ATLAS OF DISARMAMENT

Facts and figures against
the wars of today and tomorrow

ROSA LUXEMBURG STIFTUNG

IMPRINT

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2024

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INTRODUCTION

DISARMAMENT: A PIPEDREAM WHOSE TIME WILL COME

In February 2024, at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said "These victories for peace were hard-fought and hard-won". He was referring to a series of disarmament treaties signed during and after the Cold War. But they were not miracles, Guterres continued, because the opposing countries recognized that the key to disarmament could be found in cooperation for mutual benefit — and not in competition for mutual destruction. In view of the current international situation beset by crises, wars and a high risk of escalation, it is worth remembering that in the long term, peace can be guaranteed only by returning to a system of collective security. This must be based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, confidence-building, arms control and disarmament, with a structural inability for aggression as the goal. That may currently seem unrealistic. But without a return to cooperation, tackling global human issues such as halting and adapting to climate change are hopeless tasks.

Global military expenditure is at an all-time high. We live in times of geo-economic and geopolitical rivalries, a relentless arms race, nuclear risks, the erosion of arms-control treaties, and the justification of war. Against this background, the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung's decision to publish an Atlas of Disarmament goes far beyond a simple critique of arms spending. This atlas aims to show that there are ways and means to global peace through fewer arms, not more. Disarmament is complex, but vital. It reduces the likelihood of armed conflicts and wars, which disproportionately affect poorer people and marginal communities, and exacerbate inequalities further. Disarmament especially benefits vulnerable groups such as women, children and refugees, who are disproportionately affected by violent conflict.

Disarmament efforts aim to reduce military activities that cause major damage to the environment and the climate, and to reassign military resources in favour of sustainable development initiatives. Military spending ties up valuable resources that thus cannot be used for important social services such as health care, education and infrastructure. If military resources are instead channelled into programmes to combat poverty, hunger and social inequality, they will promote economic justice and equitable development, thereby also helping to prevent conflict.

The use of nuclear weapons in particular poses an existential threat to humanity. The dismantling and abolition of nuclear arsenals are of special importance for peace

and security. Disarmament also promotes an environment that is conducive to diplomacy, dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution. By reducing the use of force as a means to settle conflicts, states can prioritize diplomatic solutions and cooperative approaches to common challenges such as climate change, pandemics and poverty.

Although many states are currently filling up their arsenals rather than emptying them, some have chosen demilitarization in recent years to resolve conflicts. This is illustrated in the country studies of Colombia and Nigeria in this atlas. Successful civil society initiatives include the campaign against landmines, the treaty banning nuclear weapons, and the Group for a Switzerland without an Army. There have been successful treaty negotiations at the international and multilateral levels, which have continued even after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, such as the Global Declaration on Explosive Weapons and the Global Framework on Conventional Ammunition.

These initiatives show clearly that we are not starting from scratch when it comes to disarmament. Bodies and institutions exist that support global peace, security and disarmament, from the United Nations to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. Government agencies, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernment organizations, and bodies such as the OSCE deal with arms control. And there are agreements and treaties, such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which are valid and must finally be implemented.

Above all, however, there are good reasons for disarmament, especially in times of crisis and war. The past few years have shown that the need to resolve tensions through political dialogue and negotiations is becoming ever more urgent. In addition, disarmament and arms control are linked directly to development. The uncontrolled flow and the easy availability of weapons create a climate of insecurity that hinders sustainable development.

To continue active disarmament efforts, it is necessary to reform disarmament forums, strengthen international institutions, and expand civil mechanisms for resolving conflict. Disarmament must be recognized not just as a moral imperative, but also as a practical need; peace must be acknowledged as the goal and basis of political action. By curbing the spread of weapons and promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts, disarmament contributes to creating a more secure world for all. This will be possible only through the broad engagement of civil society. This atlas aims to contribute to this endeavour.

Hana Pfennig, Albert Scharenberg, Ingar Solty, Jan van Aken and Eva Wuchold
Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

12 BRIEF LESSONS

ON DISARMAMENT

1 Disarmament, mainly via **TREATIES,** reduces the number of troops and weapons. It plays a decisive role in the prevention of nuclear war.

2 Arms control also reduces the risk of war breaking out. Treaties between the opposing parties set **LIMITS** for weapons and permit mutual **MONITORING.**

3 Conversion is the process of realizing disarmament. The aim is to **REDUCE** military **EXPENDITURE,** cut arms production, and use land for civilian purposes.

4 The UN Charter permits member states to use conventional weapons when this complies with **INTERNATIONAL LAW.** For this reason, "arms control" and "arms limitations" are used more frequently than "disarmament" when it comes to conventional weapons.

5 The **NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY** obliges the nuclear powers to disarm and non-nuclear states to refrain from arming themselves with nuclear weapons.

6 The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe created the basis for destroying heavy weapons in Europe. Its goal was to achieve a **BALANCE** of conventional forces at a **LOWER LEVEL,** making surprise attacks impossible.

7 The end of the Cold War smoothed the way for a convention that forbids the use, production, possession and transfer of **CHEMICAL WEAPONS,** and mandates the destruction of existing stocks.

8 The concept of security has shifted its focus from being State-centred to protecting humans. Many agreements today contain provisions for the **PROTECTION** of civilians, **SUPPORT** for victims, and gender-specific aspects.

9 The Ottawa Convention on the Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines has set new standards for **DISARMAMENT FROM BELOW** because it was created through a collaboration between several states and civil society.

10 The Arms Trade Treaty obliges signatory states to clarify for each sale that the weapons will not be used to commit serious **VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS.**

11 A new international declaration aims to protect civilians better from the use of **EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS** in populated areas. Bombs, artillery shells and rockets that hit villages and towns are the main cause of **CIVILIAN CASUALTIES** in armed conflicts.

12 Disarmament functions when it prioritizes **HUMAN SAFETY,** channels resources into development, defuses conflict and promotes global cooperation. Its aim is to create a safer and **MORE PEACEFUL WORLD** for current and future generations.

FUTURE

NEEDED: MORE TOOLS AND A BIGGER TOOLBOX

International policymaking needs a new generation of peace negotiators with a holistic understanding of disarmament. Their task will be to reduce the number of weapons, as well as understand the social, economic, ecological and humanitarian dimensions of conflicts.

Wars rage in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. More than 110 million people were displaced in 2023 – a record. Some 783 million people are starving, more than at any time since 2006 – and that is just the beginning, given the dire predictions about the consequences of climate change.

The use of nuclear weapons in war is now more threatening than at any time since the end of the Second World War. Simulations show that even a limited nuclear war between two nuclear powers would transport large quantities of light-blocking particles into the stratosphere, suddenly disrupting the climate and leading to global famine.

The use of conventional weapons in today's wars jeopardizes attempts to limit climate change. Two decades of international analysis and debate have focused on how the rapidly destabilizing climate could undermine the security of states. They have ignored how national decisions, such as those on military expenditures and warfare, affect the climate and undermine our collective security. Wars and conflicts limit the possibilities to respond appropriately to climate-related disasters and to build much-needed resilience to climate change.

In economic terms, military conflicts lead inevitably to a shift in the use of limited resources; in fiscal terms they restrict government spending on development. This worsens the devastating consequences of climate change to the social system and leads to an increase in the number of refugees, among other things.

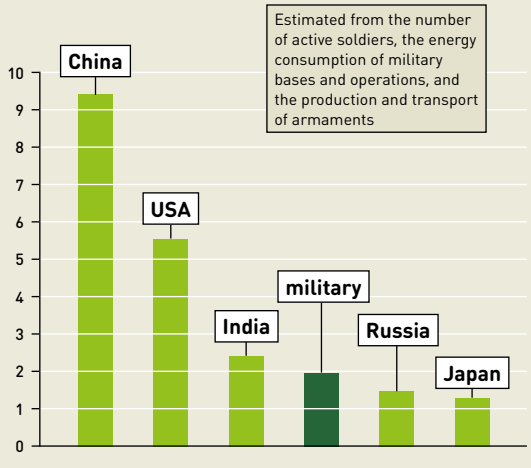
The military is itself an actor in the climate disaster. It is responsible for an estimated 5.5 percent of global greenhouse-gas emissions. If the military were a country, its emissions would rank fourth globally, between India and Russia. The military's CO_2 footprint is greater than that of the whole of Africa, which accounts for less than 4 percent of global emissions. Fewer military operations could sustainably reduce the impact on the environment.

Excessive military spending not only consumes valuable resources, but also increases the gap between rich and poor. In 2022, global military expenditures hit a new record of US$ 2.2 trillion. Vital resources that could be invested in social and economic development are being diverted, exacerbating poverty and deepening inequalities in the global economy. Disarmament, on the other hand, has the potential to catalyse transformative change. That hope grew in the 1990s, when conventional weapons were last dismantled on a large scale.

At that time, civil society optimistically looked forward to the prospect of a "peace dividend" amounting to hundreds of billions of US dollars. The hope was that this money would be used to finance Agenda 21, an agreement for sustainable development concluded at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This did not materialize because the driving force for the disarmament efforts was the financial restructuring of national budgets, and not a general rethink of international peace and security

CARBON BOOTPRINT

Comparison between the five largest emitting countries and the world's military, 2019, billion tonnes of CO_2



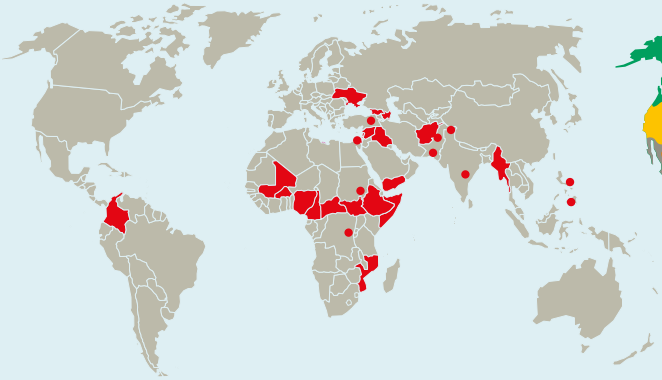
CO_2 only, no other greenhouse gases

Peace treaties and efficient disarmament agreements could contribute to achieving the world's climate goals

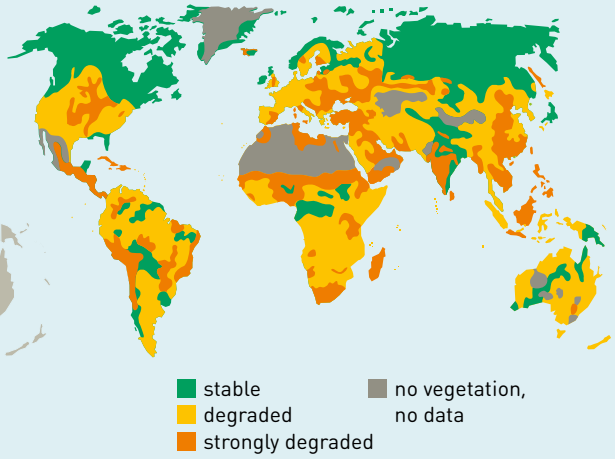
MANY REASONS TO MOVE

Triggers of migration movements, selected

Wars and armed conflicts – annual report by the Hamburg Working Group on Research into the Causes of War, end 2022



Climate crisis, rising sea levels, farming systems in peril – example of soil degradation, UN Environment Programme, no year given



Policies for peace must take armed conflicts into account, as well as their root causes – such as poverty and the climate crisis

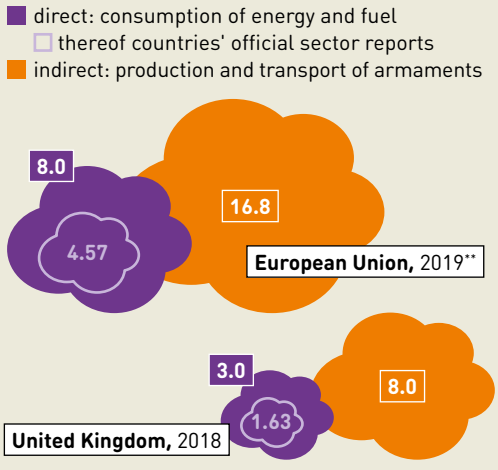
policy. The task remains: putting the enormous financial resources that the world pours into the military to use in such a way as to help resolve urgent global challenges, such as fighting climate change and poverty, and improving public health and education.

In the future, disarmament must go much further than what has been achieved. Just as negotiations on rules are defined for demobilization and the destruction of weapons, so too must binding rules be set for the civil settlement of conflicts. These rules must strengthen international treaties and conflict-resolution institutions to ensure that they are in a position to resolve conflicts through civilian means. On the global level, it is necessary to influence progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals that were set through the international Agenda 2030 process, and to emphasize the links between development and peace in the follow-up to Agenda 2030.

A comprehensive approach to disarmament would not only seek to reduce or eliminate weapons, but would consider the broader social, economic, ecological and humanitarian dimensions of armed conflict and security. Disarmament efforts must prioritize the protection of human rights and humanitarian principles. They must include meaningful cooperation with civil society, local communities and affected populations. This includes measures to promote dialogue, reconciliation and confidence-building between the parties to the conflict. Now is the time for the development of scenarios and processes for the most comprehensive global disarmament possible. The tools must be ready when there is an opportunity for disarmament.

GAS ALERT

Direct and indirect emissions by the military in the EU and the United Kingdom, million tonnes CO_2e^*



Two cases, same culprit: the military's indirect emissions are more than double their direct emissions

*CO_2e: CO_2-equivalent, using conversion factors for the various greenhouse gases. Emissions in battle operations not included **without United Kingdom

PRESENT

ONCE IT IS LOST, TRUST IS DIFFICULT TO REBUILD

The war in Ukraine reflects the Russian geopolitical desire to act on an equal footing with the United States. Europe is of secondary importance. A multipolar world does not yet promise stability.

From an outside perspective, some peace agreements come as a surprise. In 1979, US president Jimmy Carter invited his Egyptian counterpart Anwar es-Sadat and the Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin to the presidential retreat at Camp David in Maryland to negotiate a reduction in tensions between the two states. The two countries had been at war just a few years earlier, and the atmosphere is said to have been frosty. Over the following twelve days, Carter brought the opponents together in the seclusion of the estate so often that they began to trust each other. The Camp David Accords were the result. This first peace treaty between Israel and its Arab neighbour remains in force to this day.

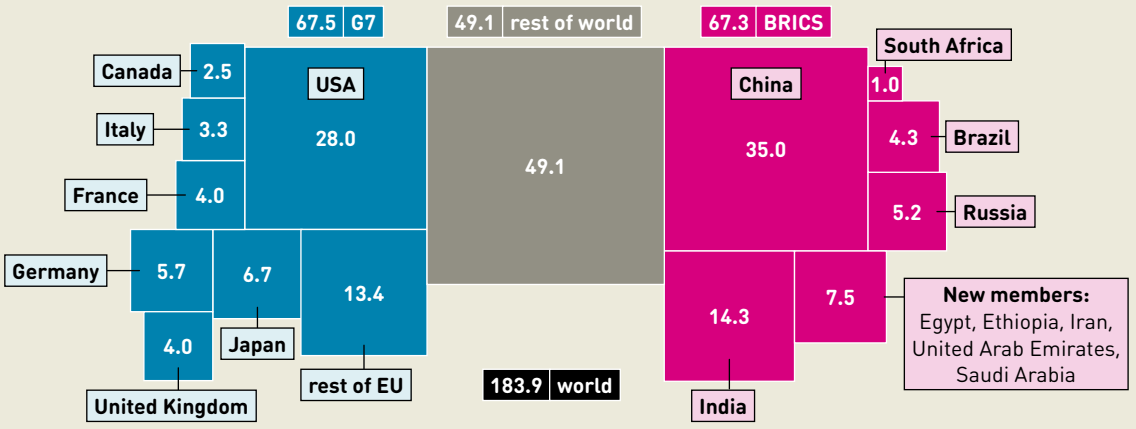
What is true for heads of government may also be true for states. In fact, according to the historian Matthias Peter, trust is "the resource of diplomacy". It is created when reliable information about the other party's intentions makes it possible to avoid misunderstandings and misjudgements. Saying goodbye to black-and-white thinking is part of this progression. Peter sees the centrepiece of international détente in the Cold War, the post-1972 Helsinki Process with its Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), as an ebb and flow in confidence-building. The benefits of such trust were shown in crises such as NATO's Double-track Decision in 1979 (threatening to deploy medium-range nuclear missiles at the same time as offering mutual limitations in such missiles) and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980.

