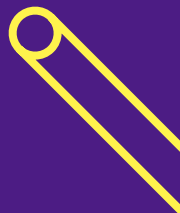
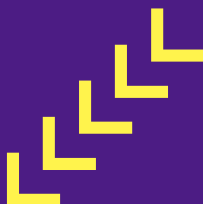
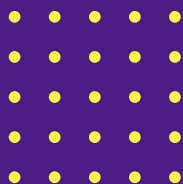


# 11 Things We Should Consider about Global Military Spending

for educators dedicated to peace



Editor: A-Young Moon

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## Greetings from PEACEMOMO and International Peace Bureau!

Greetings from PEACEMOMO and International Peace Bureau!

On the occasion of the 2021 Global Day of Action for Military Spending, we present to you a few interesting questions and possible responses.

Are you worried about the climate crisis? Do you dream of a life free from COVID-19 and other insecurities? Are you concerned with where we have fallen short in ensuring life and happiness for all? Are you concerned with education for peace that addresses all of these crucial questions? Then this booklet is a must read, because weapons are not included in the list of necessities for ensuring a good life.

June, 2021

PEACEMOMO & IPB

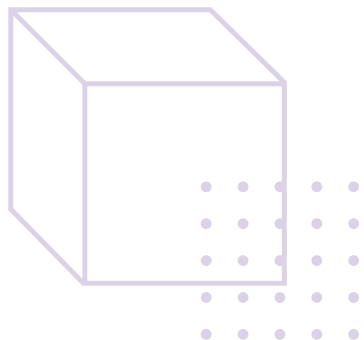


# 1. What do you mean by “military spending?”

Simply speaking, military spending means money that is spent for military related affairs. It is also called ‘defense spending’, ‘military expenditure’, or ‘defense expenditure.’

Cambridge dictionary defines defense spending as money spent by a government to provide its military with weapons, equipment, and soldiers. NATO defines defence expenditure as payments made by a national government specifically to meet the needs of its armed forces, those of Allies or of the Alliance.

SIPRI defines military spending as “all current and capital expenditure on the armed forces, including peace keeping forces, defence ministries and other government agencies engaged in defence projects, paramilitary forces when judged to be trained, equipped and available for military operations, and military space activities.”



## 2. How much are we spending?

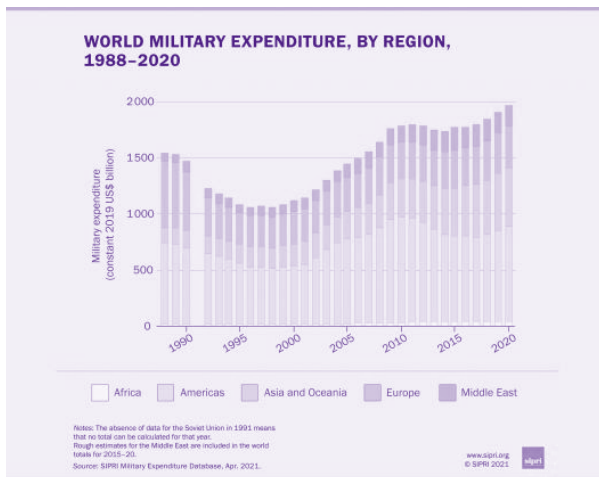
According to new data published on 24th April, 2020, by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the global military expenditure increased by 2.6 percent while the global gross domestic product (GDP) decreased by 4.4%. Total global military expenditure reached \$1981 billion in 2020. The United States was the top military spender in 2020 as it was last year. The following four biggest spenders in 2020 were China, India, Russia and the United Kingdom. The five biggest military spenders together accounted for 62 per cent of global military expenditure.

As the world's largest military spender, the US military expenditure was about \$778 billion which is an increase of 4.4 per cent over 2019. The US accounted for 39% of total military expenditure in 2020. As the second largest military spender in the world, China's military expenditure totalled \$252 billion in 2020. China's military expenditure has risen for 26 consecutive years, the longest continuous increase in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

Almost all the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) increased their military expenditure in 2020. 12 NATO members spent more or less 2 percent of their GDP on militaries. The 8th world's biggest military spender, France, passed the 2 per cent threshold for the first time since 2009. The UK became the fifth largest spender in 2020 with a total of \$59.2 billion which is 2.9 percent higher than in 2019.

