



# International Monterrey Model United Nations Simulation

American School Foundation of Monterrey



## General Assembly

**Topic:** Pushing for a reduction in excessive military and defense spending in an effort to redistribute funding to other sectors of development and promote global peace.

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### I. Committee Background

The creation of the United Nations (UN), alongside the General Assembly, was established after the atrocities that resulted from World War II. The first meeting was held in London in 1946, right after the conclusion of the war. The General Assembly is one of the UN's principal organs; it serves as a forum where all UN members assemble to discuss conflicting issues, mainly regarding international peace and security. The committee oversees the UN's budget, the organization's overall functioning, the admission of new member states, and amendments to the UN's Charter (About the General Assembly 2021).

Currently, the General Assembly has 193 member states; each member has a single, equally important vote. The sessions usually occur from September through December, but "special sessions" can be summoned if an emergency arises. In the regular sessions, member states strive to formulate resolutions that they then vote to pass. The essential questions require a two thirds majority for the draft resolution to pass, while the rest only require a simple majority. Unlike the Security Council, the General Assembly's resolutions are not binding; the resolutions only serve as recommendations and do not need approval from any other organ. However, the General Assembly receives resolution recommendations from subsidiary organs for them to take into consideration.

### II. Introduction

#### Description and Definition of the Topic

A military budget, or defense budget, is the number of financial resources dedicated to FB "military operations such as training and planning maintenance of equipment, and most of the military healthcare system" (Budget Basics: National Defense, 2022). The purpose of a military budget is to construct a troop to prepare for outside attacks and create a defense system. For the most part, a defense budget "is a component of governmental consumption, stimulating economic growth by expanding demand for goods and services" (Beattie, 2022). However, excessive use of this spending can also lead to "national debt, dislocation of potential jobs, and economic distortion of any industry that the military relies on" (Budget Basics: National Defense, 2022). Thus, each country must have a stable output and even distribution of financial resources that do not centralize the military while risking other aspects of a nation.

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However, many countries fail to care for other essential needs of their citizens and other issues within the nation. Environmental conservation, education, water and sewerage facilities, power plants, national welfare, and the infrastructure industry are a few of the many matters a country must support financially for its development. When excessive military spending occurs, the country neglects to fund these necessities and invests an unhealthy amount of money into warfare or its preparation. Consequently, nations with such an imbalance in their economic spending suffer many job dislocations and rising governmental debt, which “can also indirectly undermine economic growth” (Pettis, n.d.).

For example, the United States has the largest military budget in the world, spending \$782 billion annually and increasing its budget by around 3.9 percent each year (Armscontrol, 2021). Although the conversation surrounding military spending used to be nonexistent, many have been pushing for reducing military expenditure following the COVID-19 pandemic and the intensification of climate change. As the Coronavirus disease spread vastly, American citizens started to believe that no matter the amount of money spent on the army, this would not protect them. The economic ramifications of both of these points have forced “a third of small US businesses to close either temporarily or forever” (The Bulletin, 2022). When it comes to climate change, many protests have occurred, increasing awareness. The nation's people have pressured the government to address this acute issue.

As many nations go through this phenomenon one after the other in an attempt to defend their own country, all have become intensely focused on weapon production and war-related technological development. Unfortunately, the focus on generating more violence ultimately led them farther away from global peace and economic prosperity.

## The Problem

Excessive military spending profoundly affects the world's development and peace because “every dollar spent on defense is a dollar not spent on other public services” (Beattie, 2021). This idea is especially true for developing nations, where focusing on military spending means deviating from other critical priorities, such as public infrastructure (Beattie, 2021). However, this does not indicate that industrialized nations are disencumbered of this issue; on the contrary, countries such as the United States spend on defense rather than on civilians' true concerns: “The United States can't continue to throw money at a bloated Defense Department, while short-changing the most pressing areas of national security,” which civilians agreed were climate change and diseases (Smithbereger, 2021). Many believe that. In other words, excessive spending in the military diverts resources from economic, social, and environmental programmes” (“Military Spending,” 2022). Further, military spending is “an investment in war and conflict,” as it is “underpinned by a belief that states' security can be guaranteed by threats of violence,” thus remarking its deteriorating effects on countries' peace and development (“Military Spending,” 2022).

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While governments justify investments in military material and personnel with the argument of people's safety, "it is usually civilians that pay the highest price" with their lives and rights when states are at war ("Military Spending," 2022). This is why it is crucial to shift expenditure to other humanitarian aspects that promote rights and needs. Nevertheless, this profoundly "challenges militarism" as it calls on governments to stop spending so irrationally on the military and balance the expenditures and resources on other areas, demanding governments invest in peace, which is lagging far behind ("Military Spending," 2022).

