

The background image is a photograph of a severely damaged building interior. In the foreground, the rusted metal turret and tracks of a tank are visible, partially obscured by rubble. The floor is covered in debris, including broken concrete and twisted metal. The walls and ceiling are charred and crumbling. Light streams in from a large opening in the background, creating a stark contrast with the dark, shadowed interior. The overall atmosphere is one of desolation and the aftermath of conflict.

In Search of Enemies

**The Governments holding
Humanitarian Disarmament hostage**

**A Report by
Nonviolence International**

**Abigail H. Kramer
Elizabeth Curley
Roisin Putti
Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan**

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IN SEARCH OF ENEMIES

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Introduction

This report focuses attention on the 30 countries who are reported to have contributed to the highest levels of military expenditure over the the past decade, from 2010 and 2019.¹ Cumulatively, they are responsible for spending **\$15,618,539,366,510 over \$15.6 trillion**, on armed forces and weapons during that time. The 30 countries, in order of expenditure are the USA, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, France, India, UK, Japan, Germany, South Korea, Brazil, Italy, Australia, Canada, Tukey, Spain, Israel, Iran, Colombia, Netherlands, UAE, Taiwan, Poland, Singapore, Algeria, Pakistan, Indonesia, Oman, Mexico, Norway.

This figure represents 90% of all reported military expenditures, by all UN member states during that period of time. 85% of UN member states simply do not, or cannot, afford to play this game. 10% of UN member states don't play the game at all and do not possess formal military forces.²

Most recently, in 2019, some countries in the world spent a combined total of over \$1.9 trillion on the military.³ This figure continues a year-to-year trend of increasing military spending by some states, having risen 3.6% from 2018.⁴

¹ For documenting military expenditures this report relies on global military expenditures tracked annually by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Military Expenditure Database <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>

² 20 UN member states have no standing army or formal military forces Andorra, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada, Kiribati, Liechtenstein, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. Haiti, Iceland, Mauritius, Monaco, Panama, Vanuatu all maintain Border or Coast Guards, in addition to a Police Force, with small arms, but not heavy weapons. Also 2 UN observer states, the Vatican and Palestine, have no military forces.

³ [“Global Military Expenditure Sees Largest Annual Increase in a Decade – say SIPRI – reaching \\$1917 Billion in 2019,”](#) Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, accessed August 19 2020,

⁴ Ibid.

High and unconstrained military spending is deeply concerning from a human development perspective. In April 2020, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) published a report analyzing the relationship between military spending and socioeconomic

2010-2019 Military Expenditures	
6,526,728,282,000	USA
1,960,672,786,000	China
712,155,421,200	Russia
648,769,066,700	Saudi Arabia
599,466,218,800	France
551,361,649,400	India
540,005,184,300	UK
499,516,749,300	Japan
458,444,374,600	Germany
362,578,907,600	South Korea
303,252,486,900	Brazil
281,558,393,100	Italy
257,371,906,400	Australia
198,415,355,900	Canada
180,563,263,200	Turkey
173,383,470,500	Spain
166,102,786,400	Israel
128,809,270,000	Iran
105,308,711,600	Colombia
104,298,573,700	Netherlands
102,026,684,800	UAE
100,414,783,200	Taiwan
99,597,109,500	Poland
96,639,234,580	Singapore
94,122,685,520	Algeria
89,302,788,030	Pakistan
70,685,619,410	Indonesia
70,584,785,440	Oman
68,456,596,220	Mexico
67,946,222,210	Norway
15,618,539,366,510	

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development. UNODA calculated that the world could provide universal primary and secondary education using just over 3% of the reported global military expenditures.⁵ 13% of the global military expenditures would eliminate extreme poverty and hunger.⁶ Less than 5% of the global military expenditures would also be enough to put the initial structures in place to help developing countries adapt to climate change.⁷

In a world currently being devastated by the SARS-CoV2 virus (COVID-19) pandemic, and its implications for public health and global economy, while simultaneously struggling with the effects of global climate change, every aspect of public budgets must be under constant scrutiny. The disproportionate expenditures on the machinery of death are necessarily taking that money away from other vital sectors of the economy, and effectively making a statement prioritizing soldiers over education, weapons over health, and war over the environment.

Debate and discussion focused on the impact and costs of military expenditure have been largely absent from international fora. This has been assisted by a general lack of transparency around military expenditures. Some states have managed to avoid scrutiny for high military spending by focusing on their participation in key disarmament treaties. Yet some governments and many civil society organizations are increasingly of the view that unconstrained military spending is itself a security threat. At First Committee of the UN general Assembly in October 2019 eighteen countries independently specified unconstrained military expenditure as a threat to peace or an inappropriate expenditure of resources. In joint statements, the Non-Aligned Movement representing 120 states and the Central American Integration System representing 7 states also expressed concern

at unconstrained expenditure on the military.⁸ The exasperation of these statements was captured by the Representative of Nepal, who stated, “*Nepal is deeply concerned that scarce resources are squandered for militarization to decimate fellow human beings but not to bring people out of poverty, hunger, and diseases.*”⁹

This report calls out the worst actors in military spending. We have examined the Defense White Papers and other government documents to understand how states attempt to justify spending such enormous sums of money for the military. It compares commitment to the military, as evidenced through spending patterns, with commitment to humanitarian disarmament, as evidenced through treaty participation and other means. Discernible patterns about state behavior have been identified within our report, in an effort to expose the myths propagated in government documents regarding national security threats.

⁵ Izumi Nakamitsu, “Foreword” in *UNODA Occasional Papers no. 35, April 2020: Rethinking Unconstrained Military Spending* (New York: United Nations, 2020), v.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ During the session on General Debate, statements of concern for the impacts of military expenditures were made by Afghanistan, Armenia, Botswana, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uruguay. Other states identified spending on nuclear weapons as a threat to peace and an inappropriate use of resources during the session on Nuclear Disarmament.

⁹ Statement of Nepal, United Nations General Assembly, First Committee, 16 October 2019.

1 States' Commitment to the National Military, Weapons and Armed Force

1a. Review of publicly available information regarding 30 most highly militarized states

This section provides an in-depth look at how these states justify excessively high levels of public spending. In order to ascertain states' rationale for investing in the military, data was analyzed from publications made available by the governing bodies of the countries in question. In a few cases, reports by national think-tanks, citing government sources were relied on, where no official government documents could be obtained.

The vast majority of government documents analyzed took the form of Defense White Papers. A Defense White Paper is a public document which outlines the broad strategic policy framework for military planning, sometimes produced with consultation both within and outside Government. It should identify the security concerns of greatest priority for that country and provide an overview of how its military sector, or other sectors of government address those security challenges.

Certain limitations to this analysis should be emphasized at the outset. Firstly, of the 30 states with the highest military expenditures, only 24 had White papers, or comparable documents. The report was unable to find any data for 6 states – Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Algeria, Pakistan, and Oman. Since a Defense White Paper is an instrument of accountability, and since these countries are some of the world's most militarized countries, this lack of data is highly unsatisfactory. It is unsurprising that 2 of these countries – Algeria and Oman -- have levels of military corruption identified as 'Critical' by the *2019 Government Defence Anti-Corruption index (GI)*.¹⁰ The others – Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iran and Pakistan – fall into the second-highest

category for military corruption. In all but two of these countries – Iran and Pakistan – there are no Freedom of Information laws providing for citizens access to government data.¹¹

Even among the countries which made data publicly available, the length and detail of the reports varied greatly. While the Republic of Korea's *2016 Defense White Paper* concludes on page 327, Spain's *National Defence Directive 2012* is just 7 pages long. Comparisons are made more difficult when the tone, detail and intended audience of the publications also varied so greatly. Similarly, while Japan released a Defense White Paper in 2020, the corresponding document for Singapore was published in 2000 -- presumably, much of the country's military spending strategy has changed in the 20 years that have passed since the document's publication. Finally, analysis of Turkey's military spending relied on data published by a national think-tank, rather than official government document.

Major threats identified by the 30 states were common, and generally fit within 10 categories – **terrorism, nuclear proliferation, crime, environment, conventional military threats, non-nuclear weaponry advances in other countries, public health, migration, economy, and technology and intelligence advances**. A table on the next page lists the number of times each threat was mentioned.

