



Florida High Schools Model United Nations

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**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST
COMMITTEE (GA1)**

The Relationship between Disarmament and Development

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“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 are not clothed.”¹

-Dwight D. Eisenhower

“The cause of peace and the cause of development are one.”²

-Louise Frechette

“More arms do not make mankind safer, only poorer.”³

-Willy Brandt

¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Chance for Peace Address” April 16, 1953.

² Louise Frechette, Former UN Deputy Secretary-General.

³ Willy Brandt, Chairman of the Brandt Commission and former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany).

COMMITTEE BRIEF

Introduction

The United Nations was founded “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,”⁴ but to do so requires a firm commitment from its member states to disarm and direct their efforts towards sustainable development rather than war and violence. When governments decide to purchase more fighter jets, tanks, machine guns, and the material to create weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, they reduce the resources available to their people for food, education, health, cultural achievements, and investments in infrastructure and development. Governments often use the rationale that other states are arming and must also arm themselves to protect themselves. Still, the end result is too often impoverishment and deprivation for the people of many societies. Many states increase their arsenals of armaments to fight internal enemies or to forestall political changes that their governments do not desire. The General Assembly First Committee (GA1) must examine the levels and patterns of military expenditures and procurement budgets of the UN’s member states, particularly in the context of the contemporary global financial crisis. Understanding the relationship between disarmament and development and how best to achieve the most sustainable levels of human and economic development through disarmament and reduced military spending has been on the agenda of the UN since its inception following World War II. Thirty-six years have passed since the critical 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and the General Assembly First Committee delegates are tasked with furthering the discussions and achievements of the past quarter century.

Innovation for Universal Prosperity

The United Nations puts much of its focus on the safety of the nations and the sustainability of that safety. The United Nations considers both disarmament and development as “two of the international community's most important tools for building a world free from want.”⁵ With this in mind, the General Assembly First Committee must recognize how both disarmament and development protect the survival of humanity, creating sustainable solutions to poverty, weapon expenditure, and economic issues. Both poverty and conflict reinforce one another, increasing the UN’s focus on the relationship between disarmament and development. The General Assembly First Committee must work to create a sustainable solution to settle the increase in the weapon delivery system and poverty within developed and underdeveloped countries. The United Nations works to rebuild the economic, social, and governmental structures of nations caught in the crossfire of an uncontrolled weapons distribution system while keeping in mind the need for funding to improve these structures and the lifestyle of humanity.

⁴ *Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations.*

⁵ *Reaching Critical Will*, “Disarmament and Development”. Found at: <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/fact-sheets/critical-issues/4646-disarmament-and-development>

The Scale of the Issue

Official global military spending is approximately \$2.24 trillion,⁶ more than ten times the annual total of some \$204 billion, sent to developing countries, according to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2022.⁷ What, then, do the various peoples of the world receive in return for their collective \$2.24 trillion of military expenditures? Many people are undoubtedly protected from invasions by potentially hostile states or armed groups, but this condition is not universal. The prevalence of armed conflict and, to a lesser degree, transnational organized crime throughout many parts of the world means that these military expenditures are also caused by, and in turn, fuel breakdowns at the national and international levels. In several cases, these military expenditures are used primarily to contain, oppress, and, in the most extreme circumstances, eliminate various peoples within a given society. Military expenditures are also highly prone to cost overruns, corruption, and graft as they represent enormous profits for certain companies and are often recurring expenses for the respective governments; the US Government Accountability Office recently reported that “in November 2022, [the Department of Defense] failed its fifth consecutive audit, unable to account for sixty-one percent of its \$3.5 trillion in assets.”⁸ Excessive military expenditures also often create insecurities in many societies as political and military leaders often assume that a rapid buildup of arms necessarily presages an invasion or the commencement of hostilities.

