

Alms off the military expense could erase the poverty from South Asia forever



What is our shared goal in this planet? Killing opponents? Or eradicating poverty in order to make an equal world?

The answer might choose the second one. But what we are witnessing won't agree with that. It seems killing each other is the only principle on the earth. There are 10 bullets for every living human on this planet. Nine of them could miss the target, the tenth won't.

National security could be the reason behind, but what about the small arms?

There are now over 75 million firearms in South Asia, 63 million of which are in civilian's hands. India and Pakistan overwhelmingly account for most of the weapons (40 million and 20 million respectively) where there is local production as well, while civilians in Nepal and Sri Lanka own an additional 3 million weapons. Civilians are the largest category of gun owners in the region, accounting for far more weapons than the military, police and insurgents.

The impact of these weapons has been felt from Sri Lanka to Afghanistan. Thirty years of violence between India and Pakistan over Kashmir has killed 10,000 people. Since 1996, Maoist rebels have been fighting a war in Nepal that has killed over 2,000. And in Karachi alone small arms were used to kill an estimated 20,000 people between 1992 and 1998.

Source: <http://www.iansa.org/regions/scasia/scasia.htm>

What is on the canvas of poverty countering the display above? Let's have look.

South Asia, with 23 percent of the world's population, is the planet's poorest region. About 540 million people, or 45 percent of the region's population, are living below poverty line, with daily incomes of less than one dollar. This proportion is higher than in Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific region, including China.

Source: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/nov1999/sasa-n29.shtml>

India has the greatest number of poor people among SAARC members. The UN poverty index, quoted in the report, shows that the poverty rate has reached 53 percent in India, 53 percent in Nepal, 29 percent in Bangladesh, 12 percent in Pakistan and 4 percent in Sri Lanka. These figures may be an underestimate. According to the countries' own national poverty indexes, the rate is 48 percent in

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SAAPE, South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication

www.saaape.org.np

Arms sales (agreements) by the Leading Recipient Developing Nations, 2001-2008 (in billions of current U.S. dollars)

Rank	Country	Amount spent	% of total (approx)
1	Saudi Arabia	36.7	16
2	India	30.8	14
3	UAE	15.3	7
4	China	12.9	6
5	Egypt	12.3	5
6	Pakistan	11.8	5
7	Israel	7.1	3
8	Syria	6.5	3
9	Venezuela	5.8	3
10	Algeria	4.9	2
11	All other developing countries	80.9	36

Source: Richard F. Grimmer, CRS Report for Congress; Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2001-2008. September 4, 2009

Bangladesh, 54 percent in Pakistan and 22 percent in Sri Lanka, with no change for Nepal and India.

Source: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/nov1999/sasa-n29.shtml>

Now let's compare the expenditures of militarization and poverty alleviation.

"... Yet the costs for Pentagon operations are likely to pile up in years ahead. By 2010, war expenses might total \$600 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. ..."

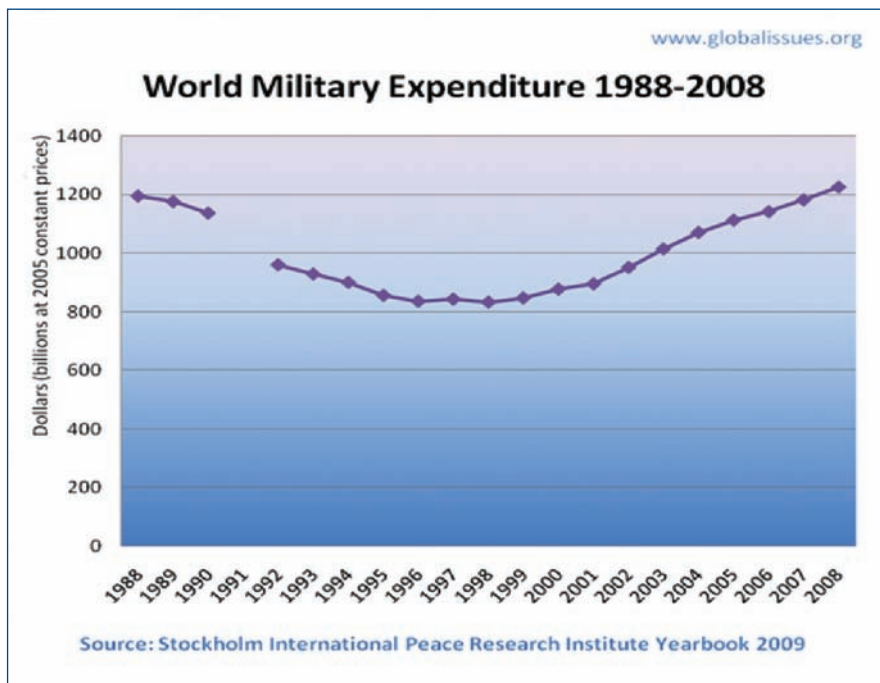
Source: http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=104x3894420

Developed and/or rich countries are the leading producers and sellers of the military ammunition as well as the small arms. They can do this as a pleasure-seeking job. But despite of being afflicted with enormous poverty the developing and under developed countries have been the leading recipient of these armament. Let's take a look on the table below.

The United States spends \$711 billion on its military each year, representing 48 percent of the total military spending in the world where Russia spends \$70 billion per year. In Latin America, \$39 billion is spent each year, representing 3 percent of the world's military expenditure. Sub-Saharan Africa spends \$10 billion per year on their military.

The Middle East and North Africa spend \$82 billion together on their military each year, which is the 5 percent of the world's military expenditure. Australasia and East Asia together spend \$120 billion on military expenses. This is 8 percent of total world military spending. China spends 8 percent of the world's total military spending with \$122 billion each year. Europe other than Russia spends a total of \$289 billion on military annually. Europe's military spending is 20 percent of the world's military expenditure.

Source: <http://www.visualeconomics.com/military-spending-worldwide/>



"... Working backward from the existing poverty level and distribution of income, the average rate of growth required to reach the poverty reduction goal in 2015 determines the amount of additional investment needed. This yields estimates of US\$54–62 billion a year. ..."

Source: <http://www.adbi.org/working-paper/2010/02/09/3455.cost.mdg.organic.agriculture/the.mdgs.and.the.costs.of.attaining.them/>

This is the additional costs out of ODA (Official Development assistance) for only achieving the No. 1 Goal of the MDG i.e. "Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger: (a) Halve the proportion of people with less than one dollar a day; (b) Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger".

If 40 percent of the total poor people of the world live in South Asia, it is easy arithmetic to understand how small portion of the total military cost of the world is required to end the poverty from South Asia forever. Do we really want to end the poverty? What do you think?

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