¹⁰ Transparency International Defence and Security, "[Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index](#)".

¹¹ See Freedomofinformation.org

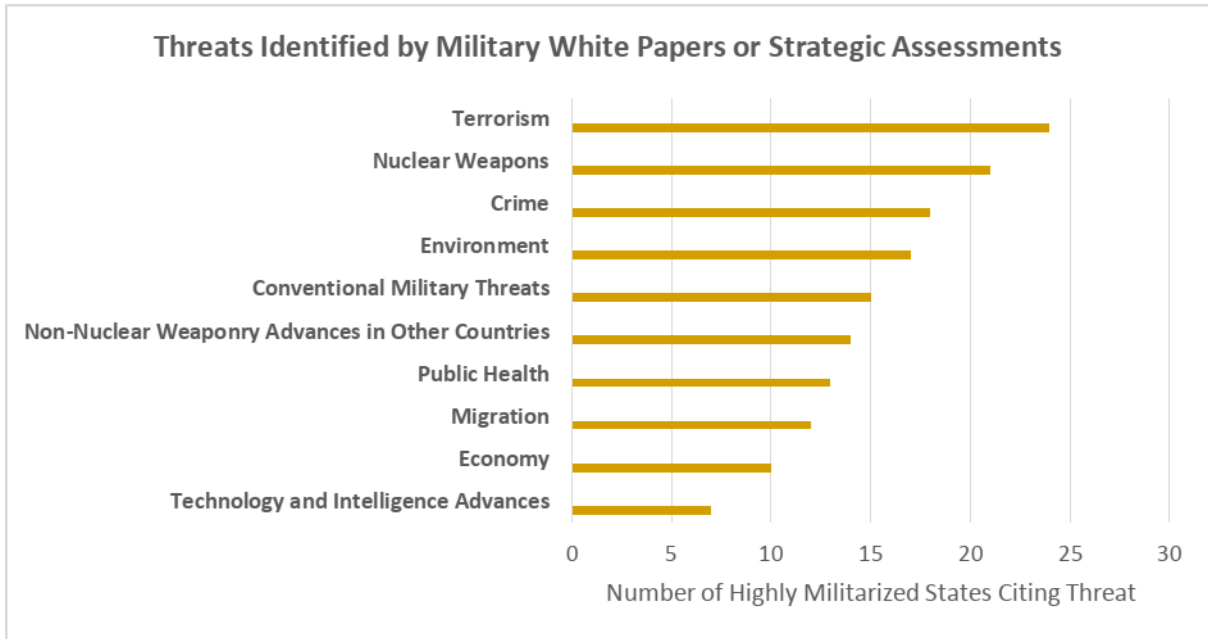
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As this table indicates, all reports mentioned the threat of terrorism, while all states except Turkey, Mexico and Colombia mentioned Nuclear Weapon Advances.

More than half of the 24 countries noted public health, often referring to emerging infectious disease, epidemic or pandemic. This figure is particularly striking, since 23 of

the 24 reports were published *before* the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Security threats less commonly cited included economy and technology and intelligence advances. A full breakdown of the threats mentioned in each of the 24 publications can be seen in the next section.



Threats identified by military white papers or strategic assessments-

Terrorism: All 24 countries with reports

Nuclear Weapons: 21 countries (but not Colombia, Turkey, Mexico)

Crime: 18 counties (but not India, Japan, Turkey, Israel, Netherlands, Singapore)

Environment: 17 countries (but not USA, Russia, India, Turkey, Spain, Israel, Singapore)

Conventional Military Threats: 15 countries (but not Norway, Poland, Indonesia, Taiwan, Mexico, Israel, Turkey, Australia, Italy, China, Russia, India, Japan, Germany, South Korea)

Non-nuclear weaponry advances in other countries: 14 countries (but not Mexico, Colombia, Israel, Spain, Turkey, Canada, Australia, Italy, Brazil, Russia)

Public Health: 13 countries (but not China, UK, Japan, France, Germany, South Korea,

Italy, Taiwan, Poland, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Colombia)

Informal Migration: 12 countries (but not Norway, Mexico, Indonesia, Singapore, Poland, Netherlands, Colombia, Turkey, Italy, Germany, UK, France)

Economy: 10 countries (but not China, India, Brazil Australia, Spain, Colombia, Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, Norway)

Military Technology: 7 countries (but not Netherlands, Canada, South Korea, USA, China, France, UK)

From military white papers or equivalent documents in 24 of the 30 states under scrutiny in this report, no publicly available reports for: Iran, Pakistan, Oman, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates

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1b. State by State: Summary of threats identified in official publications of the 30 most highly militarized states

This section provides a brief summary of the key threats identified within the 24 reports analyzed, in descending order of military expenditure. For each country, we summarize which of the above 10 categories were mentioned and briefly identify any particularly interesting or unique discussions regarding security threats.

The number after each country heading denotes its participation in Humanitarian Disarmament with 0 being no participation and 10 for high participation. More details on the Humanitarian Disarmament ranking can be found in section 2.

United States of America HD 0

The *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* identifies the military objectives in broad terms as threefold; to deter war, to protect the nations in the event of deterrence strategies failing and to strengthen the country's diplomatic negotiation position.¹² The report identifies a shift in the global balance of power that it considers concerning, noting the re-emergence of what it terms the "revisionist powers" China and Russia, and the "rogue regimes" of North Korea and Iran.¹³ It lists terrorism, crime, nuclear proliferation, weaponry advances in other countries, and technological and intelligence advances as threats. While climate change and informal migration surges were considered threats in the *2015 National Security Strategy*,¹⁴ they are notably absent from the 2018 publication.

People's Republic of China HD 1.25

China's National Defence in the New Era, published in 2019, includes a detailed assessment of the global security environment, where it tracks political changes in the USA, Russia and the European Union.¹⁵

¹² United States of America. Department of Defense. *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*. Government Printer: 2018, 1.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ United States of America. President of the United States of America. *National Security Strategy*. Government Printer: 2015.

¹⁵ People's Republic of China. The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of

China. *China's National Defence in the New Era*. Foreign Languages Press Co: 2019.

As was the case in its previous defense publication, China shares its aspiration to become a major power peacefully, without seeking hegemony. The document mentions the threats under the categories of terrorism, nuclear weapons, environment, weaponry advances abroad, conventional military threats, technological and intelligence advances and public health. Crime-related threats and economic threats are alluded to indirect terms. It notes that, "the threat of non-traditional security issues posed by natural disasters and major epidemics is on the rise".¹⁶

Russian Federation HD 0

The *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, published in 2017, identifies its goal as "defense of the state".¹⁷ The publication "reflects the commitment of the Russian Federation to use ... military action only after ... political, diplomatic, legal, economic, information and other instruments of non-violent nature".¹⁸ The doctrine notes terrorism, crime, nuclear proliferation and conventional military threats to territorial integrity as security concerns. On Russia's conventional military threats, the doctrine lists territorial threats, territorial claims, and local and large-scale wars. In its consideration of terrorist threats, Russia expresses concern

China. *China's National Defence in the New Era*. Foreign Languages Press Co: 2019.

¹⁶ Ibid 6.

¹⁷ Russian Federation. Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation. *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*. Government Printer: 2014.

¹⁸ Ibid 1.

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with “a lack of effective international cooperation”.¹⁹

Saudi Arabia HD 0

Saudi Arabia does not make information on its threat perceptions or strategic outlook publicly available.

