



GA1: Disarmament and International Security Committee

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Issue: Tackling the global increase in military expenditure

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Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1)

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I. Introduction

The security of its citizens, the economy, and the nation's institutions are all considered to be part of a government's duty to provide national security. Therefore, the military is a crucial asset for the Member States, and its development and upkeep demand substantial funding. The size of each nation's military varies greatly depending on the nation's size and military requirements which also affects the necessary expenses known as "military expenditure."

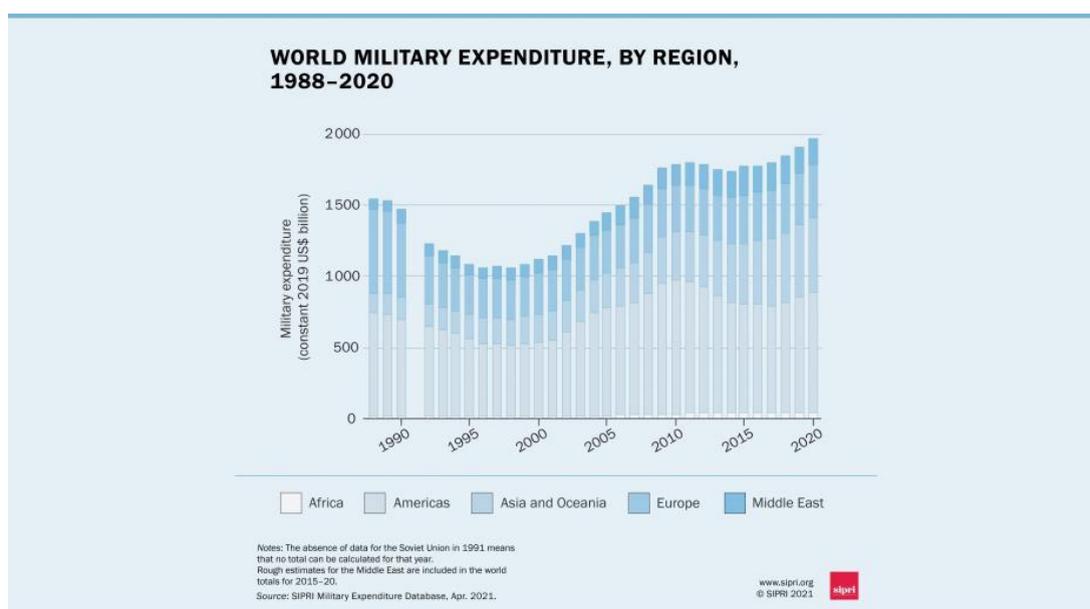


Figure 1: World Military Expenditure By Region Graph

States separate a share of their national revenue for military expenditure in order to protect their citizens from both internal and external threats. The price of producing (or importing) the weapons and vehicles used in defense, their repair and maintenance, expenditures for research and development, and the salaries of the military and civilian staff working in the defense sector make up military expenditure. The welfare of the nation is taken into account when governments arrange the share they separate for defense. If they perceive a threat, they reduce expenditures that improve national welfare and raise military expenditure.

Average military spending as a percentage of government expenditure was 5.9 percent in 2021, the same as in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic's economic implications have not "reversed the continuous



upward trend in world military expenditure seen since 2015” (“Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2021”). The percentage of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) devoted to military expenditures “fell from 2.3 percent in 2020 to 2.2 percent in 2021 as a result of the strong global economic recovery” (SIPRI). Even though the expenditure on the military as a percentage of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) has been declining, in 2021 it surpassed the two trillion US dollar level for the first time, reaching \$2.113 trillion. In three of the world's five regions, military expenditure has increased in 2021: “a 3.5 percent increase in Asia and Oceania, a 3 percent increase in Europe, and a 1.2 percent increase in Africa” (SIPRI).