And today? By the 2010s, the CSCE security architecture and bilateral agreements between the United States and Russia forged in the 1990s had already begun to erode. Key moments in this decline were the clumsy attempts by Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, and its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine. In 2019, the Russian military analyst Pawel Felgenhauer wrote that the 1992 Treaty on Open Skies symbolized the "trust between former Cold War adversaries, but today there is no trust". The US withdrawal from the

According to the concept of a multipolar world, the BRICS represents a range of actors: China, Russia and various countries in the Global South

BALANCE OF POWER

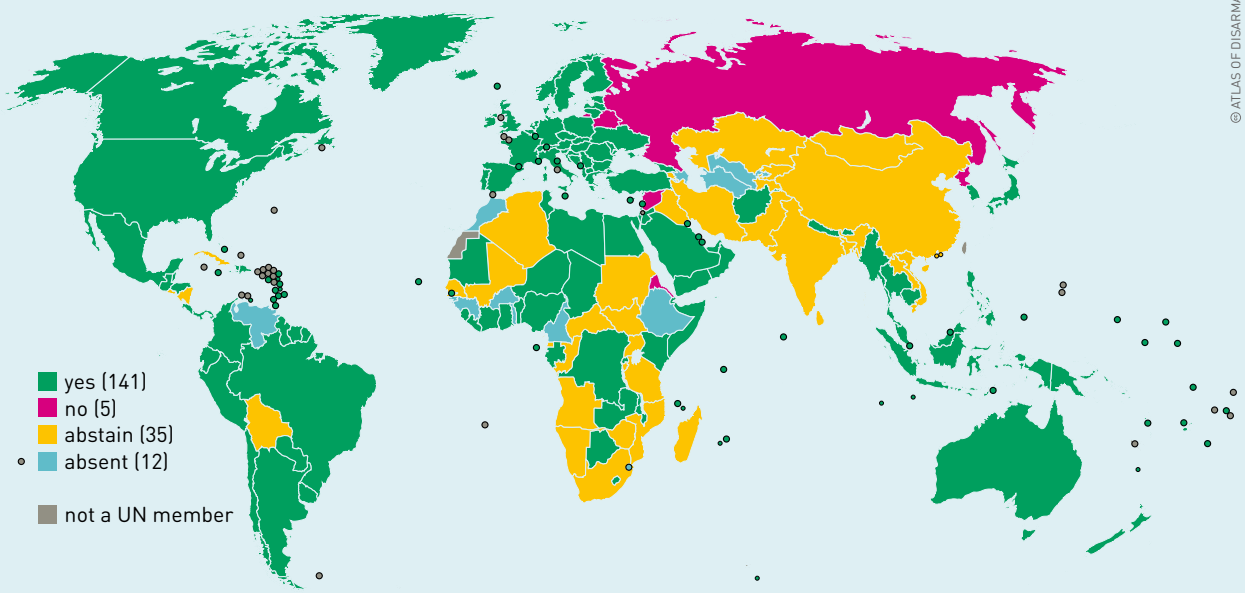
Economic performance of G7, BRICS and rest of the world by purchasing power parity, predicted for 2023, memberships as of 2024, trillion US dollars



Economic performance: gross domestic product. G7: group of seven Western developed countries; the EU regularly participates in summits. BRICS: acronym from the five founding members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Expanded to include five new members in 2024, Argentina cancelled accession at short notice.

INGLORIOUS ISOLATION

Result of voting on Resolution ES-11/1, which deplores "in the strongest terms" the Russian aggression against Ukraine, in the UN General Assembly on 2 March 2022



Russia was almost completely isolated – even China, India, Iran and South Africa withheld their support

Treaty in 2020 under Trump and Russia's withdrawal in 2021 under Putin sealed this loss of trust.

This episode shows how important it is to Russia to be on an equal strategic footing with the United States. Putin is striving towards a multipolar world order with the United States, China and the Global South, to put the United States back in its place and restore Russia's status as a superpower. He does not say what stabilising effect it could have, and perhaps this issue does not even interest him. Europe merely has a subordinate role as a theatre for the restoration of imperial greatness.

There are multiple examples of how Russia and the United States try to cement their superpower status, violating international law in the process. These include the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and more recently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The latter reveals the Russian concept of "near abroad", in which national parliaments of European and Central Asian states are not supposed to make their own decisions regarding their foreign-policy affiliations.

Russia would prefer to negotiate directly with the United States about a peaceful solution for Ukraine, over the head of the government in Kyiv. As part of its quest for superpower status, Russia is also weakening international organizations. For example, its continued membership of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE, the successor to the CSCE) is in doubt. Russia is paralysing the organization, which is so important for regulating conflict and where unanimity is necessary for decisions. It refuses to pay its membership fees, does not agree to budgets, obstructs the OSCE mission in Ukraine, and threatens to block urgent decisions on personnel. Only Russia's membership in the United Nations is secure. But the UN's action options are weakened by the Russian power of veto in the Security Council.

Prospects for peace and disarmament are hampered by Russia's internal situation and the tone of official communications. Over the last two decades, Putin has destroyed the civil society that had evolved since Gorbachev's perestroika. Critics can no longer speak out, but go into exile, or are killed. State-run television is dominated by the drumbeat of war propaganda, and members of the government issue dire threats. Media censorship means that there is no means to discuss possible ways out of the dream of superpower status or alternatives to the war society. It is not just Putin. The sociologist Katharina Blum says that since the 1990s, a layer of conservative-repressive forces has emerged in Russia that supports Putin and is now so stable that Putinism can survive without the man himself.

It is currently impossible to see how a détente similar to the one of the 1970s can be achieved. Nonetheless, the governments of states that are directly or indirectly involved should try to promote a peace agreement. It is uncertain how useful linking peace negotiations for Ukraine with disarmament negotiations for Europe might be – or whether this would be an overload. In any case, one can hardly use the word "trust"; mere "reliability" would be progress.

OSCE

THE MECHANISMS OF PEACE

In a continent of increasing tensions and a patchwork of overlapping and competing military and economic groupings, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is the only organization with sufficiently broad membership and neutral standing to broker peace.

The Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the founding document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or OSCE, aimed to reduce military confrontation and promote disarmament to complement political détente in Europe and strengthen security. But over the course of the OSCE's history, disarmament as an objective gradually faded into the background. For decades, the OSCE was mainly associated with conventional arms control.

Conventional arms control is not meant to be a fair-weather instrument, but to help bridge existing divides. It intends to set limits or ceilings for the most important categories of conventional weapons systems and forces as well as ideally, to prescribe the destruction of surplus weapons. Negotiations on conventional arms control in Europe gained momentum in the 1970s as part of the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions talks, which took place parallel to the Helsinki Process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, or CSCE.

The CSCE Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and disarmament started in 1984 in Stockholm. Between 1990 and 1992, three cornerstones of European arms control and military transparency came into force: the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Vienna Document on confidence and security-building measures, and the Open Skies Treaty, which provided for unarmed aerial observation flights over the signatories' territories. This happened under the auspices of the CSCE/OSCE, as the only neutral collective security organization in the Northern hemisphere.

Most of these agreements are now obsolete or outdated due to technological and military advances, or because Russia and NATO or the US have turned their backs on them. This is despite achievements such as the removal of more than 72,000 pieces of equipment in the first years of the Conventional Forces Treaty, an average of 90 inspections and 45 evaluation visits per year until 2013 under the Vienna Document, and over 1,500 Open Skies flights in the OSCE region by 2021.

Since both Russia and the West have either suspended or withdrawn from the Conventional Forces and Open Skies agreements, the only remaining arms-control instrument is the 2011 OSCE Vienna Document. It has the advantage that it is not legally binding, but a political document. Therefore, it has a chance of remaining relevant, even though Russia informed the other OSCE participating states in February 2022 that it would no longer participate in inspections and verification measures and would stop exchanging data.

In arms control, the OSCE has also been active at the national level. It worked with national governments in field operations to improve the management of small arms and light weapons, and in the management of stockpiles of conventional ammunition, including their destruction. Several small successes were achieved in Moldova in 2006, for example, when ten separate projects covered the management of small arms, light weapons and conventional ammunition.

In general, European security today does not feature arms control, much less disarmament. Rather, it relies on mutual deterrence and conventional armament as well as the expansion of existing arms systems. Since the prerequisites for arms control are cooperation, dialogue and voluntary reciprocity, it no longer has any basis today. The gradual erosion of arms control has contributed to the deterioration and the current crisis, though it has not been the only factor.

After a possible end to the war in Ukraine, the question of security guarantees for Ukraine and other countries that are not NATO members (or do not want to or cannot become members) will inevitably arise. Negotiations leading to a ceasefire and eventual peace agreements will require an organized process and logistics, as well as elements of arms control – military ceilings, information exchange, verification, etc.

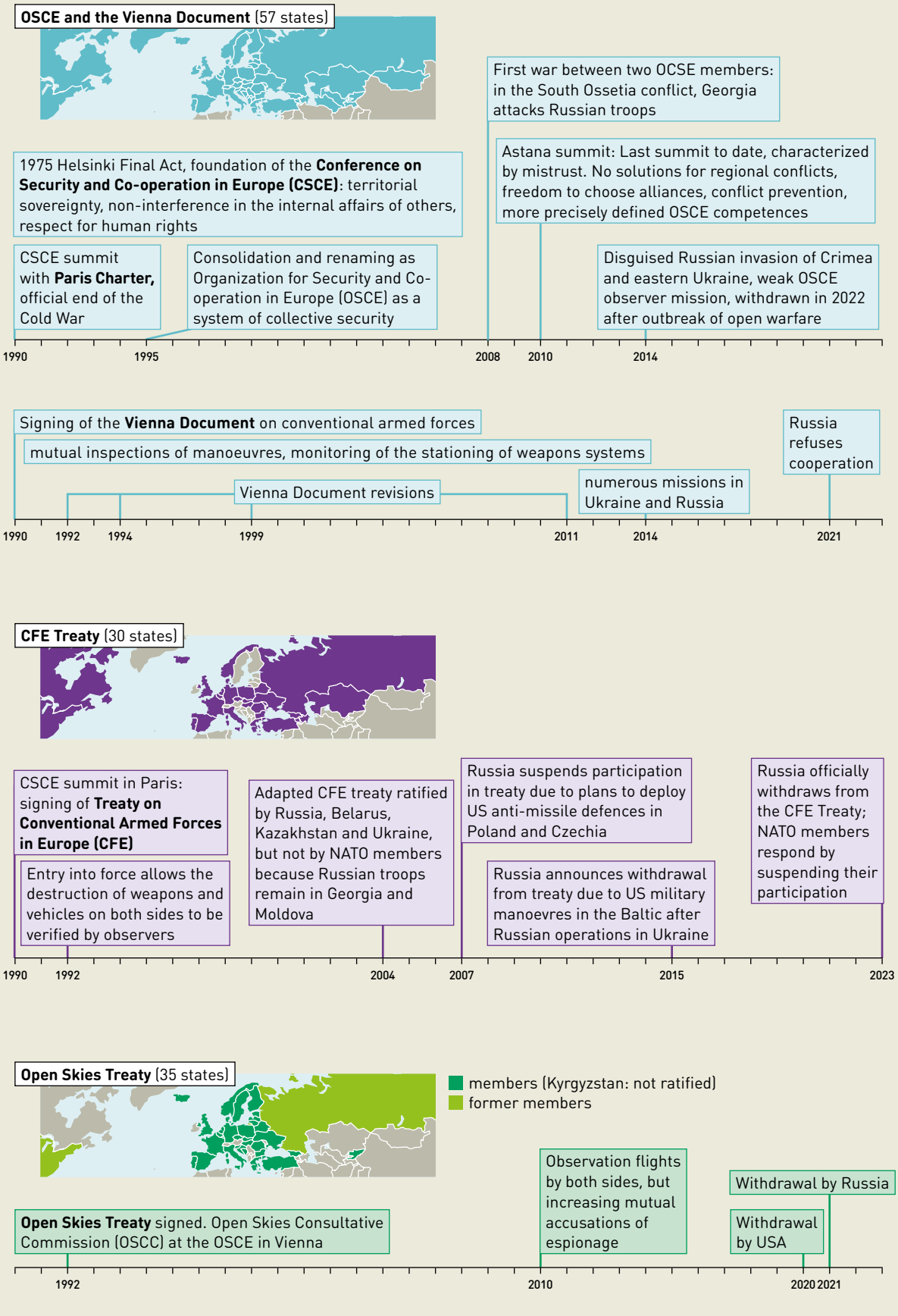
A regional framework is also needed in the medium to long term to stabilize and improve European security. The OSCE is predestined to offer all of this. The practical experience with the Conventional Arms Treaty that the national verification centres have gained over three decades could be useful.

All in all, arms control and disarmament – and ultimately European security – are being held hostage by Russia. This will remain so until Russia returns to the principles of the OSCE and negotiations to overcome the division between East and West can be resumed.

The resolution of many regional conflicts in the OSCE has been overshadowed by Russia's insistence to be treated on the same footing as the USA

RISE AND FALL OF PEACE MECHANISMS

Tasks, environment and crises of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, keywords on the chronology



DEFENCE WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

Many countries in the Indo-Pacific are arming themselves with China's territorial claims and arms buildup in mind. They are inspired by the idea that only a strong military can prevent a war. Meanwhile, the role of Taiwan's chip industry is underestimated. It could prevent an attack by China.

The shopping list is long: interceptor rockets, attack and reconnaissance drones, satellite communication equipment, stealth aircraft, helicopters, submarines and warships. The Japanese government wants to spend US$ 320 billion on its military by 2027. That is three times more than Germany is planning to spend on arms as part of its "turning point" in international relations.

North Korea's nuclear threats and the danger emanating from China has pushed Japan to take these steps. Fumio Kishida, the island nation's prime minister, has also spoken of a "turning point" for his country, which has been committed to pacifism since the Second World War and has pledged to limit it's spending on armaments to no more than one percent of it's annual economic output. But times have changed. The Japanese government fears that Russia's invasion of Ukraine might prompt China to do the same with Taiwan. As a result, Japan is now spending twice as much as before on the military.

Japan is not the only country in the region beefing up its arms. The Chinese leadership in Beijing has declared that almost the whole of the entire South China Sea is its territory. Coastal states such as the Philippines and Vietnam are alarmed as incidents become more frequent. And because far more than one-third of world trade passes through the South China Sea, the United States has also become involved. The US is also building up its military capabilities in the region. Along with existing bases in South Korea, the Philippines and Guam, the United States wants to revive an airbase in Tinian in the Northern Mariana Islands, which has lain unused since 1946. This was the base used for the 1945 atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

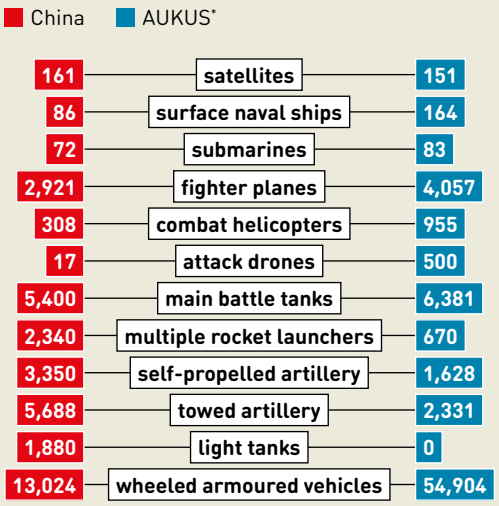
China itself is the biggest upgrader of military capabilities in the region. In 2009, it invested US$ 137 billion in its armed forces; by 2022 this had risen to almost US$ 300 billion. In summer 2022, China launched the Fujian, the world's largest warship outside the US, and the first one to be developed entirely in China. In the air, the Peoples's Liberation Army will soon have the H-20, its first stealth bomber. According to SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, China now has the world's second-largest military expenditure.

Taiwan feels especially threatened. The leadership in Beijing regards the island as a renegade province. State and party leader Xi Jinping has repeatedly stated that he would incorporate Taiwan during his time in office. China conducts military manoeuvres in the Taiwan Strait almost weekly.

Most countries in the world do not recognize Taiwan as an independent state, but it is de facto sovereign. The island republic refuses to be intimidated. With just 23 million inhabitants, it has 2.58 million military personnel and a modern army. In 2023, the government in Taipei extended compulsory military service from four months to one year.

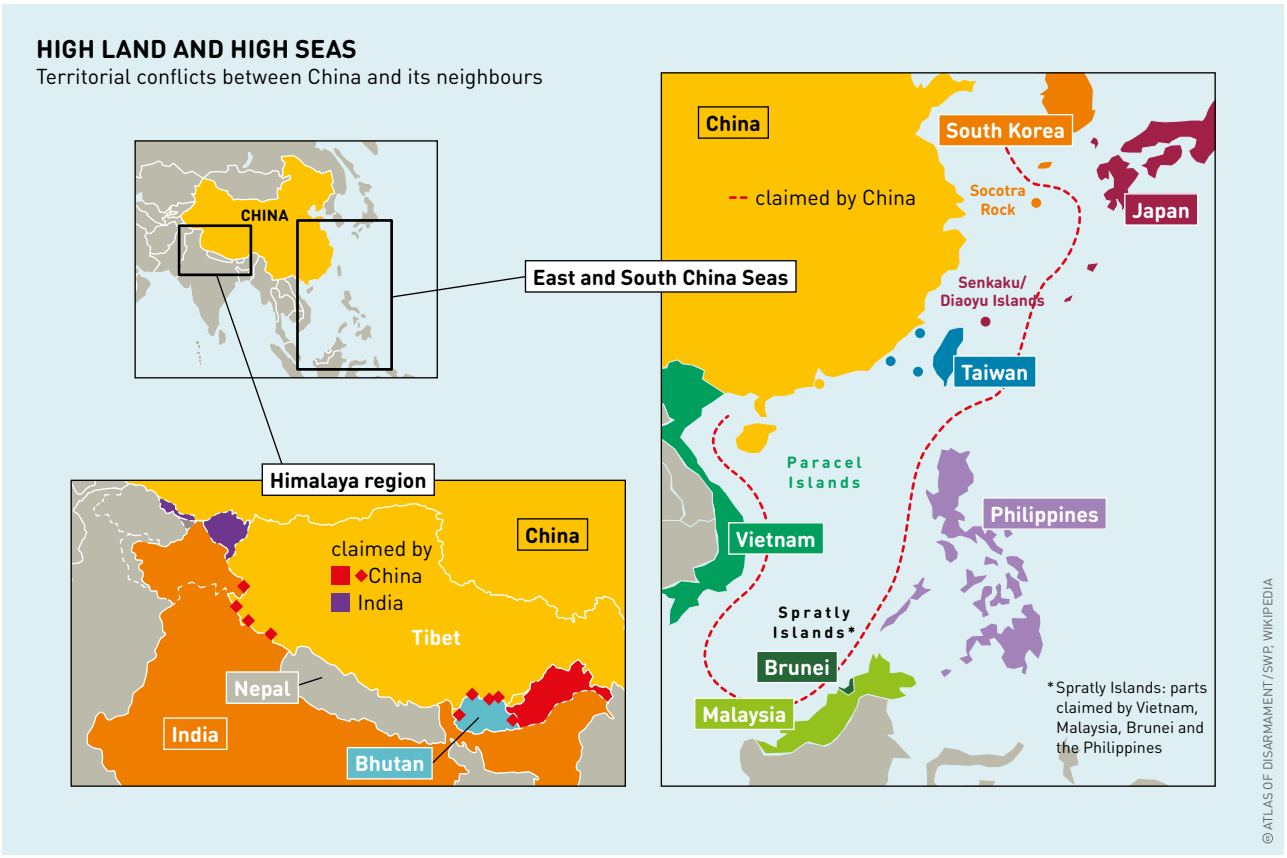
Because of the threat from China, disarmament is not a topic for any government in the region. Angela Stanzel, expert for security policy at the German Institute for In-

TEST OF STRENGTH
Heavy conventional weapons, 2022



*AUKUS: military alliance of Australia, United Kingdom and the USA from 2021. Global figures

Levels of weaponry that go up in times of increasing tensions can come down again with arms controls in more relaxed times



Battles in the Himalayas, threats against Taiwan, naval manoeuvres far to the south – China asserts some tough demands

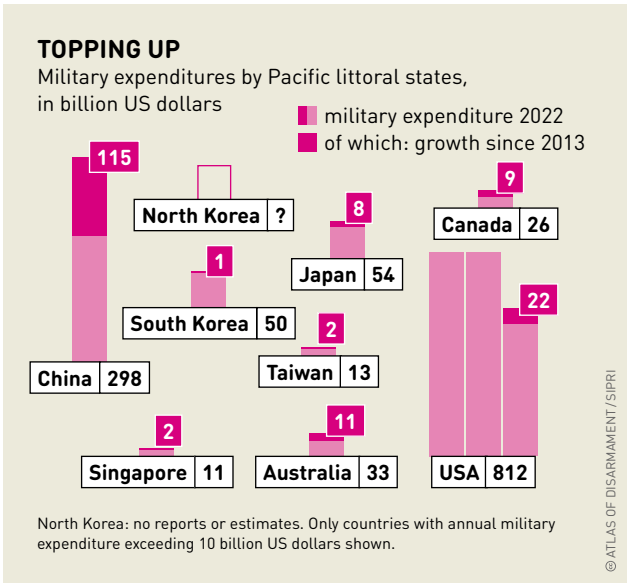
ternational and Security Affairs (SWP), regards Chinese disarmament as very unlikely – at least as long as Beijing is convinced that the US wants to contain China's rise.