France HD 3.25

The *French White Paper on Defence and National Security 2013* maps France’s security strategy as ‘going beyond mere protection of the territory and the population against external aggression,’ noting the need to manage ‘all the risks and threats, direct or indirect, likely to have an impact on the life of the nation’.²⁰ The paper thus listed a broad range of security threats relating to terrorism, crime, nuclear proliferation, environment, weaponry advances in other countries, migration, economy, technological and intelligence advances and public health. Interestingly, the report perceived the national economy as a security threat that necessitated lower rather than higher military spending, stating, ‘the Nation’s independence is threatened if public deficits make it dependent on its creditors’.²¹ **Error! Bookmark not defined.** The environmental threats mentioned include climate change and natural disasters,²² while the migration threat is labeled ‘clandestine immigration’.²³

India HD 0

The security environment analysis in India’s Defence Ministry’s *2018–2019 Annual Report* mainly comprises an in-depth investigation into relations with other countries in the

region.²⁴ It notes its multilateral efforts and reports improvements in relations with Bangladesh, the Maldives, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. It expresses concern with military expansion and religious extremism in Pakistan. Further afield, it details relations with Russia, Europe and the USA. The threat listed in the report relate to terrorism, nuclear proliferation weaponry advances in other countries, conventional military threats and economy. In respect of terrorism, nuclear proliferation and weaponry advances in other countries, the threat mentioned is, or is closely linked to, Pakistan.

United Kingdom HD 3

The *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015* outlines the United Kingdom’s strategy “for a secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and influence”.²⁵ The document lists terrorism, crime, proliferation of nuclear weapons, environment, other weaponry advances, conventional military, migration, technological and intelligence advances and public health as threats. The environmental threats listed include climate change and natural disasters. The migration threats listed in the report, which was published a year before the Brexit vote, include refugees from the European Union as well as illegal immigration. The crime threats listed include organized crime and “a range of cyber related threats”.²⁶

Japan HD 3

The *Defence of Japan Defence White Paper Digest 2020* is the only report that has been published following the outbreak of COVID-19. Naturally, it details the consequences of

¹⁹ Ibid 3.

²⁰ France. Ministry of Defence. *French White Paper on Defence and National Security*. Government Printer: 2013.

²¹ Ibid, 9.

²² Ibid 44.

²³ Ibid 50.

²⁴ India. Ministry of Defence. *Annual Report 2018-19*. Government Printer: 2019.

²⁵ United Kingdom. Ministry of Defence. *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*. (CM9161). William Lea Group: 2015, 5.

²⁶ Ibid, 86.

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the pandemic, outlines the military response and further notes that “the COVID-19 pandemic may expose and intensify strategic competition among countries intending to create international and regional orders more preferable to themselves and to expand their influence”.²⁷ The publication notes terrorism, nuclear proliferation, weaponry advances in other countries, conventional military threats, technology and intelligence advances and public health threats. In its analysis it details the regional threats posed by China and North Korea and outlines the need to defend territorial sovereignty, citing unresolved disputes in the North Territories.²⁸ Although previous publications by the Japanese Defence Ministry mention climate change and natural disasters, these concerns are notably absent from the 2020 paper.

Germany HD 3.25

Germany’s 2016 *White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* outlines Germany’s willingness to uphold peace and security and resolutely defend [Germany’s] freedom.²⁹ It notes the need to adapt national defence in the face of new challenges.³⁰ The threats listed in the paper include terrorism, crime, nuclear proliferation, environment, weaponry advances in other countries, conventional military threats, migration and public health. The paper considers migration a threat when ‘uncontrolled and irregular’.³¹ The crime threats mentioned are organized crime and cyber-attacks. It also notes the ‘unpredictable

²⁷ Japan. Ministry of Defence. *Defence of Japan Defence White Paper Digest 2020*. Government Printer: 2020, 8.

²⁸ Ibid, 6.

²⁹ Germany. Federal Ministry of Defence. *2016 White Paper on German Security and the Future of the Bundeswehr*. Berlin: Government Printer, 2016.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, 42.

risks,’ which exist due to the proliferation of ‘nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.’³²

Republic of Korea HD 1

The Republic of Korea’s 2016 *Defense White Paper* states that “strong national security is the basis for the very existence of a nation, improved inter-Korean relations, and enduring peace on the Korean Peninsula”.³³ The paper highlights threats of terrorism, nuclear proliferation, crime, environment, conventional military, weaponry advances in other countries, public health, and technology and intelligence advances. North Korea is considered a threat to the nation’s ‘territory and sovereignty’ is a consistent theme throughout the paper. Environmental threats are characterized as a “non-military threat that compounds military uncertainty.”³⁴

Brazil HD 3

Brazil’s 2012 *Defense White Paper* states that an important function of the white paper is to disclose Brazil’s defense objectives in order to avoid regional insecurity based on mistrust and miscommunication.³⁵ The threats listed in the paper include terrorism, crime, nuclear proliferation, environment and economy. Economy is framed as a security threat because “national sovereignty, economic competitiveness and full development demand a defense capacity that is compatible with the country’s potential and aspiration.”³⁶ The environmental threats mentioned in the paper include climate change and natural disasters, along with environmental preservation and preservation of biodiversity. The crime threats listed include cybercrime threats.

³² Ibid, 41.

³³ Republic of Korea. Ministry of National Defense. *2016 Defense White Paper*. Government Printer: 2017, 39.

³⁴ Ibid, 10.

³⁵ Brazil. *Defense White Paper 2012*. Government Printer: 2012, 12.

³⁶ Ibid 31.

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Italy HD 3.25

Italy's 2015 *White Paper for International Security and Defence* prioritizes its objectives as 'defence against an armed attack direct at national territory, its people and its assets'.³⁷

The paper lists terrorism, nuclear proliferation, crime, environment, conventional military, public health and migration threats. The document recognizes a need to forecast, prevent and manage "events generated by situations of instability in terms of threats and attacks on our national integrity, our sovereignty and our vital interests, without excluding the risks generated by mass migration, pandemics, terrorism and crime".³⁸

Australia HD 3

Australia's 2016 *Defence White Paper* recognizes that 'while there is no more than a remote prospect of a military attack by another country on Australian territory in the foreseeable future, our strategic planning ... recognises the regional and global nature of Australia's strategic interests and the different sets of challenges created by the behaviours of countries and non-state actors such as terrorists'.³⁹ The paper lists terrorism, nuclear proliferation, crime, environment, conventional military, migration and economy threats. Migration threats refers to illegal migrants,⁴⁰ while criminal threats include smuggling illegal weapons, trafficking of people and drugs and cyber-attacks.⁴¹

Canada HD 3

Canada's 2016 *Defence Policy Review* states the objective of the Canadian Armed Forces to

defend Canada and North America and contribute to a wide spectrum of operations globally.⁴² The review lists terrorism, crime, nuclear proliferation, environment, and technology and intelligence advances. Discussion of terrorism and crime threats focus largely on the continental region – Canada notes the threat of terrorism, 'on North American soil',⁴³ and details partnerships with the USA and Mexico to fight transnational crime.⁴⁴

Turkey HD 1.5

Although there is no up-to-date official government document outlining Turkish defence spending, this report has relied on the 2011 *Defence and Security Policy of the Turkish Republic*, an 8-page document published by an International think-tank, which ascertains security policy through analysis of government documents and other materials.⁴⁵ Its focus is limited to terrorist threats, conventional military threats and threats caused by migration. In relation to terrorism, it outlines Turkish regional and international cooperation against terrorist activity. In relation to migration, it says, "another important element of Turkish security and defence policy is related to the increasing numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the world. Turkey functions as a transit country for many refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, they constitute a security concern for Turkey as the country bordering the EU".⁴⁶

Spain HD 3.25

Spain's *National Defence Directive 2012*, notes while that deterrence is itself a military

³⁷ Italy. Ministry of Defence. *White Paper for International Security and Defence*. Government Printer: 2015, 37.

³⁸ Ibid, 14.

³⁹ Australia. Department of Defence. *2016 Defence White Paper*. Government Printer: 2016, 15.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 53.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Canada. Government of Canada. *2016 Defence Policy Review*. Government Printer: 2016, 5.

⁴³ Ibid, 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 13.

⁴⁵ "[Defence and Security Policy of the Turkish Republic](#)". *Barcelona Centre for International Affairs* (2011).

⁴⁶ Ibid, 241.

