



By: *Emre Alkin*

# It is written “Defense” But Means “War”



"Correct analysis requires correct information." Countless times I have said this fact in this column. To people who think that things happen for no reason, countless times I asked, "Are you not cross-checking your data and the available facts?"

You are always welcome to read my many articles and analyses stating that wars do not suddenly pop up, and the fact that global military spending has been increasing steadily every year was not a good sign.

According to latest statistics, the **military spending** of many countries in the world has risen by at least 25% between the years of 2022 and 2023.

Poland, for example, fearing Russian threat from air, spent 75% more on armament last year. Interestingly, Algeria too has increased its military expenditures at the same rate.

Turkey, on the other hand, augmented its military spending increased by 37% despite the presence of several threats, while Israel increased it by 24%.

While the military spending percentage in the US, Canada, China, India and Saudi Arabia remain below their current inflation rate, the UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Japan, Taiwan and Israel have increased their spending almost twice as much as the inflation rate affecting their economy.

Considering the rapid depreciation of the Turkish lira, we could say that Turkey's military spending has even declined on a unit basis. So, it is necessary to take devaluation into account when calculating countries' armament spending in dollar terms.

## Countries who have increased their military spending

Here are some countries who have increased their military spending over the last decade: Ukraine (1272%), Poland (181%), China (60%) and Russia (57%).

Military spending also rose 50% in Algeria, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Taiwan and Turkey during the same period. But, as I said above, it is necessary to consider at the current value of these countries' currencies against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, Japan, Russia, Israel and India steadily continue to increase their military expenditures each year. But to make a more precise comparison, we also need a comparison with the absolute number in dollar terms.

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Interestingly, Turkey has the lowest military spending, with USD 15.8 billion in 2023, despite its dense population density, strong military forces and the risks present in the region.

Taiwan, the Netherlands, Algeria, Spain and Brazil, on the other hand, spent much more than necessary, considering the presence of potential or current threats.

Israeli spending surpasses these countries with USD 27.5 billion, while Poland and Italy spent respectively USD 32 and 35.5 billion, yet, outcompeted by South Korea with a military spending of nearly USD 50 billion, who apparently takes the North Korean and Chinese threats quite seriously.

As for the countries with the highest military spending, the United Kingdom is ranked first on the list with USD 75 billion, followed by Germany with USD 67 billion, France with USD 61.3 billion and Ukraine with USD 65 billion, which rose to the league of highest spenders on military and defence since its war with Russia. And Japan emerges as the new member of this league, with a total of USD 50 billion.

## Countries challenging the

## highest spenders

Now, let's take a quick look at the countries challenging the highest spenders.

Saudi Arabia spent a stupefying amount of USD 76 billion, a disproportionate increase that is incompatible with neither the country's population nor the principles of deterrence or necessity.

Saudis are probably trying to catch up with top players since they did not do much in terms national armament ten years ago. Nevertheless, one cannot help but think "Against whom?"

Money spent by India on military weapons and equipment was USD 83.6 billion in 2023. Russia, on the other hand, spent USD 109 billion in the same year, while China spent almost USD 300 billion. Obviously, it is the United States that takes the lead with 916 billion.



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However, these figures refer to military weapons, equipment and ammunition alone. Because, when it comes to defence expenditures, they cover not only weapons, ammunition and military equipment, but also personnel wages, energy and other expenses.

When these three are added to the calculation, we can see that even more money than thought is spent on military each year.

In fact, global military spending, which climbed to USD 3.3 trillion amid conflicts last year, also comprises "shipping and management", bringing a total cost of, well, nearly USD 3.3 trillion again.

Today, the US appears to be the country that makes the best use of its infantrymen since its Marine Corps is present almost everywhere in the world, not to mention the US air bases scattered across the globe.

Based US Congressional data, USD 2-2.5 billion is spent every day to maintain a steady US military presence in the world. Of course, this figure includes ammunition and weapons as well.

This alone is sufficient to show that how big the military and defence ecosystem are.

As you may remember, during his office, Trump had sometimes attempted to withdraw US troops from overseas. It is quite likely that, in the upcoming US elections, we will watch a tremendous conflict between the supporters of overseas military operations, who do not want all those money spent on armament to go to waste, and those who oppose unnecessarily high military spending.