Taiwan and the People's Republic have shown that peaceful coexistence is possible despite their conflicting interests. Even though both sides reject official government contacts, they have maintained intensive economic relations for the last 30 years. In the 1990s and 2000s, Taiwanese investors played a major role in the economic growth of the People's Republic. Since 2010, the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement has been in place to reduce trade barriers between Taiwan and China.

This intensive economic exchange may be one of the reasons that China has not yet carried out its threat. The economic agreement of 2010 was agreed only to last until 2020, but neither side has taken steps to end it. This could be a sign that China is still interested in functioning economic relations.

Part of Taiwan's defence strategy is its huge expertise in the semiconductor industry. China obtains many of these important components from Taiwan, and it needs them not least for its own technological development. The dominant position of Taiwan's semiconductor industry worldwide is seen by economists as a guarantee against a Chinese attack. They speak of a "silicon shield" protecting the country. Because, the more the world depends on chips from Taiwan, the greater the global interest that war does not destroy the highly specialized factories, processes and production chains and force the island's specialists to flee abroad.

China's arms buildup over the last 10 years exceeds that of all other states in the region together



USA

PIVOT TO ASIA

The United States has long held a dominant position in Asia and the Pacific, with numerous allies and a string of military bases. The status quo is now being threatened by the rise of China as an economic and military superpower. China's smaller neighbours are caught in the middle.

To take advantage of East and South East Asia's economic potential, the United States pushed for greater trade access through such initiatives as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (1989) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (2016). The latter was the centrepiece of the Obama administration's so-called "pivot to Asia", which aimed to reorient US foreign policy away from the Middle East and Europe in the direction of a rising Asia.

The Obama-era pivot was complicated by the continuing pull of the United States back towards the Middle East to address the after-effects of the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, involvement in conflicts in Syria and Libya, and efforts to secure diplomatic rapprochement between Arab countries and Israel. But the final withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in 2021 was a signal that the post 9/11 focus on the Middle East was coming to an end. The Biden administration seized this opportunity to refocus toward a more assertive China. Earlier turns toward Asia, for instance in the 1990s and intermittently during the Obama era, imagined various forms of partnership with China. The latest pivot, however, is predicated on confrontation.

Although the perceived threat of North Korea continues to preoccupy US security policy in Asia, justifying the presence of 28,500 US troops in South Korea, China has been the real focus of Pentagon planners. The United States and China still preside over the world's largest bilateral trade flow in merchandise. But numerous disputes over trade, investment and intellectual property roil the relationship. And although there was a modicum of military cooperation during the 1990s, at least as it pertained to transparency and conflict prevention, the two sides have hardened their positions in recent years, particularly around specific areas of potential confrontation such as the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea.

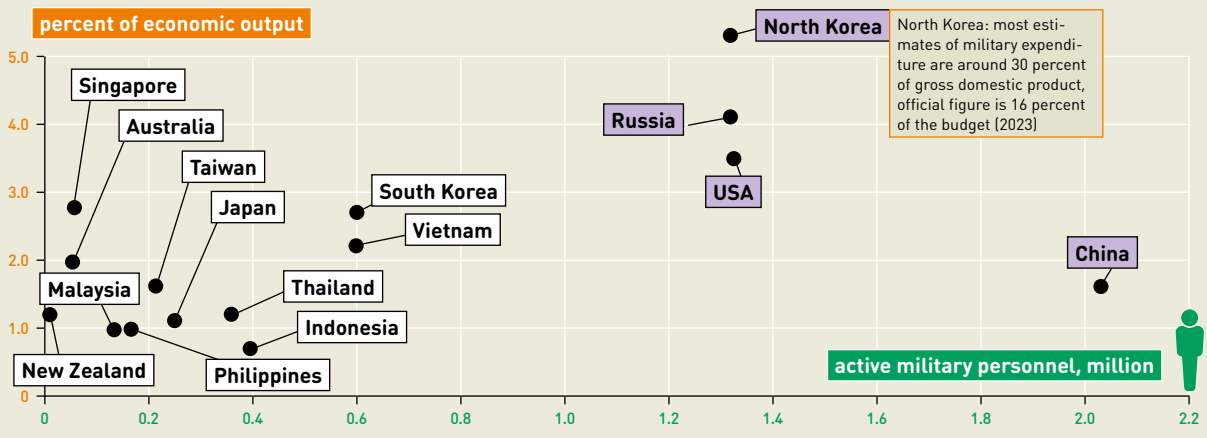
China has contributed to this dynamic. Its military spending has expanded by 7 percent annually in recent years. It has clashed with its neighbours over disputed waters. And there has been a marked increase in nationalist rhetoric under President Xi Jinping.

But it is also true that China is faced with a more explicit containment strategy. In 2017, the United States revived the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with Australia, India and Japan to counter Chinese interests along the Asian littoral and in the Pacific. These efforts have been

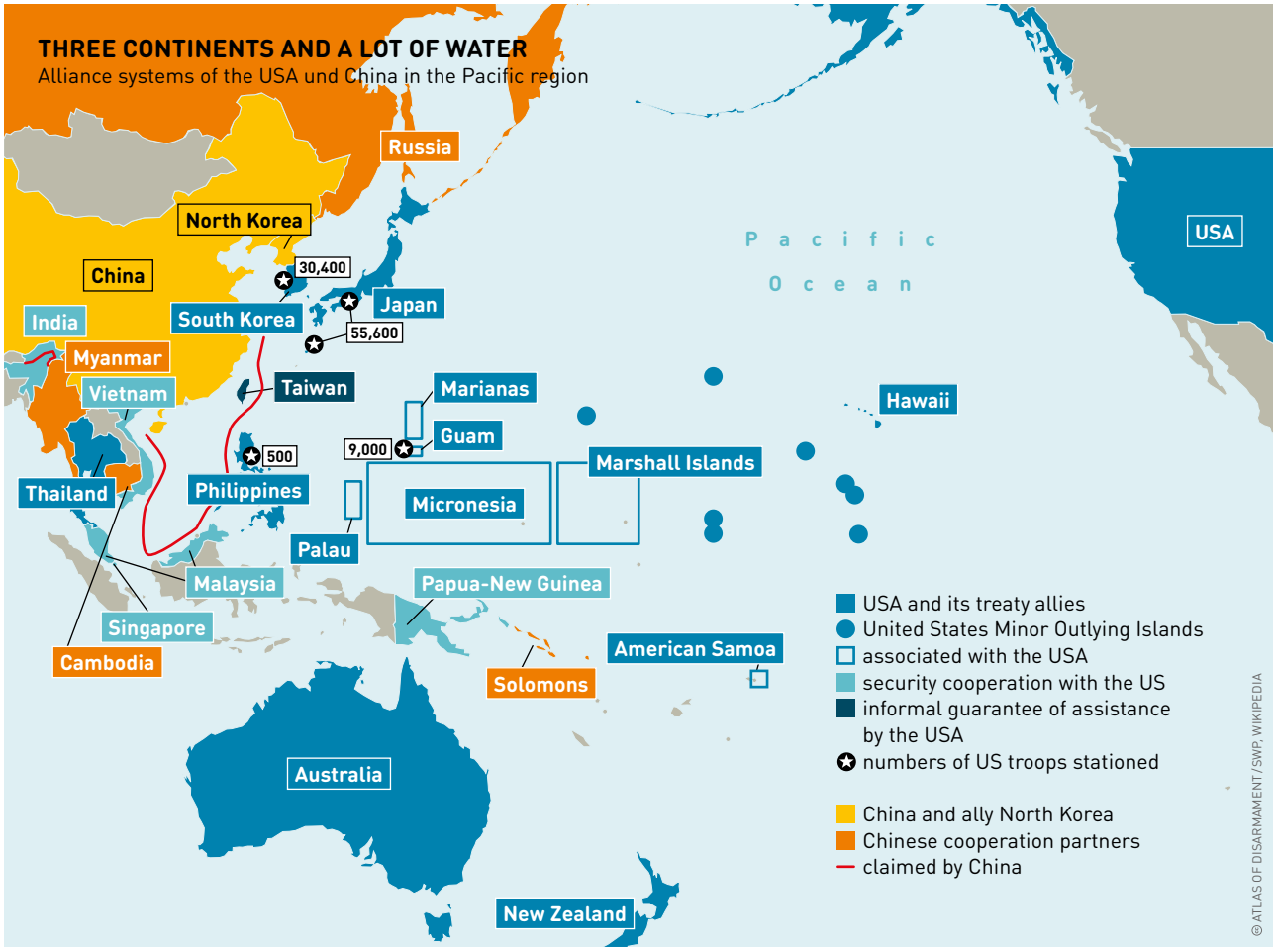
All the small and medium-sized armies in the eastern Pacific littoral states are seen as US allies or cooperate on security affairs

MARCHING AWAY

Share of military expenditure in gross domestic product and troop numbers of littoral states in the Western Pacific in comparison, selected, 2023



Russia estimated (SIPRI), Vietnam estimated (Statista)



The geopolitical confrontation between the superpowers is interwoven with regional conflicts over Taiwan, Korea and marine boundaries

subsumed in a larger Indo-Pacific strategy that brings in South Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines and other Asian partners to coordinate non-security issues as well, such as economic cooperation, diplomatic engagement, and climate initiatives.

The Pentagon has focused on preparing for a long conflict with China. In 2010, it unveiled the new AirSea Battle doctrine to prepare for a future war with Beijing. The doctrine has been paired with an expansion of military capabilities. The 2024 Pentagon budget request of US$842 billion includes a 40 percent increase in spending for enhancing these capabilities in the Pacific.

Many of the big-ticket items in the overall budget – advanced missiles and jet fighters, space weaponry, next-generation nuclear submarines, and two more destroyers and frigates – are specifically meant to counter China. This effort has spread into new realms, including hypersonic weapons and artificial intelligence. A current Replicator Initiative, for instance, is designed to generate a swarm of fully autonomous drones to overwhelm Chinese warfighting capabilities.

The United States is not alone in its focus on containing China. At the 2023 North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit in Lithuania, four Asian attendees (South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand) committed to deepening their ties to the transatlantic security alliance. A number of European countries have come on board the US initiative to restrict certain high-tech exports to China. The United States has put pressure on allies to source critical minerals such as rare-earth elements from countries other than China.

The new pivot to Asia, intended to counter China both militarily and economically, is not without its sceptics. French President Emmanuel Macron blocked a proposal for a new NATO office in Japan. Those concerned about the consequences of the cold war with China and the potential of a full-scale war have pushed for greater cooperation between the United States and China on efforts to address climate change.

But the preoccupation with confronting China has proved irresistible in the United States. As support for engagement with Beijing has dwindled in Congress, the Biden administration has met with little opposition to the adoption of its predecessor's policies on trade sanctions and tariffs on Chinese goods. Much of the US security establishment views the war in Ukraine and the conflict between Israel and Hamas as dangerous distractions from its primary mission: countering a perceived Chinese threat.

EUROPEAN UNION

NEW APPROACHES FOR NEW CHALLENGES

Peace is one of the core values of the European Union – along with democracy, culture, security, prosperity and freedom of movement. But new challenges are forcing the EU to find ways to guarantee its own security.

The politics surrounding the European Union's foreign and security policy is in constant flux. This makes it necessary to find common ground among states with conflicting interests and varied historical experiences. Some EU member states are members of NATO, while others are neutral. Some – especially the victims of German or Soviet domination in central and eastern Europe – rely strongly on the US as their main security guarantor, while others – such as France – see themselves as independent actors on the world stage. The second European nuclear power, the United Kingdom, is now no longer part of the EU discussions. These different interests make the EU's military policy concept of "strategic autonomy" controversial. Despite the desire of some states for greater autonomy from the United States, the EU's "strategic compass" of 2020 states that the partnership with NATO is of crucial importance.

Attempts by the Western European countries to pool their security interests has a long history. In 1954, France was responsible for the failure of the proposed European Defence Community. The Western European Union, a military assistance pact founded in the same year, merged in 1992 into the Common Foreign and Security Policy, which forms part of the Maastricht Treaty. In 1999, the EU governments decided to set up combat units independent of NATO. The Treaty of Nice introduced the Common Security and Defence Policy, under the control of the heads of government, and not the European Parliament, and is subject to unanimous agreement.

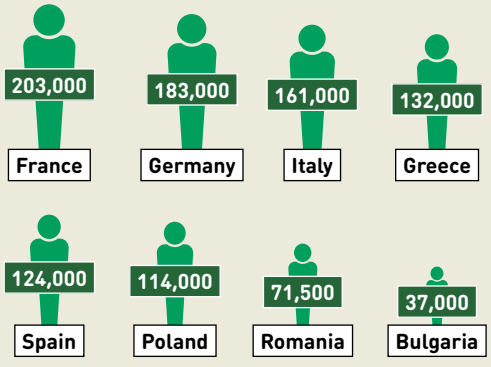
In 2012, the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2016, shortly after the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom, the EU foreign ministers adopted the EU Global Strategy. Crisis resilience and regional stability moved to the foreground. From then on, what the EU regards as its legitimate interests have included "access to resources" and a "free South China Sea". In addition, Central Asia and Central Africa became geopolitical areas of interest for the EU. In 2017, the "permanent structured cooperation" was adopted, now covering all EU states except Malta. This involves transnational armaments projects, which are preferably financed through the European Defence Fund, also founded in 2017. In 2021, the European Peace Facility was created to cover some of the costs of joint EU military missions.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine led to a change of strategy at the NATO summit in Madrid in June 2022. Prior to the invasion, NATO troops were not posted permanently in central Europe. However, in response to Russia's aggression, Western European combat units were to be stationed there permanently. Just a few weeks after the Russian attack, the governments of the EU states agreed on a "strategic compass". This was a breakthrough since the EU member states were able to agree on a joint threat analysis for the first time. However, the compass contains only rudimentary strategies for civil conflict resolution.

