



General Assembly

Twelfth Session

Distr.: Upper Elementary
XX March 2017

Original: English

First Committee – Disarmament and International Security

This committee aims to create a more peaceful world. Talks in this committee center around reducing weapons in the world. It also identifies threats to peace and finds solutions to international security.

This committee believes the world can become stable through cooperation. Countries can protect their people better if they work together for peace. For example, this committee might discuss how to keep weapons from terrorists. Or, how less weapons can make the world safer. Also, countries talk about policing weapons and finding ways to reduce the weapons they have.

First Committee works closely with **United Nations Disarmament Commission** and **Conference on Disarmament**. They have passed resolutions on ammunition, military spending and missiles.

Agenda Item 89 – Reduction of military budgets

Background

US President Dwight Eisenhower once said: “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.” More than fifty years later the budgets of militaries in the world keep rising.

In 1973, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R) suggested the permanent members of the Security Council should reduce their military budgets. The idea was to use the money saved to help other countries. Most of the countries agreed this was a good idea. They created a committee to help states using the money saved. This plan did not work.

Seven years later, countries at the UN thought states should report how much they spend on the military. Every year, states can report to the Secretary-General how much they spend. The Secretary-General reports on the situation. 126 states reported how much they spent. Some states report every year and some states report every few years. Some states have reported just once. Other states do not report at all. It is a choice to share this information.

There are many reasons that states spend money on the military. States want to be able to protect their people from attack. Companies make money from selling military equipment. However, what is the right balance between spending on the military and spending on other projects?

Every year in mid-April there is a **Global Day of Action on Military Spending**. It is estimated US\$1,700 billion is spent a year on the military in the world.

Recent Developments

- The Cold War occurred between 1947 and 1991. Western and Communist countries were scared of each other. They spent billions of dollars creating weapons.
- After the break-up of the USSR there was less of a reason to spend money on the military. From 1991-2000 most states spent less on the military.
- Since 2001, many countries have been spending more money on the military. In 2015 the worldwide total reached US\$1,700 billion. This is equal to the UN's budget for 700 years.
- The US is the country that spends the most on its military. In 2015 it spent \$US596 billion on the military.
- The US pulled most of their troops out of Afghanistan and Iraq. After, the amount the US spends went down 21%.
- In November 2016, the US elected Donald Trump as President. He has said he will increase spending for the military.
- China spent US\$214 billion in 2015. This is an increase of 7.4% from the previous year. China said it will continue to increase the budget of the military by 7-8% every year.
- China is not involved in any wars. However, it claims the South China Sea. China has been building artificial islands in the area. Many countries believe China will militarize these islands.
- Saudi Arabia spent US\$87 billion in 2015. Its spending has doubled since 2006. Part of the reason is because Saudi Arabia is involved in military action in Yemen.
- In 2009, Saudi Arabia attacked Yemeni rebels. In 2015, they were part of a group of countries trying to influence the Yemeni civil war.
- Russia spent US\$66 billion in 2015. This is an increase of 7.5%. The amount has been increasing since 1998.
- The United Kingdom spent US\$55 billion. This is roughly the amount they have spent over the last 15 years.

Regional Patterns

Asia and Oceania

- ✓ From 2006-2015, this area of the world has increased by 64% the amount it spends on the military
- ✓ China spent almost 50% of the money in this area. India spent the second most amount of money: US\$51 billion. They plan to increase it by 8%.
- ✓ Most of the countries around the South China Sea spent more money on the military.

Europe

- ✓ Europe increased how much they spend on the military by 5.4% since 2006.
- ✓ Eastern Europe increased how much they spent by 90% since 2006.
- ✓ The biggest increases were in countries close to Russia or the Ukraine.