Arms Races and Mutual Insecurity:

When states compete with each other regarding their destructive capabilities and arsenals of annihilation, they often reduce their sense of security. In the run-up to World War I, the United Kingdom and Germany engaged in an ever more costly naval arms race accompanied by attempts to frighten, impress, and deter the other side through displays of the newest and largest warship. Ultimately, this devastatingly expensive naval arms race contributed to both the outbreak and cruel length of World War I. After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union built staggering arsenals of conventional and nuclear weapons. They sent military aid to allied and client states worldwide to ramp up the arms race further. The arms race also made billions of people around the world fearful and deeply insecure, especially when the true destructive power of the superpowers' conventional and nuclear arsenals became clear. Former US Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger summarized how the two superpowers' actions often increased their insecurities. “The superpowers often behave like two heavily armed blind men feeling their way around a room, each believing himself in mortal peril from the other, whom he assumes to have perfect vision.” This Cold War era arms race not only diverted key resources from productive civilian pursuits but also saddled future generations with the particularly vexing problems of reducing and eliminating these arsenals in such a manner that these weapons do not wind up in the wrong hands nor do they further poison the natural environment. Policymakers and their civil society partners must consider the impact of the

⁶ “World Military Spending Reaches All-Time High of \$2.24 Trillion.” n.d. [www.aljazeera.com](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/24/world-military-spending-reaches-all-time-high-of-2-24-trillion).
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/24/world-military-spending-reaches-all-time-high-of-2-24-trillion>.

⁷ “Official Development Assistance.” n.d. ONE Data & Analysis.
<https://data.one.org/topics/official-development-assistance/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20aid%20totalled%20US>.

⁸ “Comer & Sessions Open Probe into Department of Defense after Failing GAO Audit for Fifth Time - United States House Committee on Oversight and Accountability.” 2023. United States House Committee on Oversight and Accountability. March 6, 2023.
<https://oversight.house.gov/release/comer-sessions-open-probe-into-department-of-defense-after-failing-gao-audit-for-fifth-time%E2%82%AC/>

multiplier effect on the economy; how much additional economic activity does each dollar of civilian or military spending produce? A RAND Corporation study from 2021 reported that the range for the military multiplier spending effect was typically between 0.6% and 1.2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the US economy.⁹ Government spending on education, health, and infrastructure is generally held to exhibit greater multiplier effects, although these multiplier effects are not constant.

With innovations in the arms system and the development and delivery of weapons, concerns for the prosperity of humanity have increased. Current arms delivery systems have become harder to monitor due to threatening “targets ranging from civilian infrastructure and populations to early warning and command and control systems, as well as nuclear and conventional forces.”¹⁰ This advancement in arms delivery systems is due to innovative technology, such as artificial intelligence, and the purchasing of weapons on the black market. With an advancement in the arms system, specifically nuclear weapons, innocent civilizations have been caught in the crossfire. Furthermore, an increase in weapons leads to an increase in government funding for military needs. The increase in the Gross Domestic Profit in the United States represents the rising focus on weapons and a decreasing focus on the environment. This interaction endangers the prosperity and sustainability of civilian lifestyle along with the sustainability of governmental and economic decisions.

Peace Sells...But Who's Buying?¹¹ Whatever Happened to the “Peace Dividend?”

When the Cold War ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, politicians and pundits on all continents hailed the event as being especially propitious for development projects because so many billions of dollars of military expenditures would now be available for economic and social development. This potentially massive infusion of government and private capital was often called the “peace dividend.” In 1989, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the “peace dividend” might equal some \$40 billion annually by the early 1990s.¹² While military spending in the United States did not escalate during the 1990s, the average level of military expenditures never fell below \$250 billion annually. Global military spending was not reduced in such a manner as to accelerate social and economic development, particularly in the developing countries and the least developed countries (LDCs) of the world. Chalmers Johnson notes, “Real defense spending during those years [1955-2002] averaged \$281 billion in 2002 dollars. Defense spending in the Clinton years, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, averaged \$278 million, almost exactly the Cold War norm.”¹³ If high levels of military spending during the Cold War were explained using rationales regarding Soviet power, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the removal of a huge military power would presumably allow Western governments, especially the United States, to spend far less on their military establishments. The former Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite states did reduce military spending precipitously during the first half of the 1990s, but these reductions were not by choice. Their economies were

⁹ Rooney, Bryan, Grant Johnson, and Miranda Priebe. 2021. “How Does Defense Spending Affect Economic Growth?”