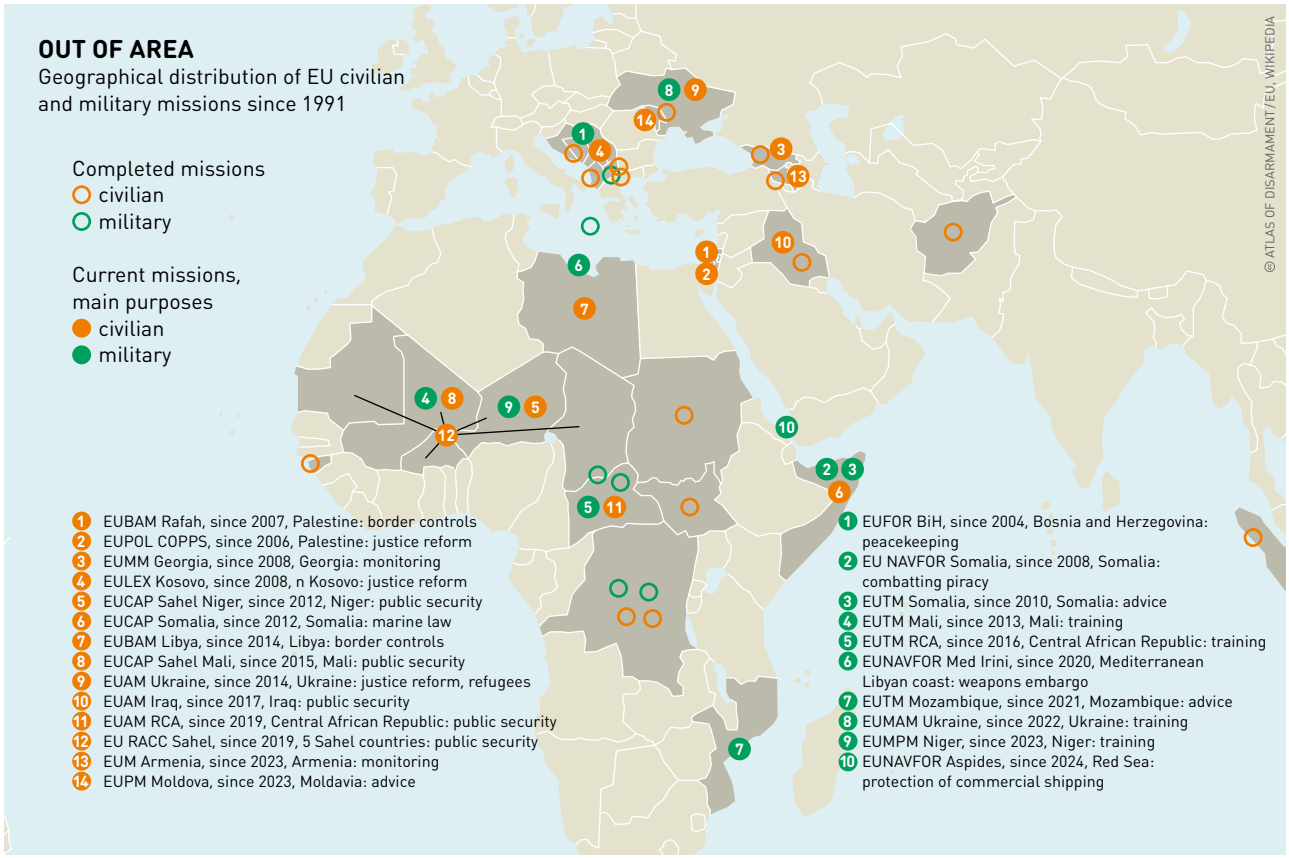
The Maastricht Treaty commits the European Union to define and implement a common foreign and security policy but requires unanimous agreement for "decisions having military or defence implications". Nevertheless, the European Commission regards arms production as a normal industrial production that may be subsidized. For the 2021–27 budget period – as per mid-2023 – a total of 12 billion euros were allocated to the European Peace

SOLDIERS FROM NEXT DOOR

The eight largest armies of EU member states by personnel numbers, 2022



France, which refuses to place its nuclear forces under EU control, also has the largest number of active military personnel at its disposal



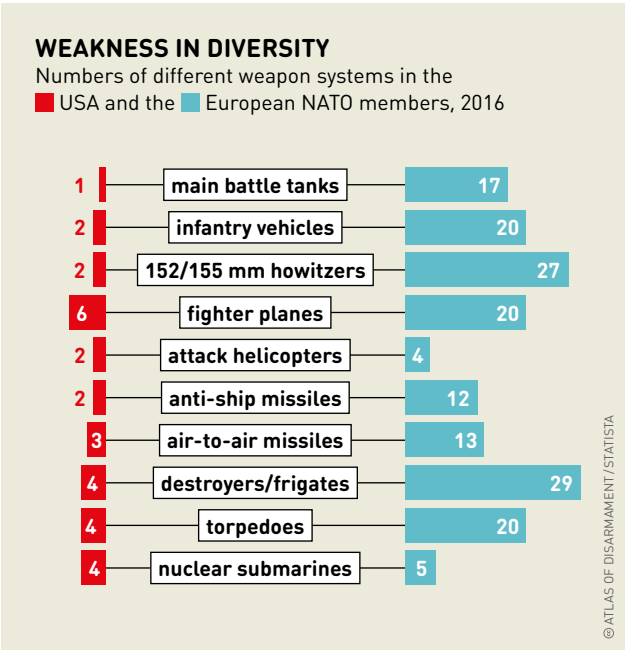
Facility for foreign operations. The European Defence Fund has a budget of almost 8 billion euros for the same period. Of this, almost 2.7 billion euros are earmarked for funding common defence research and 5.3 billion for joint projects to develop military capabilities.

Since the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the member states have continually expanded the Peace Facility, making it a major instrument in using Western weapons to support Ukraine's defence efforts. In July 2023, an "Act in Support of Ammunition Production" with a budget of 500 million euros came into force. The EU's instrument for common procurement, or EIDIRPA, aims to coordinate purchases of weaponry by several EU member states, support the integration of national industries, and lower the prices of military equipment. The rapid implementation of a new European Defence Industry Strategy is planned for 2024.

In 2024 it is not easy to be optimistic about the EU's disarmament and its built-in inability to engage in aggression. Nonetheless, progressive forces in the EU can rely on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Since 2021 this has been international law, despite the fact that only a few European countries have ratified it. Peace-oriented actors also get support from the Conference on the Future of Europe, which in 2022 called for the EU to continue actively supporting dialogue, ensure peace and a rules-based international order, strengthen multilateralism and continue the EU's long-standing peace initiatives.

The potential for rationalizing in the military is huge – and thereby for saving on tax outlays. But governments want to protect their national arms producers

The around 50 EU missions abroad so far aim to serve the interests of the local governments, but above all the interests of the EU itself



TURKEY

MIDDLING MILITARY MIGHT

Turkey has long left Greece, its traditional rival, behind in terms of defence capability and weapons production. In just a few years, Turkey has created a military-industrial complex with its own interests.

Turkey and Greece are neighbours that both have huge military budgets and are pushing to build up their armed forces further. This is partly (but not only) the result of the many unresolved disputes between the two countries. These include their mutually exclusive definitions of national identity and the status of minorities in the foundation processes of both nation states, conflicts over the continental shelf, territorial waters, national airspace and exclusive economic zones in the Aegean Sea, differences over Cyprus and the borders of exclusive economic zones in the eastern Mediterranean, as well as the issue of migration. But a series of studies has come to no definitive conclusion as to whether their confrontational foreign policies have actually triggered their arms race. In addition to their fraught bilateral relations, other internal and international political factors also play a role.

Turkey has always spent a lot of money on its military, but spending shot up further after the military coup in 1980. The policy of modernizing the military, efforts to build a national arms industry, the Kurdish insurgency, and the Turkish army offensives in northern Syria and Iraq have given the arms industry a continuous boost. Calculating total military outlays is difficult because of a lack of regular data. Spending by the extra-budgetary Defence Industry Support Fund alone rose from the equivalent of US$ 54 million in 1986 to US$ 2.2 billion in 2013. Another factor is the decision made at the NATO summit in Wales in 2014 to increase member states' defence spending levels to 2 percent of GDP, and to increase that portion of the total defence budget going to equipment to at least 20 percent. Most defence spending is used to cover personnel costs.

Through its strong support for its domestic defence industry, Turkey's dependence on foreign equipment suppliers has shrunk to 50 percent since 2004, while budgets have risen markedly. In 2018 the army procured 65 percent of its equipment from domestic sources; for 2023 it targeted 75 percent. Turnover in the defence sector was US$ 1.3 billion in 2004. A figure of US$ 27 billion was forecast for 2023. The value of contracts managed by the Defence Industry Agency climbed from US$ 8 billion in 2004 to US$ 60 billion in 2018, and the trend is rising.

These changes reflect the policy of turning Turkey into a regional power based on a capable military. The arms industry serves as a political and ideological symbol for Turkey's self-sufficiency, its independence from the restrictions set by foreign arms suppliers, the country's growing role in world affairs, and its economic success.

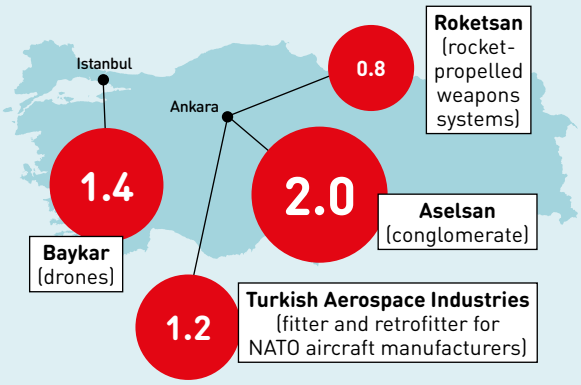
In Greece too, high levels of military spending result from both internal and external factors. NATO membership and the perceived threat mainly from Turkey are the most important issues. Other considerations are the country's economic and financial situation and the needs of the defence industry. A close examination of Greek military spending shows that it decreased by fifty percent from US$ 10 billion to US$ 5 billion during the financial crisis after 2010, and has only recently risen again to US$ 8.3 billion. The same trend applies to the share of equipment in total defence spending.

Greece is dependent on imports from US and European suppliers for its advanced weapons systems. The intention behind the expansion of the domestic defence industry is to help guarantee supplies and where possible boost self-sufficiency in military procurement, and thus support the push for more autonomy in foreign pol-

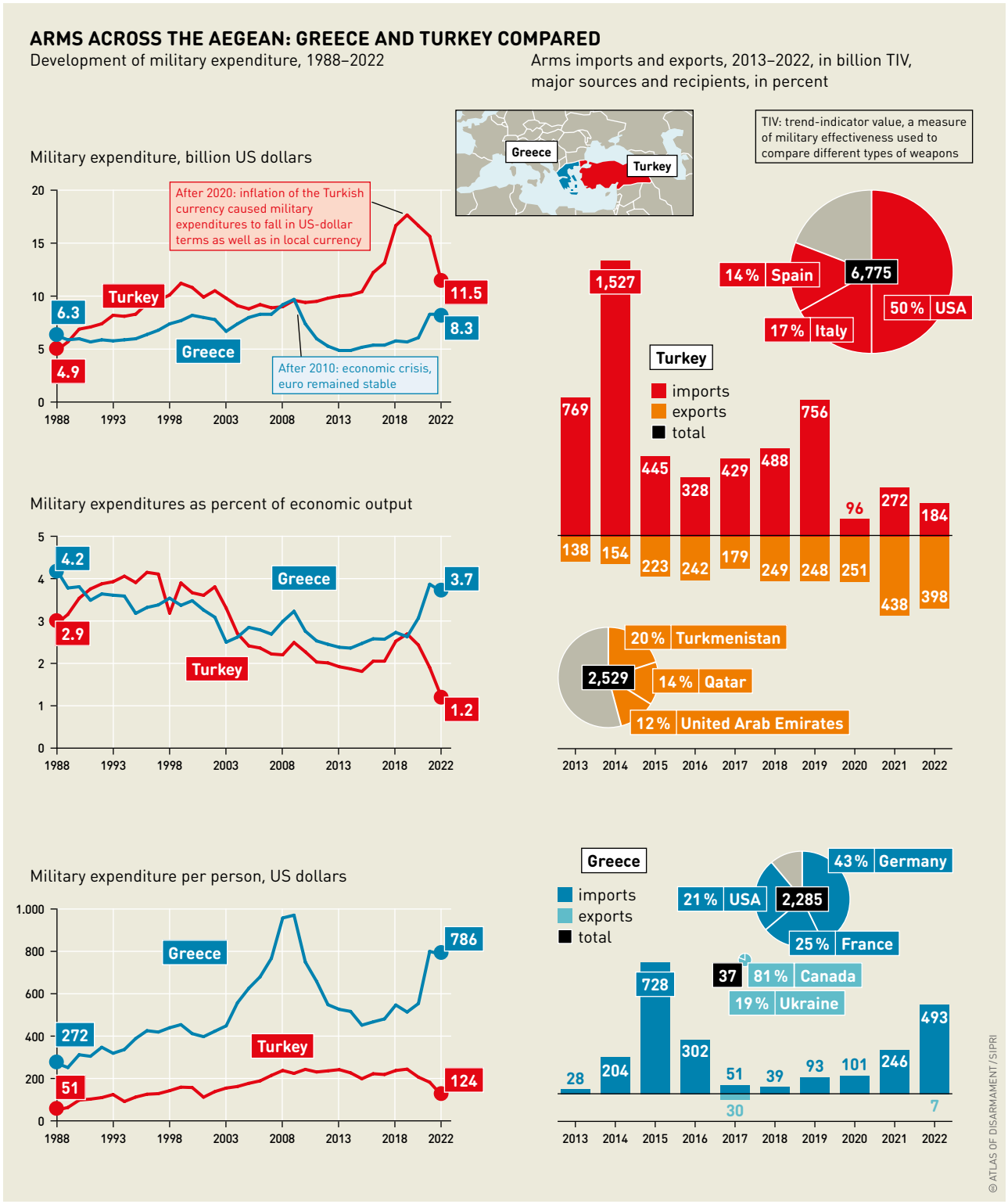
Apart from Baykar, a family-owned firm, the largest defence companies in Turkey are all directly or indirectly owned by the army

THE LARGEST TURKISH ARMS MAKERS

The four Turkish firms among the world's 100 largest defence companies, main business areas, sales of defence equipment 2022, billion US dollars



The peace research institute SIPRI publishes an annual list of the 100 largest defence companies. There are no Greek firms among them.



Turkey has been a net arms exporter since 2020, delivering weaponry mainly to the Gulf and Central Asia

icy. Naturally economic motives come into play, such as the wish to reduce the need for imports, thereby saving foreign currency, and promoting economic growth and technological progress. However, the economic goals are scarcely attainable. This is because the Greek defence industry depends on government subsidies, exports very little, and is used for patronage purposes.

A move towards disarmament is not foreseeable in either Turkey or Greece. Such an effort would make sense – especially when considering the periodic economic and social crises that afflict both countries. But the chances of a turnaround are slim in view of the strongly nationalist, militaristic and security-oriented domestic and foreign policies of these two neighbours.

INDIA

JOINING THE BIG LEAGUE

India, the world's largest country by population aspires to great-power status – but it has difficult relations with its two nuclear-armed neighbours, Pakistan and China. Historically India had close military ties with Russia, but it has been diversifying its partnerships and building up its own defence industry.

India's defence policy is shaped largely by the threats posed by its neighbours, China and Pakistan. All three countries have nuclear weapons. Although the nuclear deterrent works, border disputes continue to flare up. However, the Sino-Pakistan alliance alarms India more. India has been fighting terrorism it believes is inspired by Pakistan. In response, India has increased its arms purchases and manufacturing to respond to this threat.

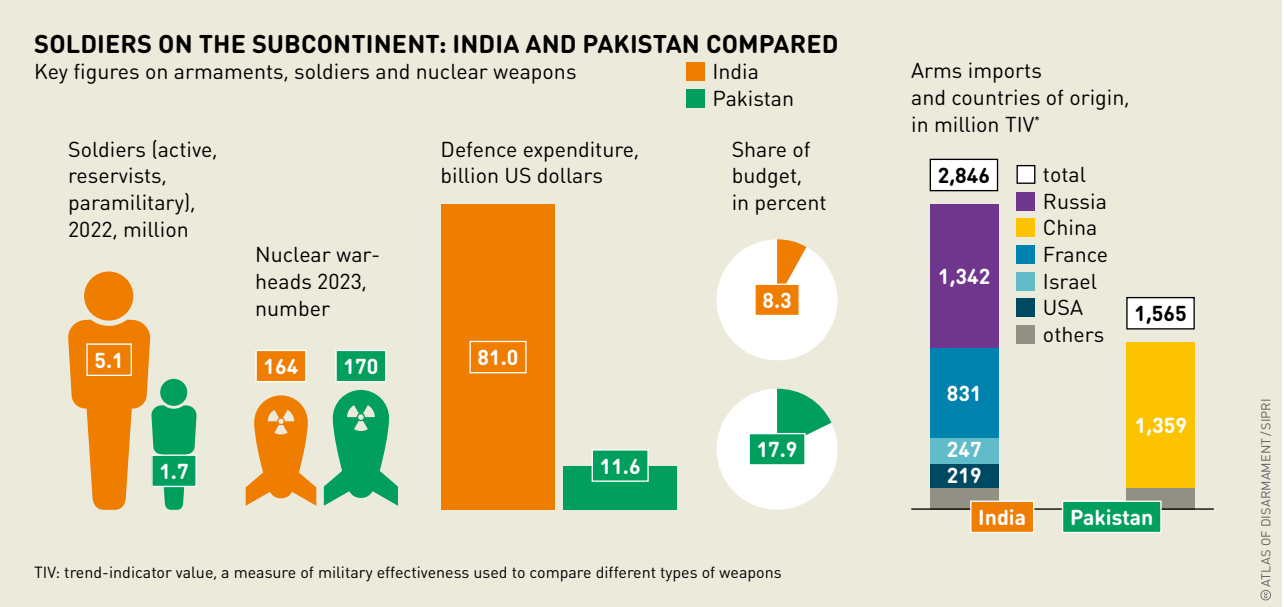
Russia, historically, has been the source of most of India's arms imports. Their defence relationship was cemented in 1962, when India became one of the first countries to benefit from Soviet technology transfer, co-producing the MiG-21 jet fighter in India. Soviet weapons were relatively cheap; the Soviet Union permitted India to pay in rupees and did not insist on immediate payments. During the Cold War, India was geopolitically close to the Soviet Union, and this partnership helped maintain the balance of power in Asia. The Soviet Union used its Security Council veto to block several resolutions against India, and unlike the West, the Soviet Union (and later Russia) never imposed sanctions on India.

