

Appendix 5D. The reporting of military expenditure data

CATALINA PERDOMO and ÅSA BLOMSTRÖM

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 SIPRI's annual requests. 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 levels of reporting in 2007 are given in section III and the trends in reporting for the period 2001–2007 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 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

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 5D.1. Reporting of military expenditure data to SIPRI and the United Nations, by region, 2007Figures are numbers of countries. Nil reports to the UN are not included.^a

Region/ subregion ^b	Reporting to the UN		Reporting to SIPRI		Total	
	Requests	Countries reporting data	Requests	Countries reporting data	Requests	Countries reporting data
<i>Africa</i>	50	Burkina Faso, Namibia ^e	49 ^d	Burkina Faso, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Uganda ^f , Zimbabwe	6	7
<i>Americas</i>						
North America	2	Canada, USA	2	Canada ^f , USA	2	2
Central America	7	El Salvador ^e , Guatemala ^g , Mexico ^g , Nicaragua	7	Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico	3	5
South America	11	Argentina, Bolivia ^e , Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay	11	Bolivia, Brazil ^f	2	5
Caribbean	8	Jamaica ^g	8	—	0	1
<i>Asia and Oceania</i>						
Central Asia	5	Kazakhstan	5	—	0	1
East Asia	17	Cambodia ^e , China ^e , Japan ^g , Malaysia ^e , Mongolia ^e , South Korea ^e	16	China ^f , Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand	5	8
South Asia	6	Bangladesh ^e , Nepal ^g	6	Sri Lanka	1	3
Oceania	4	Australia, New Zealand	4 ^h	Australia	1	2
<i>Europe</i>						
Western Europe	21	Belgium, Cyprus ^e , Denmark, Finland, France ^e , Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK	21	Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland ^f , Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey	14	20

Central Europe	16	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina ^a , Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary ^e , Latvia, Lithuania, FYROM ^g , Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia	13	16	14	15
Eastern Europe	7	Armenia ^e , Belarus, Georgia ^g , Moldova ^e , Russia, Ukraine	6	7	5	6
<i>Middle East</i>	14	Israel ^e , Jordan, Lebanon ^e	3	14	2	3
Total	168^f		66	166	55	78

FYROM = Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

^a Twelve UN member states submitted nil reports to the UN: Andorra, Grenada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Nauru, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, and Solomon Islands. In addition, 1 non-UN member submitted a nil report: Cook Islands.

^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 This column shows the total number of countries that submitted reports with military expenditure data to either SIPRI or the UN (excluding nil reports). Totals may be smaller than the sums of reports to the UN and SIPRI because the same country may report to both organizations.

^d There are 50 African countries in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, but SIPRI is unable to send requests to Somalia because of a lack of contact details.

^e These 18 countries reported their data using a simplified UN form.

^f These 6 countries did not use the SIPRI questionnaire in their report to SIPRI.

^g These countries used both the simplified and standardized forms when reporting to the UN. In this table they are counted as standardized form responses.

^h There are 5 Oceanian countries in the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, but SIPRI did not send a request to Tonga in 2007.

ⁱ In addition, the UN sent requests to 24 very small states.

Sources: United Nations, 'Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures', Report of the UN Secretary-General, UN documents A/62/158, 26 July 2007, A/62/158/Add. 1, 14 Sep. 2007, and A/62/158/Add. 2, 15 Oct. 2007, <<http://disarmament2.un.org/cab/milex.html>>; and submitted filled-in SIPRI questionnaires.

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, formerly the Department for Disarmament Affairs) manages the system. The reported data are included in an annual report by the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly and are published in appropriate UN media.⁶ In addition, the ODA periodically publishes documents analysing the reporting trends to the UN. The most recent example is the 2007 ODA report on world and regional military expenditure reporting, by country, for the period 1996–2007.⁷

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 are one source of information used in preparing SIPRI's tables of military expenditure.⁹

The SIPRI request for data is sent to various national government offices and embassies of the respective countries. 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 are requested for the five most recent years in order to ensure consistency over time.

III. Reporting of military expenditure data in 2007

Table 5D.1 lists the countries (by region) that reported data on military expenditure to the United Nations and SIPRI in 2007. It also gives the number of reports submitted to each of these organizations and the overall number of countries requested to report (i.e. the number of UN member states and the number of requests sent out by SIPRI) by region. Finally, the table gives the number of countries that reported either to the UN or to SIPRI. All figures in table 5D.1 exclude 'nil reports'.¹⁰

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), <<http://disarmament.un.org/cab/Bk2-TransArms.pdf>>, 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.]), <<http://disarmament2.un.org/cab/milex>>, p. 1; and UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/13 (note 2).

⁷ 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.]), <<http://disarmament2.un.org/cab/milex>>.