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA700/RRA739-2/RAND_RRA739-2.pdf

¹⁰ Carnegie, “Arms Control and Disarmament,” January 21, 2021. Found at: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/01/21/arms-control-and-disarmament-pub-83583>

¹¹ Megadeth, *Peace Sells...But Who's Buying?* Capitol Records 1986.

¹² David Wessel, *Wall Street Journal* November 27, 1989.

¹³ Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* Henry Holt & Co. New York 2005 p. 56.

experiencing near free-fall conditions, and the respective states did not have the financial resources available to devote their militaries; over the past decade, though, military spending in Russia and Eastern Europe has rebounded significantly, although it still does not match the peak levels of the late 1980s.

By the time global leaders formulated the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 1999-2000, astute observers were posing the question of what happened to the “peace dividend.” To put the relevance of the MDGs and current military spending into better relief, it is instructive to note that the goal of universal primary education by the year 2015 appeared to be within reach, “but the primary school completion rate has been stalled at 91 percent for developing countries since 2009.”¹⁴ “Total costs are estimated at around \$3.6 billion a year for ten years – equivalent to about two days’ worth of global military spending.”¹⁵ The annual budget for the US Department of Defense, supplemented by—until recently—additional spending bills to fund wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, was “already displacing expenditure on public schools and hospitals, which are facing cuts across the country”¹⁶; by comparison, the most recent US defense budget bill amounted to \$816.7 billion USD for the 2023 fiscal year.¹⁷ In the context of the current global financial crisis, increased military spending will almost invariably lead to further spending cuts for education, health care, and related forms of social spending.

‘If You’re Not Hiding Anything, Then Why Won’t You Publish the Figures?’ The Need for Transparency in Military Expenditures

One persistently vexing problem associated with military budgets is that the mechanisms and procedures for reporting them are nowhere near uniform. Most governments publish some form of statistics about military expenditures, but many programs that are intended for military purposes are classified as civilian programs instead. Other parts of the military budgets are not published, or the information provided is restricted to overall total expenditures without explaining how the money was spent. The so-called “black budgets” of many countries can serve to alarm other governments and serve as an impetus to further increases in military spending. Chalmers Johnson notes that for the United States, “the General Accounting Office (GAO) has identified at least 185 black programs”¹⁸ which, according to The Washington Post, receive over \$50 billion per year for secret military and intelligence spending.¹⁹ The United States, in turn, is very concerned about what it believes to be intentional underreporting of military expenditures by China and other governments. The US Department of Defense has consistently argued that China does not accurately report its military expenditures. In 2022, China’s military

¹⁴ “MDG2: Accelerating Progress towards Universal Primary Education.” 2015. Blogs.worldbank.org. May 20, 2015.

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/mdg2-accelerating-progress-towards-universal-primary-education#:~:text=Accelerating%20the%20MDG%20%20target>.

¹⁵ Kevin Watkins, “Basic education for all Africans” *Africa Recovery Online* Vol. 13 No. 4 1999 Found at: <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol13no4/36educ.htm>

¹⁶ *Guardian* (UK) “So Much for the Peace Dividend” May 22, 2003. Found at: <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0522-01.htm>

¹⁷ *Associated Press*, “Senate Approves Military Spending Bill” December 21, 2012.

¹⁸ Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire* p. 118.

¹⁹ Gellman, Barton, and Greg Miller. 2013. “‘Black Budget’ Summary Details U.S. Spy Network’s Successes, Failures and Objectives.” *Washington Post*, August 29, 2013, sec. National Security. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/black-budget-summary-details-us-spy-networks-successes-failures-and-objectives/2013/08/29/7e57bb78-10ab-11e3-8cdd-bdc09410972_story.html.

expenditures reached around \$230 billion USD²⁰ but “United Kingdom and Europe-based think tanks estimate that the PRC’s actual 2022 defense budget is at least 30-40 percent higher than the PRC’s announced budget.”²¹ All indications are that the Chinese government has not substantially reformed its military expenditure reporting procedures over the past 15 years. Furthermore, governments are finding increasingly creative ways to disguise military expenditures within their regular budgets; one of the most common sleights-of-hand is reclassifying a military expenditure as a vital program for the Ministry of Energy or Transportation. While the expenditure was in one sense accounted for, the government in question has succeeded in obfuscating the true size and scale of the defense budget yet again.

