Appendix 5C. The reporting of military expenditure data

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I. Introduction

An important source of official data on military expenditure is the annual government reporting within the framework of the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. Governments also report such data to SIPRI in response to an annual request. This appendix provides information on the reporting of military expenditure data to the UN and SIPRI. The systems of reporting are described in section II. The trends in reporting for the period 2001–2007 are given in section III and the levels of reporting in 2008 in section IV.

II. The reporting systems

The United Nations reporting system

Each year the UN Secretary-General invites all member states (currently 192) through a *note verbale* to report their military expenditure for the most recent financial year. The basis for this request is a UN General Assembly resolution adopted in 1980.[1] Successive biennial General Assembly resolutions have called for the continued reporting of military expenditure by member states.[2]

The justification for this request has changed over the years. The initial purpose was to use the reporting system as a step on the road to gradual reductions in military budgets.[3] The justification stated in the latest resolution is that 'a better flow of objective information on military matters can help to relieve international tension and is therefore an important contribution to conflict prevention' and that transparency in military issues is an essential element for building trust among countries.[4]

Countries are requested to report (preferably and to the extent possible) using the reporting instrument developed for this purpose—the UN Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures—or in any other format for reporting military expenditure developed by other international or regional organizations. The instrument is in the form of a matrix with fields for the reporting of disaggregated data by function (aggregate personnel, operations

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[1] UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/35/142 B, 12 Dec. 1980. The texts of UN General Assembly resolutions are available at <http://www.un.org/documents/resga.htm>.

[2] The most recent such resolution is UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/13, 5 Dec. 2007.

[3] See Omitoogun, W. and Sköns, E., 'Military expenditure data: a 40-year overview', *SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford: 2006), pp. 276–77, 286, 291.

[4] UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/13 (note 2).

Table 5C.1. Number of countries reporting their military expenditure to the United Nations and SIPRI, 2001–2008

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
UN reporting system[a]								
Number of UN member states	189	191	191	191	191	192	192	192
Excluding very small states	165	166	166	166	166	167	167	167
Number of reports to the UN[b]	56	70	64	68	62	69	66	68
Standardized reports	56	70	54	54	55	54	48	53
Simplified reports[c]	..	..	10	14	7	15	18	15
Nil reports[d]	5	11	11	10	12	11	12	8
SIPRI reporting system								
Number of SIPRI requests	158	158	158	159	167	165	165	165
Number of reports to SIPRI	63	61	64	62	67	60	55	53
Total number of reports to the UN or SIPRI[e]	..	..	..	..	..	85	78	78

[a] The figures for 2001–2003 and 2005–2006 include some late submissions of data to the UN and are therefore slightly higher than those presented in previous editions of the SIPRI Yearbook. The data for 2008 includes late submissions up to 20 November 2008, but some countries may report after this date.

[b] These figures exclude nil reports.

[c] The UN simplified reports include 1 state that was not in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database: Suriname for 2006 and 2008.

[d] A nil report is a questionnaire returned to the UN with no data entered, submitted by a country that does not maintain regular armed forces.

[e] These figures are for the total number of countries that submitted reports with military expenditure data (excluding nil reports) to either the UN or SIPRI. Totals before 2006 are not available because of changes in the way responses to the UN and SIPRI are counted.

Sources: United Nations, 'Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures', Reports of the Secretary-General, various dates, 2001–2008, <http://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/Milex/html/Milex_SGReports.shtml>; and submitted filled-in SIPRI questionnaires.

and maintenance, procurement, construction, and research and development) and by military service (e.g. air force, army and navy) and to give aggregated totals. In the belief that some countries found this matrix too complicated and in order to encourage reporting by more countries, in 2002 the UN introduced an alternative, simplified reporting form.[5]

The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) manages the system. The reported data is included in an annual report by the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly and is published in appropriate UN media.[6] In addition,

[5] United Nations, Department for Disarmament Affairs, *Transparency in Armaments: United Nations Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures—Global and Regional Participation 1981–2002* (United Nations: New York, 2003), p. 3; see also the UN's standardized instrument and simplified form on pp. 12–14.