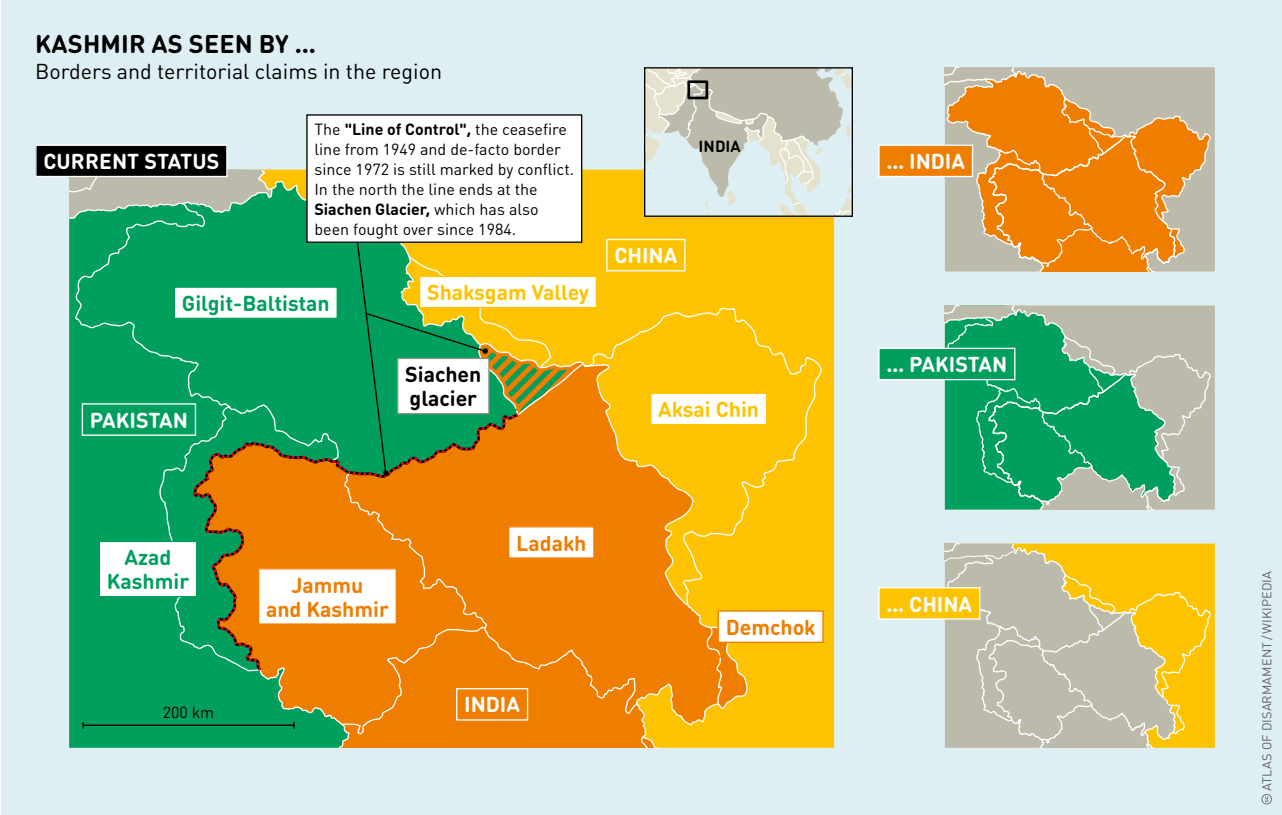
The Indian armed forces are familiar with Russian weapons, and Russia has remained willing to transfer sophisticated technology, including leasing a nuclear submarine. Russia has consistently been India's top weapons supplier, and today, 70 percent of India's military equipment is of Russian origin. Between 2018 and 2022, Russia provided 45 percent of India's arms, followed by France (29 percent) and the US (11 percent). During the same period, India was the top global importer of arms, accounting for 11 percent of world imports.

Over the years, however, India has attempted to diversify its imports and build its own defence industry. India cannot become a great power or be strategically autonomous if it is dependent on arms imports. The Sino-Russian relationship has made India more wary of being too dependent on Russian arms; India wants to avoid any country having a monopoly on its arms imports. It also realizes that it needs defence partnerships with Western countries to confront China's rise; buying arms from the West can strengthen mutual relations.

New Delhi has also started exporting arms. Its exports surged from around Rs 6.86 billion (US$ 82.4 million) in the 2013–14 financial year to nearly Rs 160 billion (US$

India and Pakistan are backed by powerful allies: Russia and China. The United States are also starting to enter the fray





The territorial clims of the three neighbours have militarized Kashmir. A Muslim independence movement also exists

1.9 billion) in 2022–23. India has been pushing for joint research, production and manufacture of defence materiel with foreign countries, moving away from mere buyer–seller relationships. An agreement was reached with the US to produce combat-aircraft engines, infantry combat-vehicles and howitzers. Their agreement with Russia involves the production of T-90 tanks and Su-30-MKI aircraft on license, the supplying of MiG-29-K aircraft and Kamov-31 helicopters, the upgrading of MiG-29 aircraft, and jointly producing BrahMos cruise missiles. A joint venture began the production of AK-203 rifles in India. India also has an agreement with the Philippines to sell BrahMos missiles and is negotiating to sell these missiles to more than a dozen countries.

Budget figures for 2022–23 show that India allocated around 2 percent of its GDP to defence, matching the pattern since 2013. The defence budget is about US$ 73.8 billion, but around 53 percent is spent on salaries and pensions, leaving little for military modernization and reforms. Most of the defence budget went to the army (57.1 percent), followed by the air force at 19.1 percent and the navy with 15.5 percent.

India's defence diplomacy has seen an upsurge in recent years, in terms of buying arms from a more diverse set of partners and the number of joint military exercises carried out across the world. European countries like Britain, France and Germany have also been developing stronger ties with India's defence establishment because of the lure of India's arms market, common perceptions about China's rise, and closer economic and strategic ties.

While India and Germany have exchanged students at military academies since 1978, defence ties have been limited. Germany supplied four Type 209 submarines to India between 1986 and 1994. Since 1999, Germany has been supplying India with parts to build ships, submarines, planes, helicopters and tanks. It has supplied Dornier 228 aircraft, which India has been manufacturing since 1983 under a technology-transfer agreement. The Indo-German strategic partnership began in 2001. In 2006, the two countries signed a defence cooperation agreement, and an agreement to protect classified information followed in 2007. India and Germany hold regular high-level meetings on defence, and have been collaborating in anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden. They both participated in the US-hosted Rim of the Pacific naval exercise in 2022.

India is party to regional security arrangements such as the Quad, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus, and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. As tensions between the US and China grow, India and the US are deepening their strategic partnership. This includes both the deepening and broadening of defence and intelligence cooperation and more multilateral partnerships. With defence spending in the US and China showing no signs of decreasing, neither will India's. But one can expect more domestically produced armaments from India in the future, and higher arms exports.

MIDDLE EAST

REGION OF TENSION, ZONES OF CONTENTION

A regional collective-security system would require that Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia come to the same table – and include a treaty securing an end to the occupation of the West Bank.

The shock of the terrorist attack by Hamas on 7 October 2023 still reverberates half a year on. Not only in the immediate neighbourhood of Israel and Palestine, but also as far away as Pakistan, where Iran fired missiles at a regional militia associated with the so-called Islamic State. A decade after the self-appointed caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi reached the peak of his terror campaign in 2014, with capitals in Raqqa and Mosul, the Islamic State is now gaining new momentum in the border region of Iran and Pakistan, of all places.

The Gaza war is also fanning the flames on the periphery of the Middle East, as solidarity with Palestine and the protection of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem belong to the self-image of all Arab and Muslim states. According to Palestinian sources there have been more than 30,000 deaths in Gaza, and many people in Beirut, Baghdad, Tehran and Kabul regard the international community's failure to compel Israel to limit its military actions as a double standard.

After the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan, an imported system of democracy appeared to offer some hope, guaranteed by the world's biggest military power. But the Americans withdrew in defeat 20 years later, taking a whole armada of international partners and aid organizations in their wake. Two decades of war against terror came to an end.

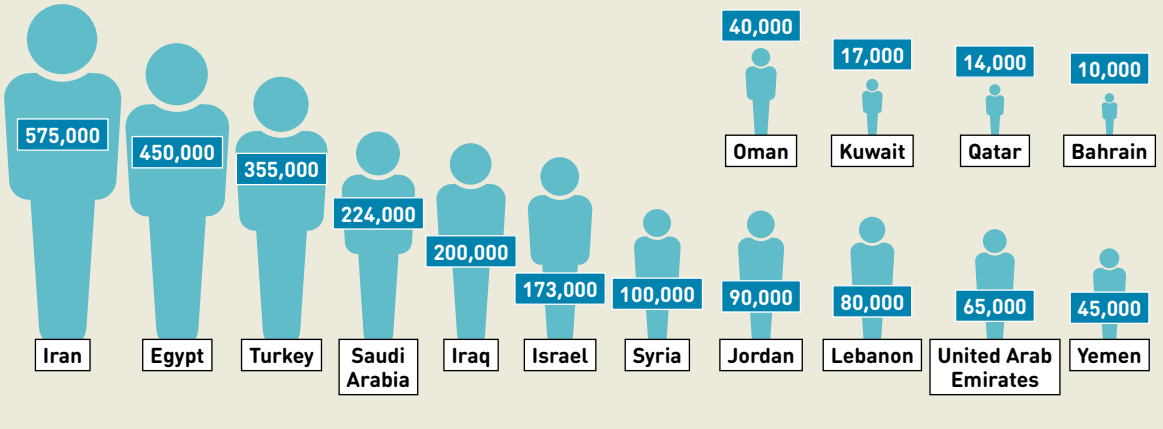
For Jews, the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023 mean that they now no longer have any secure refuge that offers protection from pogroms – as before the founding of the Israeli state in 1948. Palestinians are reminded of a different trauma: the Nakba, or "catastrophe" – the mass dispossessions that resulted from the Israeli war of independence in 1948 and the Six-Day War of 1967. The dream of their own state, nurtured by the Oslo Peace Accords and a Nobel Peace Prize, was shattered by the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, and is now long dead.

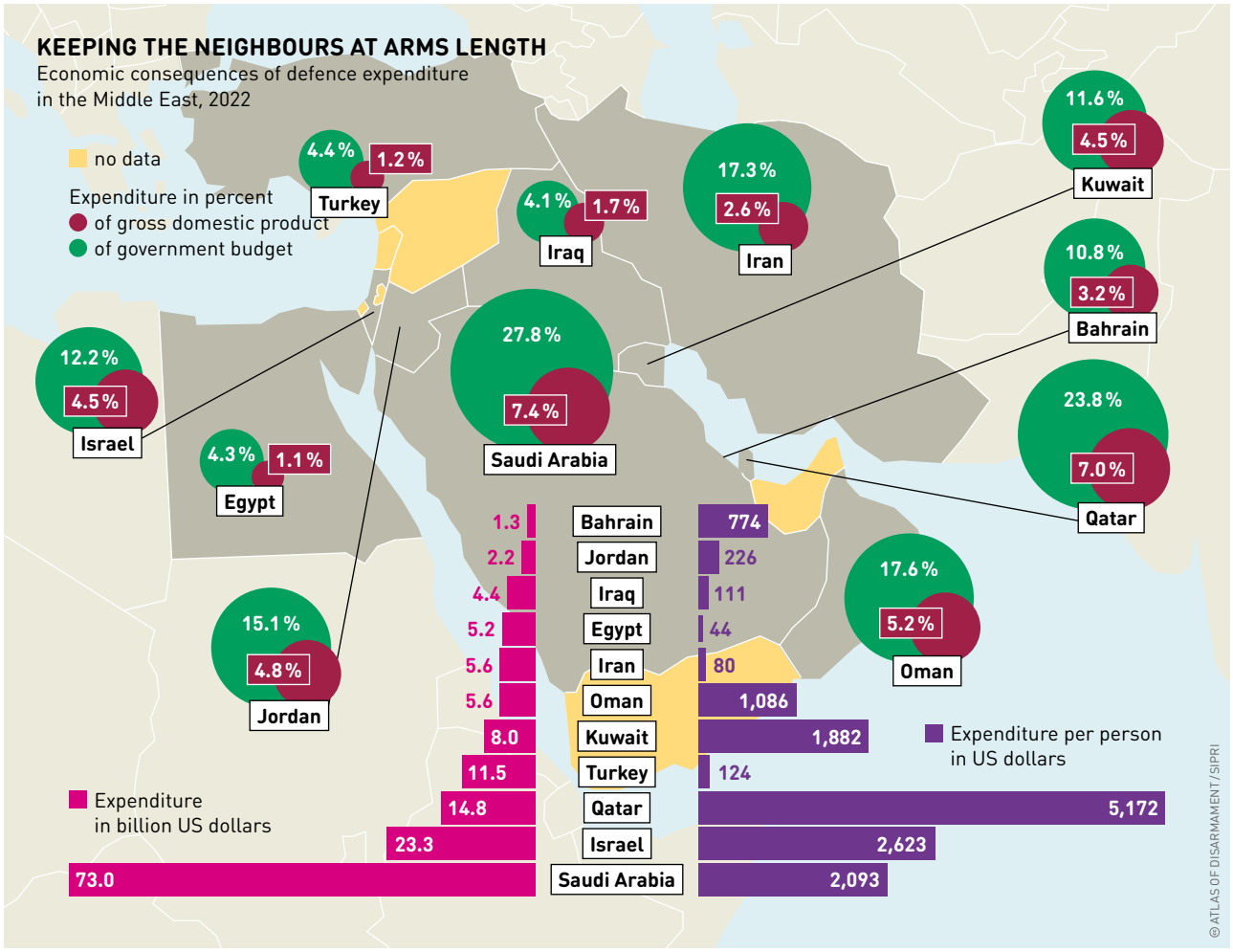
Yet the blueprint for the settlement of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict has been on the table for two decades. The Arab Peace Initiative provides for Israel to be recognized by the states of the Arab League, in return for an Israeli army withdrawal from the West Bank territories it has occupied since 1967. The domino effect that international diplomacy had hoped for through the peace agreements between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization might perhaps follow after all.

The armies of the region have many functions. They protect resources and trade routes, maintain and expand power, and secure the existence of states

MASSED RANKS AND HIGH-TECH

Troop strengths in the Middle East compared, selected, 2024, number of personnel





NATO members are discussing a goal of two percent of gross domestic product. Many countries in the Middle East spend far more than this on defence

The so-called Abraham Accords have reversed the political direction of the Oslo era: first peace between Israel and Palestine, then in the region as a whole. The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco did not want to wait, so, in 2020 they established diplomatic relations with Israel. Saudi Arabia was also working towards normalization before the Hamas terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023 torpedoed the rapprochement, at least for the time being.

In the long term, once the shockwaves of 7 October have died down, Saudi Arabia is aiming for a peace agreement with Israel – depending on a formal end to the occupation regime. An Israeli–Saudi accord is essential for the creation of a system of regional security that would also include Iran. Stability in the Middle East can only be achieved if representatives of the Islamic Republic and the Wahhabi Kingdom can one day sit at the same table with Israeli diplomats.

The fact that in 2023 after a long freeze, Tehran and Riyadh exchanged ambassadors is an important step in this direction. Ten years after the Saudi intervention in the Yemen war, the regime of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman is now again seen as an anchor of stability in the region. The German government agreed to deliver Eurofighter jets to the Saudi air force in early 2024.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates could emerge from the Gaza war as the new regional power-brokers because they have brought the Syrian strongman Bashar al-Assad back onto the international stage. Washington has noted the military restraint of Damascus, despite daily Israeli attacks on Iranian and Lebanese militias in Syria.

Strategic restraint also characterizes the approach of Iran's Revolutionary Leader, Ali Khameini. He favours de-escalation in both the conflict across the border with Pakistan and in the border triangle of Israel, Syria and Lebanon. Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah is adhering to this policy. Neither Tehran nor Washington have an interest in a direct war, even though pro-Iranian militias have increased their drone attacks on American military targets since 7 October. New islands of non-peaceful coexistence have emerged, which the regional hegemons Saudi Arabia and Iran are endeavouring to contain. Their effort is a hopeful sign in view of the numerous conflicts that have shaken North Africa and the Middle East since the revolutions of the Arab Spring in 2011.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY CONVERSION

DREAMS OF PEACE

The end of the Cold War saw a marked fall in arms spending. Ideas were needed on how resources previously used for military purposes could be put to civilian use. But since the turn of the millennium, armaments budgets have begun to rise again.

At the end of the 1980s, governments were searching for ways to provide their defence industries with a fresh future. They had various reasons to do so. Faced with falling demand and high development costs, the military suppliers found themselves in an economic crisis. Bottom-up initiatives emerged in firms with a large number of trade union members. These initiatives tried to develop alternatives for the civilian market by producing socially useful and desirable products. But most of the pressure for conversion came from above. With the INF treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces of 1987 and the CFE treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe, the most successful arms control and disarmament treaties in history came into force. As a result, the military spending of almost all countries declined after 1990. It was necessary to convert production and research capacity, as well as property and land used for military purposes, to civilian use.

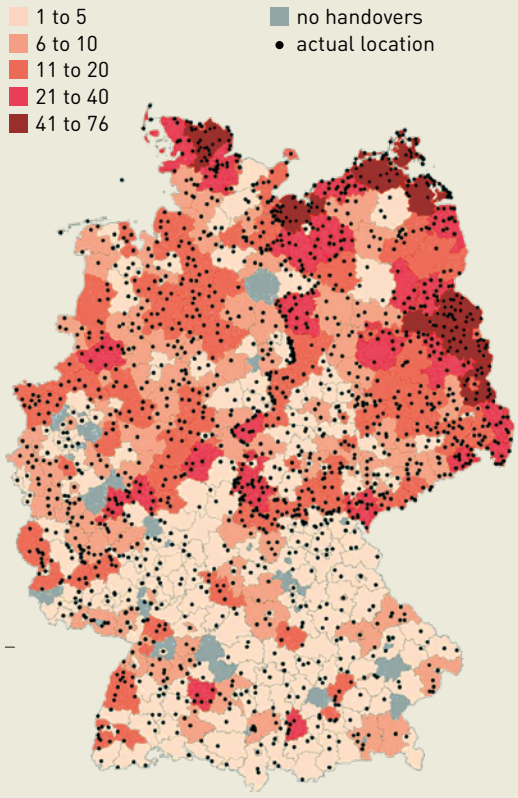
At first, expectations were high. A "peace dividend" was promised – or at least lower costs of disarmament. Global military expenditure sank by over 27 percent between 1988 and 1995: in North America by 26 percent, in Central Europe by 54 percent, and in Eastern Europe by as much as 90 percent. Between 1990 and 1994, the Russian arms industry shed around 3.7 million jobs; in the US it was 600,000, and in the Germany around 100,000. It is unclear how many of these jobs were shifted to the production of civilian products, but there were some major regional successes. In Bremen, the German state with the highest density of arms makers in 1990, almost 15 percent of all defence-related jobs were converted, and one-third of the employees switched to civilian-related employment.

