

Selected Abbreviations

AA	Anti aircraft	LPH	Landing Platform, Heli
AAFCE	Allied Air Forces Central Europe	LRCM	Long-range Cruise Missile
AAM	Air-to-air missile	LRP	Long-range Patrol (aircraft)
AB	Airborne	LSD	Landing Ship, Dock
ABM	Anti-ballistic missile	LSM	Landing Ship, Medium
A/C	Armoured car / Aircraft	LTA	Lighter Than Air (aircraft)
ACD	Arms Control and Disarmament	LST	Landing Ship, Tank
ACV	Air Cushion Vehicle	LVT	Landing Vehicle, Tracked, Personnel
ADC/NORAD	Air Defense Command / North American Air Defense Command	MAD	Magnetic Anomaly Detection, Mutually Assured Destruction
AEV	Armoured Engineering Vehicle	MARV	Manoeuvrable Re-entry Vehicle
AGSS	Auxiliary Research Submarine	MCM	Mine Countermeasures
AEW	Airborne Early Warning	MCMV	Mine Countermeasures Vessels
AFV	Armoured Fighting Vehicle	MGB	Motor Gunboat
AGM	Air-to-ground missile	MICV	Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicle
AIFV	Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle	MIRV	Multiple Independently-targetable Re-entry Vehicle
ALCM	Air-Launched Cruise Missile	MLRS	Multiple Launch Rocket System
ALOC	Air Line of Communications	MR	Maritime Reconnaissance
ANG	Air National Guard	MRBM	Medium-range Ballistic Missile
AOP	Airborne Observation Post	MRV	Multiple Re-entry Vehicle
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier	MTB	Motor Torpedo Boat
ASM	Air-to-surface missile	NAADC	North American Aerospace Defence Command (US and Canada)
ASSW	Anti-Surface Ship Weapons	NADGE	NATO Air Defence Ground Environment
ASW	Anti-submarine Warfare	NBC	Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (warfare)
ATGM	Anti-tank Guided Missile	NORAD	North American Aerospace Defence Command (US and Canada)
ATGW	Anti-tank Guided Weapon	OCU	Operational Conversion Unit
ATK	Anti-tank	OMG	Operational Manoeuvre Group
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System	PGM	Precision Guided Munitions
Bde	Brigade	RCL	Recoilless rifle
BMEWS	Ballistic Missile Early Warning Station / System	Rece	Reconnaissance
CAS	Close Air Support	Regt	Regiment
CCC (C ³)	Command, Control and Communications	R&D	Research and Development
CENTAG	NATO Central Army Group	RDF	Rapid Development Force (US)
CG	Cruiser, Guided Missile	RF	Reconnaissance (Fighter)
CGN	Guided Missile Cruiser (Nuclear)	Rkt	Rocket
COIN	Counter-insurgency	RL	Rocket Launcher
COS	Chief of Staff	RPG	Rocket-Propelled Grenade
CV	Conventional Powered Aircraft Carrier	RPV	Remotely Piloted Vehicle
CVA	Attack aircraft carrier	RV	Re-entry Vehicle
CVN	Nuclear aircraft carrier	SAC	Strategic Air Command (US)
DD	Destroyer	SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
DDG	Guided Missile Destroyer	SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
DEW	Distant Early Warning	SAM	Surface-to-air missile system
Div	Division	SAR	Search and Rescue
DoD	Department of Defence (US)	SATCOM	Satellite Communications
ECM	Electronic Countermeasures	SES	Surface Effect Ship
ECCM	Electronic Counter measures	SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Power in Europe
EFA	European Fighter Aircraft	SLEP	Ship Life Extension Programme
ELF	Extremely Low frequency (submarine) communications system	SLBM	Submarine-launched Ballistic Missile
ELINT	Electronic Intelligence	SLCM	Sea-launched Cruise Missile
EW	Electronic Warfare	SOW	Stand-off Weapon
FAC	Forward Air Controller / Fast Attack Craft	SP	Self-Propelled Squadron
FB	Fighter Bomber		A formation of aircraft numbering between 4 and 30 (depending on the country and the type of aircraft)
FBS	Forward Based System	SRBM	Short-Range Ballistic Missile
FF	Frigate	SS	Submarine
FFG	Guided Missile Frigate	SSBN	Ballistic Missile Submarine (Nuclear)
FGA	Fighter, Ground Attack	SSGN	Nuclear-Powered Cruise Missile Submarine
FY	Fiscal Year	SSM	Surface-to-surface Missile Submarine (Nuclear)
GW	Guided Weapon	START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
Hy	Heavy	SWATH	Small Water Plane Area Twin-Hull Aircraft Carrier
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile	TA	Tactical Air organisations, support or operations
ICV	Infantry Combat Vehicle	TAC	Tactical Air Command
IFF	Identification, Friend or Foe	TACAIR	Tactical Air Force
IFV	Infantry Fighting Vehicles	TAVR	Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve (UK)
IR	Infra-red	TGSM	Terminally Guided Sub-Munition
IRBM	Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile	Tk	Tank
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff (US)	USAFE	US Air Force Europe
JSS	Joint Surveillance System	USAREUR	US Army Europe
LCA	Landing Craft, Assault	VLS	Vertical Launch System
LCC	Landing Craft, Command	VSS	V/STOL Support Ship
LCAC	Landing Craft, Air Cushioned	V/STOL	Vertical / Short Takeoff and Landing aircraft
LCM	Landing Craft, Mechanised		
LCU	Landing Craft, Utility		
LCT	Landing Craft, Tank		
LCV	Landing Craft, Vehicles		
LHA	Landing Helicopter Assault (ship)		
LKA	Amphibious Attack Cargo Ship		
LPD	Landing Platform, Dock		

MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

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While the facts and figures as contained in the tabulated sections for individual countries are intended to describe the real situation as correctly and impartially as possible, our selection of the accompanying articles – be these official documents, speeches, or studies by independent observers – is rather aimed at providing a broad view of the various different (and often mutually opposed) ideas and goals on the global defence and foreign policy arena. Accordingly, our choices should not be assumed to imply that we do agree with the content of the articles, and even less so that we intend to express support for their Authors or/and the policies of any Government. The guiding selection criteria are rather linked to our assessment of the articles' value as information and basis for further analysis.

Important Note on Financial and Defence Expenditures Data

The WDA not being a financial publication, the data about the economy of the various countries are inserted for the sole purpose of enabling a broad assessment on their respective "financial muscle" in relative terms, i.e. in relations with each other. For this reason, the figures for the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are expressed in terms as Purchasing Power Parity (so-called Parkinson formula). While this approach is useful for our purposes, readers must be aware that it results in values, that can be markedly different than presented by official bodies, or calculated by independent agencies, and then transformed into US\$ at the official exchange rate. Our Purchasing Power Parity GDP figures tend to be lower than the official exchange rate ones in the case of countries, with advanced economies and high standards of living, and higher in the case of developing countries.

Also, some readers have questioned our defence budget figures being often at variance with the data as provided by other agencies or organizations, that report on global defence spending issues. There are two main reasons for this discrepancy.

First, some of the above agencies and organizations follow their own peculiar criteria, whereby they conflate into a broader "defence spending" category not only the regular budget of the Ministry of Defence and other allocations for the defence forces, but also many other forms of state expenditures, that they chose to regard as being of military significance (e.g., militarized police, coast guard, border security, SAR, pensions and medical care for military and security personnel, etc.). For our part, we reject these procedures as potentially misleading – the more so, in that the resulting final figure is often presented in US dollar or Euro rather than in the national currency, which makes it nearly impossible to reconstruct the real situation. Of course, however, when the defence budget proper is supplemented by allocations from other sources (e.g., US nuclear weapons being under the Department of Energy's budget, Italy's major procurement programmes being funded by the Ministry for Economic Development, Chile's "Copper Law", etc.), these are properly reported.

Second, and even within the above limits, it is self-evident that the real measure of a country's investment in defence would be provided not by the budget estimates (plus any extra-budgetary allocations) as approved in advance for the next financial year, but rather by the balance sheet on actual expenditures during that year – whereby the latter might be either higher than the former, because of the emergence of unforeseen urgent requirements, or lower due to savings and spending cuts becoming necessary. Due to their very nature, however, such statistical data only become available with a considerable delay.


Most studies and analyses on global defence expenditures are based on balance sheet figures, and are thus unavoidably backward-looking – which is perfectly acceptable for historical documentation purposes. The WDA being a yearly publication, however, we reckon that our readers would be much more interested in knowing how much countries intend to invest in defence in the current fiscal year, rather than being presented marginally more accurate figures on how much they did actually spend two, three or four years ago.


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