Currently, due to recent developments in the Russo-Ukrainian war, countries are now increasing their military expenditure. This has been present in countries outside of Europe as well. A prime example can be identified in China as the country "announced a defense budget of 1.45 trillion yuan (about \$229 billion) for fiscal year 2022, which is a 7.1 percent year-on-year increase from 2021" (Jash 2022). Countries that excessively fund their armed forces view increased military budgets as a necessary response to the crises that threaten world peace. As the world continues to be plagued by poverty, recessions, and other economic disasters, citizens are left desperately needing financial aid. Consequently, military expenditures have linearly risen alongside poverty rates as "military expenditures continued to increase by an average of 2.6 percent worldwide" (Rovelli, 2022). The world is facing many prevalent issues, the money being spent on military arms and resources could be redirected to fund solutions for other problems specific. This especially applies "in other nations, particularly ones that are still developing economically" because "a focus on military spending often means foregoing other important priorities" (Beattie 2021).

Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations states that countries must limit wasteful military spending. It is the responsibility of this committee to find a solution to reduce the excessive military spending and redistribute the financial resources in a certain manner which includes funding other sectors in need of development to succeed in promoting global peace.

### III. History of the Topic Chronological History of the Topic

The issue of military spending originated before the ancient river valley civilizations, including the Ancient Egyptians. Governments did not know how to properly manage their funds, resulting in these agricultural civilizations being "internally unstable and vulnerable to external incursions" (Eloranta, 2005). The size of an army was established based on the efficiency of the tax collection system and how the government leaders chose to allocate these. Later on, other civilizations such as kingdoms in Europe during the Renaissance period and the Byzantine Empire continued to have similar issues with managing armies until the nineteenth century. This period, known as the century of industrialization of war, consisted of governments requiring new methods to finance their armies. This period generated a rise of reforms including

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a “centralized public administration, reliance on specific, balanced budgets, innovations in public banking and public debt management, and reliance on direct taxation for revenue” (Eloranta, 2005). In this period leading up to World War I, military engagement and demand increased, mainly in the four great powers, Germany, France, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In the period from 1870 to 1912, the percentage of military burden –total gross domestic product (GDP) spent on the military– increased drastically. The First World War unleashed a period of military activity and great damage to various European countries. The total estimated economic damage of the war is “180-230 billion 1914 U.S. dollars” (Eloranta, 2005). In the time frame of this war, France spent around 43 percent of its total GDP on the military burden, the United Kingdom spent 22 percent, and the United States allocated seven percent.

When the First World War ended, countries began relaxing their military burden, but these soon spiked again at the start of the Second World War. Great Britain, for example, had a 27 percent military burden during World War I, and this value increased to half of their GDP during World War II. The Soviet Union and Germany also had percentages nearing 50, and the United States allocated 32 percent. This resulted in a lethal war with millions of deaths resulting in economic losses of “4,000 billion 1938 U.S. dollars.” The rapid increase in military spending was partially due to the rise in soldier employment “from less than 500,000 in 1940 to 12 million in 1945” (Vandenbroucke, 2020). While this data relates to the United States, all countries involved in the war saw a similar increase in personnel. There are various examples of countries that had a surge of resources allocated to military forces, such as when Hitler took power over Germany. During this time, the military burden increased from 1.6 percent in 1933 to 18.9 percent in 1938. Another example during this time frame is the time of the Japanese rearmament drive, which increased Japan's military burden to 22.7 percent in 1938.

During the Cold War, military spending continued its high patterns, especially for the United States and the Soviet Union. From 1952 to 1954 the United States had military spending above ten percent and other countries such as France and Great Britain followed their lead. During the 1970s and 1980s, countries part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) held an advantage over the Warsaw Pact members due to the “technological advances that led to increases in the cost per soldier” (Eloranta, 2005). Between these two powerful countries, nuclear weapons were their main investment.

Even after the Cold War, military spending kept increasing by a large margin, this is due to the fact that technological advances were improving the military armory and countries such as the United States did not want to stay behind. 40 years after the Cold War ended, in 2012, there was a trend of increased military spending and “it is now \$100 billion above what the nation spent on average during the Cold War.” (Affatigato, 2022)

As mentioned previously, many countries have increased their military spending due to the war waged by Russia towards Ukraine. The conflict provoked tensions to rise not only in Ukraine, but Europe in general. Germany specifically has initiated an increment in military

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expenditure. The country's "decision to increase its military budget for 2022, going from 60 billion USD in 2021 to over 100 billion in 2022 has caused a sensation, quickly placing the country in third place among the nations that spend most in their military profile" (Korb, 2011). Thus, a trend to increase military expenditure continues to this day.