The General Assembly (UNGA) has consistently adopted resolutions urging increased transparency of military expenditures, with the latest resolution being adopted by consensus on December 2, 2011 – A/RES/66/20. The GA noted that “transparency in military matters contributes greatly to confidence-building and security among States.”²² One concrete measure that the General Assembly has repeatedly called for is for member states to “report annually, by April 30, to the Secretary-General their military expenditures for the latest fiscal year for which data are available...”²³, with a particular emphasis on countries either harmonizing their procedures for reporting their military expenditures or at least using similar categories in their reports. On November 2, 2023, the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) approved draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.8, which “would encourage stronger coordination between the Security Council and General Assembly with the Peacebuilding Commission, encourage special political missions to continue fostering inclusive partnerships with regional and subregional organizations” and request a “timely, results-based report on the implementation of the text.”²⁴

“Unprecedented and Unequaled Strength and Influence in the World:”²⁵ The United States and Its Military Budget and Outlook

It would have been unfair and impractical to expect the United States to engage in rapid and unilateral disarmament when it was embroiled in two simultaneous wars in the Middle East and South Asia. Still, now that those conflicts have come to a close, more must be demanded of the US, as no real traction can be gained regarding disarmament and the reduction of military budgets without US leadership. While some countries devote higher percentages of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to military spending than the United States, the United States alone accounts for nearly 40% of all defense spending worldwide, and its military budget is greater

²⁰ 赵婷婷. n.d. “China to Raise Military Budget by 7.1% This Year.” [Www.chinadaily.com.cn](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn).

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202203/06/WS62245064a310cdd39bc8aacb.html>

²¹ Review of *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China*. 2023. U.S. Department of Defense.

<https://media.defense.gov/2023/Oct/19/2003323409/-1/-1/1/2023-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENT-S-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA.PDF>

²² A/RES/66/20 December 2, 2011.

²³ A/RES/60/44 January 6, 2006

²⁴ “Fourth Committee Approves Draft Resolution on Special Political Missions as Speakers Urge Better Funding, Bigger Role for Women | UN Press.” n.d. [Press.un.org](https://press.un.org/en/2023/gaspd794.doc.htm). Accessed November 13, 2023.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gaspd794.doc.htm>

²⁵ National Security Review of the United States 2002.

than the combined military budgets of the next ten major spender countries.²⁶ US military spending, projected at \$857.9 billion USD for fiscal year 2023,²⁷ is more than three times that of China after adjusting for exchange rates and purchasing power differentials, which economists call “purchasing power parity” (PPP).

While the United States does spend nearly \$160 billion annually to pay the salaries, housing, and health care costs of its armed services personnel,²⁸ much of the money in the defense budget is also spent on high-tech weapons systems that are often designed to counter threats from the Cold War era, such as the F-22 Raptor fighter jet. While each fighter plane will cost over \$100 million, “the expense is mainly for measures that would allow the aircraft to penetrate a Soviet air defense system that disappeared over a decade ago.”²⁹ Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced that he was scaling back the total number of F-22 fighter jets that would be ordered.