⁸ There were 2 exceptions in 2007: SIPRI did not send requests to Somalia or to Tonga.

⁹ See appendix 5A. The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database is available at <http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_database1.html>.

¹⁰ 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. Most of the countries submitting nil reports are very small states. The exceptions in 2007 were Iceland and Panama.

In 2007 a total of 78 countries reported data on military spending to either the UN or SIPRI. The 66 countries that reported to the UN account for 39 per cent of UN member states (excluding the 24 very small states). Twelve of the 24 very small states also submitted reports, all of which were nil reports. The 55 countries reporting military expenditure data to SIPRI in 2007 represent a reporting rate of 33 per cent.

On a regional basis the best reporting rates in 2007 were for Europe and the Americas, where most countries submitted reports to both the UN and SIPRI. In Western Europe 19 out of 20 countries reported to either the UN or SIPRI, excluding the nil report submitted by Iceland. In Central Europe all but one country reported data, the exception being Montenegro. Similarly, all East European states (the European members of the Commonwealth of Independent States) except one, Azerbaijan, reported to either the UN or SIPRI.

In North America, both countries reported military expenditure data to the UN and SIPRI. In Central America, five out of seven countries reported, and in South America five out of 11 countries submitted reports. None of the eight Caribbean countries reported to SIPRI and only one, Jamaica, reported to the UN.

Half of the six South Asian countries and eight of the 17 East Asian states reported to the UN or SIPRI, while one Central Asian country, Kazakhstan, reported. Of the four countries in Oceania, two reported to either the UN or SIPRI.

In Africa and the Middle East the response rate was very low in 2007, as it has been in previous years. Of the 50 states in Africa only 7 (14 per cent) reported to the UN or SIPRI, while only 3 of the 14 Middle Eastern countries reported, a reporting rate of just 21 per cent.

IV. Trends in reporting of military expenditure, 2001–2007

Government reporting to the UN and SIPRI dropped significantly in 2007 (see table 5D.2). In the period 2001–2007 the reporting rate to the UN has fluctuated. The number of countries reporting data to the UN decreased to 66 in 2007 from its high point of 70 in 2002. Including nil reports, the total number of reports to the UN was 78 in 2007, representing a decrease compared to the 80 reports in 2006.

Reporting to SIPRI was at its highest in 2005, at 67 countries. It decreased to 60 countries in 2006 and again to 55 in 2007. The total number of requests sent by SIPRI has increased from 158 requests in 2001 to 166 in 2007. With a higher number of requests sent and a decreasing number of reports received by SIPRI, the rate of response has decreased over the period 2001–2007 from 40 per cent to 33 per cent.

Overall, the number of countries reporting to either the UN or SIPRI decreased from 85 in 2006 to 78 in 2007.

According to the latest ODA report on participation in the UN reporting system, the total number of countries reporting at any time during the period 1996–2006 has increased. Most countries have participated at least once in the UN reporting system. The regions with the lowest reporting rates were Africa and the Middle East.¹¹ The countries in these regions have consistently fail to report data, whereas countries in other regions have reported on an irregular basis.¹²

The need to improve the participation in the UN reporting system has resulted in a decision by the UN General Assembly, at the suggestion of the ODA, to increase its

¹¹ United Nations (note 7), pp. 5–6.

¹² United Nations (note 7), pp. 5–9.

Table 5D.2. Number of countries reporting their military expenditure to SIPRI and the United Nations, 2001–2007

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<i>UN reporting system^a</i>							
Number of UN member states	189	191	191	191	191	192	192
UN members excluding very small states	165	167	167	167	167	168	168
Number of reports to the UN ^b	56	70	64	68	62	69	66
Standardized reports	56	70	54	54	55	54	48
Simplified reports	..	..	10	14	7	15	18
Nil reports ^c	5	11	11	10	12	11	12
<i>SIPRI reporting system</i>							
Number of SIPRI requests	158	158	158	159	167	166	166
Number of reports to SIPRI	63	61	64	62	67	60	55
Total number of reports to the UN or SIPRI^d	..	..	..	..	..	85	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 2007 include late submissions up to 15 Oct. 2007, but some countries may report after this date.

^b These figures exclude nil reports.

^c 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.

^d 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 may be smaller than the sums of reports to the UN and SIPRI because the same country may report to both organizations. 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, 2001–2007, <<http://disarmament2.un.org/cab/milex.html>>; and submitted filled-in SIPRI questionnaires.

efforts in that regard. Thus, the 2007 UN General Assembly resolution on transparency of military expenditures noted the need to review the operation of the reporting system and to improve and broaden participation. For this purpose, it requested the creation of a group of governmental experts, to begin work in 2010.¹³

¹³ UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/13 (note 2), paragraph 5.