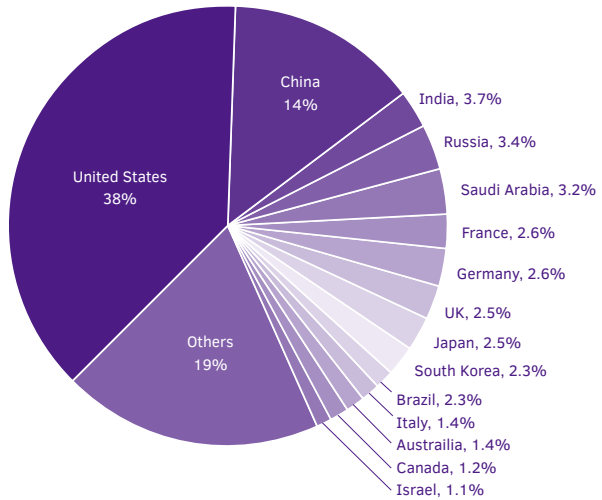
Germany's military spending was increased by 5.2 percent to \$52.8 billion and ranked the seventh largest spender in 2020. Overall, total military spending across Europe increased by 4.0 per cent in 2020.

In the case of Asia and Oceania, India (\$72.9 billion), Japan (\$49.1 billion), South Korea (\$45.7 billion) and Australia (\$27.5 billion) were ranked the largest military spenders in the region. The increase of four countries between 2019 and 2020 is bigger than the increase in the decade 2011–20.



Some countries like Brazil, Chile, South Korea, and Russia, reallocated their military budget to the Covid-19 pandemic response, it was not enough to change the global increasing tendency of military expenditure. Despite the downward curve of global GDP due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the total world military expenditure has increased.

The share of world military expenditure of the 15 countries with the highest spending in 2019 (source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, Apr.2020.)



### The Rank of the Main Exporters and Importers of Major Arms 2015-2019

Rank	Exporter	Global Share(%)	Rank	Importer	Global Share(%)
1	USA	36	1	Saudi Arabia	12
2	Russia	21	2	India	9.2
3	France	7.9	3	Egypt	5.8
4	Germany	5.8	4	Australia	4.9
5	China	5.5	5	China	4.3
6	UK	3.7	6	Algeria	4.2
7	Spain	3.1	7	South Korea	3.4
8	Israel	3.0	8	UAE	3.4
9	Italy	2.1	9	Iraq	3.4
10	South Korea	2.1	10	Qatar	3.4



Once there was hope of reduced military spending, but only briefly. The global military spending went down with the dissolution of the Cold War. However, it has continued to increase ever since.



### 3. Why so much? Why ever more?

Continuous increase in military spending is possible because there is a belief that more armament will bring more security. This is a symptom of a critical dilemma. This unstoppable arms race is an outcome of the impossible paradox of pursuing security capability by oneself, often called a security dilemma.

An arms race occurs as a result of competitive amassment of military capability between two or more countries, including armaments and military personnel. For example, when one country acquires high-tech armaments for its own security, it affects the strategic stability of neighboring countries. In other words, the decision by one country to acquire arms makes neighboring countries feel insecure and seek stronger armaments. This is not the case of just one country but the whole world. These continuous competitions create a vicious cycle of arms races.

Let's imagine your neighbors who live next door put a gun on the fence towards your house for security. They say the system is up to date and automated, and it's only for the enemy, not for you, so nothing to worry about. However, the gun keeps aiming and following all your moves around the house. So, you decided to build a defense system along your fence that will respond to any misfires, in order to save your life. Now both houses have guns on their fence. Have they become more secure than before?