The total scale of US defense spending may seem relatively moderate when measured as a percentage of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Still, the sums are quite weighty when measured in terms of total dollars and when considering the opportunity costs of funneling tens of billions of dollars to defense instead of to education, health care, renewable energy sources, and foreign aid. Additionally, the US government persistently tried to downplay the costs of the war in Afghanistan, and previously the war in Iraq, by not including the bulk of those expenditures in the regular military budget; instead, the Bush administration repeatedly sought “supplementary” or “emergency” appropriations to pay for the wars, which at one time were costing American taxpayers \$16 billion USD per month.³⁰ Even now that the wars have wound down and the vast majority of combat forces have been removed from these two countries, the US government continues to pay tens of billions of dollars annually for disability and health care for the tens of thousands of returning wounded veterans. There will be further costs for maintaining military bases in Afghanistan and Iraq now that major combat operations have ended, as well as for the projected expansion of the US defense budget. While a few economists argue that increased military spending will result in direct stimulus for the US economy, most economic analysis indicates that increased military spending during this contemporary economic crisis will only increase US government budget deficits and divert essential resources from economic recovery initiatives.

United States Monetary Contributions to Worldly Conflicts

The United States is marked as having the highest military expenditures from 2020, with \$778 billion.³¹ With the overall military expenditure reaching almost \$2 trillion, the United

²⁶ Peter G. Peterson Foundation. 2023. “The United States Spends More on Defense than the next 10 Countries Combined.” www.pgpf.org. April 24, 2023.

<https://www.pgpf.org/blog/2023/04/the-united-states-spends-more-on-defense-than-the-next-10-countries-combined>

²⁷ “Summary of the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act FY 2023 DEFENSE FUNDING LEVELS.” n.d. https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/fy23_ndaa_agreement_summary.pdf

²⁸ “DoD Releases Report on Defense Spending by State in Fiscal Year 2022.” n.d. U.S. Department of Defense. Accessed November 24, 2023.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3538311/dod-releases-report-on-defense-spending-by-state-in-fiscal-year-2022/#:~:text=Of%20those%20funds%2C%20%24389.5%20billion>

²⁹ James Fallows, “The Military-Industrial Complex” *Foreign Policy* November/December 2002 p. 47.

³⁰ Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes, *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Consequences of the Iraq Conflict* W.W. Norton & Co. New York 2008 p. 9.

³¹ *Military Spending by Country 2023*

Nations has begun to rethink its unconstrained military spending. With this in mind, the United Nations has focused on “working to cut military budgets and to redirect these funds to support peace, disarmament, climate protection and sustainable development.”³² The uncontrolled military spending has only increased from 2020 to over \$2 trillion. With this, the United States’ military expenditures have also increased due to its involvement in other nations’ wars.

When the Russia-Ukraine War began in 2014, the United States sent Ukraine \$46.7 billion in security assistance. In 2022, the United States committed another \$43.9 billion to Ukraine’s security efforts.³³ With the United States continual increase in military spending, according to the RAND Corporation, “a larger budget gives the country more funds to promote and defend its global interests, but it also reduces funds available for domestic programs, including those that might do more to boost economic growth.”³⁴ The continuous question that needs to be asked is whether reallocating funds from defense spending to infrastructure spending will boost growth within a nation. The United States’ increased monetary contributions to the Ukraine-Russia War presented the United Nations with the difficult task of controlling military spending while developing a way to move that money more toward sustainable growth and development.

China, India, and Russia: Increased Military Spending by Regional Powers

US defense spending is a critical dimension of global defense spending. However, it is essential to acknowledge the increasing military spending of countries such as China, India, and Russia. Over the past two decades, “China’s defense spending has grown nearly five-fold... jumping from \$62 billion in 2002 to \$298 billion in 2022.”³⁵ China has become more active in international peacekeeping over the past few years, but this accounts for only a small fraction of recent military expenditures. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Eastern Europe has witnessed the greatest percentage increase in military spending in recent years, with an increase of 162% during the decade from 1998-2007.³⁶ It must be noted that overall military spending in Eastern Europe, including Russia, is well below the peak levels of the late 1980s, but this rapid rearmament certainly bears careful observation. Russia alone accounts for over half of this recent increase in military spending, with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia comprising another region high in military spending, even before the most recent war between Russia and Georgia. India’s desire to play a greater role on the international stage means that it is committed to modernizing and upgrading its military, making it an increasingly attractive target market for major defense contractors.³⁷ During 2004-06, India emerged as the world’s leading importer of armaments, and there are few indications that its defense spending will decline soon. Given India’s recent experiences with domestic and international terrorism, its perennially precarious relations with Pakistan, as well as disturbing regional conflict dynamics including the continuing war in Afghanistan, Pakistan’s own internal security conflicts, the unresolved conflict in Jammu-Kashmir, and the previous escalation of the civil war in Sri Lanka, increased Indian defense spending will likely spur its neighbors to scale up their own military expenditures.