For many countries, the trade-off between military investment and public infrastructure is irrefutably painful. Especially for countries whose economies are still emerging, an emphasis on military spending usually entails sacrificing other important priorities. Many nations have a permanent military yet a poor public infrastructure, including hospitals, roads, and schools. The social welfare (i.e. infrastructure, financial assistance, etc.) of the general population can be severely impacted by an unrelenting focus on military spending, as seen in countries such as North Korea.

Given that every dollar spent more than what is essential reduces government spending on other initiatives, the fundamental question is what constitutes an "appropriate" level of military spending. That topic is discussed by publicly elected authorities in a democracy and changes every year. As military operations abroad come to an end, military spending in the United States as a share of total spending has been dropping recently. However, in non-democratic countries, the level of adequate spending is set by a select few and may result in an even bigger cost to the country's citizens.

II. Involved Countries and Organizations

United States of America (USA)

With \$801 billion in military spending in 2021, the United States of America is the world's largest military spender. Even though there was a nominal increase of 2.9 percent compared to 2020, there was a real decrease of 1.4 percent. The discrepancy is due to the rising inflation rate in the USA. For instance, while the U.S. budget for military research & development activities rose nominally in 2021 when taking into account inflation resulted in a real-terms decline of 1.2 percent from 2020. Nevertheless, real growth in the U.S. budget for research and development since 2012 has increased by 24 percent. In contrast, U.S. financing for arms procurement decreased by 6.4 percent between 2012 and 2021 and by 5.4 percent between 2020 and 2021. In addition, the nearly two-decade-long international military presence in Afghanistan came to an end in 2021. The United States spent over \$85 billion to strengthen the Afghan National Security Forces between 2001 and 2021.



The United States' continued investment in research and development as well as the decline in procurement spending suggest that the development of new technologies is favored over the large-scale investment in legacy systems. Also, the fact that nuclear-related spending was among the military budget items that witnessed the biggest increase in 2021 is indicative of the USA's intention to reform and modernize its nuclear arsenal.

People's Republic of China

The second-highest spender in the world, China, allocated an estimated \$293 billion to its military in 2021, up 7.2% from 2020 and 72.2% from 2012. Chinese military spending has increased for 27 consecutive years, which is the longest uninterrupted sequence of increase by any nation in the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database. China's GDP grew by an expected 8.4% in 2021. its military burden decreased by 0.1 percentage points, to 1.7% of GDP, the same as in 2012.

China stands out when compared to the other major spenders because despite growing its military spending, it is the only major spender globally that did not increase its military burden in 2020. China's GDP has positively grown, therefore an increase in the military expenditure did not lead to a rise in military burden. Chinese military modernization and expansion plans, which are in accordance with the country's stated ambition to catch up to other top military powers, are a contributing factor in the country's continued spending increase.

Russian Federation

In 2021, Russian military spending increased for the third consecutive year. Due to high oil and gas prices, Russia's spending increased by 2.9% to \$65.9 billion (or 4.1% of its GDP). Following a period of decline due to Western sanctions following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and a dramatic decline in energy prices in 2015, Russian military spending has recently begun to increase. Over the course of the year, the "national defense" budget line, which covers money for operating costs as well as arms purchases and makes up three-quarters of SIPRI's estimate of overall Russian military spending, was revised upwards over the course of the year. Starting with an initial value of \$42.3 billion in December 2020, the budget line increased to \$48.4 billion by the end of 2021. Russia amassed troops around the Ukrainian border in late 2021, prior to its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, along the border, which can also explain the increase of 14% in the budget line throughout the year.

In addition, in an attempt to return to the strategically critical MENA region, the Russian Federation took advantage of the Syrian crisis. The Kremlin used the Syrian crisis to their advantage to return to the



region of geopolitical importance as well as solidify its allies in the region “after a prolonged period of disengagement from the MENA region following the collapse of the Soviet Union” (IEMed.). After the 2015 Russian military intervention, the trends seen in military expenditures inevitably increased in order to secure the peace and safety of the region.