In the United States there was less success in converting jobs because a large part of the peace dividend went to pay off debt rather than being spent on conversion. Some firms merely transferred their staff to other departments, and some sold their defence business to other companies, leading to a concentration in the defence sector. In Russia, on the other hand, there was a complete lack of resources to provide meaningful support for conversion. The civilian sector in many areas proved too technically backward to take over technology and personnel from the defence sector in an effective way. And faced with a shrinking Russian economy, the notion of conversion became a byword for a misguided policy that even drove some internationally competitive defence firms into bankruptcy.

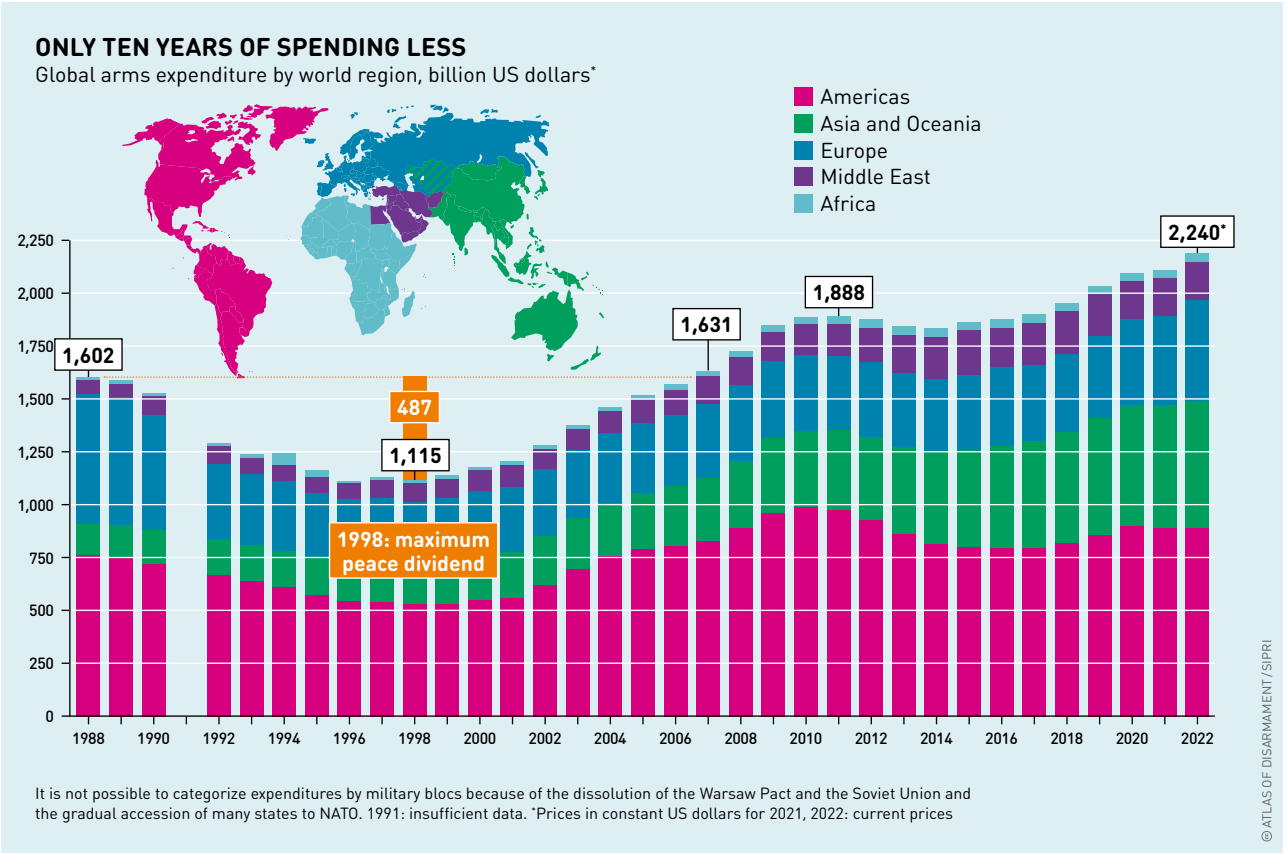
The first wave of conversions showed that funds must be made available for the sustainable financing of conversion projects. In the 1990s, the Costa Rican president and later Nobel Peace Prize winner Óscar Arias Sánchez proposed creating a United Nations Conversion Fund for this purpose. This fund was to be financed by the peace dividends of developed countries, and would support the conversion of arms industries in financially weaker coun-

DEMILITARIZED ZONES

Handovers of closed Bundeswehr properties for conversion, 1990 to 2007, by district



Around two-thirds of all miltary properties in Germany, or about 600,000 hectares, have been returned to civilian use since 1990

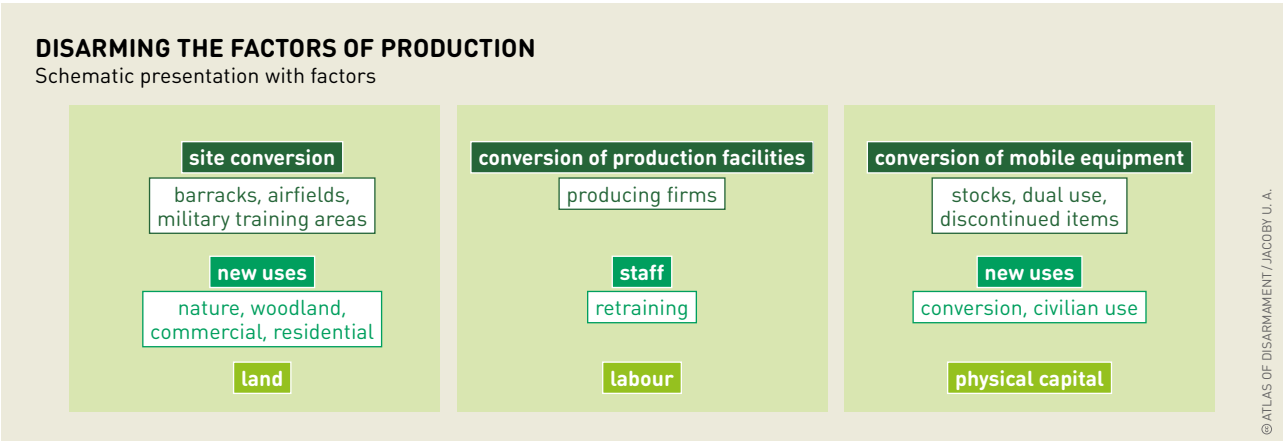


tries. A similar instrument is conceivable today, though perhaps not fed by peace dividends but by a conversion tax, levied on the purchase of armaments. This would mean that the costs of disarmament would not be externalized, as is currently the case. An arms buildup would become more expensive because it would already contain the costs of disarmament and conversion. In addition, the war in Ukraine has shown that it is not enough to limit the numbers of particular weapons systems, as in the CFE treaty. The stockpiles of munitions, the capacity of the arms industry, and investment in military research and development must also be regulated or reduced in order to limit the risk of war.

After the Cold War, military budgets fell by one-third. It took just 20 years for them to recover and reach their previous level

Successful defence conversion must be linked to active policies for environmental protection, land use, employment and economics

Today, some people regard conversion as a side-effect of the Cold War – something that could occur only under specific circumstances, because rearmament was neither possible nor necessary. But any era of arms growth could be followed by a period of arms control and disarmament, accompanied by the process of conversion. —



ARMS TRADE

BOOM FUELLED BY WAR AND CRISES

Rising global tensions are reinvigorating the business of importing and exporting arms. If NATO members increase their arms spending, the trade can expect another boost.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 heralded the end of "real socialism" in the Communist Bloc. The Cold War ended. Spending on defence fell as did cross-border arms sales. At their lowest level in 2002, these sales were half as high as in 1982. According to figures from SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, international trade in defence equipment has since been rising again, albeit unevenly from year to year. It has now again reached levels last seen in 1990. In 2021, defence spending broke the US$ 2 trillion barrier for the first time. According to the most recent figures, it hit US$ 2.24 trillion in 2022.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the buildup of the 2000s and 2010s has morphed into an era of new weapons. But it would be misleading to speak of an out-and-out arms race worldwide, as the extra weaponry is unevenly distributed globally. The most recent figures show some paradoxes. Comparing the two five-year periods of 2014–18 and 2019–23, the global volume of exports sank slightly by 3.3 percent: 52 percent fewer arm imports went to Africa, 19 percent less to Latin America, 12 percent less to Asia and Oceania, and 12 percent fewer to the Middle East.

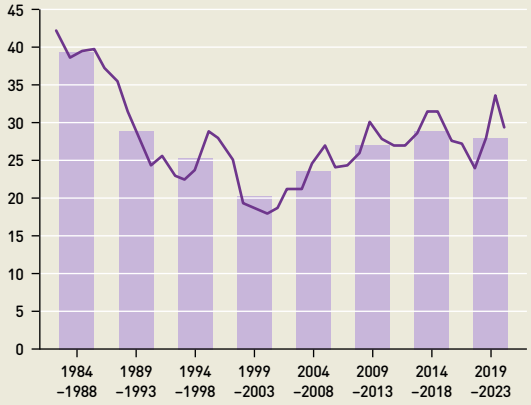
But a few countries are adding to their arsenals especially quickly. Arms imports to Europe nearly doubled (going up 97 percent) between the period from 2014–18 to the period from 2019–23. The United States profited from these purchases: its share of imports rose from 35 to 55 percent. How dominant this position is can be seen from the shares of the second- and third-placed exporters: together, France and Germany account for just 11 percent of the EU market for defence equipment.

This rise has almost made up for the decline in demand in other parts of the world. It is striking that Japan increased its arms imports by 155 percent between the two five-year periods mentioned above. Qatar, an ally of the West, also massively increased its arms imports – by 396 percent. The biggest change, however, was in Ukraine. In 2021, it ranked 63rd in the list of importers; in 2022, the year of Russia's illegal invasion, it was third, after Qatar and India; and in 2024 it ranked in fourth place.

In a short period, the USA and France have significantly boosted their defence exports. Russia increasingly needs to use the weapons it produces itself

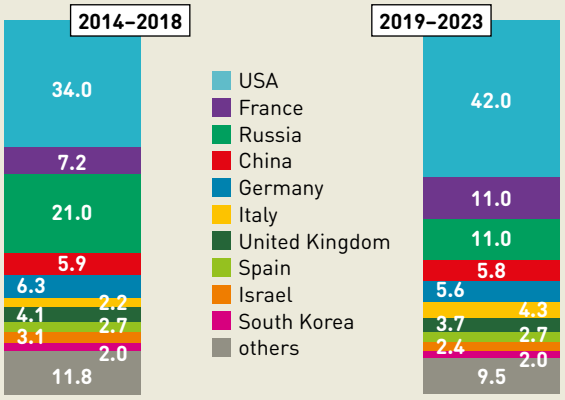
ARMS EXPORTS AND WORLD MARKET SHARES

International trade in heavy weapons, in billion TIV*

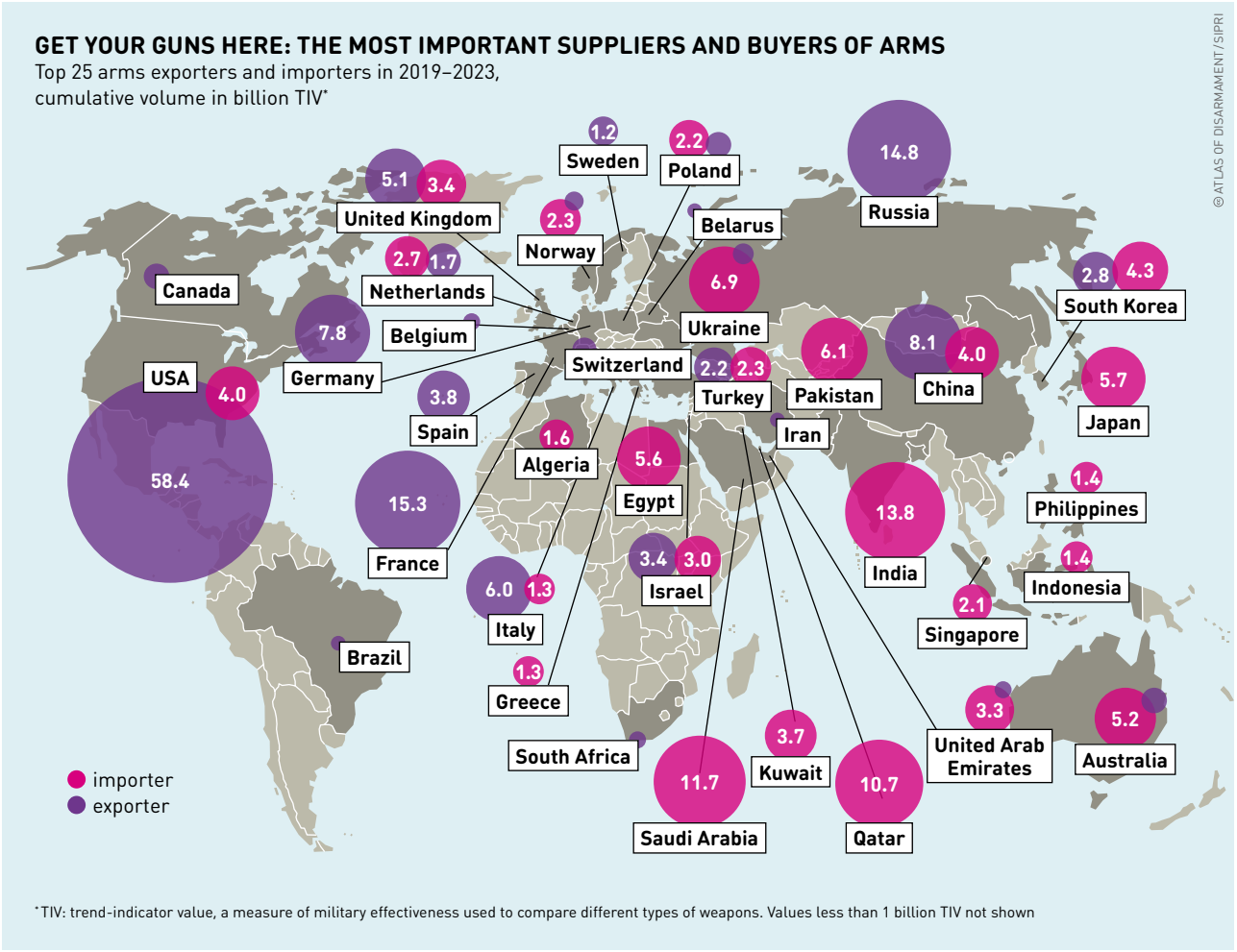


*TIV: trend-indicator value, a measure of military effectiveness used to compare different types of weapons

Comparison of top 10 supplier countries, shares in percent



Differences due to rounding



*TIV: trend-indicator value, a measure of military effectiveness used to compare different types of weapons. Values less than 1 billion TIV not shown

India and the Gulf states buy the most weapons on the international market. Lately, Europe has had the strongest growth; NATO members tend to buy from each other

The "burden sharing" that the United States is pressing on the European members of NATO is expected to give the international trade in arms new impetus. NATO members aim to spend at least 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defence. Of that figure, 20 percent is meant for buying or developing new weapons systems. But the gap between the commitments and actual spending amounted to 66 billion euros in 2021. By 2023 it had shrunk only slightly to around 54 billion.

It was also agreed that no NATO member should have to be responsible for more than 50 percent of the total expenditure on arms. Based on America's 70 percent share of NATO military expenditure in 2023, that would imply redistributing around 213 billion dollars to the United States. It is true that this aspect of defence funding is not part of the political discussions, even in the United States. But any restructuring of NATO financing would lead to a considerable increase in the flow of arms as many countries would not be able to meet the new requirements from their own production, so would have to import from abroad.

The beneficiaries of spiralling spending are the global arms manufacturers. Morningstar, a financial information provider, predicts that the cumulative turnover of the six largest listed companies in the sector, all from the United States, will rise by around 7 percent a year between 2022 and 2025. The share price of Rheinmetall, the biggest German arms maker, was 90 euros in February 2022. In mid-March 2024, it was approaching the 500-euro mark.

Russia comes out as the loser in these changes. SIPRI no longer has exact data about Russian arms production but estimates that the Russian manufacturers in the list of the 100 largest defence companies worldwide had just 3.5 percent of the global market in 2022. That compares to 5.1 percent in 2019, when Russia still published figures. In 2022, firms from the rest of Europe had 20 percent of the market, while American ones had 51 percent and Chinese firms accounted for 18 percent.

Figures for Russian exports are available from the importing countries. Russia's world market share collapsed from 21 percent in 2022 to 11 percent in 2023. In 2019 Russia supplied arms to 31 countries, but to just 12 in 2023. Comparing the periods 2014–18 and 2019–23, exports to India, which remains Russia's biggest customer, fell by 34 percent. Exports to China declined by 39 percent, and to Egypt by 54 percent. Russia itself now needs the weapons it produces, and sanctions hinder sales, so this shift is likely to be accentuated in the coming years.

DRONES

THE POOR MAN'S AIR FORCE

Unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, are changing the nature of warfare. Cheap, hard to detect and able to operate independently or in swarms, they can deliver information and intelligence to their operators and inflict deadly force to their targets. Drones are shifting the balance of power away from large, national armies towards rebel groups and militias.

Advances in technology have changed the game in the methods and scale of warfare – and most importantly, in the type of belligerent party. A decade ago, many technologies that are taken for granted today, were accessible only to those with the means to pay. In military terms, this meant only national armed forces. At the time, "high-tech" technologies were complex and required highly advanced knowledge and training to operate. Today, these technologies are regarded as low-tech. They use older components, are easy to operate, and have readily available parts, which makes them cheap and accessible to non-specialists.