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objective, it can only occur as a result of “having capabilities and the determination to use them if necessary,” and that, “the greatest guarantee for peace and security is none other than credibility”⁴⁷ The threats listed are terrorism, nuclear proliferation and economy. The economic threat mentioned is an economic crisis,⁴⁸ while the criminal threats listed are organized crime and cyber-attacks.⁴⁹ The paper notes that the effects of both terrorism and criminal activity in Ibero-America are felt in Spain.⁵⁰

Israel HD 0.5

The *Official Strategy of the Israel Defense Forces*, translated to English by the Belfer Center, outlines its offensive military concept, “the basic assumption is that the enemy cannot be defeated through a defensive posture”.⁵¹ The doctrine analyses terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and conventional military threats. Israel characterizes the border of Israel as a “permanently threatened area,”⁵² elsewhere expressing fears about territorial gains made by ‘the enemy’.⁵³

Islamic Republic of Iran HD 0.25

Iran does not make information on its threat perceptions or strategic outlook publicly available

Colombia HD 3.5

Colombia’s *Política de Defensa y Seguridad para La Legalidad, el Emprendimiento y la Equidad*, available in Spanish only, notes that security threats have worsened for Colombia

⁴⁷ Spain. Presidency of the Government. *National Defence Directive 2012*. Government Printer: 2012,

⁴⁸ Ibid, 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 3.

⁵¹ Israel. Israel Defense Forces. *Deterring Terror: How Israel Confronts the Next Generation of Threats*. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs: 2015.

⁵² Ibid, 40.

⁵³ Ibid, 21.

at an international level.⁵⁴ It cites terrorism, transnational and organized crime, environment, migration and economic threats which inform military spending. In relation to the environment, it lists many of the biodiverse features of Columbia and emphasises that the defence and protection of natural resources is a national security priority.⁵⁵ It also links military spending to a stronger economy by arguing that the national economy needs stable security conditions in order to grow.⁵⁶

Netherlands HD 3

2018 Defence White Paper of The Netherlands, entitled, “Investing in our people, capabilities and visibility,” identifies protection of Dutch and NATO territories, promotion of the international legal order and support of civil authorities as its main objectives.⁵⁷ It documents security threats related to terrorism, nuclear proliferation, environment, weaponry advances in other countries and migration. The document notes the strengthening of Russian armed forces, instability in the Middle East and parts of Africa, the development of robotics and biotechnology and the proliferation of conventional and nuclear weapons.⁵⁸

United Arab Emirates HD 0.5

The UAE does not make information on its threat perceptions or strategic outlook publicly available

⁵⁴ Colombia. National Ministry of Defence. *Política de Defensa y Seguridad para La Legalidad, el Emprendimiento y la Equidad*. Government Printer: 2018, 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 21.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 19.

⁵⁷ The Netherlands. Ministry of Defence. *2018 Defence White Paper: Investing in our People, Capabilities and Visibility*. Government Printer: 2018, 7.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 8.

The Republic of China (Taiwan) (no HD ranking)

The Republic of China's *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review* states the objective of "shaping a military force capable of delivering deterrence and defense to keep the enemy at bay".⁵⁹ The review highlights terrorism, nuclear proliferation, crime, environment, conventional military threats, weaponry advances in other countries and public health as security threats. The report recognizes the transnational nature of modern security issues, stating, "many challenges such as the proliferation of terrorist ideologies, incidence of complex emergencies, spread of contagious diseases, cyber attacks, threats to information security, competition for energy resources, and rise of food and water resource crises, are all transnational and regional issues that cannot be resolved by a single country alone".⁶⁰

Poland HD 2

The *2013 White Book on National Security of the Republic of Poland* recognises that 'challenges for and threats to Poland which arise from the analysis of its external security environment, are mainly of a non-military nature'.⁶¹ Nonetheless, the document continues to state that "military threats still remain significant,"⁶² listing terrorism, nuclear proliferation, crime, environment, weaponry advances in other countries, economy and migration as threats. In relation to the environment it notes, "Challenges resulting from climate changes might result in disastrous consequences that we are not fully capable of specifying yet".⁶³ The concerns

⁵⁹ Republic of China. Ministry of National Defense. *2017 Quadrennial Defense Review*. Government Printer: 2017, 5.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 16.

⁶¹ Republic of Poland. The National Security Bureau. *White Book on National Security of The Republic of Poland*. Government Printer: 2013, 13.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid, 119.

regarding weaponry advances in other countries include general concerns about biological and chemical weapons,⁶⁴ and a specific concern about the modernization of Russia's armed forces which began in 2008.⁶⁵

Singapore HD 0.5

Singapore's 2000 document *Defending Singapore in the 21st Century* states that, "diplomacy and deterrence form the twin pillars of [Singapore's] defense policy".⁶⁶ The document focuses on threats of terrorism, nuclear proliferation, weaponry advances in other countries, migration and economy. In relation to the economy, the report states, "the economic crisis has shown clearly the strong linkage between economics and security. There can be no security without economic stability, just as there can be no sustained economic development without security".⁶⁷

Algeria HD 1.75

Algeria does not make information on its threat perceptions or strategic outlook publicly available

Pakistan HD 0.25

Pakistan does not make information on its threat perceptions or strategic outlook publicly available.⁶⁸

Indonesia HD 2.25

Indonesia's *Defence White Paper of 2015* states the need to "build a strong defence force with deterrent capability as an archipelagic and maritime country, so that Indonesia has a bargaining position in

⁶⁴ Ibid, 168.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 126.

⁶⁶ Singapore. Ministry of Defence. *Defending Singapore in the 21st Century*. Government Printer: 2000, 12.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 7.

⁶⁸ For an introduction to military expenditure in Pakistan, see [Pakistan's Military Spending and Defence Budget](#).

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maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the safety of the entire nation of Indonesia”.⁶⁹ The paper highlights terrorism, nuclear proliferation, crime, environment, conventional military threats, weaponry advances in other countries, public health and migration as security threats to Indonesia. The conventional military threat refers to “unresolved border issues”.⁷⁰ It also highlights regional uncertainty which is caused by the modernization of military forces in the Asia-Pacific region.⁷¹

Oman HD 1

Oman does not make information on its threat perceptions or strategic outlook publicly available

Mexico HD 4.5

Mexico’s data is taken from a 2005 white paper entitled *Libro Blanco de la Defensa Nacional*, published by the Ministry of Defense and available in Spanish only.⁷² The paper notes that it has been necessary to identify new concerns, and challenges of a diverse nature, and accordingly lists public health and transnational crime and the natural environment as threats.⁷³ The public health threat includes HIV, AIDS and other diseases. The white paper also terrorism, conventional military threats and migration threats. Migration is considered a “transnational antagonism,” alongside drugs, illicit arms trafficking, and international terrorism.⁷⁴

Norway HD 3.5

Norway’s 2017 Defence White Paper, entitled, *Setting the Course for Norwegian Foreign and Security Policy*, opens by noting that “unpredictability is the new normal” and that “cooperation is being put to the test”.⁷⁵ It outlines security threats related to terrorism, nuclear proliferation, crime, environment, conventional military threats, weaponry advances in other countries, public health, migration and economy. Like many other papers, it notes the existence of non-military security threats, stating that, “climate change and health challenges are two other global factors that are affecting our security. These are not security threats in the traditional sense, but they can exacerbate other challenges that are already having an impact on peace and security”.⁷⁶ Norway also notes that the link between economy and security “cannot be overstated”.⁷⁷

⁶⁹ Indonesia. Defence Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia. *Defence White Paper 2015*. Government Printer: 2015, 40.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 9.

⁷¹ Ibid, 8.

⁷² Mexico. Ministry of Defense. *Libro Blanco de la Defensa Nacional*. Government Printer: 2005.

⁷³ Ibid, 37.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 13.

⁷⁵ Norway. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Setting the Course for Norwegian Foreign and Security Policy*. Government Printer, 2017, 5.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 42.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 19.

2 Commitment to Humanitarian Disarmament

Humanitarian Disarmament (HD) is a human being-centered approach to disarmament. It focuses on the safety of human beings and the communities in which they live rather than the security of the state. Humanitarian Disarmament has much in common with Preventative Health strategies, as it identifies and campaigns to eliminate the “disease threats” to human security and well-being. Its approach to prevention is by the establishment and implementation of norms, and by stigmatizing use of weapons with widespread humanitarian consequences.⁷⁸ In short, it is an approach to disarmament where people matter.