One day your neighbors knock on your door and ask you to deconstruct your defense system. They say it is ineffective to build a separate defense system among neighbors. They suggest making an agreement to yield the security of your house to them. However, you turn down their suggestion. Soon after, your neighbors upgrade their defense system because now you are considered their enemy since you turned down their suggestion. According to the village's gossip, their system is costly and high-tech, which exceeds what you can afford. Now you are at a crossroads whether you accept their suggestion and yield your security to them or build a stronger defense system with a loan.

After several days, you decide to suggest a deal to your neighbor. The deal you suggest is to deconstruct the defense system of both houses at the same time. Your neighbor agrees with the idea and says they will do it after you've done it first. Now you are at another crossroads whether you deconstruct your system first or keep the current situation. Keeping the current system costs you a lot, but you think it is risky to deconstruct yours first because you are not sure that your neighbor will keep their word. While you are hesitating, there is news from your friend living in your village that they also decided to build a defense system.

This story is quite simplified, but it still works as a metaphor. We may call this a stalemate, and the stalemate is often used as an excuse for the arms race. What do you think? Is it really better to have ways to protect oneself? The defensive weapon is an ambivalent concept. At this point, another crucial question arises. Who was the enemy that your neighbor wanted to keep away in the first place? What was the ultimate security that you and your neighbor wanted to ensure?

## 4. Inevitable consequence?

Many believe we are bound to enter into an arms race – an unjustifiable claim. An arms race is inevitable only because people believe it is inevitable. It is a costly claim that needs to be challenged. Security has always been what we make of it, not fixed, not determined. An arms race relies on the traditional concept of ‘our security only’ through military might. However, military security has the self-contradiction of inducing an endless race towards the insecurity of all. It puts all the related actors in danger. This is the frailty of the traditional concept of military security that needs to be questioned. Inevitability, too, is what you make of it.

The consequence of the continuing arms race is clear: it is not security for all but ever more danger for all. According to the Federation of American Scientists(FAS), the total number of nuclear warheads that the earth is carrying now is approximately 4,315. This number includes "1,570 deployed offensive strategic warheads(with 870 in storage), 1,875 non-strategic warheads, and 2,060 additional retired warheads awaiting dismantlement, as of January 2020."





Oh! One more update for you. Frightening news came in March 2021: the UK released its defense plan to increase nuclear warheads by up to 40%. (As we discussed earlier, this is not a domestic issue for the UK, it's a global problem. This decision will cause a fluctuation in security policies all over the world.) It is obvious what race this will trigger.

In the field of disarmament, “a standstill does not exist; if you do not go forward, you go backwards” in the words of former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld said.


It seems like a revival of the Cold War as some call it the New Cold War. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world military expenditure reached the highest in 2018. According to SIPRI, the world military expenditure has reached \$1,822 billion. However, the dynamics of the so-called New Cold War look more gloomy than in the 1990s. Technologies in the arms industry have developed rapidly and the arms transfer market has expanded, the trend of automation of the field of war casts a dark shadow.

## 5. What sustains the arms race?

Today, the military is a mega institution, often associated with huge profit-making. Eisenhower who was an American military officer and served as the 34th president of the United States from 1953 to 1961 said at the retirement ceremony: “As we peer into society's future, we – you and I, and our government – must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering for our own ease and convenience the precious resources of tomorrow... 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. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes... Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

“The military-industrial complex(MIC)” refers to a self-sustaining politico-economic system that perpetuates profitability in military supplies industries, de facto in multiple countries but primarily in the USA.





States usually get into arms races due to diverse internal and external causes that amount to threat perception. The threat is usually ascribed to an external source, often labeled as ‘enemy’ or ‘evil’, but it is more a rhetorical strategy than a statement of fact. Arms races rise from the mutual escalation of mistrust, antagonistic discourses, and political and economic interest of each state involved and their regional and global objectives.

According to the Global Campaign on Military Spending(GCOMS), the money spent on the military sector in 2018 equates to \$235 per person. What do we mean by ‘per person?’ Yes, it means every single person on this planet. Are we not spending too much? Is it worth that much?