Algeria

Algeria has the highest defense spending budget in Africa as of 2022, at almost 10 billion dollars. The nation ranks 23rd in the world. With respective budgets of around 5.9 billion and 5.4 billion dollars, Nigeria and Morocco came in second and third. In 2021, the long-standing tensions between Algeria and Morocco grew worse. However, Algeria's military budget decreased by 6.1% to \$9.1 billion.

Still, Algeria is the top spender on defense in Africa, allocating close to 7% of its GDP to military spending, the largest proportion on the continent. Additionally, with military spending per citizen in Algeria reaching 221 dollars in 2020, it was the second-highest in Africa behind Botswana. These significant expenditures had the dual goals of enhancing Algeria's security and bolstering the People's National Armed Forces, the nation's main military force. In addition, Algeria has the second-most powerful army in Africa as a result of the country's substantial public spending.

Saudi Arabia

Military expenditure in the Middle East was an estimated \$186 billion in 2021, up by 5.6% from 2012 but down by 3.3% from 2020. Saudi Arabia has contributed 6.6% to that amount. Saudi Arabia's estimated spending of \$55.6 billion in 2021, decreased by 17% from 2020. The decrease coincided with reports that Saudi Arabia had started to withdraw its military personnel from Yemen; however, the Saudi government denied the claims and insisted that the troops were just being redeployed. Since 2015, Saudi Arabia's military spending has been on the decline, partly as a result of a significant decline in oil prices that strained the Saudi Arabian economy. As oil prices started to climb in 2020–21, Saudi Arabia's economy began to show indications of recovery; however, this has not yet resulted in a corresponding increase in military spending.

Iran

For the first time in four years, Iran increased its military budget in 2021, reaching \$24.6 billion. The annual rise of 11% was approved despite Iran's ongoing economic issues brought on by the long-lasting consequences of sanctions. Additionally, it happened against the backdrop of Iran's deteriorating relations



with Israel and the United States. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) budget increased by 14% in 2021, making up 34% of all military spending in Iran.

Israel

Due to Israel's continuous military operations against Hamas and growing concerns over Iran's potential nuclear capabilities, its military budget increased by 3.1% in 2021 to \$24.3 billion. During the political standoff in the parliament in 2020 and 2021, Israel did not have a properly approved state budget. The budget for those years' military spending, along with some additional funding, was based on the budget for 2019. According to SIPRI, the nation spent \$22 billion on its military in 2020. Israel spent almost \$2,508 per person on defense, which accounted for 12 percent of all government spending. The sum of these indicators, when visualized, demonstrates how unusual Israel's military spending is in comparison to some of the biggest militaries in the world, including the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

III. Focused Overview of the Issue

Due to military and naval supremacy, the early modern expansion of Western European states started to challenge other regimes all over the world. States eventually began to develop effective fiscal systems during the totalitarian era of the nineteenth and twentieth century, which allowed some of them to allocate more than half of their GDP to the war effort during the world wars. Comparatively, even though before the twentieth century, military spending was regularly the biggest item on the budget for the majority of states, it still made up only a small portion of their GDP.

As of right now, no consensus has been developed on whether the increase in military expenditure is beneficial or detrimental to economic growth. However, according to data from 90 countries spanning over 1992-2006, results indicate that military spending leads to negative economic growth for low-income countries. Specifically, a negative but stronger causal relationship between military expenditure and economic growth is found for the countries in Europe and Middle East–South Asia regions. Even though military safety is considered as welfare, the increase in military expenditure might influence the social welfare of citizens, which impacts daily life, in many countries. Therefore, it is vital to tackle the continuous upward trend in military expenditures.

1. The Impact of The Cold War

Since the close of World War II and the start of the Cold War, military expenditures have gone through three phases: military Keynesianism, redistributive militarism, and global militarism. Military



Keynesianism is the first phase military expenditures have gone through from 1947 to 1978. Military expenditures had the economic purpose of partially ensuring high employment policies and boosting the profit rate for the majority of the top firms in the United States under the pretense of "containment." Additionally, cyclical tendencies in the macroeconomy were countered by arms spending, which also boosted production through the development of new products and manufacturing techniques.