In fighting wars, drones are one common form of low-tech equipment. Drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), have appeared in battlefields in Yemen, Syria, Nagorno Karabakh, Ethiopia and Ukraine. It is easy for non-state armed groups to buy drones, or the components needed to make them, on the internet. Combat drones can be built by modifying radio-controlled hobbyists model planes to carry heavier payloads, and by adding cheap components bought on Alibaba. Advances in and the commercialization of several key technologies explain this proliferation. Improved global positioning systems give greater control and a longer range to commercially available craft. Artificial intelligence has boosted capabilities further.

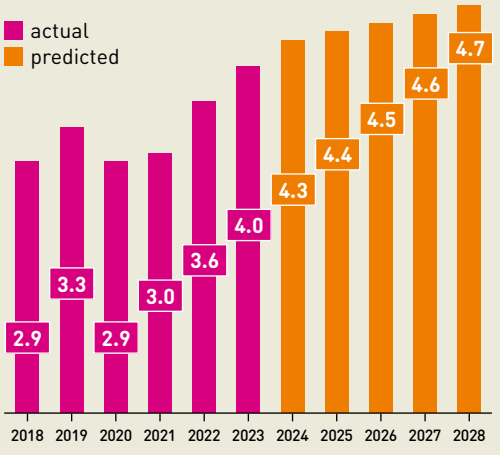
Until recently, the military drone industry was controlled by Israel and the United States, selling the technology only to those parties who assured that it would not be used against them (i.e. the seller nations) or in violation of human rights. Such anti-proliferation measures resulted in many states establishing indigenous drone programmes, such as the Turkish Bayraktar TB2 or the United Arab Emirates' Yabhon United 40. The alternative was to procure drone technology from states such as China, and then convert them for military purposes. Ukrainians fighting the Russian invasion have taken this route, causing China to restrict exports. The Turkish TB2 is significantly cheaper than the US-made Javelin, and Turkey cares less about the purchasers' human-rights records. The TB2 has been sold to many states, including Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Libya, Morocco and Ethiopia.

Drones are useful for more than reconnaissance and surveillance. They have shifted from being a secondary tool to one of the most common and valuable pieces of artillery, especially for non-state groups. In 2019, the Syrian army recovered a homemade drone from a rebel group near Aleppo. Fitted with a PG-7vL high-explosive anti-tank round it was thought to have been built using a DIY kit. The Islamic State was able to replicate this type of drone construction on a much larger scale, giving it a significant and unanticipated edge on the battlefield.

Air power was traditionally very expensive, making it available only to states with large budgets. Drones suddenly provided poorer states and non-state groups with an inexpensive air force. Drones are cheap and do not need costly maintenance or skilled operators with years of expensive training. While drones are not as effective as fighter jets, they do provide an air capability previously unavailable to some belligerents, and which, in addition, has levelled the playing field. Low cost is a plus, but however, it is their ability to move in unison and without human intervention, thanks to artificial intelligence, that

FIELD TESTING IS GOOD FOR SALES

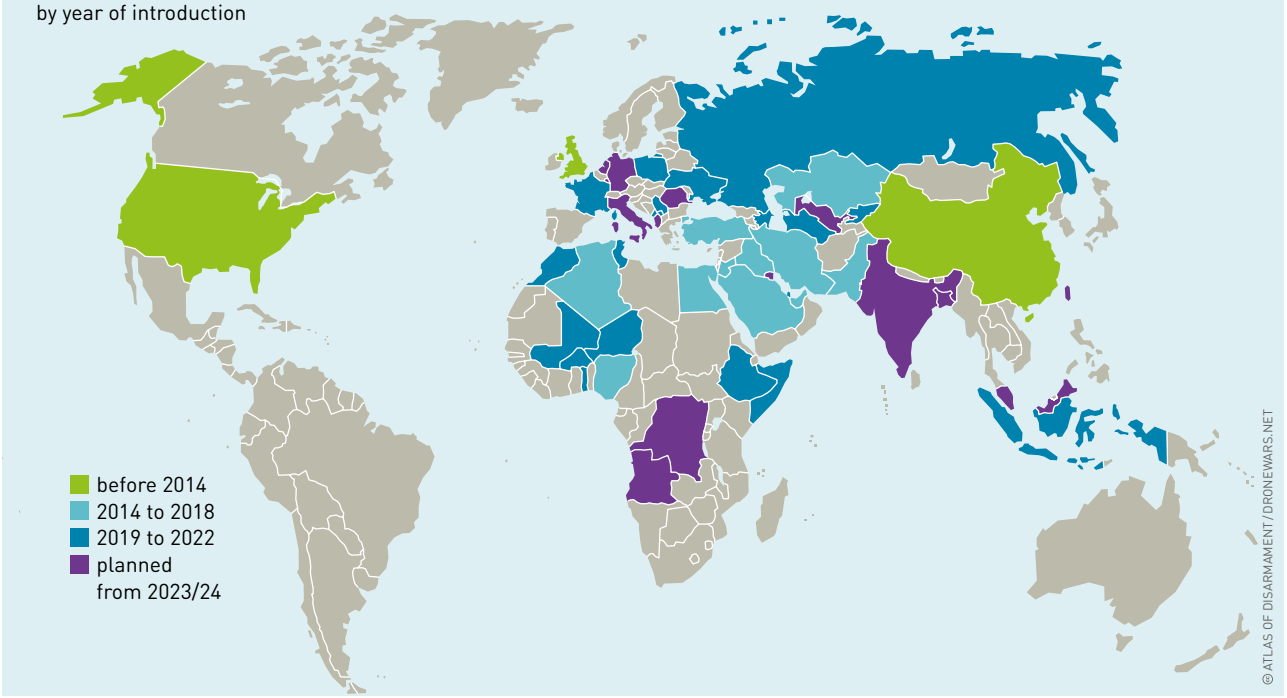
Global boom caused by war in Ukraine in the sale of drones for private use, turnover in billion US dollars



Marketing blitz from the battlefield: between the start of 2022 and the end of 2023, the sales of drones shot up by one-third

GAME OF DRONES

Deployment of armed medium-altitude long-endurance (MALE) drones, by year of introduction



For unmanned combat operations, more and more governments are acquiring drones that can be controlled from locations far from where they are deployed

provides the advantage. Libya, Yemen, Syria and Ukraine all have battles taking place across vast areas at low elevations and over open ground. Drones can overcome these barriers by their ability to cover long distances quickly and to penetrate traditional defences such as blockades.

Because the technology is so useful, national armed forces are showing a preference for armed drones over traditional weaponry, carving out a new, lucrative market for suppliers. The Russian army has become reliant on drones to carry out many attacks against Ukraine, preferring them to missiles, which are significantly more expensive and less accurate. Having chosen to prioritize other areas of air defence and crippled by Western sanctions, Russia was late to the drone game. It found itself isolated from large parts of the international supply chain needed to manufacture its own craft, forcing it to turn to Iran. Iran, in turn, found itself with a steady customer with ample means to pay and a readymade battlefield in which to demonstrate its products' capabilities. Iran has been able to bolster its image as a reliable supplier among other buyers in the region, and as a credible military force in its own right.

The development and proliferation of drone technology has permanently altered the landscape of warfare. Previously the United States and its allies enjoyed near-unrivalled control over the skies with their vast fleets of fighter jets and the ground-launch capabilities; this is no longer the case. The proliferation of low-tech has permitted armed groups with tiny budgets to pose a serious threat to larger adversaries, forcing the re-evaluation of defensive strategies that have hitherto been reliable and effective.

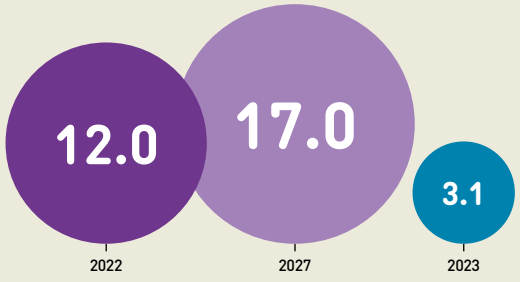
The sheer size of government orders makes US and Israeli firms the frontrunners. But they no longer have the market to themselves

TAKING FLIGHT

Market for US and Isaeli manufacturers of military drones, in billion US dollars

USA: Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Teledyne FLIR, Dynetics, Volansi, Griffon Aerospace. **Israel:** Israel Aerospace, Robotican

As comparison: a single order by **Saudi Arabia** for the drone maker Baykar in **Turkey.** This benefited from a US weapons embargo against Saudi Arabia



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PROLIFERATION

REACTOR BOOM

Miniature nuclear reactors generate power without pumping out greenhouse gases. But they carry the risk of uncontrollable nuclear proliferation, as the fuel could be reprocessed to make weapons. In addition, they produce radioactive waste that must be disposed of safely.

Small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs) have electrical power capacities of up to than 300 megawatts. They can be largely assembled in a centralized facility and are installed in a modular fashion at power generation sites. Some are so small (20 megawatts or less) that they are considered "micro" reactors. SMRs are distinct from conventional nuclear plants in operation today, which are typically around 1000 megawatts and are custom-built. Interest in building small reactors has grown in recent years because some recent large reactor projects, including Olkiluoto in Finland and Vogtle in the United States, have taken far longer and cost far more than originally projected, undermining arguments that nuclear power plants can be deployed rapidly around the world to help reduce carbon emissions.

SMR designers say that these small reactors can be cheaper and quicker to build than large reactors. They claim that achieving efficiency in the mass production of identical units will eventually result in lower production costs. However, there is no evidence to demonstrate that such cost reductions would be sufficient to make the reactors economically competitive with large reactors or with renewable technologies such as wind and solar power. In addition, dozens of units would have to be produced before manufacturers could learn how to make their processes more efficient, meaning that the first reactors of a given design will be unavoidably expensive and will require large government or ratepayer subsidies to get built.

Getting past this obstacle has proven to be one of the main impediments to SMR deployment. In the United States, for example, a project to build six SMRs was cancelled in 2023 because of a ballooning cost estimate, even with the promise of government subsidy. Currently China is the only country with a land-based SMR under construction. A Russian SMR on a floating platform has been operating since 2019, but utilises two reactors that are also used in submarines and on icebreakers.

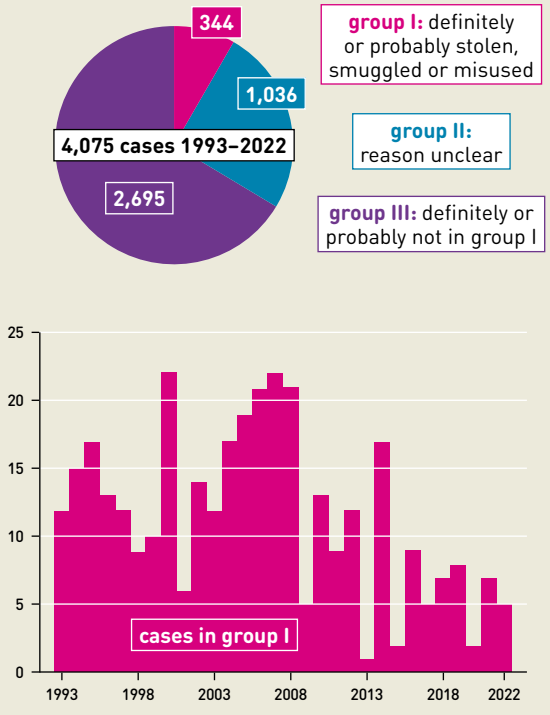
Nevertheless, there continues to be significant interest around the world in pursuing SMR technology. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) estimates that more than 80 SMRs are being designed globally, although the state of maturity of those projects varies widely.

Despite their smaller size, SMRs can pose significant proliferation risks. Even a 50-megawatt reactor will produce more than ten kilograms of plutonium annually – enough to make one or more nuclear weapons. Such reactors will therefore require intensive monitoring to verify that they are not being misused for nuclear weapon programmes and that significant quantities of nuclear materials are not diverted or stolen. Non-nuclear weapon state parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty must place their nuclear facilities and materials under international inspection by the IAEA.

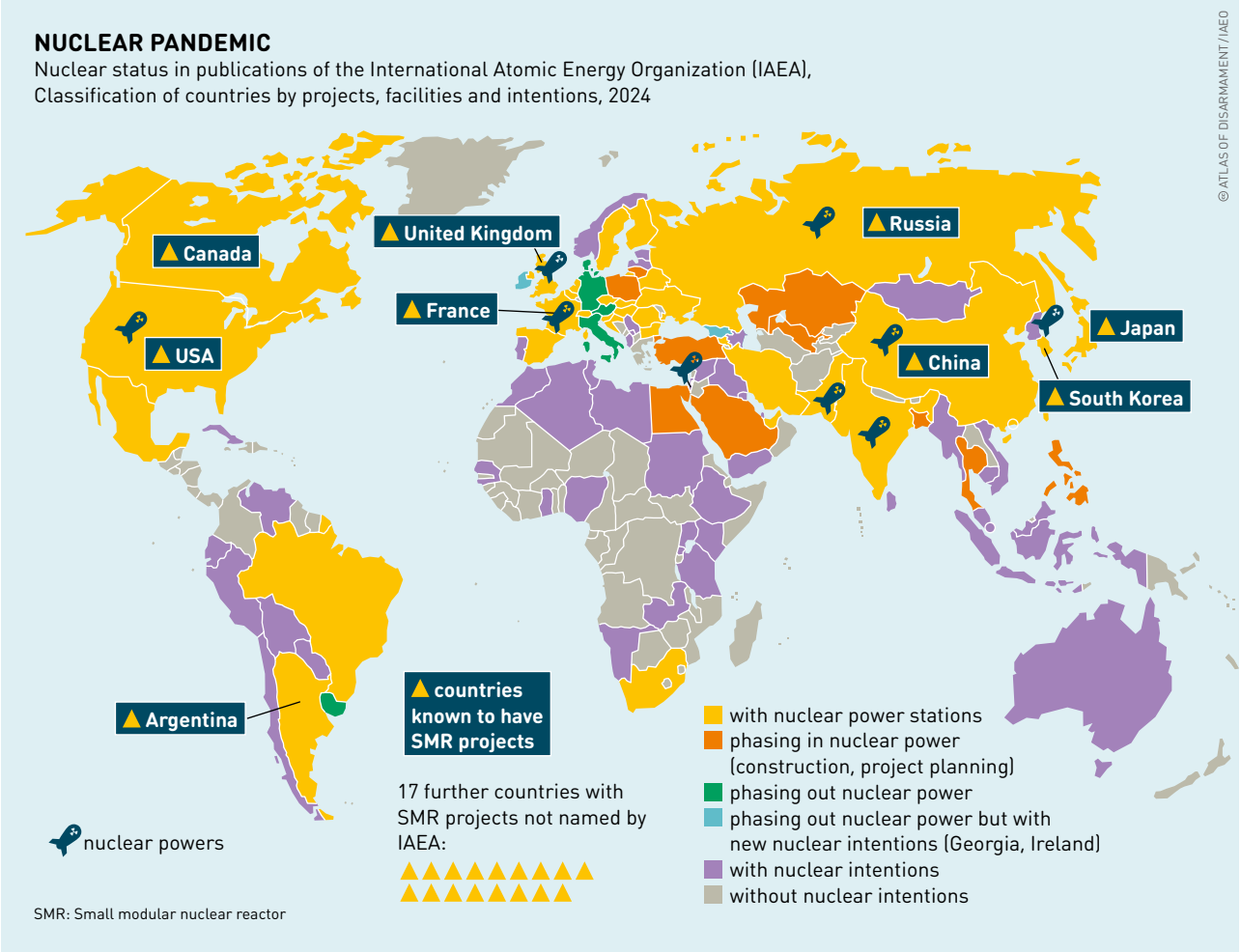
Experts fear that terrorists could mix stolen radioactive material in a bomb – for actual use or as a threat to extract concessions

HOT GOODS

Reports to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on incidents involving radioactive materials



Most cases involve tiny amounts of radioactive materials in measurement instruments. But containers with low-enriched uranium have also disappeared. Some thefts are made for the scrap trade. The Islamic State was also interested in radioactive materials.



The IAEA keeps track of nuclear intentions and plans worldwide. The number of countries with nuclear plants is currently rising, while the number of reactors is falling

However, if SMRs are widely deployed to remote regions and nuclear newcomer countries, the number of sites worldwide that would have to be routinely inspected by the IAEA could increase from hundreds to thousands, and inspectors may have to visit SMR sites with many units more frequently. In addition, the physical layout of some SMRs may inhibit inspector access and make their jobs harder. The IAEA's resources, already insufficient today, could become even more strained unless member states vote to end the "zero real growth" budget policy that the agency has operated under for decades.

Some SMR designs are riskier than others, depending on the type of fuel and their modes of operation. The lowest proliferation risks posed by SMRs are similar to nearly all the large power reactors today, which use ordinary water as a coolant and very low-enriched uranium fuel. But many SMRs are designed to use different coolants, such as liquid sodium or helium gas. In some designs, the fuel itself is a molten salt – mostly uranium chloride, and a liquid rather than a solid material. These other types of reactors typically require uranium fuel with enrichments higher than water-cooled SMRs, which makes them more attractive for nuclear weapons use. Also, some SMRs, such as molten-salt reactors and some types of gas-cooled reactors (called "pebble-bed" reactors), would require near-continuous refuelling, providing more opportunities for diversion of fuel than reactors that are refuelled only once every few years.