³² Simpson, Erikam, *Unfold Zero*, “UN publishes a paper on Rethinking Unconstrained Military Spending. May 25, 2020

³³ Welt, Cory, *Congressional Research Service*, “U.S. Security Assistance to Ukraine.” October 5, 2023

³⁴ Rooney, Bryan, *RAND Corporation: How Does Defense Spending Affect Economic Growth?*

³⁵ “What Does China Really Spend on Its Military?” 2015. ChinaPower Project. December 28, 2015.
<https://chinapower.csis.org/military-spending/#:~:text=Calculations%20in%20this%20section%20are>

³⁶ Information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) 2008.

³⁷ Karishma Vaswani, “Foreign firms covet Indian skies” *BBC News* February 7, 2007.

Guns But No Butter: Military Spending in the Developing World

Most armed conflict occurs within the developing countries of the world, and many developing countries' governments devote considerable resources to their militaries, often at the direct expense of the civilian populations. Much of this spending is spurred by regional hostilities and instability, unfortunately providing the means to continue these conflicts at a higher level. In Central Africa, Rwanda has emerged as a bright spot as it is reducing its defense spending; its neighbor, Uganda, however, continues to increase its own military spending steadily.³⁸ In South Asia, continued tensions with Thailand³⁹ had Cambodia steadily increasing its military spending for over a decade until, in 2022, the defense budget decreased slightly from \$630 billion USD to \$611 billion USD.⁴⁰ Iraq's own military spending continues to escalate, with American firms and contractors reaping a large share of these lucrative sales. North Korean military spending is currently estimated at over 33% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)⁴¹, requiring a huge diversion of resources away from civilian needs and toward the military. Dozens of other developing countries continue to devote critical expenditures to their militaries while not meeting the development needs of their own populations.

Defending the Government Against the People: The Doctrine of "Internal Security"

One oft-cited reason for reducing military budgets in the developing world is the need to limit the ability of a number of governments and militaries to engage in "internal security" operations. During the 1960s and 1970s, this insidious term, "internal security", became a thinly veiled code word for counter-insurgency and anti-guerrilla warfare operations conducted by governments in Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, and in other countries where the military frequently used its power and technological advances to repress and eliminate political opposition. Many developing country governments have bankrupted their treasuries purchasing weapons systems and have denied their citizens fundamental services because of a focus on military spending, which sometimes accounts for over half of all spending by these countries. While governments will often argue that internal opposition and "terrorists" force them to devote increasingly large sums to their militaries, as remains the case in Colombia, Sri Lanka, and Turkey, it is clear that many of these threats are exaggerated and have often been, at least in part, created because of the government's spending policies and the military's own policies of repression.

Beware the Global Military-Industrial Complex

As President Dwight Eisenhower left political office in January 1961, he called upon the American people to remain alert and vigilant in regard to the increasingly powerful and profitable arms industry. "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."⁴² Sales of military hardware are conducted in all corners of the globe, with governments, corporations, criminal

³⁸ *Rwanda News Agency*, "Rwanda: Military Spending Going Down, New Figures Show" June 12, 2008. Found at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806120461.html>

³⁹ *Asia News*, "Cambodia, one of Asia's poorest countries, doubles military spending" October 29, 2008.

⁴⁰ "Cambodia Military Expenditure | 1986-2018 Data | 2020-2021 Forecast | Historical." n.d. Tradingeconomics.com. <https://tradingeconomics.com/cambodia/military-expenditure>

⁴¹ "North Korea: Share of Military Expenditure in GDP 2020." n.d. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/747387/north-korea-share-of-military-spending-in-budget/>.