## Historical Case Studies

### Nuclear Proliferation with the U.S and the Soviet Union

In the 1950s, the United States' Intelligence Community (IC), "a federation of executive branch agencies and organizations that work separately and together to conduct intelligence activities necessary for the conduct of foreign relations" reasoned through their estimation that the proliferation of nuclear weapons caused more violence, which consequently spread the development of such weaponry to more nations (ODNI, n.d.). The National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) is "the [IC's] most authoritative written judgments on national security issues" (Burr, 2005). In order to envision "a situation where more countries had nuclear weapons," its analysts commenced their estimations on this matter (Burr, 2005). Moreover, because the NIE is the top authority in helping military leaders develop policies to protect its citizens, their supervision of the rising military budgets of other countries and prediction of violence is crucial to the country. Thus, broader implications were estimated by the NIE; a few of the implications that the analysts addressed were that "the spread of 'nuclear know-how' was creating widespread capabilities for nuclear weapons programs" and that "countries sought nuclear capabilities for 'prestige' and 'military effectiveness'" (Burr, 2005).

A major example of this case took place after the end of World War II when the tension between the Soviet Union and the United States became a significant element of world politics. According to the published NIE estimation, "prospects and possibility of a Soviet bomb [were] unnerving to many"; hence, the U.S intelligence systems were composed to track down the Soviet project. However, through espionage and hurried progress, "the Soviets [eventually managed to acquire] the bomb in 1949" (Burr, 2005). This growing tension further affected the proliferation of nuclear weaponry, leading to more constant violence around the world. By the 1940s and 1950s, the U.S had already "obliterated two Japanese cities and hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians with atomic bombs" (Study.com, 2021). On that note, the U.S "spent at least \$10.1 trillion in present-day terms on nuclear weapons development" and the military spending solely made up "11% of all Federal Government spending" around the same time (Biello, 2022) (Greene, n.d.). Moreover, the Soviet Union had started to pioneer "even larger hydrogen bombs" (Study.com, 2021). By the same time, "the Soviet Union was spending around 27% of its total gross national product on the military" (Duckster, n.d.). Thus, there exists a correlation between the high military budgets and the augmentation of violence between countries.

Ultimately, it was predicted that this tension between the nations with the highest development in nuclear weapons would lead to an eventual "all-out-nuclear war" (Study.com, 2021). Fortunately, no war occurred; however, "[the U.S and the Soviet Union] fought numerous

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proxy battles around the world” (Study.com, 2021). The involvement of the U.S in the Vietnam War is one of the many representations of this situation. The repetition of such a phenomenon, as seen in the case of the NIE Nuclear Proliferation Problem, continued to increase the number of nuclear weapon states. Like so, the growing focus on the development of such weaponry and its support through military budget funds has triggered more violence worldwide.

## The United States

The United States (US) federal budget's second-largest expense category is the military (Amadeo, 2022). This expenditure “costs almost twice as much as education” (Macovei, 2022). Thus, the US has given priority to spending on the military sector rather than other crucial aspects of the state. This is exactly what President Dwight D. Eisenhower —Supreme Commander and five-star General during World War II— feared when he gave his Farewell Address in 1961: “he viewed military spending as ‘sterile’ and worried it would lead to a society that mistakenly valued safety and arms at the expense of schools, infrastructure, and social safety nets,” this was despite of his military career (Kitch, 2020). Inclusively, Eisenhower was the first to use the term “military-industrial complex,” which refers to those involved in the creation of weapons or other arms for the military (Weber, 2020). He used this term to warn the US population about dangers that might come with a growing investment in the military; in other words, he “believed that the military-industrial complex tended to promote policies that might not be in the country’s best interest” (Weber, 2020). This president’s concerns have now become a reality.

Nowadays, “The U.S. outpaces all other nations in military expenditures” because while “world military spending totaled more than \$1.6 trillion in 2015, the U.S. accounted for 37 percent of the total” (“US Military Spending...”, n.d.). This not only affects the country, but it impacts its people too because “the economic cost of defense spending shows up in the national debt” this negatively impacts the jobs that the private sector can offer to the public (Beattie, 2021). Furthermore, the expenses of the US have continued increasing with time, being at a much higher peak than they were during the Vietnam War. To put it in perspective, “last year the national defense budget totaled \$716 billion, or roughly 17% of the total federal budget and more than the defense spending of the next [9] countries *combined*” (“Defense Budget”, 2022). This further remarks how such a focus on military spending and defense is “diverting resources” from crucial investments for the citizens such as healthcare, innovation, infrastructure, and education, which are just as vital for the safety and development of a country (“Defense Budget”, 2022).

