



Peace Movement Aotearoa

PO Box 9314, Wellington 6141. Tel 04 382 8129, email pma@xtra.co.nz

~ www.converge.org.nz/pma ~ www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa ~

Global military spending remains shockingly high

13 April 2015

According to figures released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) today, the Global Day of Action on Military Spending, world military expenditure totalled an estimated US\$1,776 billion, representing a marginal fall of about 0.4 per cent in real terms compared to 2013. While this is the third consecutive year that total global military expenditure has decreased, the falls during the previous two years have been comparatively small; world military expenditure is still only 1.7 per cent below its 2011 peak, and it remains significantly above the levels of the late 1980s.¹

Last year's global military spending averages out to more than US\$4.86 billion every day. By way of contrast, an average of more than 17,260 children under the age of five die every day from mainly preventable causes - lack of access to adequate food, clean water and basic medicines. This is one of the prices paid, the collateral damage that is seldom talked about, for maintaining armed forces in a state of combat readiness around the world.²

While the US remains the highest military spender, US military spending fell by 6.5 per cent as part of ongoing budget deficit reduction measures; spending has now fallen by 20 per cent since its peak in 2010. However, current US military spending is still 45 per cent higher than in 2001. The next three highest spenders - China, Russia and Saudi Arabia - have all substantially increased their military expenditures, with Saudi Arabia's increase of 17 per cent making it the largest increase of any of the top 15 spenders worldwide.³

According to SIPRI, reductions in military spending by the United States and Western Europe were largely matched by increases in Asia and Oceania, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Africa; while spending in Latin America remained virtually level.

Military spending in Asia and Oceania increased by 5 per cent in 2014 and by 62 per cent between 2005 and 2014, reaching US\$439 billion in 2014 at current prices and exchange rates. In 2014 the growth of 9.7 per cent in China's expenditure dominated the regional trend, with the overall increase in the rest of the region standing at just 1.2 per cent. Although military spending in Asia and Oceania remains on an upward

trend - with all states in the region except Fiji, Japan and Laos increasing their spending since 2005 - the growth rate for most states has been substantially lower since 2009, when the effects of the global financial crisis began to be felt.⁴

Australia is 13th on the list of states with the highest level of military expenditure last year, with spending of US\$25.4 billion. New Zealand's military spending in the current financial year is more than NZ\$3.7 billion.⁵

Global and national military spending, as well as the other costs and consequences of militarism, will be the topic of the opening presentation of the National Peace Workshops, 'Remembering WW1 in the context of ongoing militarism' in Wellington next Saturday, 18 April - details are available at www.converge.org.nz/pma/npw2015.htm

Links to more information:

- 'US military spending falls, increases in Eastern Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia says SIPRI, 13 April 2015, available at www.sipri.org and www.converge.org.nz/pma/sipri-release15.pdf
- Fact sheet: Trends in world military expenditure 2014, SIPRI, 13 April 2015, available at www.sipri.org and www.converge.org.nz/pma/sipri-facts2015.pdf
- Time for action on military spending, Peace Movement Aotearoa, 13 April 2015 - leaflet at www.converge.org.nz/pma/milspend-leaflet.pdf - poster at www.converge.org.nz/pma/milspend-poster.pdf
- Global Day of Action on Military Spending in Aotearoa New Zealand web page is at www.converge.org.nz/pma/gdams.htm
- 'Global military spending remains shockingly high' - on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa/notes - formatted for printing at www.converge.org.nz/pma/milspend2015.pdf
- 'Remembering war / ending war: Challenging militarism and building peace', 18 and 19 April 2015, details at www.converge.org.nz/pma/npw2015.htm

References

¹ SIPRI Fact sheet: Trends in world military expenditure 2014, 13 April 2015, available at www.sipri.org and <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/sipri-facts2015.pdf>

² Time for action on military spending, Peace Movement Aotearoa, 13 April 2015 - leaflet at www.converge.org.nz/pma/milspend-leaflet.pdf - poster at www.converge.org.nz/pma/milspend-poster.pdf

³ 'US military spending falls, increases in Eastern Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia says SIPRI', 13 April 2015, available at www.sipri.org and www.converge.org.nz/pma/sipri-release2015.pdf

⁴ SIPRI Fact sheet: Trends in world military expenditure 2014, 13 April 2015, as above

⁵ Time for action on military spending, Peace Movement Aotearoa, 13 April 2015, at www.converge.org.nz/pma/milspend-leaflet.pdf