Middle East

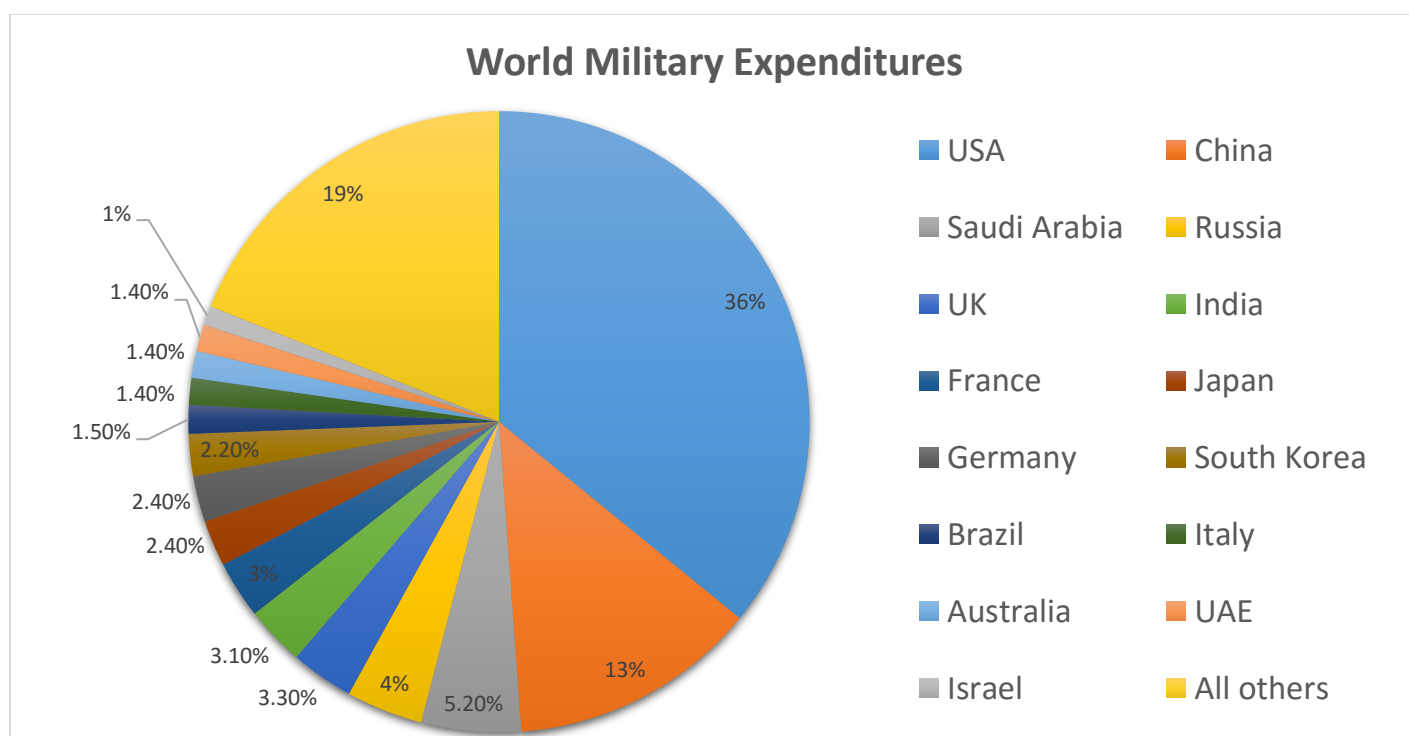
- ✓ Saudi Arabia spends the most at US\$87 billion. This is double what it spent in 2006.
- ✓ The next biggest spender is Iraq: US\$13 billion. This is an increase of 536% since 2006. They had to build their military and are now fighting the Islamic State.
- ✓ Iran spent US\$10 billion in 2015 and may increase how much they spend in the future.

Latin America and the Caribbean

- ✓ This area of the world spent 2.9% less in 2015. All the countries together spend US\$67 billion.
- ✓ Venezuela, Ecuador and Brazil had to reduce the amount they spend on the military. This was because of the bad economy.
- ✓ Colombia, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay all increased spending.
- ✓ Since 2006 Mexico has spent 92% more. Most of the money is used to fight criminals and drug gangs.

Africa

- ✓ For the last 11 years, the states in Africa have been spending more and more on the military. In 2015, it dropped 5.3% percent. The whole continent spends US\$37 billion a year on the military.
- ✓ Countries that rely on oil like Angola and Chad had to reduce the amount spent because of the low price of oil.

Top 15 Countries: Military Expenditures¹

¹ Perlo-Freeman, Sam, et al. "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2015." *SIPRI Fact Sheet*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, April 2016, books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1604.pdf. Accessed 4 February 2017.

Guiding Questions

1. How much does your country spend on the military every year? What does your country spend most of its money on?
2. Does your country report how much they spend on the military? Why might a country want to share this information? Why might a country not want to share this information?
3. Do your neighbors report their military spending? How would how much they spend influence you? Why?
4. More money is spent on the military during difficult economic times. Poverty often causes violence and then money is spent on the military. How can this cycle be changed?
5. What are some positive outcomes of investing in the military?
6. Fifteen countries pay for 81% of the world's total military expenditures. Why might this be seen as a problem by the other 180 countries?
7. What would need to happen to encourage all countries in the world to reduce the amount they spend on the military?
8. Does the problem exist in your community?
9. How does being a delegate from a different country help you understand this problem in your community?
10. How do the choices you make in your life help resolve this problem?

Resources

Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
<i>United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs</i>	http://www.un.org/disarmament/	Provides broad information about disarmament.
<i>World Military Spending</i>	http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending	Overview of the issue and how much money is spent on the military.
<i>United Nations Report on Military Expenditures</i>	http://www.un-arm.org/Milex/home.aspx	Click on a country to see how much they have spent on the military.
<i>Global Campaign on Military Spending</i>	http://demilitarize.org/	An organization connected with International Peace Bureau that wants to reduce military spending.
<i>Trends in World Military Expenditures</i>	http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SI PRIFS1604.pdf	A fact sheet that summarizes how much is spent.
<i>Military Expenditure</i>	https://www.sipri.org/research/armament-and-disarmament/arms-transfers-and-military-spending/military-expenditure	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's page on military expenditures around the world.
<i>UNODA Fact Sheet</i>	https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Military-Spending-Fact-Sheet.pdf	United Nations fact sheet on the reporting of military expenditures.
<i>Disarmament Education</i>	http://www.un.org/disarmament/education/	Resources for young people studying disarmament. The UN produced it.
<i>Military Spending</i>	http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/fact-sheets/critical-issues/5441-military-spending	An overview of the problem according to the NGO Reaching Critical Will. It includes links.