

The Military Budget Can Have a Big Effect on Citizens

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It is crucial to understand the reduction of military budget and how it affects the people. Many nations are debating whether it would help or hinder them to reduce the budget of their military. The reduction of the military's budget in any given place could easily have a positive effect on the citizens in the region in more ways than one.

Many delegates have suggested that the money cut from the military could be spent on helping ensuring peace, eradicating poverty, providing relief for countries in need, providing accessible and quality education, security, health and welfare, and many more causes. A vast majority of delegates want to use the money to help citizens of their own country or other countries. One of the delegates representing Cambodia says that "the money should be put into projects that help the community". Armenia wants to "put money eradicating poverty and helping other countries". Panama has already abolished the military so the delegates of Panama noted that other nations cutting some of their budget would promote a feeling of peace and safety in Panama. Many delegates from many places, including Botswana and Russia, would like to put the money towards whatever needs it the most at the time.

Many delegates are interested in a system to manage the military's budget to ensure that the designated funds are going into things that benefit the citizen. The representative for the UK was particularly keen on the idea that we should "reduce industrial budgets". They felt countries should work to cut down the production and purchasing of weapons because they think this will hinder the acts of many terrorist groups and keep innocent citizens safe. Austria proposed that there was an "organization created to manage the funds. They could decide where the money would go... because the UN couldn't manage everything".

Instead of setting a certain number for the military budget, many delegates wish to lower the budget by a certain percent. These percentages range from Panama's recommended 2.5% , to Botswana's, 5% to Kuwait's recommendation of lowering the budget by 15%. A popular suggestion was to have places with a higher budget reduce their budget before countries with smaller budgets. This is provide smaller countries with a sense of ease, so they don't have the threat of getting attacked when they are

weakest looming over them. Austria is one of the delegates that wants to reduce the budget gradually. They think it should be reduced over the course of five through ten years in order to “allow member states to adjust to their budget”.

Some delegates are also interested in raising the military budget during times of conflict. They feel the money is going to the right place as long as the money is being used to benefit the citizens. Being able to protect your nation is important, but if the military is too heavily funded, money that could have been used in a better way is wasted.

Many people were concerned that if they wrote a resolution they would have no way of enforcing it. In response to this issue Afghanistan proposed that “people writing [the resolution] should come up with an incentive to join instead of a way to enforce it”. After hearing this, a draft resolution that was cosponsored by Algeria, Bolivia, and Kuwait included a peace treaty with other countries as an incentive to support their resolution. Incentives often work better than punishments, so many think this was a wise decision.

Many delegations and drafts focused on the five countries with the highest military budget. They felt that taking care of the biggest problem first would be the most helpful. Although this is a good approach, it caused some delegates (from places like Kuwait, Bolivia, and Algeria) to start their own draft. A representative from Algeria said they left the drafted resolution they were cosponsoring and started their own because they want to focus on everyone and “include little countries that aren’t known”. While focusing where the problem is the worst is a good strategy, inclusion is necessary to provide benefits for all people.

One draft resolution supported by a number of people including Botswana, wants all member states to report their military budget annually. This is because many places keep their citizens in the dark about what their money is being used for. This omission can be dangerous. At PNN we think that people have the right to be informed and wish to give them the power of knowledge.

Understanding different military budgets and the ways it can help or hurt its citizens is important. Learning about the pros and the cons of the reduction of the military’s budget will help people make informed decisions about what they do or not want and if they think the funds could be better spent elsewhere.