## 6. Can we afford it?

The economic drain associated with military spending is huge, particularly in a time of multiple global crises. The poor suffer even more disproportionately during multiple crises. The UK Department for International Development has estimated that half of the world's poorest people could be living in states that are experiencing, or are at risk of, violent conflict. The world is drowning in weapons. An estimated 875 million or more small arms are in circulation.

By 2016, nuclear-weapon states possessed nearly 15,400 nuclear warheads. The global stockpile of nuclear-bomb-making material remains enough to make tens of thousands of new weapons. Dozens of countries still stockpile millions of cluster munitions. Women and children continue to be targeted in armed conflict. Tens of thousands of boys and girls under the age of 18 are still used and enslaved in conflicts worldwide.

According to the report of Centre Delàs, the main arms exporting countries together represent "35.48% of the world's population, accounting for 82% of global military spending and being responsible for two thirds of the world's CO2 emissions. These countries practically manufacture all the weapons in the world which triggers never-ending armed conflicts and victimization of people in the countries most greatly affected by the climate crisis.



“International security is at risk. Cold war tensions have returned. Global military spending is at its highest since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Disarmament must be brought back to the centre of our common efforts for peace and security. We must understand the role of disarmament measures in preventing major war and armed conflict and violence, contributing to sustainable development, upholding humanitarian principles and protecting civilians.”

— António Guterres United Nations Secretary-General



## 7. Can we think of alternatives?

Based on the report published by the Global Commission on Adaptation to Climate Change, the globe needs an investment of \$1.8 trillion to relieve current climate crises, and that investment will be returned as an economic benefit of \$7.1 trillion.

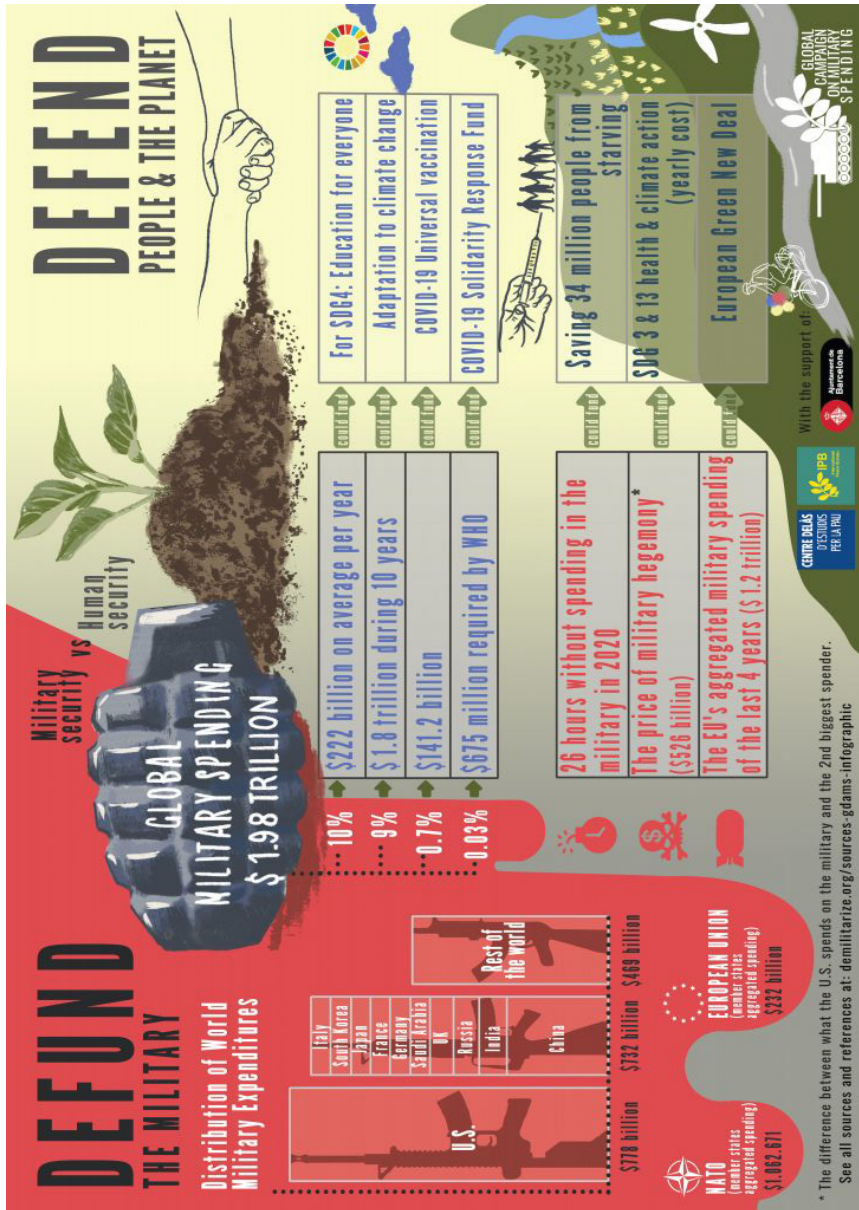
You know what? The disturbing fact is that \$1.8 trillion is the exact amount of global military spending in 2018. It means we already missed a chance to earn \$7.1 trillion. No surprises because we have repeatedly been missing out on chances like that. What would have been your choice, if you had information that you will have a return of \$7.1 trillion in coming years?