## Soviet Union

The Soviet Union (USSR), which was dissolved in 1991, has been one of the most powerful forces in history. Their total military expenditures are estimated to have been 12-14 percent of their gross national income. In comparison to the expenditures of the United States at this time, which was five to six percent, their numbers were relatively high. It was estimated that

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from 1970 to 1981, the Soviet Union spent 300 billion dollars more on its military forces than the U.S. (Holzman, 1982). In fact, the Soviet military budget was “trending upward since at least the early 1970s” (Ray, 2018). These funds were mostly allocated to military housing, equipment, weapons, and military construction for the Red Army. This powerful army consisted of “forces numbering more than 11 million” soldiers in 1945. During the times of the World Wars, soldiers which consisted of peasants and common workers were given harsh tasks and worked in severe conditions (Britannica, 2003). One of the factors leading to the USSR's downfall in 1991 was their excessive military expenditures and the priority of the army over political and economic issues as “even when the Soviet economy lagged, the military remained well-funded” (Ray, 2018). Additionally, a big part of the USSR's investments were directed toward developing nuclear weapons, but it backfired in 1986 when a reactor at a nuclear power plant exploded. This resulted in radioactive fallout that was covered up by the government with propaganda and led citizens, who suffered from radiation poisoning, to further distrust authorities (Ray, 2018). Both of the military-related factors that contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union affected millions of citizens.

## Germany

After World War II, German military spending started to decrease. Germany's massive budget for the war did not become a trend to the country's military budget. Although war was still persistent throughout the 20th century, Germany managed to keep a constant rate of spending and there were little to no noticeable changes in budget. This was until the 1960s, when the United States and the USSR engaged in a nuclear arms race to obtain nuclear military superiority. Thus, tensions began to rise when “the Soviet Union managed to advance its dominant position” in nuclear armament “in the medium and intermediate range” (Bundeswehr.de, 2022). The developments in this conflict produced a trend followed by many countries, such as Germany, to increase their defense budget. This was noticeable in the country from 1960 to 1975, in which their military spending grew from 2 to 14 Billion dollars (Macrotrends, 2022).

Despite Germany not participating in a warlike conflict since the second World War, various countries surrounding Germany did engage in violent disputes such as the Yugoslav wars. Although Germany never saw a big change in the nation's defense budget, in the year of 2022 Germany broke the trend.

The recent war between Russia and Ukraine generated tension in the European community. The German government noticed these changes and decided to increase their defense budget to 100 billion dollars (Knight, 2022). Although Germany is increasing its military expenditure, that will not be enough to defend the country from any conflict, as the current state of its military is not fully operational. Eva Högl, a German politician who has been serving as Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces of Germany since May 2020, commented that “only 50% of some major hardware was operational, she said, before adding

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that ‘everyday equipment’”, like armored vests and winter jackets, often had to be delivered later while soldiers were “already in the field.” (Knight, 2022). The 100 Billion dollar military budget won’t have a big impact on the country financially, since the budget will barely go past the 2% GDP mark. Thus, other aspects of the country such as education and healthcare will not lose funds, but the rise in military spending will be hard to control since the military is in an unfavorable condition. The situation continues to this day, it is uncertain what new measures will be taken by the country as the situation in Ukraine continues to develop.

## India

Over the course of the past 10 years, India’s military budget has increased exponentially. In recent times (2011-12 to 2021-22), “the budget of the Ministry of Defense has grown at an annual average rate of 8.4%”, whilst government expenditure has “grown at 10.3%” (Demand for Grants 2021-22 Analysis : Defense, 2022). India has been ranked as the third country with the highest defense funding worldwide for the past four years. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), an institute that makes suggestions based on data about armed conflicts, military expenditures, and arms trading, “India was the third-largest defense spender in absolute terms in 2019” (Demand for Grants 2021-22 Analysis : Defense, 2022). Apart from the increase in military financing, India’s army has made sure to advance its firearms and specialized warfare.