Redistributive militarism is the second phase military expenditures have gone through from 1978 to 1988. Redistributive militarism, in contrast to military Keynesianism, dissociated the purchase of weapons from high employment, high wage policies. In order to redistribute income from the "bottom 80 percent" of the income distribution to the top 20 percent, military procurement increased to previously unheard-of levels in both relative and absolute terms, procurement practices became more lax, allowing for higher profit margins and more business for arms contractors —thus increasing the mass of profits —, and military spending increased significantly. In other words, a given amount of military spending in the 1980s was accompanied by a far bigger deficit than during the period from 1945 to 1978. This raised the proportion of the total budget that was allotted to bondholders of federal debt, who predominantly fall among the top 20% of the income distribution.

Global militarism is the last phase military expenditures have gone through since 1988. The foundation of global militarism is the ability to wage war quickly and with minimal collateral damage in Third World countries. In regard to the macroeconomy, overall military spending may not go below their level from the late 1980s, but the nature of the acquisition process will change drastically. For the first time since the Cold War, the mix of weapons changed from massive, astronomically expensive systems intended for use in an East-West clash to more "stealthy" systems specialized for swift interventions (i.e. autonomous weapon systems) . There is a chance that the ongoing procurement crisis may be resolved given the demand for dependable, combat-proven weapons. The consolidation of global militarism would most likely be accompanied by an appreciable reduction in the federal deficit-to-gross national product (GNP) ratio, thereby eliminating a significant redistributive constraint, because rising interest payments on the rising federal debt are crowding out other forms of federal spending and in the near future threaten to partially crowd out arms expenditures. While still being given second-order consideration, Keynesian stability and growth strategies are no longer to be the main determinants of the amount, timing, or makeup of military spending.

All of these phases have been determining factors in the trend of military expenditures. Since the start of the Cold War, we have seen a visible rise in military expenditures globally. However, military expenditure has started to decrease as a percentage of GDP since the conclusion of the Cold War in 1990. Especially after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, the military expenditures in U.S. dollars have



relatively been stabilized until 2001. This has allowed room for additional public spending on things like infrastructure, health, and education. But military expenditures did not remain at these levels. Since 2002, there has been an almost continuous upward trend in military expenditures, especially after the Great Recession in 2008. The Great Recession has led to an increase in military spending specifically because the governments “have deemed it dangerous to risk job cuts in the defense sector at a time of recession” (BBC). The governments were rushing to increase public spending in order to combat the recession, and since for major states — especially the U.S., Russia, and China — military represents a long-term strategic choice, they didn’t want to make cuts to military spending even in times of recession. Hence, this has contributed to the continuous uptick seen in trends in military expenditures.

Most importantly, contrary to common assumptions that the end of the Cold War would result in a decrease in overall military spending, events in the Middle East since August 1990 have shown that there will not be a meaningful reduction in the military budget under the current and foreseeable circumstances. By 1989 a fundamental turning point had been reached regarding U.S. military policy. A thaw in the Cold War and a political, social, and economic restructuring of the Soviet Union were among the factors driving this change. Cold War "Keynesian" patterns of lax procurement, cost overruns, rapid obsolescence, and low-quality weapons were replaced with programs that closely tied weapons procurement to more efficient management. U.S. foreign trade/GNP ratio increased from 7 percent in 1960 to 28 percent in 1989. Due to the U.S. 's increasing independence on foreign made materials for its military base as well as its continuing desire for basing access in the Third World, the U.S. continuing and developing relations with the MENA countries has led to an increase in military spending in that region.

