



Reaching Critical Will

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Military Spending Toolkit

Introduction

While military expenditures increase every year, investment in conflict resolution, peace-building, and development—elements recognized by the United Nations to be necessary for sustainable security—lags far behind. Since the end of the Cold War, militarism has been growing in response to an increasingly unstable world, propelling the world even further into instability and war. Armed conflict—and the constant threat of war or terrorism—has become both the cause of and response to this growing militarism. War and the threat of war destroy lives, infrastructure, and well-being, creating a culture of fear, violence, and instability. This impedes development by upsetting social programs, education, transportation, business, and tourism, which prevents economic stability, mental well-being, and sustainable livelihoods. The manufacture and use of weapons also prevents sustainable ecological development and preservation, creating unequal access to resources.

Governments that spend excessive financial, technological, and human resources on their militaries divert resources from economic, social, and environmental programs. The military-industrial-academic complex—composed of a state's armed forces, the government, suppliers of weapons systems and services (corporations), and academic institutions that conduct research on weapon systems and designs—absorbs vast amounts of funding that could otherwise be spent on human security, including education, health, housing, etc. Furthermore, funds reserved for development initiatives are increasingly spent on emergency relief and rehabilitation operations to clean up after violent conflict.

It is evident through commitments governments have made on paper to the Millennium Development Goals and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness that the international community recognizes investment in development is necessary to create conditions for sustainable security. Yet in 2006, military spending amounted to \$1,204 billion, while Official Development Assistance amounted to less than \$80 billion—several billions of which went to reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹ It is therefore imperative to increase transparency of military spending and accountability for the priorities governments choose.

Tools

Two tools for increasing transparency of and accountability for militarism already exist:

United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

Established in 1991, by UN General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, "Transparency in Armaments"

The Register is a database to which UN member states submit information on international arms transfers, procurement through national production, holdings, and relevant policies. It comprises seven categories of major conventional weapon systems: battle tanks; armored infantry combat vehicles; large-calibre artillery systems; combat aircraft; attack helicopters; warships (including submarines); missiles and missile-launchers.

¹ "Official Development Assistance increases further – but 2006 targets still a challenge," OECD, http://www.oecd.org/document/3/0,2340,en_2649_201185_34700611_1_1_1_1,00.html

Participation: 172 states have participated in the Register one more more times.

United Nations Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures

Established in 1980, by UN General Assembly resolution 35/142 B, “Reduction of military budgets”
The Instrument is a tool for the standardized reporting of military expenditures. The reporting form invites data on expenditures for military personnel, operations, maintenance, procurement, construction, research, and development.

Participation: 120 states have reported to the Instrument one or more times.

Both tools promote international security by building trust between states—when everyone knows what everyone else is doing, there is less uncertainty and suspicion to cloud interactions between governments. They also indicate to citizens what their governments’ priorities are and where their taxes are going.

However, both instruments face obstacles to their effectiveness. The Register of Conventional Arms does not have an agreed-upon definition of the term *transfer*. The Register’s 1992 Panel of Government Technical Experts instead provided guidelines on how to report arms transfers to the Register,² which have been supported by subsequent Groups of Governmental Experts. Thus, each country recognizes the transfer of arms based on their national rules, regulations, and procedures. Varying definitions have led to discrepancies in reports to the Register.

In addition, participation in both the Register and the Instrument is voluntary. Three of the top 15 military spenders for 2006—India, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea—have never submitted a report to the Register.³ India and Saudi Arabia have also never submitted reports to the Instrument. China, whose spending trends have increased significantly over the past few years, participated in the Instrument for the first time in 2007, and in the Register for the first time since 1993.⁴

There have been some encouraging steps toward increased effectiveness of these tools. For example, it is now optional to include small arms and light weapons in annual reports to the Register. But in order to use these tools to their maximum potential, more states need to participate more consistently with the Register and the Instrument. They also need to clarify the definition of transfer of arms for the Register—more clarity on the import and export of arms would provide insight as to whether and/or how such transfers adversely affect international security as well as aid, and give the whole world an indication of who has what—and what they might use it for.

What you can do

This kit includes a draft letter to government officials requesting their consideration of military spending, development assistance, and reporting to the Register of Conventional Arms and Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. We also welcome you to invite your government officials to a meeting to discuss these matters—the kit includes talking points for your meeting, and some sample questions that you could give your sympathetic representatives to ask in parliament or equivalent, in order to raise these issues—and receive answers—at the highest levels of government.

² The UN Register of Conventional Arms Information Booklet 2007, p. 5

³ United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures: Patterns of Global and Regional Participation by States 1996-2007; United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures: Patterns of Global and Regional Participation by States 1981-1995

⁴ United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures: Patterns of Global and Regional Participation by States 1996-2007; SIPRI “Recent Trends in Military Spending.”
http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_trends.html

Draft Letter to Government Officials

Prime Minister's/President's Office

Address

City/Country

Dear Prime Minister/President's Name,

We the undersigned urge the government to live up to its commitment to help achieve the international aims embodied in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to contribute to international peace and security through development rather than militarism.