⁴² Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Farewell Address" January 17, 1961.

organizations, and individuals all trafficking arms to a huge number of governments, paramilitary organizations, rebel and insurgent groups, criminal syndicates, and warlords. Official government diplomacy is often in service to commercial interests, and the military-industrial complex is one of the most important international commercial sectors. Defense contractors are also incredibly adept at establishing and cementing alliances with influential members of the world's respective legislatures, military command structures, and executive branches. These relationships often bear bountiful fruit for these companies when governments contemplate military purchases and design their budgets. In 2008, the American defense industry spent almost \$150 million on lobbying Congress and the Bush administration⁴³; there were undoubtedly millions of dollars more spent by defense companies and contractors as campaign contributions to both political parties and many individual candidates. While the current headlines may seem comparatively grim for defense contractors⁴⁴, unless governments fundamentally realign their defense contracting and expenditures mindsets and procedures, the relatively lean times for defense companies may still be rather comfortable and quite temporary in nature.

Military hardware sales, whether replacing spent munitions or purchasing new weapons systems, are also being supplemented by the rise of private companies that provide a vast array of services to the world's militaries. These private defense contractors have grown in terms of the number of functions they serve, the number of employees in various theaters of operation, and their influence in world capitals. Private military companies (PMCs) train national security forces, provide critical logistical support, and sometimes engage in actual combat. Recently, these companies have begun providing force support for humanitarian aid missions. Contracts for these PMCs may range from several million USD to over a billion USD for longer-term services and are even more highly prone to cost overruns and corruption than traditional military spending. As long as military procurement remains an invitingly lucrative target for politicians, generals, and defense contractors, this confluence of mutually reinforcing interest groups will impede the progress of those committed to reducing and redirecting military spending toward development projects.

Not Buying Swords Means That We May Buy More Plowshares

While global military spending continues to increase, there are keystone initiatives that may provide real hope and practical examples for reducing military spending without compromising security. After its civil war of the 1940s, Costa Rica became the first country in the modern world to abolish its army; at least part of Costa Rica's higher levels of development, certainly when compared to its Central American neighbors, is due to the fact that it has enjoyed 60 years of relative stability and has not diverted its resources to the military in the same manner that Guatemala and Nicaragua did for many years. At a previous meeting of the UN Security Council, Costa Rican President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Oscar Arias noted, "with the money that some developing nations spend on a single combat plane, they could buy 200,000 MIT Media Lab computers for students with limited resources."⁴⁵ The Arias government has spearheaded the Costa Rica Consensus, introduced in 2007, which calls for developing countries to increase their spending on education, environmental protection, and health care while

⁴³ Frida Berrigan, "Is the Next Defense Budget a Stimulus Package" *The Nation* March 12, 2009.

⁴⁴ *The Economist*, "In the line of fire" March 19, 2009.

⁴⁵ Oscar Arias, "Statement of Costa Rican President on Reducing Military Spending" November 19, 2008. Found at: http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2008/11/19_arias_article_26.php?print

simultaneously decreasing their military spending. The Costa Rica Consensus further calls on highly developed countries to increase their Official Development Assistance (ODA) and to support greater debt forgiveness to developing countries that achieve these increases in social spending and reductions in military spending. Further encouragement of interrelated development-disarmament measures like the Costa Rica Consensus offers real promise for successful sustainable development and enhanced human security.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In 2018, the UN developed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda integrates disarmament and control of arms into other areas of international urgency, such as extreme poverty. This way, the issue of arms control would be present within multiple areas of the UN's work. The agenda's goal is to provide a long-term framework for action within arms control and disarmament, but also development. With the UN's recognition of the devastating impact explosive weapons have had on cities, towns, and the lives of civilians, it has shown its support "to develop appropriate limitations, common standards and policies in conformity with international humanitarian law on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas."⁴⁶ The agenda supports arms control to decrease the destruction of the infrastructure and lifestyles of citizens affected by the armed conflict. With an increase in the urbanization of armed conflict, the agenda focuses on promoting security, peaceful interactions, and sustainable development and growth among nations and their civilians and governments while balancing the disarmament of weapons and the development of prosperity.