Since the Cold War, Russia has become the Republic of India’s main supplier of weaponry and equipment. The types of war machines go “from tanks to missiles, aircrafts”, equipment, and “submarines”. Thus, Russia remains to this day “a key arms supplier for the Indian military” (Up in Arms: Is Russia Losing the Indian Arms Market?, 2022). Moreover, the nation has expressed its hopes to boost its domestic defense manufacturing, due to the many benefits this industry brings to the country’s economy. To achieve this, “the Defence Ministry has set a target of 70% self-reliance in weaponry by 2027” (Defence Manufacturing Industry in India, 2022). The government has made it clear that funding its military is a priority to them by making it the second most funded sector. This economic objective caused the “Union Budget to allocate over 13% of its total budget to defense”, out of which “more than half of this sum was assigned to the Indian Armed Forces” (Falak, 2022). Inclusively, this unrestricted funding has become a greater problem seeing as India is constantly being faced with a multitude of healthcare crises because of the underdevelopment of the sector. Globally, “India has some of the highest burdens of disease in the world”, especially “when measured by the number of years of life lost due to death and disability on a per-capita basis” (Jagtiani, 2021). These concerns would be less prominent in the country if the proper funding was dedicated to each sector. Nevertheless, it is estimated that the country’s military expenditure will only grow during the following years; especially because of the detailed self-sustaining plans the Indian government has started to develop. Currently, the Indian government reserved “\$11.77 billion from the total \$18.4 billion procurement budget for domestic companies to manufacture weapons and

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platforms locally” (Raghuvanshi, 2022). This will only strengthen the lack of budgeting in other areas of the government that desperately need it.

## Past UN Actions

The United Nations (UN) has made various efforts to maintain peace through means other than military and armed forces ever since it was created. Article 47 of the UN Charter, signed in 1945, says that everything must go through the “Security Council’s military requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security, the employment and command of forces placed at its disposal, the regulation of armaments, and possible disarmament” (“UN Charter”, 1945). Resolutions for the issue of excessive military spending have been attempted for a long time. In 1978, the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly on disarmament “called for a ‘Gradual reduction of military budgets,’” which was encouraged to be on a “mutually agreed basis,” as it would decrease the spending in the creation of arms and promote the better use of resources in other areas rather than just in the military. This was said to greatly benefit all countries, especially developing ones (“Rising Military Budgets...”, 2021). Additionally, the United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) published a paper, *Rethinking Unconstrained Military Spending*, in April 2020, which “critiques the massive and growing global military budget [...], examines the negative impact of such high militarization on security, explores opportunity benefits of reduced military budgets including to implement the sustainable development goals,” and it discusses how certain policies can redirect resources to areas other than defense (“UN Publishes a Paper...”, n.d.).

Furthermore, the UN has a public database to track national military expenditures, where countries must report their spending on the military, which incentivizes “transparency,” “public awareness,” and “trust among nations” (“Rising Military Budgets...”, 2021). However, it hasn’t achieved the desired objectives, as this reporting system is purely voluntary and many nations choose not to share such information. Not to mention, there is a lack of clarity as to what “excessive” means when it comes to military spending (“Rising Military Budgets...”, 2021). Other than signing treaties and calling for action, the UN has not done many physical efforts or concrete, specific resolutions to decrease military expenditure, which is crucial if this spending is to diminish and peace is to increase.

The 16th goal in the UN’s sustainable development plan “is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (UN, 2022). The UN actively seeks to take actions on the issues of unconstrained military budgets, as its “early proposals focused on reducing the expenditures of States with large militaries, and on freeing up funds for development aid” (UN, 2022b). In spite of this objective, the Russo-Ukrainian war has demonstrated the level of violence that is achievable with heightened military expenditures.

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Due to this current conflict, the UN should be taking further action to create safer militaries and decrease the possibilities for potential conflicts in the future; however, it has not showcased any concrete efforts to attempt to reach peace and decrease spending.

## IV. Key Players and Points of View

### Russia

The country's military spending was at the highest percentage of total GDP in the last two decades, with 5.4 percent. The numbers decreased for a few years since then, but have recently started rising recently (The World Bank, 2022). As previously mentioned, Russia's ongoing war with Ukraine has substantially raised its military spending and power in the past months. President Vladimir Putin is planning on increasing the military budget for the next two years more than what was initially intended (Bloomberg News, 2022). At the rate that Russia is allocating its resources to its military, total spending is estimated to reach around 90 billion USD by the end of 2022 (Pavel, 2022).