[6] United Nations, Department for Disarmament Affairs, *Transparency in Armaments: United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures—Guidelines* (United Nations: New York, [n.d.]), p. 1; and UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ 62/13 (note 2).

the ODA periodically publishes documents analysing the reporting trends to the UN.[7]

The SIPRI reporting system

SIPRI has sent requests for data on military expenditure to governments on an annual basis since 1993. Such requests are sent to all countries that are included in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database (currently 168 countries).[8] The reported data is one source of information used in preparing SIPRI's tables of military expenditure and the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.[9]

The SIPRI data request is sent to various government offices and embassies of each country. The SIPRI questionnaire is a simplified version of the UN instrument, with fields for data on spending on military and civilian personnel, operations and maintenance, procurement, military construction, military research and development, paramilitary forces, and military aid provided and received. Data is requested for the five most recent years to ensure consistency over time.

III. Trends in reporting military expenditure, 2001–2008

Table 5C.1 presents the number of countries reporting their military spending to the UN and SIPRI for the period 2001–2008. The figures exclude countries not in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. The UN receives reports with no data (nil reports) from countries that do not maintain regular armed forces. These countries are often very small states, with the exceptions of Iceland, Panama and Tunisia. Countries reporting with both the standardized and simplified reports to the UN are counted as standardized reports in the totals.

While it has not been possible to calculate the total reporting of military expenditure to the UN or SIPRI prior to 2006, a decrease in the reporting in recent years is evident. The number of countries reporting to either the UN or SIPRI fell form 85 in 2006, to 78 in 2008. This decrease in the total reporting mostly reflects a drop in the response rate to SIPRI.

For the period 2001–2008 the average rate of response to the UN was 39 per cent. Since 2004 the rate of responses to the UN has stabilized at approximately 40 per cent, with the exception of 2005 when the rate was 37 per cent. The year with the highest number of reports was 2002 with 70 countries reporting, while the year with the lowest number was 2001 with 56 submitting responses.

The average response rate to SIPRI for the same period was slightly lower, at 37 per cent. While SIPRI has increased the number of requests sent to countries, the number of responses has been dropping, particularly since 2006. The highest response rate was in 2003, when 33 per cent of countries responded to

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[7] The most recent example is United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs, *United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures: Pattern of Global and Regional Participation by States 1996–2007* (United Nations: New York, [n.d.]).

[8] There were 3 exceptions in 2008: SIPRI did not send requests to Costa Rica, Somalia or Tonga.

[9] SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, <http://milexdata.sipri.org/>.

a SIPRI request, while the lowest rate was in 2008, at 32 per cent. In absolute terms, 2005 was the year when SIPRI received the largest number of reports, 67. The lowest number of countries reporting to SIPRI was 53 in 2008.

IV. The reporting of military expenditure data in 2008

The countries that reported to the UN and SIPRI in 2008 are listed in table 5C.2. A total of 78 countries answered the UN and SIPRI requests for reporting on military expenditure in 2008. Of the 167 UN member states (excluding 25, mostly very small states, that are not in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database), 41 per cent submitted standardized or simplified responses to the UN. SIPRI sent requests to 165 countries and 32 per cent of the countries reported back.

The region with by far the best reporting rate was Europe, with 95 per cent of the countries submitting responses to the UN or SIPRI in 2008. The sub-region with the highest number of countries reporting were Central and Western Europe with all countries reporting to either the UN or SIPRI, except Iceland which sent a nil report to the UN. In Eastern Europe only one country reported to neither the UN nor SIPRI: Azerbaijan.

The Americas and Asia had relatively high reporting rates, at 43 and 44 per cent, respectively. In North America, Canada and the United States reported to the UN or SIPRI. Four out of eight countries reported in Central America. In South America the response rate dropped to five out of 11 countries and in the Caribbean only one country out of seven submitted a response (the Dominican Republic). Similarly, in Central Asia only Kyrgyzstan sent an answer, while in South Asia two countries reported (Bangladesh and Nepal). In East Asia half of the 16 countries submitted reports.