How is Economic Growth Affected

Military spending is a major concern for all nations, regardless of their development status. The military formulation is an economic burden, as a result, a smaller amount of resources are left for investments in the education and technology sectors, which are crucial to the process of economic growth and provide a wider foundation for socio-economic development. In the insecure region, it is generally accepted that each nation purposefully devotes an uneven portion of its limited economic resources to "unproductive" military spending. As each nation goes beyond its neighbors to ensure its security, military spending can be driven more and more across a region, raising the level of regional military expenditure and bringing little rise or even a decline in the security of all. This can happen in the absence of international collaboration to reduce political pressure. However, there are two specific and connected ways that greater military spending could adversely impact long-term economic growth. First, an increase in military spending could reduce the total set of resources that are currently accessible for other domestic uses like investing in productive capital, education, and market-driven technological advancement. Second, increased military



spending may amplify misrepresentations that reduce the effectiveness of resource allocation, lowering the total yield factor.

Many studies have shown that higher military burden is associated with slower growth for 69 nations between 1952 and 1970, while an increase in military spending of 10% results in a 0.13% reduction in yearly economic growth. A panel of 50 developing economies will have slower growth and less development between 1965 and 1973 as a result of the direct and indirect effects of military spending. For Egypt, Israel, and Syria (1975–1988), (1967–1988), and (1973–1988), respectively, military spending slows economic growth while civilian spending improves it. Additionally, the military expenditure had a detrimental impact on Peru's growth rate between 1970 and 1996. In the entire sample of 90 countries from 1992 to 2006, military spending had a negative growth impact for low-income countries. The empirical results from many studies and research over the years has proven the negative influence of military expenditure on economic growth, therefore, it is vital to tackle the global increase in military expenditures in the upcoming years.

IV. Key Vocabulary

Military Expenditure: The term "military expenditure" refers to "all ongoing and future spending on the armed forces, including peacekeeping operations, defense ministries and other governmental entities working on defense initiatives, military space activities, and paramilitary forces that are deemed capable of participating in military operations" (SIPRI). Military expenditures should cover everything related to the existing workforce, both military and civilian, as well as pensions for retired military people, social services for personnel and their families, operations and maintenance, procurement, military research and development, military construction, and military aid.

However, funds for civil defense, current expenditure for prior military operations, veteran benefits, demobilization, conversion of arms production facilities, and destruction of weapons are not included in military expenditure.

Gross Domestic and National Product: Gross domestic product (GDP) is "the total market value of the goods and services generated by an economy during a given time period" (Britannica). Gross national product (GNP) is an estimation of the total value of all finished goods and services produced over a specific time period using resources owned by the citizens of a nation.

The terms gross national product and gross domestic product are related. GNP begins with GDP, adds residents' investment income from foreign investments, and deducts foreign residents' investment income earned within a country.



Trade-off: In economics, the phrase "trade-off" is used to describe how budgeting invariably entails giving up some of X to obtain more of Y. For this agenda item, "trade-off" is used to describe the increase in national military expenditures which is compensated by making sacrifices from the public infrastructure.

Nominal GDP: Nominal GDP is the total value of all goods and services produced in a country's economy during a certain period of time. Contrary to other GDP measurements, the price changes caused by inflation and deflation are not adjusted for in the calculation of nominal GDP.

Procurement Funding: Procurement funding is used for the purchase of production articles, including acquisition and production support costs like production testing, quality assurance, and production engineering, as well as equipment assembly performed either in-house or under contract when necessary to produce and deliver a functional end product intended for operational use. Procurement funding could also go toward initial logistics, any changes needed as a result of equipment upgrades or modifications, training materials, etc.

Guns and Butter Curve: The guns and butter curve is a well-known example that demonstrates the tradeoffs on a production possibilities curve (PPC). For example, if you think a country needs a standing military, the size of that military can be disputed but its existence cannot.

The national debt and a shift of potential jobs from the private to public sectors are two ways that defense spending has an economic cost. Any industry that the military relies on suffers from economic distortion as resources are shifted to make better fighter planes and weaponry. A nation must bear all of these expenses if they are to defend themselves. We sacrifice some butter to have guns.