Last year, "Moscow's official military spending increased by 2.9 percent to \$65.9 billion" when tensions between Russia and Ukraine rose. Additional operational costs are due to the movement of Russian troops to the Ukrainian border with the purpose of continuing the ongoing invasion (Berger, 2022). The funds that are now allocated to war efforts come from regional and local budgets, leaving the country with a less flexible and efficient spending plan for the government. As a result, there is a lack of essential equipment such as medicine and training support for its soldiers, leading to "further imbalances and instability within the Russian political-economic system" (Pavel, 2022). Since Russia's army is constantly losing military personnel and weapons, funds for the military keep increasing, which contributes to the problem of a lack of employees in the defense industry. Additionally, the rise in weapons has led to "more than 100,000 of Moscow's troops dead or wounded" and a similar amount of Ukrainian casualties (Cooper, 2022). The ongoing violence continues killing and displacing millions of Ukrainians whilst affecting Russia's internal economy.

### The United States

The United States has one of the top military budgets among all countries. In 2021 "[it] was the top nation in terms of military expenditure, spending \$801 billion to make up almost 38% of global military spending" (Conte, 2022). In the U.S, "military spending is the second-largest item in the federal budget after Social Security" (Amadeo, 2022). Moreover, "the military budget covers the [Department of Defense], overseas contingency operations, the [Veterans Affairs], Homeland Security, the State Department, and many others that involve national security" (Amadeo, 2022). The spending of this budget is divided into many sectors, but "[it] allocates more than 50% to maintenance and personnel" (Bernal, 2022).

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Notably, the heavy use of this budget “has been increasing both the current U.S. debt and budget deficits”; just military spending forms approximately “10.5% of the U.S. budget” (Amadeo, 2022). However, more significantly, political conflicts regarding methods of military spending are occurring within the nation. The defense budget has been a controversial topic in the federal government of the United States. Considering the Ukrainian war, military tension with China, return of Taliban rule, Iranian nuclear buildup, and other intricate situations, President Biden has decided on “expansive plans for defense spending”(Korb, 2022). However, this budget is disputed within the government; “the administration’s spending priorities have been the subject of criticism from across the political spectrum” (Korb, 2022). The Democrats “are constantly called to answer for how [they] will afford [to spend] on lowering costs and expanding access to healthcare, housing, childcare services, on fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, and on combating climate change” (Greve, 2022). On the other hand, the Republicans have been fueling the “[demand] for more military funding,” their reasoning being the “devastation in Ukraine” (Greve, 2022). Therefore, President Biden making his decision upon the Republicans means that the administration “ignored the Democratic Party platform and essentially embraced Trump-era budget levels and programs” (Korb, 2022). All aspects considered, due to President Biden’s ongoing increase of the military budget, “progressive lawmakers have fiercely criticized the proposed defense budget, arguing that the US already spends far too much on its military and needs to invest more in domestic programs” (Greve, 2022).

Subsequently, the military budget of the United States is the highest among all countries. Its priority lies on military budgets before any other exigencies in the country. Through such circumstances, despite neglecting issues regarding social justice, the environment, and fiscal matters, its military assists numerous countries such as Ukraine, and associations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and also maintains a defense system against China, Russia, and other countries.

## Iceland

Iceland is a pacifist country with no military at all, differing from most other nations. That is to say, “Icelanders have long been proud of their country’s pacifist tradition, which goes back further than its independence from Denmark in 1944” (NATO, n.d.). Not to mention, the country’s own Government website states that “Iceland is a country without a military and has emphasized a comprehensive and multilateral approach in security affairs,” as it is a member of various major organizations like the UN, NATO, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), so it is capable of achieving peace without the need of armed forces or excessive military spending (“National Security”, n.d.). This state believes that security is not just about territorial defense, but it is about global threats within a nation that the world together must combat such as terrorism, crime, environmental degradation, cyber threats, and financial security. Likewise, “the fight for human rights and women's empowerment, peace and

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disarmament has high priority in Iceland's foreign policy," and these are values the government wants to make international commitments ("National Security", n.d.).

Even so, for the matters of security and defense, Iceland works closely with other nations. The country's guard is mostly based on NATO's policies and the agreement with the US of 1951. This bilateral agreement "stipulated that the U.S. would make arrangements for Iceland's defense on behalf of NATO and provided for basing rights for U.S. forces in Iceland;" however, these forces were withdrawn from Iceland in 2006, yet the support continues without the presence of military in the state ("U.S. Relations", 2020). Nevertheless, Iceland believes in peace without the need of force, and it is ranked as the most peaceful country in the world in the Global Peace Index, even when it has no military and no defense budget at all, proving a point to the rest of the world that peace is not ensured nor guaranteed through excessive defense spending (Global Peace Index, 2022).