It's the oddest point of global military spending. It is clear that we have better options to invest in, but the world keeps opting for the wrong option. Does the spending guarantee what it should guarantee? Can we really continue to afford it? Are we allowed to raise these questions? Do we get proper responses to these questions?

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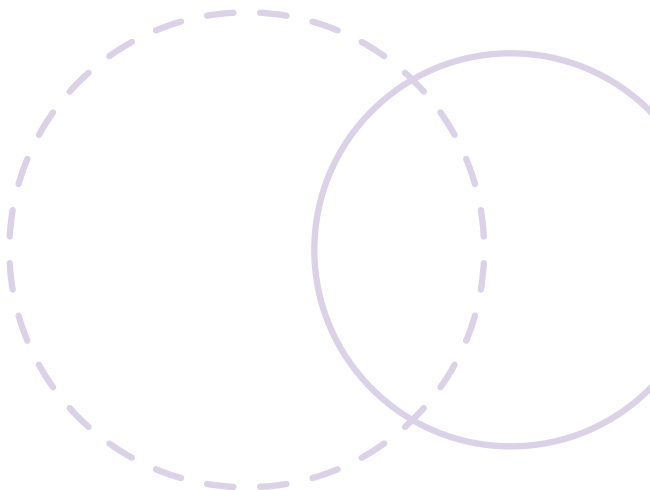
According to the Global Campaign on Military Spending, a 10% decrease of world military spending will assure full accomplishment of SDG 4 which aims at education for all. If the global society can cut 9% of its military spending, \$1.8 trillion can be used for climate crisis prevention. If the world agrees to spend not a penny in the military for 26 hours, 34 million people will be free from starvation. To provide Covid-19 vaccination for all, we need \$141.2 billion which equals only 0.7% of global military spending. Why are we competing over Covid-19 vaccination despite the fact that we have such an alternative?

The global society is working together to cope with the current climate crisis and trying hard to build back better. However, interestingly, the issue of military spending is always missing in the mainstream agenda. Disarmament is a clear alternative to manage the crises that the world is facing such as Covid-19 and the climate crisis.

## 8. One way to protect? Or better ways to protect?

Military spending is justified for protecting a state from a prospective enemy. However, the enemy is not necessarily clearly defined; rather, it stays as an open possibility. This is another reason why the arms race never ends. When there is no visible enemy, the state wants to keep its defense system for the future enemy. The state's desire for security works as demand in the market and arms industry reacts with the supply. This is how the MIC works, and it is also a reasonable suspicion that the enemy is being created for the continuing growth of the arms industry.

In 1982, the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues of Sweden published a report, *Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival*. Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme chaired the Commission, also known as “the Palme Commission.”



The Palme Report pointed out the interdependence of security among states, often referred to as common security. Common security's main idea is that a country cannot assure security by the unilateral decisions on its own military actions. This is because national security is intertwined with international security. So not a single actor is free from the interactive aspect of security.

