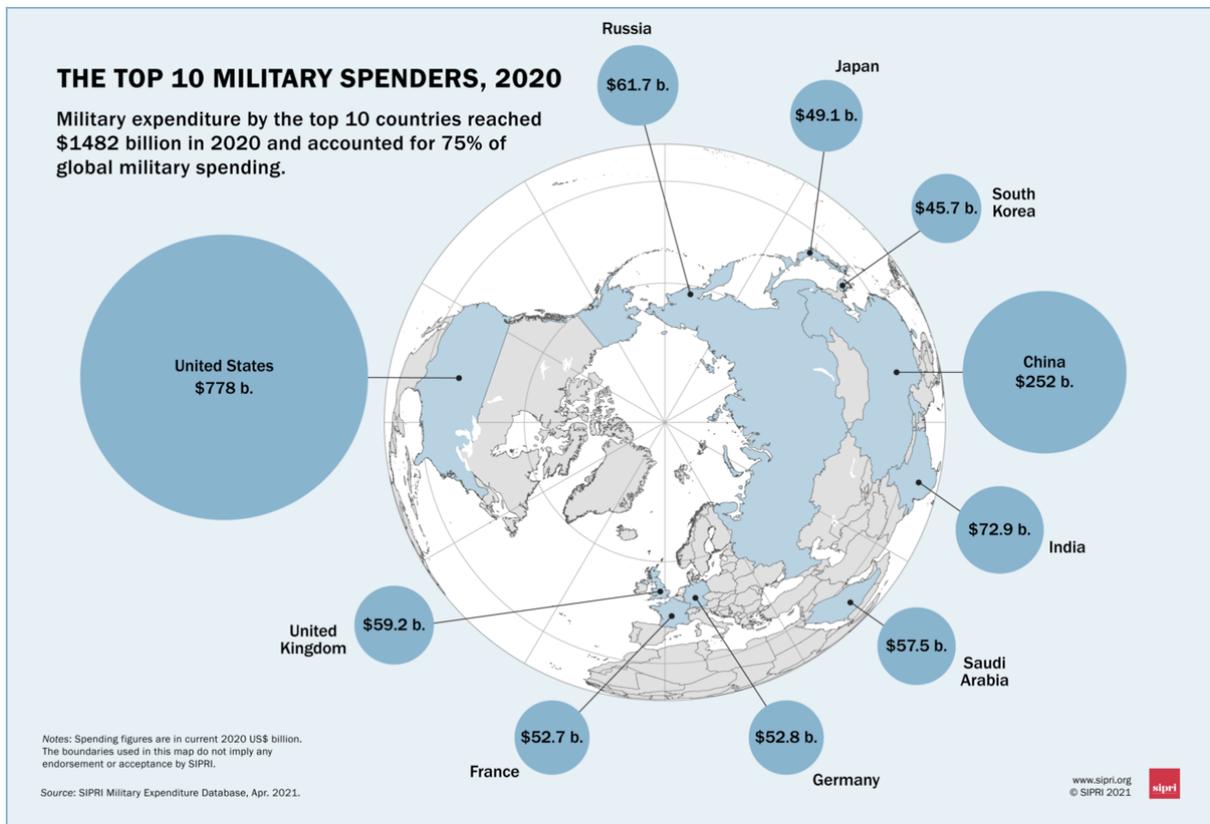
the SDGs consist of 17 goals to change the world

Military burden:

... indicates how much of the nation's resources are being allocated to defence each year; is measured by the d/GDP ratio

d = demand price (price at which a given quantity is demanded)

Major actors:



The P5 nations

United States of America

The US is the eighth largest military spender with 49.1 billion US dollars, in 2020, spending 2.1% of its GDP on military expenditure.

Further, the USA accounted for 39 per cent of total military expenditure in 2020.

Representing an increase of 4.4 per cent over 2019, it was the third consecutive year of growth in US military spending, following seven years of continuous reductions.

Alexandra Marksteiner,

a researcher with SIPRI's Arms and Military Expenditure Programme:

‘The recent increases in US military spending can be primarily attributed to heavy investment in research and development, and several long-term projects such as modernising the US nuclear arsenal and large-scale arms procurement.

This reflects growing concerns over perceived threats from strategic competitors such as China and Russia, as well as the Trump administration's drive to bolster what it saw as a depleted US military.’

China

China is the second largest military spender with 252 billion US dollars, in 2020, spending 1.7% of its GDP on military expenditure.