## Israel

Israel has significant military power worldwide and has the most powerful army in the Middle East. Even though the army's size matches that of other nations in the region, the weapons, training, and other significant factors make the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) dominant. Israel has also received economic aid from the United States government for many years to spend on its military and also gets many nuclear weapons from them. From 2016 to the present, the percentage spending of GDP has constantly increased, and the trend continues primarily due to tensions with several Middle Eastern countries such as Palestine and Iran (Rogers, 2021). Also, in Israel, all young adults are forced to participate in military service activities, which facilitates constant availability in military personnel.

Furthermore, Israel allocates a significant percentage of its GDP to its military than some of the world's most important powers, including the United States. For example, in 2020 they spent \$2,508 per capita or twelve percent of their total GDP (Hussein, 2021). As of 2022, Israel's total budget for the military is estimated to be 22.6 billion dollars. Israel is also the twelfth largest weapon supplier in the world, which provides them with constant access to weaponry.

Moreover, The geographical position of Israel incentivizes political leaders to keep expanding the IDF. Since their territory is surrounded by enemies, they have to maintain their defense strategies to "guarantee the country's existence, neutralize threats, develop an effective deterrence as needed, and avoid confrontations" (Global Data, 2022). Israel's defense strategy has been a constant since 1943 when the country gained independence and established the IDF (Britannica, 2018). Most of their budget is spent on missiles, vehicles, infrastructure, and underwater warfare technology. As long as tensions in this region remain, Israel will not retire its military. This will continue affecting civilians in the country and its neighbors as other important sectors are overlooked.

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## Palestine

Palestine, despite being a struggling state, has managed to form a relatively strong military under the circumstances the country is experiencing. Palestine has been involved in a conflict with the country of Israel since the end of the nineteenth century. This has caused a violence outbreak between these two territories. Seeing as Palestine is not a country, its own version of a government is called the Palestine Authority (PA). Because of this, “Palestine does not have an army, navy, or air force” (Does Palestine Have a Military?, 2017). Despite this fact, the Oslo Accords, a document that houses various agreements between Palestine and Israel, allows the state to establish various police forces that may include up to 30,000 members of the country (What is the military capability of the Palestinian Authority?, 2005). This has become Palestine’s own version of a military, even if they are only allowed to carry light weapons such as “handguns, rifles, and light machine guns” (What is the military capability of the Palestinian Authority?, 2005). However, Palestine has been accused several times by Israel of breaking the Oslo Accords, and creating and utilizing various armed cars and personal carriers (What is the military capability of the Palestinian Authority, 2005).

Although, Israel has also broken the Oslo Cords by utilizing prohibited weapons; ones that the opposing state does not have access to, such as mortars, grenades, and anti aircraft-missiles, presenting a clear advantage during battle (What is the military capability of the Palestinian Authority?, 2005). Because of the intense tension between these regions, violent conflict has been regularly present. This has generated a drastic and expensive humanitarian crisis for the citizens of Palestine, one that the state can not pay for. Currently, “UNICEF requires US\$ 39,000,000 million” for “humanitarian funding to provide and sustain life-saving services for women and children in the State of Palestine (SoP)” (UNICEF State of Palestine Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2: 01 July to 30 September 2022, 2022). Apart from a humanitarian crisis, the state is also dealing with a financial and fiscal one (UNICEF State of Palestine Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2: 01 July to 30 September 2022, 2022). Palestine simply does not have the resources to prosper as a state, leaving its citizens in distressing situations; this is especially true as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not appear to be coming to an end. It is predicted that peace will not be reached anytime soon (Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 2022). It is imperative for the sake of both regions to come to a peaceful agreement.

## **V. Possible Solutions**

There are multiple militaries with an unconstrained budget, bringing upon various issues. This is not only due to their militaristic power, but also due to the fact that most of the military expenditure could be relocated to other important areas of societal development. Some countries, such as the United States, have many areas of opportunities in which funding could be relocated. Increasing funding towards humanitarian aid would be helpful to its citizens since “the United States spent \$16.80 on the military for every \$1 spent for diplomacy and

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humanitarian aid” (National Priorities, 2020). The UN has taken minimal actions which have had little to no effect in solving this dilemma. In 1978, the UN called for a “gradual reduction of military budgets on a mutually agreed basis” (ipu, 2021). The solution did not actually restrain countries’ military funding, since nations had to mutually agree upon a budgetary reduction. Furthermore, the UN implemented an annual report to track military expenditures within countries (ipu, 2021). This solution created awareness around the world about the issue, even though this tracking system was purely optional.