Coordinating Action on Small Arms Mechanism

In 2001, the United Nations developed the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA). Although the program focuses only on small arms control, it increases governments' control over the arms system, engages in regional and international work, and strengthens weapons tracing. In 2005, the General Assembly developed the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), which is now part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This instrument for weapons tracing and the 2030 agenda work to "constitute the normative framework on small arms and light weapons, which all UN Member States have agreed upon."⁴⁷ The General Assembly has begun to create a dent in the issue of arms control with small arms and has expanded its global framework through the Firearms Control and the Arms Trade Treaty. The Security Council recognized the detrimental issue of small arms control back in 1999. With continuous development made by the General Assembly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will continue to broaden its work towards both small arms control, military expenditures, and arms control in general.

Conclusion

Military spending comprises a critical component of government budgets for most countries. Determining the optimal level of spending for true defense may not be an exact science. Still, it is abundantly clear that many governments choose to devote crucial resources to defense spending that could fund vital development initiatives. Reducing military budgets, especially in the current global economic crisis, will be essential to implementing sustainable

⁴⁶ Nakamitsu, Izumi. *UN Chronicle*, "Advancing Disarmament within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" No. 2 Vol. IV, August 2018

⁴⁷ *Small Arms and Light Weapons*

development initiatives and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). With concerns about military spending and arms control, the United Nations urges the General Assembly First Committee to discuss both issues and incorporate them into developing sustainable and economic sustainability within the nations. By collaborating in a climate of openness and transparency, the General Assembly First Committee delegates may contribute to disarmament, development, and a fundamentally positive restructuring of the global security situation.

RESOURCE REVIEW

United Nations Documents

United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/66/30 “Relationship between disarmament and development,” January 12, 2012, <https://bit.ly/N11460>.

The General Assembly resolution focuses on the changes made since the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and mentions the progress made since the establishment of past resolutions. The delegate should use this resolution to understand further the international conference and the progress made since the first resolution 1994. The delegate should also focus on the resolution’s call for the Security Council’s support and Member States’ support for implementing disarmament.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/66/20 “Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures,” January 12, 2012, <https://bit.ly/RES6620>.

This resolution focuses on the issue involving military expenditures. It recognizes the progress made from past resolutions pertaining to military expenditures. The resolution focuses on the need for transparency in government spending and how incorporating international relations can promote this. The delegate should utilize this resolution to delve deeper into the effect of military spending on the nation and its people. The delegate should then understand its own country’s stance on military expenditures and the change transparency would have on the development of the nation.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/77/45 “Relationship between disarmament and development,” December 13, 2022, <https://bit.ly/RES7745>.

This resolution is meant to strengthen the information recorded within the 2012 resolution stated above. It focuses on the necessity of the United Nations' promotion of the relationship between disarmament and development. It discusses the need for the Security Council to support its endeavors to promote development and increase disarmament. The delegate should utilize this resolution to continue the former resolution, building upon the need for further support to promote the relationship between disarmament and development.

Guiding Questions for Debate

1. How can the General Assembly First Committee implore countries to reduce their military budgets, beginning with the Permanent five members of the Security Council?
2. How might the countries represented in the General Assembly First Committee encourage broader and deeper implementation of development-disarmament initiatives such as the Costa Rica Consensus?
3. How might the First Committee improve the overall transparency of military

- expenditures and transfers?
4. How can the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development be implemented and sustained by the General Assembly First Committee?
 5. How can the limited sovereignty of the UN grapple with an issue that nations do not want international interference with?

Guiding Questions of Position Papers

1. How much does your government spend on the military? How much does your government put towards sustainable development and economic and infrastructural growth?
2. How transparently does your government report its military expenditures to your people? Does your government file annual reports with the UN Secretariat regarding military expenditures? If not, why not?
3. How might reporting mechanisms be standardized to ensure the same information is being gathered and reported globally?
4. How should the UN System and the international community, in general, treat countries that consistently refuse to report their annual military expenditures accurately to report their annual military expenditures accurately?
5. What is your country's position on the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development? Why or why not does your country support it?