Therefore, the Palme report's main idea is clear that to obtain comprehensive security, a state needs to extend its partnership to its adversaries. Common security is also called 'security with the enemy.' A question still remains as to how the common interest among nation-states can be well defined.

Since 2020, the world has begun to see Covid-19 as a new, undeniably serious common threat to all humanity. In response, a common interest emerged: how do we best counter Covid-19 together and provide the best cure and protection to the infected? Public calls were raised for governments to mobilize an emergency budget for the Covid-19 response. Some governments indeed cut their military budget to deal with the Covid-19 cost. Working for common security in the face of a new common threat is well founded.



## 9. Security for everyone and for a common future?

There is a vision that security, and protection, should be enjoyed by everyone, not just a few. Human security is a concept and frame of policy promoted by UNDP since 1994. It means everyone deserves security, not just a few institutions. It also means we need multiple means and conditions to provide such genuine security. Military means fall short of, and are even detrimental to, providing such conditions for people in the 21 century. Arms races in particular, severely diminished available means and conditions for providing genuine security for everyone.

For too long, security has been equated with the threats to a country's borders. For too long, nations have sought arms to protect their security. For most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event.

Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime—these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world. This should not surprise us. The founders of the United Nations had always given equal importance to people's security and to territorial security.

— p.3, UNDP, Human Development Report (1994)

The Report pointed out "drought and disease can decimate no less mercilessly than the weapons of war." With the impact of Covid-19, we have seen all the complex weaponry turn cold and worthless to counter new common dangers.

Providing human security requires serious and sustained investment in the fields where human potential is underdeveloped or threatened. UNDP called for all countries to reduce military spending by 3% in 1995-2000, which was not realized. Military spending undermines human security and wastes precious resources that could be used for human development.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reaffirms the need for fundamental changes in doing and thinking security.

The notion of security has always evolved... The changing nature of armed conflict in the past few decades and the unspeakable human suffering it has caused gave rise to the concept of placing human beings at the centre of security. Today, it is well understood that our concept of security must ensure the protection not only of the State, but of its human population as well.

— p.2, Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament





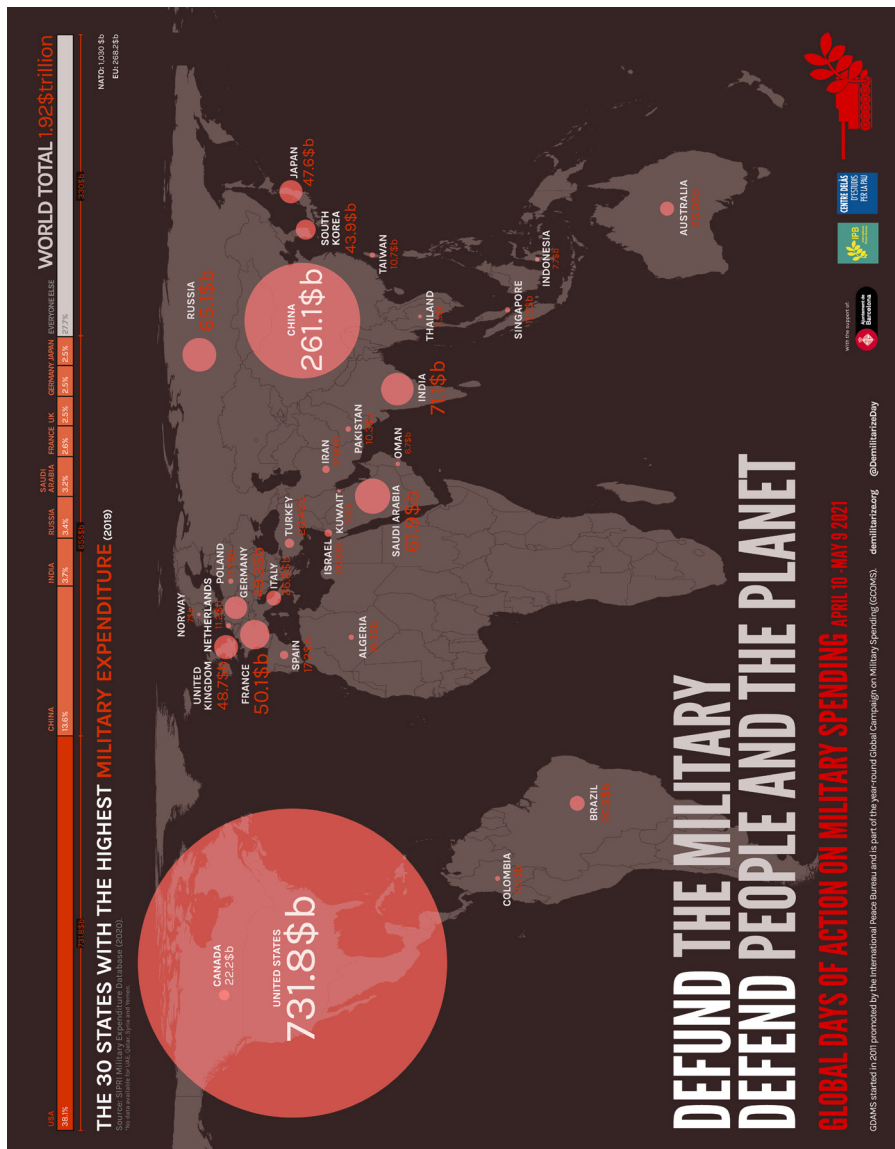
## 10. What needs to be done to reduce military spending?