Currently, neither the UN nor any country is executing solutions upon the problem, although if the UN started to take stronger action instead of repeatedly signing treaties, they could decrease unconstrained military funds. Countries such as the United States, and Russia are clear examples of the issue, some of their many problems come from their misuse of money. The U.S. operates ten times more military bases than the rest of the world combined (National Priorities, 2020). These are unnecessary and practically unused.

Similarly, during the Russo-Ukrainian war, Russia allocated many of its funds towards the army, which took away from the economy as well as being a rushed action producing “further imbalances and instability within the Russian political-economic system” (Pavel, 2022). The UN could possibly force countries with unregulated military budgets to decrease their military expenditure to a maximum of a 4% GDP, this would allow them to focus on further financial, medical, and economical care for their citizens. Additionally, nations that have unlimited budgets are also powerful ones from an economic standpoint. In theory, cutting their budget to 4% GDP wouldn’t hurt the country’s military much since they would still hold high monetary assistance. This solution would only apply to those nations with unconstrained budgets; for countries which have low budgets, the UN could force these nations to improve their military budget to at least 2% GDP in the span of 5 years. This would not only allow them to raise their military expenditures in a time frame which would not hurt the country economically and impact them financially.

## VI. Current Status

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament,” the global military budget “fell by 0.1 percentage points from 2.3 percent in 2020 to 2.2 percent in 2021” (SIPRI, n.d.) (SIPRI, 2022). Nonetheless, priorly, the world military expenditure had been rising for the past seven years in a row, with the U.S and China forming 50 percent of it. “In 2021, [it] reached \$2.1 trillion” (Conte, 2022). The U.S has been the top military spending nation since 1949, the same year SIPRI began tracking army expenditures. Since then, the U.S. has “[made] up more than 30% of the world’s military spending for the last two decades” (Conte, 2022). China’s military budget, coming second, does not reach half that of the U.S; however, it has been exponentially increasing for the previous 27

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years (Conte, 2022). Russia comes after; although it was ranked in fifth place after Saudi Arabia, “its military expenditures amounted to 4.1% of its GDP” (Conte, 2022).

Currently, especially with the Russo-Ukrainian war, “military spending and technology [have] come under the spotlight” (Conte, 2022). Since the beginning of the war, the total amount of security sent by the U.S to Ukraine was \$8.2 billion. Similarly, Russia and China have bonded over “sharing military intelligence and technology along with beginning joint military exercises at the end of August” (Conte, 2022). According to the Washington Post, the Russian military budget increased due to the ongoing war; “Moscow’s official military spending in 2021 increased by 2.9 percent to \$65.9 billion” (Berger, 2022).

To put an end to this war, in April, the European Union (EU) “massively expanded sanctions against Russia, by adding a significant number of persons and entities to the sanctions list, and by adopting unprecedented measures” (European Council, 2022). Furthermore, their recent incursions including the “invasion of Ukraine, cyber-attacks, malign influence, use of chemical weapons, and election meddling,” added to the imposing of the sanctions. These actions against the war have pressured Russia economically, limiting them from having access to international goods (U.S Embassy, 2022). An example of this situation is that “exports to Russia have declined by 60 percent from their average level in the second half of 2021” due to sanctioning countries (Chorzempa, 2022). Nevertheless, not all of the newly imposed sanctions were effective, seeing as the attacks on Ukraine have continued. Among many attacks, one of the recently launched Russian missiles was targeted at Zaporizhzhia on October 9th and killed at least thirteen people (VOA News, 2022).

Another measure the EU has implemented for the sake of ending this war is protecting the Ukrainian citizens. Initiatives such as the “reception of refugees through the temporary protection mechanism,” as well as providing “material assistance to Ukraine and its neighboring countries through the EU civil protection mechanism” and “€3.1 billion to support the Ukrainian armed forces” are a few examples of their concrete actions (European Council, 2022).

Similar to the aforementioned Russo-Ukrainian War, many problems involving militaries often led to another more violent solution. The general idea of this phenomenon is that in times of conflict, alliances support each other by giving additional military funds. Regardless of other peaceful but ineffective solutions to the problem, countries will mostly be willing to aid their allies through arms funding, encouraging them to “fight back” against the opposing country. Thus, financially funding allied countries by adding to their military budgets is one of the many ways to create more violence.

Drawing a line on how a country should receive help is contentious; however, numerous organizations and countries are willing to aid their allies, and it is only a matter of their methods of support that may decide the end of this issue. It is the objective and purpose of the committee to take advantage of this notion, cooperate with all delegations, and find a solution to terminate the frequent augmentation of military budgets that promotes further violence and impedes world peace.

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