In order to achieve the MDGs, donor countries need to contribute 0.54% of their GNPs. With military spending presently at (enter amount of GDP for military spending here) % of the GDP, the government should have no trouble providing funds for international aid. We urge the government reassess its allocation of funds toward military spending. With global military spending reaching \$1,204 billion (USD) in 2006 and trends indicating that it will steadily increase in the coming years, there must be some accountability to citizens of how it is being disbursed.

One way to accomplish this is for the government to report to the UN Register of Conventional Arms and to the UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures annually. This would be in line with the General Assembly's articulated sentiment to build "a climate of trust and confidence between States worldwide" through the "better flow of objective information on military matters (which) can help to relieve international tension and is therefore an important contribution to conflict," as stated in resolution A/60/44.

We also request the government take an active role leading countries to work together for a common definition of arms transfers. This will prevent discrepancies in reporting identified by the panel of experts for the Register that could ultimately lead to actions that undermine efforts to achieve the MDGs, international aid effectiveness, and gender equality.

In peace,

Name, Title

Cc: Deputy Minister, Opposition Leader, Opposition Deputy Minister, Minister of Defence, Opposition Defence Critic, Minister of Women's Affairs, Opposition Critic on Women's Affairs, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Opposition Foreign Affairs critic.

Talking points for a meeting with government officials

Reporting to the UN Register of Conventional Arms

- The UN has a Register for Conventional Arms that has been in operation since 1992.
- The Register's purpose is to promote transparency of the transfer, procurement, and holding of conventional weapon systems in order to increase international security by building trust between states.
- Since January 2007, 172 countries have participated at least once.
- India, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea, ranked tenth, ninth, and eleventh respectively of military spenders, have not submitted a report to the Register.
- There is currently no agreed upon definition among states of the term *transfer* due to different rules, regulations and procedures involved when importing and exporting arms.
- The 1992 Panel of Government Technical Experts instead has guidelines on how to report arms transfers to the Register. These guidelines have been supported by subsequent Groups of Governmental Experts.

Reporting to the UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures

- The UN has an Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditure that has been operating since 1981.
- The Instrument's purpose is to increase transparency of military expenditures.
- Since January 2007, 120 countries have participated at least once.
- China, ranked as the fourth largest military spender, has submitted one report as of 2007.
- In 2007, China increased its military spending by \$17.8.5 China announced that most of the \$44.94 billion dollar budget would go towards wages and military equipment enhancement.
- India and Saudi Arabia, ranked tenth and ninth respectively of military spenders, have not submitted a report to the Instrument.

5 "China to boost military spending by 17.8 per cent." Associated Press, March 4, 2007

Questions for government officials to ask in parliament or equivalent

Questions related to the UN Register of Conventional Arms

- Due to varying national procedures regarding processes for the transfer of arms there is no one common definition for “transfer”. Instead, the Register provides guidelines on how to report of transfers. Given this situation, what is the national criterion that determines the definition of transfer of arms?
- Has the national definition of transfer of arms been submitted to the experts to assist in decreasing the number of mismatches in the Register?
- Have changes been made to the national definition of the transfer of arms? If so, how does it achieve the stated aim of the General Assembly through resolutions like A/60/44 to build “a climate of trust and confidence between States worldwide” through the “better flow of objective information on military matters (which) can help to relieve international tension and is therefore an important contribution to conflict”?
- Which arms transfers are not captured in the annual report submitted to the Register? Are they recorded somewhere else? Are efforts made to decrease the flow of these transfers?
- What is the government doing to achieve the aim articulated in SCR 46/36 L “to prevent the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms in order to promote stability and strengthen international peace and security, taking into account the legitimate security needs of States and the principle of undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments”?
- What has the government done to make the process of the transfer of arms more transparent?
- What legislation and infrastructure is in place to authorize arms transfers and prevent illegal ones?
- Do national definitions of the seven categories of arms differ from the Register’s definitions? If so how? If the Register’s definitions are more comprehensive, is the government taking initiatives to update national definitions accordingly?
- Has a national point of contact been appointed to act as a conduit for Governments to address items linked to the Register? If so has the contact’s information been submitted to the UN Secretariat?
- Does the government report on the transfer of small arms and light weapons (SALW)?
- Are there challenges to reporting SALW transfers? If so what are they and what actions is the government taking to overcome them (i.e. does the country support the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects)?

Questions related to Security Council Resolution 1325 and Military Spending

- Are mechanisms in place to monitor and record spending to increase the number of women in field based operations, as military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel?
- How much military spending is allocated for incorporating gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping and field operations? What indicators are in place for cost/benefit analysis in terms of an increase or decrease in military expenditures based on this introduction into field and peacekeeping operations?
- How much military spending is allocated for gender sensitive training?
- How much funding is in place to support processes to prevent gender based violence in times of conflict?
- How much of the military funding is allocated for security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration? Is there a detailed breakdown of what programs are funded specifically?