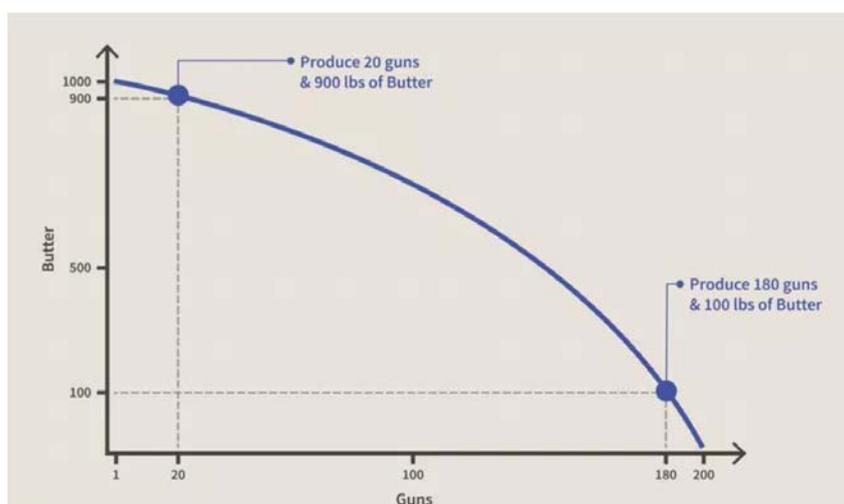


Figure 2: Guns-and-Butter Curve



V. Important Events & Chronology

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
12 March 1947	The Cold War started between the West and the Communist Bloc, starting an irreversible and increasing trend in military expenditures.
31 July 1991	The U.S.-Soviet Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) was signed by the United States and the Soviet Union.
2008	The Great Recession occurred after the bursting of the U.S. housing bubble and the global financial crisis, affecting many nations' economies.
4-5 September 2014	Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreed at the Wales Summit to reverse the trend of declining defense budgets and raise them over the coming decade.
2021	World military spending has surpassed the \$2 trillion mark, with the United States, China, India, the United Kingdom and Russia as the top 5 spenders respectively.
December 2021	The Global Peace Dividend was launched by the United Nations.

VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

- The U.S.-Soviet Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I)

<https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/treaties-between-united-states-america-and-union-soviet-socialist-republics-strategic-offensive-reductions-start-i-start-ii/>

START I was signed by George H.W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev on July 31, 1991. START I was the first treaty to demand significant reductions in the strategic nuclear arsenals of both the US and the Soviet Union/Russia. It was essential in preserving the predictability and stability of the strategic balance and serving as a base for even further reduction. START I came into force on December 5, 1994, as a result of the Soviet Union's dissolution in December 1991 and the need to establish plans for its nuclear inheritance. Despite the delay, some important steps were still taken.



START I lasted for fifteen years. The treaty required reductions to be finished no later than seven years after it entered into force. After then, for the following eight years, parties had to uphold those restrictions. In fact, even after reaching the START I-mandated limitations, both the US and Russia continued to reduce. Their strategic nuclear arsenals were much smaller than what was required by the treaty at the time it expired. Despite having promise for success, START I remained in force until December 5, 2009 and was allowed to expire.

- A/RES/53/72 Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/166354>

The United Nations adopted this resolution at the 79th plenary meeting on December 4, 1998. Although it fails to tackle the solution directly, it entails great detail about annual reporting and ensuring transparency of the military expenditures for all Member States.

- A/31/222/Rev.1 Report of the Secretary-General

<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/reports-secretary-general>

This United Nations document is created by a group of experts on the reduction of military budgets. It includes information regarding the definition and accounting of military expenditures, as well as measurement and international reporting. While the document also includes “suggestions for implementation” (59), these suggestions have not been sufficient for decreasing the continuous increase.