Finally, Africa and the Middle East had the lowest rates of reporting military expenditure in 2008. The response rate was in Africa, at 14 per cent, with 7 countries reporting to either the UN or SIPRI. the Middle East was slightly higher, at three out of 14.

Table 5C.2. Reporting of military expenditure data to SIPRI and the United Nations, 2008

Figures are numbers of countries. Nil reports to the UN and the reports of states not included in the SIPRI military expenditure database are excluded.[a]

Region/subregion[b]	Reporting to the United Nations			Reporting to SIPRI			Total SIPRI and UN reports[d]
	Requests[c]	Countries reporting data	Total	Requests	Countries reporting data	Total	
Africa	50	Burkina Faso, Mauritius[h], Morocco[f], Namibia[f]	4	49[e]	Namibia[g], Seychelles, South Africa, Tunisia[g]	4	7
Americas							
North America	2	Canada, USA	2	2	USA	1	2
Central America	8	El Salvador[f], Guatemala[h], Mexico[h], Nicaragua[f]	4	7[e]	Guatemala, Mexico	2	4
South America	11	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia[h], Chile	4	11	Bolivia, Colombia	2	5
Caribbean	7	Dominican Republic	1	7	–	0	1
Asia and Oceania							
Central Asia	5	Kyrgyzstan[f]	1	5	–	0	1
East Asia[i]	15	Cambodia[f], China[f], Japan[h], Mongolia[f], South Korea[f], Thailand[f]	6	16	Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan	4	8
South Asia	6	Bangladesh[f], Nepal[h]	2	6	–	0	2
Oceania	5	Australia, Fiji, New Zealand	3	4[e]	Australia, New Zealand	2	3
Europe							
Western and Central Europe	37	Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina[h], Bulgaria, Croatia[h], Cyprus[f], Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, FYROM, Montenegro[h], Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia[h], Slovakia, Spain[h], Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK	33	37	Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France[g], Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, FYROM, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland[g], Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey	32	36

Region/subregion[b]	Reporting to the United Nations			Reporting to SIPRI			Total SIPRI and UN reports[d]
	Requests[c]	Countries reporting data	Total	Requests	Countries reporting data	Total	Total
Eastern Europe	7	Armenia[f], Belarus, Georgia[h], Moldova, Russia, Ukraine	6	7	Belarus, Georgia, Moldova Russia	4	6
Middle East	14	Israel[f], Lebanon[f]	2	14	Jordan[g], Lebanon[g]	2	3
Total	**167**		**68**	**165**		**53**	**78**

FYROM = Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

[a] Eight UN member states submitted nil reports to the UN: Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Nauru, Panama, Samoa and Tunisia. One state not included in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database (Suriname) submitted a simplified report to the UN.

[b] In order to make the SIPRI and UN reporting systems comparable, countries are grouped according to the geographical regions in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. See appendix 5A.

[c] In addition, the UN sent requests to 25 states not in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

[d] This column shows the total number of countries that submitted reports with military expenditure data to either SIPRI or the UN (excluding nil reports).

[e] Of countries in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database in 2008, SIPRI did not send questionnaires to Costa Rica (Central America), Somalia (Africa) or Tonga (Oceania).

[f] These 15 countries reported their data using a simplified UN form.

[g] These 6 countries did not use the SIPRI questionnaire in their report to SIPRI.

[h] These 12 countries used both the simplified and standardized forms when reporting to the UN. This table counts these countries as standardized form responses.

[i] SIPRI sent a questionnaire to non-UN member Taiwan.

Sources: Submitted filled-in SIPRI questionnaires; and United Nations, General Assembly, 'Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures', Report of the UN Secretary-General, A/63/97, 3 July 2008, A/63/97/Add.1, 16 Sep. 2008, A/63/97/Add.2, 20 Nov. 2008.