Humanitarian approaches to international relations by civil society groups are continuously developing alongside ever-increasing expenditure on arms by governments. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs notes that, while people-centered approaches to disarmament have existed since the 19th century, attempts have been made to consolidate these efforts into a single movement, which approaches disarmament with the aim of preventing human and environmental suffering.⁷⁹ The movement originated with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty – a process and international convention which broke new ground by being driven by civil society actors rather than states themselves. Building on the success of the Mine Ban Treaty, the Humanitarian Disarmament movement focused its attention on the catastrophic consequences of cluster munition weapons. A decade later, civil society again succeeded where states had failed with adoption of the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. Humanitarian Disarmament’s most recent success was in

2017, with the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.⁸⁰

The above 3 conventions comprehensively ban a weapon, and propose remedial actions, specifically assistance to victims of the weapon and clearance in the case of landmines and cluster sub-munitions. Humanitarian Disarmament is thus characterized by 3 areas of action: a norm, a movement and remedial action.⁸¹

Each year since 2012, member movements have organized the Humanitarian Disarmament Forum (HDF) in conjunction with the meetings of the United Nations General Assembly’s First Committee. Each year the forum takes stock of the current political environment, making a survey of emerging opportunities and threats to Humanitarian Disarmament. Additionally, member movements look for cross-cutting themes on which they can work together, and examine how to broaden themselves and their movements by reaching out to other disciplines and civil society organizations. Organization of the Humanitarian Disarmament Forum rotates among member organizations. Humanitarian Disarmament has become a focus of the Harvard Law School’s Armed Conflict and Civilian Protection Initiative, which has helped define the movement’s conceptual frame research and conferences in an academic setting.⁸²

Humanitarian Disarmament movements have not been limited to banning weapons. The movement is promoting a political declaration to constrain the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, seeks a pre-emptive ban on the development and use of autonomous weapons and is strengthening

⁷⁸ “About,” [Humanitariandisarmament.org](https://humanitariandisarmament.org), accessed May 22 2020.

⁷⁹ United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs, “Fact Sheet: Humanitarian Approaches to Disarmament,” (July 2017), 1.

⁸⁰ “[Timeline of Humanitarian Disarmament](https://humanitariandisarmament.org/timeline),” [Humanitariandisarmament.org](https://humanitariandisarmament.org), accessed May 22 2020.

⁸¹ “About,” [Humanitariandisarmament.org](https://humanitariandisarmament.org), accessed May 22 2020.

⁸² See “[Humanitarian Disarmament: The Way Ahead](#),” (March 2018).

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the laws protecting the environment in relation to armed conflicts.⁸³

Measuring States' Commitment to Humanitarian Disarmament

As a movement which exists alongside increased military spending, humanitarian disarmament is an interesting area of contrast. This report has created a Humanitarian Disarmament “scale”, in order to compare the 30 highly militarized states’ commitment to ever increasing military procurement, as evidenced through public spending, with their commitment to humanitarian disarmament, as evidenced through state behavior in multilateral fora. The scale ranks states for signing and ratifying key treaties as well as for making calls to further protect vulnerable communities through political processes or the creation of binding international treaties. A score of zero indicates no discernible commitment to humanitarian disarmament, while a score of 4.5 indicates the highest possible commitment to humanitarian disarmament. The scale provides a score for each humanitarian disarmament action as follows:

Treaty or Convention	HD Score for Signature to Treaty	HD Score for Ratification / Accession to Treaty
1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty: <i>prohibits the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of anti-personnel landmines</i>	0.5	1
2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions: <i>prohibits all use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions</i>		
2013 Arms Trade Treaty: <i>regulates international trade of conventional weapons</i>		
2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: <i>comprehensively prohibits nuclear weapons</i>		
Other Action	Score for public support of current disarmament processes	
Public call to Ban Lethal Autonomous Weapons	0.25	
Public call to Ban Explosive Weapons in Populated areas	0.25	

⁸³ For more information on Humanitarian Disarmament, see <https://humanitariandisarmament.org/>.

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The Humanitarian Disarmament Scale

In general, states with the highest spending on military have engaged less with Humanitarian Disarmament. USA ranked first in military expenditure; Russia ranked 3rd; Saudi Arabia 4th; and India sixth. All score 0 on the Humanitarian Scale, while China, second in military expenditures, scores 1.25.

In 2019, these five countries were responsible for 62% of global military expenditures.

In general, but not universally, states engaged in lower levels of military expenditures were more likely to have more engagement with Humanitarian Disarmament treaties and processes. Mexico, 29th in military expenditures out of 30 states documented in this report achieves a maximum HD score of 4.5.

More analysis of the HD scores of each country will follow in section 3.

The USA signed the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013, however in 2019 notified the UN that it had no intention of taking further steps to join the convention and was of the opinion that it did not have further legal obligations arising from its signature. Its signature remains in the United Nations Treaty Database. Iran and Pakistan have not joined any Humanitarian Disarmament treaties, however Iran has publicly endorsed action on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas and Pakistan has publicly called for action on a binding prohibition on the development of autonomous weapons. Taiwan which ranks 22nd in military expenditures is not ranked as it is prohibited from joining international treaties due to its status.]

Rank by Military Spending, cumulative 2011-2019	Country	HD Score 0-4.5
3	Russia	0
4	Saudi Arabia	0
6	India	0
1	USA	0
18	Iran	0.25
26	Pakistan	0.25
21	UAE	0.5
17	Israel	0.5
24	Singapore	0.5
28	Oman	1
29	Kuwait	1
10	South Korea	1
2	China PR	1.25
15	Turkey	1.5
25	Algeria	1.75
23	Poland	2
27	Indonesia	2.25
8	Japan	3
14	Canada	3
7	UK	3
13	Australia	3
11	Brazil	3
20	Netherlands	3
5	France	3.25
9	Germany	3.25
12	Italy	3.25
16	Spain	3.25
19	Colombia	3.5
30	Norway	3.5
29	Mexico	4.5
22	Taiwan	-

3 Our observations and Analysis

3a. Most highly militarized states exhibit more commitment to militarization than to disarmament

When considered side-by-side, the vast disparity between states' commitment to the National Military and their commitment to Humanitarian Disarmament is striking. Only one state, Mexico (29) showed high levels of support for multilateral efforts to promote Humanitarian Disarmament. More than half of the 30 countries achieved a HD score of 4 or less.

Although commitment to Humanitarian Disarmament clearly does not have an exact inverse relationship to military spending, it is nonetheless significant that countries which spent the most on the military were among the least committed to Humanitarian Disarmament, and the countries at the lower end of the list (although still spending a huge amount on their national militaries) exhibit more commitment to Humanitarian Disarmament.

Through consideration of military spending, commitment to Humanitarian Disarmament and states' own characterizations of their attitudes to the military, two patterns of state behavior emerge, *non-engagement* and *rhetorical multilateralism*.

Russia, China, India, Israel, the USA and Singapore (states with HD rankings between 0 and 1.25) display *non-engagement* behaviors. They are all high military spenders and make no attempt to suggest otherwise. Their Defense White Papers usually utilize state-centric language and include in-depth analyses of the global security environment and spending on weapons in other countries. These countries are less inclined to use language of global solidarity or refer to the international community, and their focus is on traditional rather than non-traditional security threats like the environment and public health. They are less likely to meaningfully participate in multilateral fora or humanitarian disarmament treaties.

The UK, France, Canada, Brazil, Netherlands, Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, Italy Germany, states with a higher HD ranking, engage in rhetorical multilateralism. They are strong advocates for disarmament at multilateral fora but this advocacy is not reflected in their domestic affairs. These states have high Humanitarian Disarmament scores, yet their military spending over the past decade has equally been high enough to justify their inclusion in this report. Many of these countries' Defense White Papers have a strong internationalist flavor and extensively document the states participation in multilateral projects and cross-border operations. They also include consideration of non-traditional security threats such as the environment and public health.

Both patterns of state behavior are deeply problematic. With regard to the *non-engagement* countries, it is highly concerning that so much of the world's armed forces and military weapons are controlled by countries with little regard for, or open hostility towards, Humanitarian Disarmament. On the other hand, while each disarmament treaty signed by a state is a step in the right direction, it is also troubling that the countries engaging in *rhetorical multilateralism* may be projecting an image of themselves which is discordant with actual behavior. These states' multilateral contributions would carry far more weight if their commitment to humanity, as articulated through participation in treaties and conventions, was matched by lower military spending.