VII. Failed Solution Attempts

Through different proposals and treaties, nations have attempted to come to a global agreement on cuts to military spending throughout the past century. Governments were signing treaties to accomplish such reductions, especially after the Cold War with the rise in military spending globally. Despite START I's success, such treaties didn't stay in effect long enough to address the issue.

Early UN suggestions centered on reducing the expenditures of countries with large militaries and freeing up funds for development assistance. Spending reductions for the military, however, were not implemented. They resulted in the 1981 creation of the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures (later renamed United Nations Report on Military Expenditures, or MilEx), which encourages nations to report on their military expenditures.



MilEx's primary objective, which was to help cut military spending, gradually gave way to another crucial objective: enhancing transparency and building confidence among States. MilEx will shed light on trends in military spending and help to boost global security and confidence if States submit annual reports. Although it has a lot of potential, this has not yet succeeded in achieving its initial goal addressing the rise in military expenditure.

VIII. Possible Solutions

One of the major reasons for the continuous upward trend in military expenditure is the security dilemma that countries cannot trust their neighbors, especially high military spending neighbors, and continue seeing them as a threat to their national security on a daily basis. In addition, it is incorrect to refer to military expenditures as "defense" spending because the majority of them are aimed towards supporting populous allies with large populations rather than defending the nation itself. A policy goal is advanced through military spending. Therefore, a government will invest more in the military the more it intends to do in the world. As a result, any military downsizing should begin with consideration of foreign policy. To further elaborate, it is absolutely critical that governments reaffirm what it wants its military to achieve. Delegates will have to consider a "guiding strategy" and determine their national and international objectives for its military to follow. Hence, it is vital that delegates write their clauses by considering the foreign policies of their delegations. Delegates are also highly encouraged to write clauses intending to promote regional and international cooperation to eliminate the security dilemma. The European Commission states that the lack of cooperation in the field of defense and security is estimated to cost annually between €25 billion and €100 billion. Forming, at least, regional cooperation gives all the countries in the same region (or the members of the same organization) the same goal of trying to ensure security. As a result, that decreases the military spending of countries, even if it is slightly. While promoting regional and international cooperation has been controversial for this agenda, delegates should focus more on keeping the cooperation between countries sustainable for this to be an effective solution to the issue at hand.

Moreover, on a more national level, states should develop strategic initiatives to play up on their individual geographic strengths for reductions in logistics. Reductions of military expenditures have to involve many aspects through a combination of changes for effective and immediate solutions. For example, cutting the size of the military force, purchasing fewer or lesser weapons, as well as reducing the cost of producing and maintaining forces and equipment can be done together as a combination for effective results at a national level.



IX. Useful Links

- <https://peace-dividend.org/the-appeal>

As the launching of the Global Peace Dividend Initiative can be seen in the timeline above, delegates can get more information from the link about what it really is. The information can be useful to grasp the most recent developments regarding the agenda and can give the delegates a better understanding.

- https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm

Since NATO is a considerably large organization with many members, delegates can look at the relevant declaration to not only indicate what has been ineffective towards tackling the issue, as well as get inspiration for their own clauses.

- <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gunsandbutter.asp>

Guns-and-Butter Curve is used as a foundation for the explanation of the agenda. Therefore, it is highly beneficial that the delegates grasp the concept of it.

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

SIPRI is the main organization which researches about the agenda as well as provides data. Therefore, to get the most accurate information for each country and region, delegates should use this link.

- <https://www.downsizinggovernment.org/defense/plan-cut-military-spending>

This link can help the delegates get a better understanding of the agenda. In addition, the delegates can look at this example plan before writing their clauses.

- <https://keough.nd.edu/its-time-to-eliminate-unnecessary-military-spending-dd/>

Keeping in mind that the United States is the country which contributes the most to the global military expenditure increase, delegates can benefit from specific information about the U.S.'s military spendings and should visit the link above.

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