

In the most recent years this rate of increase has slowed. That slow-down, however, is likely due to the completion of major arms sales, economic constraints and debt rather than any conscious desire to reduce armament.¹⁵

The United States and Soviet Union far out-distance the next group of nations in military spending. At more than \$US 200 billion each, the Superpowers spend ten times as much as any of the other major military spenders. The UK, China, West Germany, Saudi Arabia and France all spend in the \$US 20 billion range. Iraq, Poland and Japan round out the top ten.¹⁶

Just as development assistance spending reflects decisions based on criteria other than most-able-to pay, so too does military spending. Many nations financially least able to support major military expenditures are, in fact, doing so. The top ten military spenders as a portion of GNP are Qatar, Iraq, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, North Korea, Libya Yemen (Aden), Jordan and Nicaragua. (Egypt and Israel are 11th and 12th, Canada is 95th.)¹⁷ Perhaps even more revealing is the ranking of nations according to military spending as a portion of government spending. These figures reveal the political spending choices that are made: guns versus butter. The ten governments that spend the greatest share of their resources on armament are Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Qatar, Iraq, Taiwan, Soviet Union, North Korea, Vietnam, Oman, and Syria. The runner-up group is especially interesting: United Arab Emirates, Libya, Peru, Cambodia, China, Chad, Jordan, Iran and El Salvador. (Canada is 90th).¹⁸

With the exception of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the leading military spenders, as measured by the portion of government expenditure that goes to armament, are all developing nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America, including some of the

¹⁵ World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1987, ACDA. See also Ruth Leger Sivard as quoted by Globe and Mail, 25 January 1988, "Arms Outlay Decreasing" economic problems and "The strain of the world economy" have created debt and some decrease in spending by some nations.

¹⁶ Ibid., Tables pp.30-38.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. See also The Military Balance 1988-89, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London 1988, p.122, for GNP, per capita, rate of growth and other comparative military spending figures.