To secure a common future for us, “general and complete disarmament” should be our common objective as Antonio Guterres stresses. So what we need to do is

- foster new cooperation and dialogue to reduce military spending and build confidence for common security.
- initiate global and regional pacts for arms reduction to realize general and complete disarmament in the nearest future.
- monitor and prevent new technologies, such as automatic lethal weapons, space weapons, and AI-weapons systems that could endanger the security of future generations. New weapon technologies pose great challenges to existing legal, humanitarian and ethical norms for peace.
- ensure a global transparency in arms production, trade and stockpiles, with active participation of local governments and civil society actors.
- build a common understanding of the new dangers posed by the climate crisis and other global systemic crises, and reflect it to the national and local budget to secure human security.

“As armed conflicts grow more deadly, destructive and complex, we need a new focus on disarmament that saves lives.”

— Agenda for Disarmament (2018)



source:<https://demilitarize.org/resources/the-map-of-military-spending-2019>



## 11. What can you do to stop it?

We have worked hard to reduce the arms race by banning many weapons so far.

### **Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)**

: BWC prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons. A biological weapon means a weapon that disseminates disease-causing organisms or toxins to harm or kill humans, animals or plants.

### **Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC)**

: CWC aims to eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons by States Parties. A Chemical Weapon is a chemical used to cause intentional death or harm through its toxic properties.

### **Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)**

: CCM prohibits under any circumstances the use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions, as well as the assistance or encouragement of anyone to engage in prohibited activities. A cluster munition is a weapon consisting of a container or dispenser from which many submunitions or bomblets are scattered over wide areas.

### **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)**

: CCW is to ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately. A conventional weapon means a wide range of equipment not limited to armoured combat vehicles, combat helicopters, combat aircraft, warships, small arms and light weapons, landmines, cluster munitions, ammunition and artillery.

### **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**

: TPNW is to ban a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. It also includes undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities.

There are many hundreds of civil society organizations globally advocating for arms control and disarmament.

- So stay alert – to save our common future.
- Stay informed and get connected.
- Join meetings and express your concerns.
- Watch and press for budgeting for human security.
- Influence the public and representatives – arms race is deadly.
- Start and support peacebuilding efforts.

## Useful disarmament-related websites

#Youth4Disarmament Website

Disarmament Education Website

UNODA's First eLearning Module providing an introduction to Disarmament  
Factsheets on Disarmament Issues

Disarmament: A Basic Guide

Action for Disarmament: 10 Things You Can Do!

World is Over-Armed and Peace is Underfunded infographic

History of Disarmament as Written by Nobel Peace Laureates

How Weapons Control Fosters Development infographic



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