Representing an increase of 1.9 per cent over 2019 and 76 per cent over the past decade, China's spending has risen for 26 consecutive years, being the longest and uninterrupted series of increases by any country.

Dr Nan Tian, SIPRI Senior Researcher:

‘China stands out as the only major spender in the world not to increase its military burden in 2020 despite increasing its military expenditure, because of its positive GDP growth last year.

The ongoing growth in Chinese spending is due in part to the country's long-term military modernization and expansion plans, in line with a stated desire to catch up with other leading military powers.’

Russia

Following India, Russia is the fourth largest military spender with 61.7 billion US dollars, in 2020, spending 4.3% of its GDP on military expenditure.

Representing an increase of 2.5 per cent in 2020 to reach \$61.7 billion, it was the second consecutive year of growth.

However, its actual military spending was 6.6 per cent lower than its initial military budget, in 2020.

United Kingdom

The UK is the fifth largest military spender with 59.2 billion US dollars, in 2020, spending 2.2% of its GDP on military expenditure.

The UK's military spending was 2.9 percent higher than in 2019, but 4.2 per cent lower than in 2011.

France

France is the eighth largest military spender with 52.7 billion US dollars, in 2020, spending 2.1% of its GDP on military expenditure.

Further, there has been a notable increase of 4.5% from 2017, as the defence budget for 2018 was 51.41 billion US dollars.

=> Military spending across *Europe* rose by 4.0 per cent in 2020.

Notable information:

Countries with the biggest increases in military burden among the top 15 spenders in 2020:

Saudi Arabia (+0.6 percentage points)

Russia (+0.5 percentage points)

Israel (+0.4 percentage points)

USA (+0.3 percentage points)

Useful links:

- SIPRI definition of military expenditure
[online] Available at:
<https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex/definitions>
- “Understand to Prevent - The military contribution to the prevention of violent conflict”
A Multinational Capability Development Campaign project
[online] Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518617/20150430-U2P_Main_Web_B5.pdf
- “The military spending debate”
[online] Available at:
<https://charleskochinstitute.org/stories/the-military-spending-debate/>
- “Rising military budgets and the UN mechanism to curb them: Mission impossible?”
[online] Available at:
<https://www.ipu.org/event/rising-military-budgets-and-un-mechanism-curb-them-mission-impossible#event-sub-page-24288/>
- For the delegation of the USA, still interesting for others:
“The United States needs to cut military spending and shift money to two pressing threats: pandemics and climate change”
[online] Available at:
<https://thebulletin.org/premium/2021-09/the-united-states-needs-to-cut-military-spending-and-shift-money-to-two-pressing-threats-pandemics-and-climate-change/>
- Security after 9/11:
[online] Available at:
<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/28261/security-after-911.pdf>



For your research, use **valid and reliable sources**. Such are:

- NGOs Websites
- [UN.org](https://www.un.org/) (Often here you can find articles written especially on your issue)
- <https://scholar.google.com> If you use google for your research, try this one, it offers sources that have the specific purpose to educate and leaves out irrelevant information.

How to prepare as a delegate:

In order to discuss this issue, all delegates should be aware of the importance of finding measures to deescalate military spending, with particular regard to the P5 nations.

The delegates need to be informed about their countries' current situation/status, including social, economic, and political aspects, as well as about their national policy.

More specifically, all delegations shall be aware of the influence they may or may not have on this issue, and need to know about initiatives and laws established by the governments, as well as various IGOS and NGOs dealing with the issue of excessive military spending.

In addition, you may consider the following questions during your research:

- Does my country have an army/military force?
 - If not:
 - Is the police responsible for international security?
 - Is it dependent on another nation's military?
- How high is my country's military expenditure?
 - What share of my country's GDP does it have?
 - Have there been decreases/increases throughout the past decades/years?
 - Why?
- Is my country supporting the international community to decrease military spending and promote transparency on this matter?



All delegates are required to write a position paper, which considers all issues discussed in the committee, and should be sent to the Student Officers of GA1 via the contact email on the front page. All delegates are also encouraged to write a draft resolution, such that they maximise their power in lobbying.

Sources:

<https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/fact-sheets/critical-issues/5441-military-spending>

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/072115/how-military-spending-affects-economy.asp>

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/military-spending-by-country>

<https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2021/world-military-spending-rises-almost-2-trillion-2020>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/home>

<https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Chap%2006..pdf>

<https://eh.net/encyclopedia/military-spending-patterns-in-history/>

<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/28261/security-after-911.pdf>