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3b. Military expenditures in response to threats which are not easily solved by military means.

Several of the white papers drew attention to changes in the international security environment which revealed that non-military threats were now just as pressing, if not more pressing, than military ones. The logical response to this observation would be to divert some of the military funds to non-military channels, in order to solve non-military problems. Yet, this logic was not reflected in the publications. Rather, states' behavior demonstrates a trend of highly militarized countries relying on non-military threats to justify ever-increasing military spending. This trend is elucidated by reference to six of the ten commonly cited threats, terrorism, crime, environment, health, irregular migration, and economy.

Terrorism

Terrorism was mentioned in each of the 24 available reports and is thus the most cited threat justifying military expenditure among highly militarized states. Of these 24 states, many provided lengthy accounts of the threat of terrorism and detailed national military strategies in place to combat it. Some viewed the threat of terrorism as illustrating the changing nature of war, while others linked it to globalization.

Virtually all reports imply that military spending is the only way to suppress terrorism, and that the terrorist threat that exists today justifies the large amount of public funds allocated to the military sector. Rhetoric of the "war" on terror has been so prevalent in recent decades, that one might be forgiven for thinking that combatting terrorism is an objective that belongs firmly within the domain of the military.

Yet, research indicates otherwise. A report published by the RAND corporation analyzing how terrorist groups ended between 1968 and 2006 found that political processes and local police and intelligence were the primary reasons that the vast majority of terrorist

groups ceased to exist.⁸⁴ It found that, where political processes were not possible, use of the police force and police intelligence was more appropriate, since these forces tended to be better trained in tracking and arresting suspects. The use of the military to fight terrorists suggests that the action is a 'war,' which may well legitimize the terrorists in the eyes of some sectors of the public.

Furthermore, a report prepared for the American Political Science Association on the effect of US military intervention on terrorism found that in general, military intervention actually led to an increase in terrorist incidents.⁸⁵ In other word, be spending large sums on military capacities to fight terrorism, states are actually perpetuating a threat which they clearly consider very grave. Governments should re-evaluate their assumptions about the relationship between a strong military and terrorist threats. Input by civil society and academics, and the public more broadly should be sought.

Crime

18 countries relied on the threat of crime to justify military expenditure. The United Kingdom (**7**) noted the threat of organized crime and 'a range of cyber-related threats' facing the country.⁸⁶ Indonesia (**27**) expressed concern about transnational crime,⁸⁷ while Russia (**3**) details ongoing problems with illicit arms and drug trade.⁸⁸

The suggestion made by 18 states that military investment is necessary to fight crime

⁸⁴ Seth G Jones *et al*, "[How Terrorist Groups End: Implications for Countering al Qa'ida](#)," RAND Corporation, 2008.

⁸⁵ Seung-Whan Choi, "[Does U.S. Military Intervention Reduce or Increase Terrorism?](#)" APISA 2011 Annual Meeting Paper, 2011.

⁸⁶ United Kingdom. Ministry of Defence. *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*. (CM9161). William Lea Group: 2015.

⁸⁷ Indonesia. Defence Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia. *Defence White Paper*. Government Printer: 2015.

⁸⁸ Russian Federation. Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation. *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*. (Government Printer: 2014).

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fails to recognize the function of a fundamental element of any modern state – the police force. Military troops undergo extensive training to gain the ability to kill a target upon instruction by a superior; an approach which may work in times of war, but is highly inappropriate when dealing with civilians committing illegal acts⁸⁹ and will likely lead to human rights crimes or atrocities. Military forces are not trained in community protection and are not taught to use minimum force or fair procedures during arrest. The use of military forces to fight crime has the potential to damage and erode civil rights and criminal procedure which has been developed over many years.

The fusing of the military and policing units of a state has equally troubling implications for the police force. Excessive ‘militarization’ of the police diminishes police reputation and erodes public trust in this important institution.⁹⁰ To avoid these issues, it is essential that states do not confuse the police force as the military, and do not confuse the military as the police force.

Environment

The environment is portrayed as a threat to the security of 17 of the 24 highly militarized countries. Many publications were vague about the specific threat that the environment posed, and how military expenditure could solve it. Those countries which were more specific usually referred to the need for military support during natural disasters. As a plan to mitigate the effects of climate change, this strategy is deeply lacking in ambition. Supporting the communities in the aftermath of natural disaster is a vital humanitarian imperative, yet governments of a country should be looking to *prevent* such life-altering disasters from occurring in the first place,

⁸⁹ Arthur Rizer, "[Asking Our Soldiers to Do Police Work: Why It Can Lead to Disaster](#)" *The Atlantic*, January 17, 2012.

⁹⁰ Jonathan Mummolo, "[Militarization fails to enhance police safety or reduce crime but may harm police reputation](#)" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115, no. 37 (September 2018): 9181-9186.

including by investment in scientific research and adoption of conservation practices.

There are two major ironies about military spending on the environment. Firstly, many military weapons and practices are themselves environmentally damaging. The Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS) notes that while there is some attention drawn to the environmental damage which occurs during conflict, much damage to the environment caused by the military occurs by regular operational activities.⁹¹ Thus, military practices which damage the environment occur frequently, and hidden from international scrutiny. The military sector is, in almost all cases, the entity of government which uses the most carbon intensive resources, and produces the most toxic waste. It is not surprising that CEOBS notes that militaries have been slow to develop environmental policies.

Secondly, changing the status quo to create environmentally sustainable practices is costly and requires considerable public investment. In the case of many states, particularly the 30 countries which are the subject of this study, high military spending ties up vital public funds which could be used in the transition towards a green economy. A decrease in public funding of the military would not just be a triumph from a humanitarian perspective, it would make it economically possible to take care of our environment. It would save and prolong lives at every level of society.

Public Health

While concerns related to emerging infectious disease, pandemic and epidemic were mentioned by 13 countries, many of these references were fleeting and lacked detail. Norway noted that '[climate change and health challenges] are not security threats in the traditional sense, but they can exacerbate other challenges that are already having an impact on peace and security.'⁹²

⁹¹ Doug Weir, "[How Does War Damage the Environment?](#)" *Conflict and Environment Observatory*, June 4, 2020.

⁹² Norway. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Setting the Course for Norwegian Foreign and Security Policy*. Government Printer, 2017.

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The global outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 has obliterated any doubt in the ability of infectious diseases to take root and drastically effect the life and livelihood of people in every society in the world. When our review of white papers was launched, the pandemic had not yet occurred. Yet, the references to pandemics evidence little thought given to what exactly the military's role would be, in the event of a global health emergency.

It is true that in many countries, the military was sometimes utilized in the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. But many of the ways the military was utilized involved stepping into the role of others – healthcare staff, contract tracers, delivery services, ambulance services and others. In other words, instead of investing in the health system and hiring more healthcare staff, governments invested in the military, and subsequently requested that they carry out tasks outside of their training and expertise.⁹³ This approach is inefficient and sub-optimal; it involves deploying personnel who are not best suited to the job. The value of healthcare services provided by the military during COVID-19 represents money that should have previously been allocated to a robust health system in the first place.⁹⁴

COVID-19 is a threat that does not stop at borders – it targets all of humankind rather than specific countries. Yet, military problem-solving actively engages the logic of borders and boundaries. This military, border-oriented approach to problem-solving is precisely why the international community has failed to coordinate its response to the pandemic, and has cost humanity hundreds of thousands of lives.

Migration

Irregular migration has manifested as a difficulty being experienced by 195 countries

⁹³ See e.g. [“What’s the Military Doing to Fight COVID-19”](#) *British Forces Broadcasting Services*, July 8, 2020 [“Military Faces Limits in Responding to the Coronavirus outbreak”](#) *Associated Press News*, March 17, 2020,.

⁹⁴ For a breakdown of the duties of European Armies during COVID-19 pandemic, see [“Armed Forces and COVID-19”](#), *EUROMIL*, accessed 24 July, 2020.

across the globe.⁹⁵ Almost nowhere is untouched. 86.5 million people have been displaced both within and outside states. Clearly, if not addressed appropriately this will and has caused problems for these countries. The inclusion of migration as a security threat in 12 of the white papers suggests a lack of consideration of the issue from a humanitarian perspective. It is difficult to see any cohesive policy motivating these particular countries to consider this issue in military terms. All but two of the 12 states – Singapore **(24)** and Indonesia **(27)** -- have ratified the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees.⁹⁶ A given countries commitment to Humanitarian Disarmament (see Section 2) does not seemed to be linked to this issue.

Generally speaking, global migration, when facilitated, has a proven positive effect, economically and otherwise.⁹⁷ While negative effects can result from certain types of mass migration, the military is the *problem*, not the *solution*. A UK academic report found that 84% of migration to Europe is caused by war and violence.⁹⁸ Migration is a non-military issue overwhelmingly caused by the military activity. Investment in international cooperation rather than weapons might result in the resolution of issues related to mass irregular migration. The controversy surrounding the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration revealed how difficult international cooperation is, with several of the top 30 militarized states subject of this report – the USA **(1)**, Italy **(12)**, Australia **(13)**, Israel **(17)**, Poland **(23)**, Singapore **(24)**, and Algeria **(25)**– refusing to adopt the UN resolution on the Compact.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ [Refugee population by country or territory of origin](#), World Bank/UNHCR.

⁹⁶ “2. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees,” United Nations Treaty Collection Repository.

⁹⁷ Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development, “Is Migration Good for the Economy?” *Migration Policy Debates*, May, 2014.

⁹⁸ Brad Blitz *et al*, [“Mapping Refugee Reception In the Mediterranean: First Report of the Evi-Med Project”](#), *Evi-Med Project*, 1 July 2017.

⁹⁹ United Nations Digital Library, [“Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”](#), accessed September 19 2020.

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The most convincing argument against relying on migration to justify increased military spending goes to the heart of the issue -- the use or threat of violence against vulnerable people such as refugees and asylum seekers who have already experienced a great deal of hardship, is fundamentally troubling from a humanitarian perspective and contrary to international norms of human dignity.

Economy

Economic considerations were noted by 10 countries, who argued for the need to arm militarily in order to protect the economy. Interesting, others considered the economy from the opposite perspective, perceiving it as a reason to set limits on military spending. For example, the Defense White Paper prepared by France (5) stated the following, 'the Nation's independence is threatened if public deficits make it dependent on its creditors. Decisions relating to public expenditure on defence and security must not only take account of the threats to which our forces are required to respond, but also the risks to our economic independence.'¹⁰⁰

Where economy was characterized as a threat to the security of a country, it was articulated in terms of the security implications of a future economic crisis. Yet, no state was clear on how exactly the military should intervene during economic crisis. It would seem, that high military spending would be detrimental to an economy during crisis or recession, as it would represent funds which could be put to better economic use, for example by insulating a national economy from the highs and lows of the economic cycle.

It seems logical that countries that are highly invested in strengthening their military, such as the subjects of this report, would be more likely actually to enter war if they considered it necessary. Yet war, itself, is bad for the economy. Economists such as Joseph Stiglitz have found that the popular post World War II assertion that capitalism "needs" war is without basis, and that peace is far better for

the economy.¹⁰¹ The Institute for Economics and Peace has found that positive effects of increased military spending were outweighed by longer term unintended negative macroeconomic consequences,¹⁰² while the National Bureau of Economic Research has found that a booming postwar economy is the result of population growth rather than the military spending itself.¹⁰³

3c. Military expenditures in response to certain perceived threats counter-productive to multilateralism and international security

All 24 countries take an interest in the acquisition of weapons, nuclear and otherwise, by other countries. States perceive these acquisitions as security threats, which appears to motivate much of their own military spending. 21 of the 24 available reports listed nuclear proliferation as a security threat. In many cases, the threat was articulated by reference to a specific country, such as in Japan's report, which states, "North Korea's further development of weapons of mass destruction and missiles... constitutes a serious and imminent threat to the security of the region".¹⁰⁴

The most effective and cost-effective solution to this issue is universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which came into legal force in January 2021. During the 2019 UN General Assembly First Committee Meetings seventeen states identified expenditures on nuclear weapons as a global security threat.¹⁰⁵ At that meeting, the representative of the Non Aligned Movement

¹⁰⁰ France. Ministry of Defence. *French White Paper on Defence and National Security*. Government Printer: 2013.

¹⁰¹ Joseph Stiglitz, "[The Myth of the War Economy](#)," *The Guardian*, January 2, 2003,

¹⁰² Institute for Economics and Peace, "[Economic Consequences of War on the US Economy](#)" (2011).

¹⁰³ "Iraq, Afghanistan, and the US Economy," *Washington Post*, February 4, 2008,

¹⁰⁴ Japan. Ministry of Defence. *Defence of Japan Defence White Paper Digest 2020*. Government Printer: 2020, p.4.

¹⁰⁵ Afghanistan, Austria, Bangladesh, Cuba, El Salvador, Finland, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, Slovakia, Togo and Uruguay, Statements at the UNGA First Committee meetings October 2019.

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representing 120 states expressed concern “at the plans by nuclear weapons states to modernize their nuclear arsenals including new delivery vehicles, as provided for in the military doctrines of some nuclear weapons states, including the latest United States Nuclear Posture Review, that set out rationales for the use of such weapons against non-nuclear weapons states.”¹⁰⁶ The representative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) representing 15 states stated, “Our fears about the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons have been heightened against the background of recent developments that have seen an increasing tendency to weaken disarmament treaty obligations. For CARICOM, it is imperative that the international community accelerates efforts towards nuclear disarmament commitments and fully abides by the ICJ's Advisory Opinion that reiterated the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.”¹⁰⁷

Similar state-by-state analysis was noticeable with regard to non-nuclear weapons, with 14 countries publishing details of recent acquisitions or weapon modernization schemes of other countries. These publications imply that increased military spending is necessary to respond to such behavior. However, threat perceptions are based on what another state could do, not necessarily what they will do. This level of professional paranoia drives new weapons acquisitions based on what other states have obtained, needed or not. This leads to a situation where no amount of military security is ever enough. Acquisitions will continue until an end state at which all available resources have been turned into weaponry. The simple observation is that over the past decade a vast amount of more powerful arms have been produced and consumed, and yet we are not vastly more secure. Recent research by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs reflects this, noting that unconstrained military

spending negatively impacts international security by creating cycles of insecurity which spur state mistrust and arms races between global and regional powers, and historical rivals.¹⁰⁸ This resort to unilateral military acquisition rather than multilateral solutions exacerbates state hostilities between countries. It drains state financial resources without delivering increased security, permanently or even temporarily, as other nearby countries will likely feel compelled to match or increase their military investments and acquisitions in response.¹⁰⁹

Virtually all of the white papers of the states under scrutiny here attempt to distract from the reality of their continuous acquisition of weapons by identifying deterrence as their military objective.¹¹⁰ Even the top military spenders, USA **(1)** and China **(2)**, stipulate that deterrence is one of the main purposes of military spending, meaning they hope not to have to use the weapons they have spent billions on. Who is going to invade the US? Or China? If states were truly interested in obtaining weapons solely for deterrence, they could dispense with purchases of offensive systems.

Despite increasing expenditures and advances in military technology and intelligence the world does not seem more safe. Just the opposite. 7 of the 24 countries referred to advancing technology in language that suggested a concern regarding its potential to undermine national security. A number of these countries detailed the threat of technology advancements which culminate in the development of autonomous lethal weapons.¹¹¹ Yet it is difficult to see how the emergence of autonomous lethal weapons can

¹⁰⁶ [Statement by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement](#), First Committee, 74th Session, New York, 7 October 2019.

¹⁰⁷ [Statement by Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community](#), First Committee, 74th Session, New York, 7 October 2019.

¹⁰⁸ Samuel Perlo-Freeman, “How unconstrained military spending harms international security,” in *UNODA Occasional Papers no. 35, April 2020: Rethinking Unconstrained Military Spending* (New York: United Nations, 2020), 4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Deterrence is mentioned in 21 of the 24 documents analyzed, by all highly militarized states except Canada, Thailand and Turkey.

¹¹¹ The USA **(1)**, the UK **(7)**, Canada **(14)**, and the Netherlands **(20)** mention robotics; France **(5)** mentions automated control systems.

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be a justification for *increased* military spending. According to a public report by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs “consistently spending more on military capabilities, particularly through research and development, can contribute to technological advancements in weapons systems with highly unpredictable consequences”.¹¹²

If states are truly concerned about autonomous lethal weapons, they should invest in creating a legal regime which preemptively bans autonomous lethal weapons. A civil society driven movement calling for a ban has existed since 2012. Since 2013, 97 UN member states have publicly stated their views on lethal autonomous weapons at both the UN General Assembly, and in the meetings of the Convention on Conventional Weapons. The vast majority regard human control and decision-making as critical to the acceptability and legality of a weapon, and most of these countries have expressed their desire for a new treaty to retain human control over the use of force. Thirty have called for a comprehensive ban on fully autonomous weapons.¹¹³

As a threat which is just emerging, states have the opportunity to redefine how they deal with military advances. Instead of searching for a military solution, states should create a norm against the development and use of these weapons, through legal and political means. For once, there is an opportunity to pre-empt an arms race.

While states devote time and resources to analyzing the behavior of other states – regarding military research and development, or acquisition of weapons – there are many non-military challenges facing the world, which can only be solved by international cooperation. By continuing to increase military spending, states are sending a clear message

about their priorities – prioritizing unilateral military action over multilateral cooperation and settlement of disputes.

There are threats in this world, and they face us not as singular states, but as humankind. These threats don't stop at borders, they are beyond the ability of any one country to address. Yet more arms acquisitions will not build trust or ally between countries. But it will most assuredly destroy any chance we have of collective effort to combat the climate crisis, which in its wake will bring further refugees, economic uncertainty, plagues and suffering without frontier.

¹¹² Samuel Perlo-Freeman, “How unconstrained military spending harms international security,” in *UNODA Occasional Papers no. 35, April 2020: Rethinking Unconstrained Military Spending* (New York: United Nations, 2020), 4.

¹¹³ [Stopping Killer Robots: Country Positions on Banning Fully Autonomous Weapons and Retaining Human Control](#), Human Rights Watch, 10 August 2020.

Simple and urgent recommendations

This report has sought to firmly place military spending as an inter-dependent issue within the Humanitarian Disarmament agenda. Vast and never ending expenditures on military security have not obtained vast and perpetual security, not for the state and certainly not for the human being. These expenditures are displacing economic resources which must be deployed to solve unprecedented existential threats that know no borders, key among them rapid climate change and global pandemics.

Highly militarized states are revealed to have less commitment to Humanitarian Disarmament, raising questions about the ethics and values of those who possess some of the worlds most destructive weapons.

In light of this stark reality, all UN member states must urgently reconsider the proportion of state funding which is spent on the military and divert funding to meet human needs through multilateral cooperative frameworks.

The much ignored UN process on Disarmament and Development action programme provides for the adoption of measures to reduce the level and magnitude of military expenditures and reallocate those resources to social and economic development, particularly in developing countries. In June 2020, a UN member state called on the UN to supervise an international fund, to which half of current military expenditures be allocated, in order to help the least developed countries achieve sustainable economic development.¹¹⁴

The threats listed in defense publications which are examined in this report are real, but very few of them will be resolved by military means. If the states which are the focus of this report are truly interested in a safer world for their citizens, they must shift significant

amounts of funding from military expenditures toward building cooperative multilateral processes focused on real solutions to our common existential threats.

Changes may include:

- Redirect military spending justified by prevention of **terrorism** to border and policing, where relevant, and to cooperative political and diplomatic projects addressing terrorism's root causes such as racism and extreme poverty.
- Ratify or accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of **Nuclear Weapons**. No one is safe as long as they exist.
- Target transnational criminal networks and **cybercrime** by investing in intelligence and transnational cooperation under public oversight.
- Immediately shift funds from fossil fuel intensive military expenditures to sustainable energy infrastructure which will preserve the natural **environment** and counteract the climate crisis.
- Appoint a special Commissioner on Women, Peace and Security. Her job will be to study and recommend new roles for women in the peace and security decision-making in your country.
- Dismantling and uprooting of the "professional paranoia," toward all neighbouring states driving, so called, **conventional military threats**, and halt use of **weapon acquisitions in other countries** as a justification for increased military spending leading to localized arms races.
- Invest in public **health** and public health research at a national level and contribute to and participate in transnational networks to solve cross

¹¹⁴ Relationship between disarmament and development, Report of the Secretary-General, A/75/114, 16 June 2020.

In Search of Enemies

- border/global health issues including, but not limited to, infectious disease.
- Engage in multilateral problem solving while ensuring adherence to human rights law when responding to increasing irregular **migration**.
 - Protect the **economy**, by wise investments in sustainability rather than further investment in the 'dead end' expenditures on military equipment.
 - Develop a cross-cutting Ministry of Peace and Human Security to proactively address peace deficits in society, and cooperatively with others abroad.
 - Address militarization of artificial intelligence, robotics and other emerging technologies by promoting a pre-emptive ban on autonomous lethal weapons in collaboration with civil society groups.
 - Set up a national commission to reflect on how racism, patriarchy and misogyny underpin militaristic responses to human problems.
 - Call out and condemn governments which threaten global peace with ever increasing military expenditures.

Humanitarian Disarmament Campaigns

The **International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)**, founded in 1992, urges countries to join the Mine Ban Treaty and live up to its obligations; the ICBL received the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize as a co-laureate for their work to achieve that treaty. <http://www.icbl.org> @minefreeworld

The **Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC)**, formed in 2003, works toward a world without cluster munitions, including by promoting universalization of and compliance with the Convention on Cluster Munitions. <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org> @banclusterbombs

Control Arms is a civil society coalition founded in 2003, advocates for universalization and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in order to establish strong international norms for arms transfer decision-making. <https://controlarms.org> @controlarms

The **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)**, which was launched in 2007 and received the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, spotlights the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and promotes the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as it strives for the elimination of these arms. <https://www.icanw.org/> @nuclearban

The **International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW)** established in 2011, seeks to prevent the human suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas through international and national actions, including negotiation of a new political declaration. <http://www.inew.org/> @INEWexplosiveweapons

The **Campaign to Stop Killer Robots**, launched in 2013, calls for an international treaty that bans fully autonomous weapons and ensures that meaningful human control is maintained over the use of force. <https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/> @bankillerrobots

The **Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS)**, launched in 2018 as a successor to the *Toxic Remnants of War Project*, is committed to increasing awareness of the environmental and derived humanitarian consequences of armed conflicts and military activities. <https://ceobs.org/> @detoxconflict

Other

The **Global Campaign on Military Spending** was launched in December 2014, the *International Peace Bureau (IPB)* as a permanent, global, year-round campaign to tackle the worldwide issue of excessive military spending. It sponsors the Global Day of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS) takes place every year in mid-April. <https://demilitarize.org/> @demilitarizeday

Gender and Disarmament database was established by *Reaching Critical Will* in order to promote understanding and share information on the gendered impacts of the use and trade of weapons, gendered perspectives on disarmament and arms control and gender diversity in disarmament. <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/research-projects/10637-gender-and-disarmament> @feministpeace

Armed Conflict & Civilian Protection Initiative of the *Harvard Law School* was established to increase public awareness of humanitarian disarmament while serving as a hub of information for practitioners in the field. <https://humanitarianandisarmament.org> @Harvard_ACCPI

The **European Forum on Armed Drones** is a civil society network of organisations focused on the growing global use of armed drones. <https://www.efadrones.org> @efadrones

This report examines the behavior of the 30 most militarized states through analysis of government publications and each country's participation in disarmament treaties. The findings are stark. Highly militarized governments use ill-defined and irrelevant threats to justify spending large amounts on weapons. They rely on the language of deterrence to make false links between military expenditures and a safer world. The governments that spend the most on weapons are among the least committed to humanitarian, people-centered approaches to disarmament. This report calls out the worst actors in unconstrained military spending, and urges an end to the shielding of this issue within disarmament fora.

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