Even more relevant to proliferation is the question of how the spent fuel from an SMR will be managed. Reactors based on a once-through fuel cycle – meaning that their spent nuclear fuel is stored for eventual disposal underground – are relatively proliferation-resistant, because plutonium and other weapon-usable materials are diluted in highly radioactive spent fuel and are difficult to access. But some SMR developers claim that their designs can "recycle" their spent fuel into fresh fuel. However, to reuse spent fuel, it must first be reprocessed: chemically treated to separate plutonium and other usable fuel materials from the bulk of the spent fuel. Because reprocessing produces separated plutonium in a relatively accessible form, SMRs that use plutonium-based fuel present much greater proliferation risks and would require much more intensive IAEA verification than those that use very low-enriched uranium fuel and do not reprocess.

MERCENARIES

GUNS FOR HIRE

Deploying mercenaries is attractive. Powerful states can outsource both hazardous and humdrum military tasks. Smaller states can gain the services of skilled and often ruthless foreign operatives. Mercenaries give their employers a veneer of plausible deniability, allowing them to sweep humans-rights violations under the carpet.

Mercenaries have always existed. They took on a modern form in the mid-20th century to strengthen certain regimes and carry out coups d'état. Their missions were closely linked to the fight against communism and the maintenance of colonial domination in Africa and parts of Asia. In 1977, the Organization of African Unity passed the Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa. This banned both mercenaries and mercenarism, which was described as a crime against peace and security in Africa. It defined mercenaries as persons who were recruited at home or abroad specifically to fight in an armed conflict, who participated directly in hostilities motivated by material compensation, and who were neither nationals of a party to the conflict nor members of the armed forces of a party to the conflict.

The end of the 1980s and the start of the 1990s saw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the downsizing of armies in Europe and the United States, the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa and that country's war in Namibia and Angola. These events led to an influx of fighters and material to mercenary armies. In 1989, South Africa's first modern private military company, Executive Outcomes, was founded by Eeben Barlow, a former lieutenant colonel in the South African Defence Force. It aimed to bring his teams' combat experience to the rebellion-plagued regimes of Sierra Leone and Angola.

Thus, in the 1990s, the concept of outsourcing of a war effort emerged. In 1990, there was one "civilian contractor" for every 50 military personnel in the US army; ten years later, there was one for every 10. The end of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1989 and the Gulf war and the deployment of American troops to Saudi Arabia in the following year were the catalysts for jihadist terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa. The impact on unstable states such as Somalia and countries in the Gulf of Guinea was disastrous, reigniting local conflicts and marine piracy. This resulted in countries turning to mercenaries for their military equipment and even logistics. Large defence and technology corporations provided logistical support to the US army's overseas deployments in the mid-1990s, delivering transport, accommodation, food and security in the Middle East and Africa.

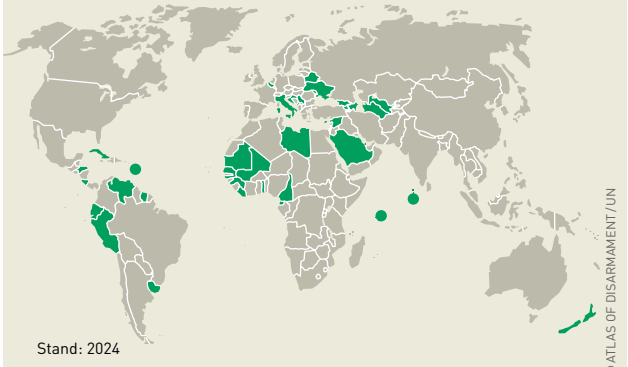
The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 were a major turning point in the normalization of mercenarism. The founding of Blackwater Worldwide by Erik Prince in 1996 marked the transition from employing private military companies for strategic or tactical purposes to using them as a geopolitical tool. Since the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2002, Blackwater has received numerous military contracts from the US government as well as contracts to protect the activities of private companies. What's more, Blackwater was responsible for the security of Afghan President Hamid Karzai for over five years.

Blackwater's involvement in the US occupation of Iraq after 2003, where the company was responsible for the transport and security of 16,000 American embassy employees in Baghdad, also highlighted its limitations. After Blackwater agents were lynched in Falluja in 2004, the US army launched a bloody major offensive that claimed many lives. A massacre perpetrated by Blackwater employees in Baghdad in 2007, in which 17 civilians were killed, marked the beginning of Erik Prince's dwindling influence. He sold Blackwater in 2010.

In 2014, Yevgeny Prigozhin, an oligarch with close ties to Vladimir Putin, founded PMC Wagner. He built up a veritable mercenary army, deployed in far-flung conflicts

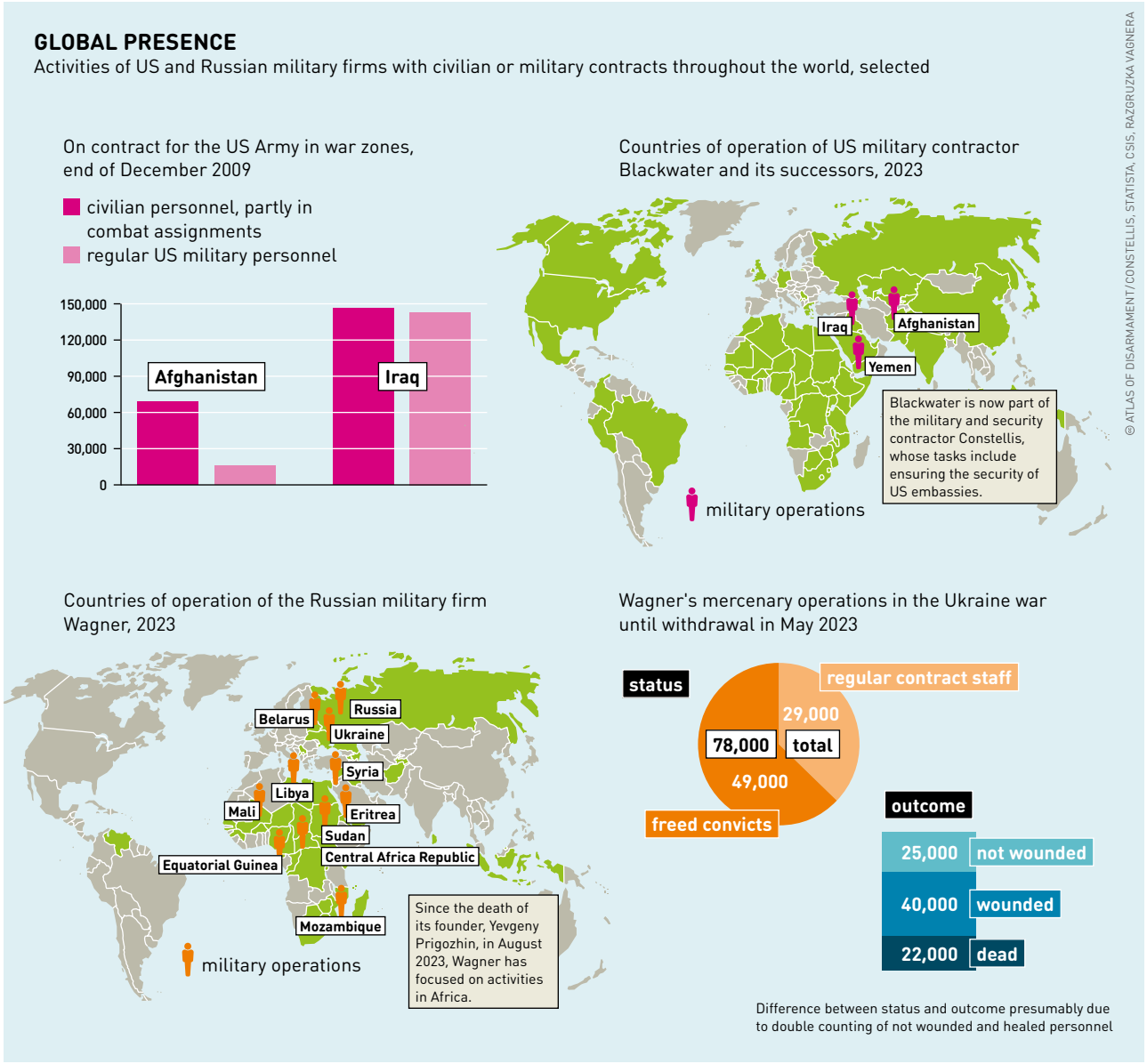
LITTLE INTEREST IN A BAN

The 37 signatory countries to the 1989 International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries



Stand: 2024

Some countries, including Belarus, Syria and Mali, have signed the Convention but still allow mercenaries to operate on their soil



The leading military contractors Blackwater and Wagner have become household names as a result of their combat missions in Iraq and Ukraine

such as Libya, Syria, Sudan, Mali, Mozambique and the Central African Republic. Wagner was legalized in Russia only in December 2022, in the wake of its deployment in the war against Ukraine. Moscow has used mercenaries under its control as a geopolitical weapon, positioning them in Africa and other countries where they were given the task of spreading Russian soft power through propaganda, politics or violence in these countries. Moscow tied Wagner's forces into its invasion plans until the organization staged a rebellion in 2023. Wagner's leaders later died in a mysterious plane crash.

Mercenaries are likely to flourish due to global instability and the proliferation of recruits and weapons. China's major projects in Africa, Asia and Europe through its Belt and Road Initiative are a security challenge for Beijing, which is reluctant to send its troops abroad. Dozens of private Chinese security firms are now active internationally. Missions such as the evacuation of Chinese workers from conflict regions are well known, but otherwise their activities come under little scrutiny. They also operate on the fringes of the military, such as in training paramilitary groups. FSG, a state-financed group from Beijing under the leadership of the Blackwater founder Erik Prince, attracted attention in 2014 when it had three agricultural aircraft converted to small fighter planes. One of them turned up in South Sudan. The ambitions of regional powers such as Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and even South Africa are also leading to the establishment and deployment of mercenary companies.

The Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries offers an opportunity to put an end to the use of mercenaries. This International Convention went into force in 2001 and has been ratified by 37 states – though not by any of the major powers.

ARCHITECTURE OF ARMS CONTROL ON SHAKY GROUNDS

The global security environment has undergone tectonic shifts of late, with important implications for multilateral disarmament and arms control. These changes impact upon everything from conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction to emerging areas like cyberspace and outer space. The international community must grapple with these changes.

First, the range and order of actors has changed significantly: multipolarity, a growing role for non-state actors, and current armed conflicts have all reshaped international relations and heightened tensions. Second, a cascade of global crises, particularly climate change and the covid-19 pandemic, have also disrupted global peace and security. Third, rapid technological change such as artificial intelligence and drones have affected many areas of peace and security. The multilateral disarmament and arms-control architecture is coming under significant stress – precisely when it is most needed.

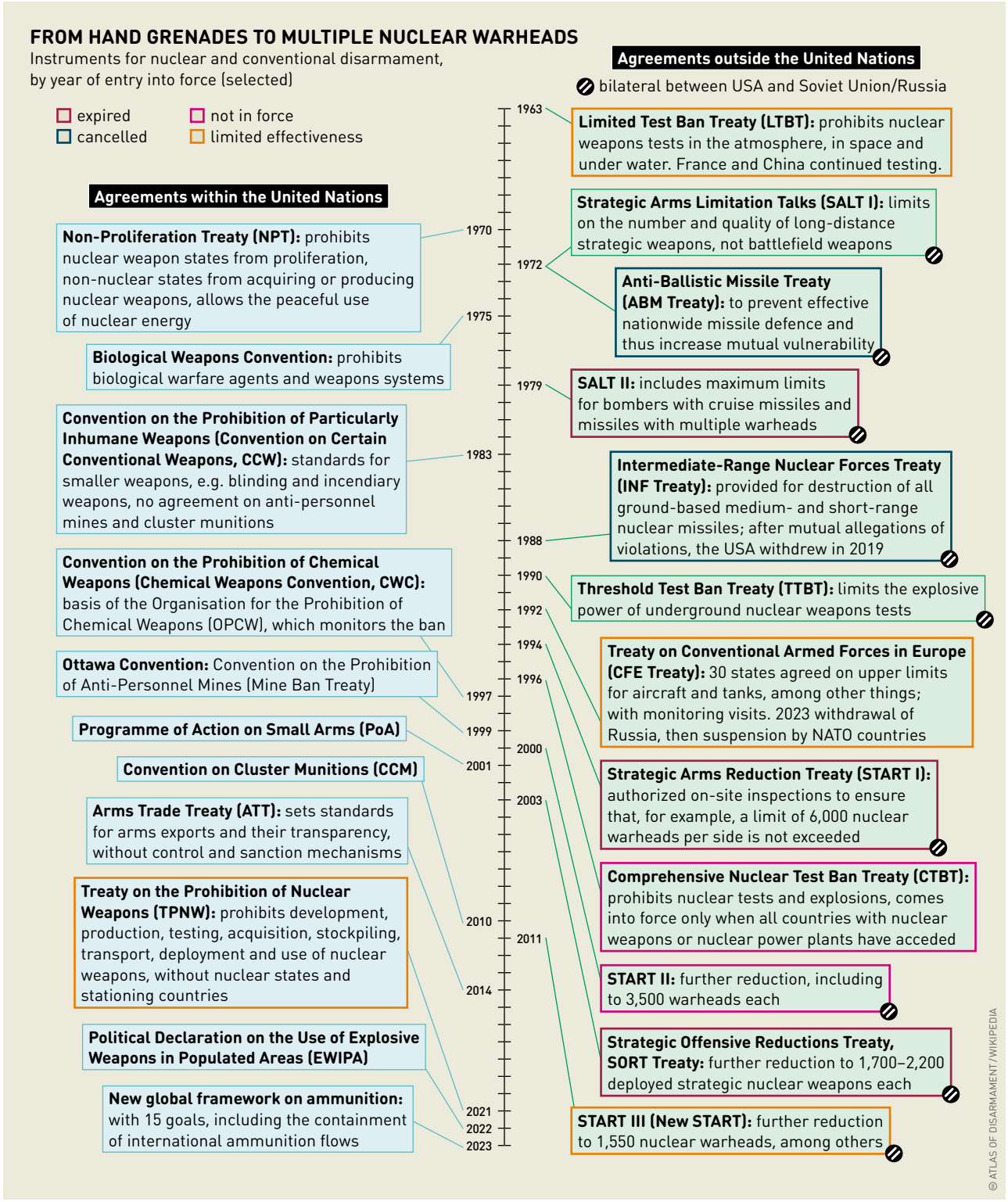
One trend is a progressively smaller number of states signing arms-control agreements. Many of the most important disarmament treaties, such as the 1970 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, were signed when relations between states were near breaking point during the Cold War. They show that despite – or perhaps because of – mounting tensions, states can agree on common goals. But recently, instead of aiming for universality, smaller groups and coalitions of states and civil society have produced agreements, such as the 2021 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons or the 2022 Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA). While these can help drive progress in times of impasse, there are concerns over a potential fragmentation of the global regulatory landscape.

As states struggle to agree on legally binding treaties, reliance on politically binding frameworks has increased. Such instruments typically lack both the force of international law and the mechanisms to verify compliance, yet they have become an important complementary part of the multilateral disarmament toolbox. They signal commitment, find common language on key challenges and solutions, and may pave the way for more robust future treaties. The EWIPA Declaration and the 2023 Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management are recent examples. Practical measures to build confidence and transparency have also gained traction. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research has created several online portals to provide public information about UN member states' policies in domains like cyberspace, outer space and artificial intelligence.

The disarmament machinery is increasingly adopting informal institutional formats. In the mid- to late 1990s, the formal multilateral negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament, helped produce some major agreements, but has since remained deadlocked: it has not agreed on a Programme of Work in decades. In the meantime, UN member states have resorted to more informal "groups of governmental experts" and "open-ended working groups". One such working group developed the recent Global Framework on Ammunition, which was subsequently adopted by the UN General Assembly and fills a crucial gap in the regulation of conventional ammunition.

Another trend has been a shift from a State-centred to a human-centred notion of security. Humanitarian arms-control agreements like the 1999 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (the "Mine Ban Treaty") and the EWIPA Declaration reflect this new understanding. Such instruments more frequently include provisions to protect civilians, assist victims, and consider gender related aspects. A human-centred approach will also help deal with the effect of climate change on conflicts.

Humanitarian arms-control agreements have shifted the overall focus of international instruments, from solely covering wartime to also engaging with issues during peacetime. For instance, the Mine Ban Treaty acknowledges the long shadow cast by conflict after the violence is over. This tendency is likely to continue, as the distinctions between armed conflict and other forms of violence (such as criminal violence) become less clear-cut. The same applies to the means and theatres of conflict: dual-use technologies such as drones can be used for both military and civilian purposes. Conflict in cyber and outer space, both crucial to civilian life, can also blur the lines between war and peace. The rapid development of artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities and biotechnology present extensive challenges. A major task for the international community will be to prevent global policy from lagging ever further behind. It must instead control



What looks like a tightly knit tapestry of treaties is in fact a patchwork, inadequate in terms of demilitarization and far from binding for all states

and where needed prohibit emerging technologies in military contexts.

In 2023, the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace captured the dire state of global security, the need for human-centred disarmament, and the relevance of new domains of conflict. It also called for the dismantling of patriarchal power structures in international security and ascribed a growing role in peace operations to regional organizations. The New Agenda for Peace will be one of the key planks of the 2024 Summit of the Future. While multilateral disarmament and arms control have repeatedly shown their resilience and adaptability, today's complex conflicts, new technologies and cascading crises represent an extraordinary stress test for this architecture.

GETTING EVERYONE TO AGREE

Disarming seems like a good idea: it would make war less likely, and would be a lot cheaper than spending huge amounts on weaponry. But in practice, talks on reducing the levels of arms proliferation have hit one roadblock after another.

Drawn up in the aftermath of the Second World War and its over 60 million deaths, the first sentence of the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations describes the most important task of the newly formed world body: "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind..." But this was not a pacifist statement. The large majority of the fifty UN founding member states regarded national armed forces and the availability of weapons as essential for their own security. The statements on arms control and disarmament in the UN Charter were therefore rather cautious. In 1919, immediately after the First World War, the founding members of the League of Nations, the forerunner of the UN, had been able to agree on more far-reaching statements.

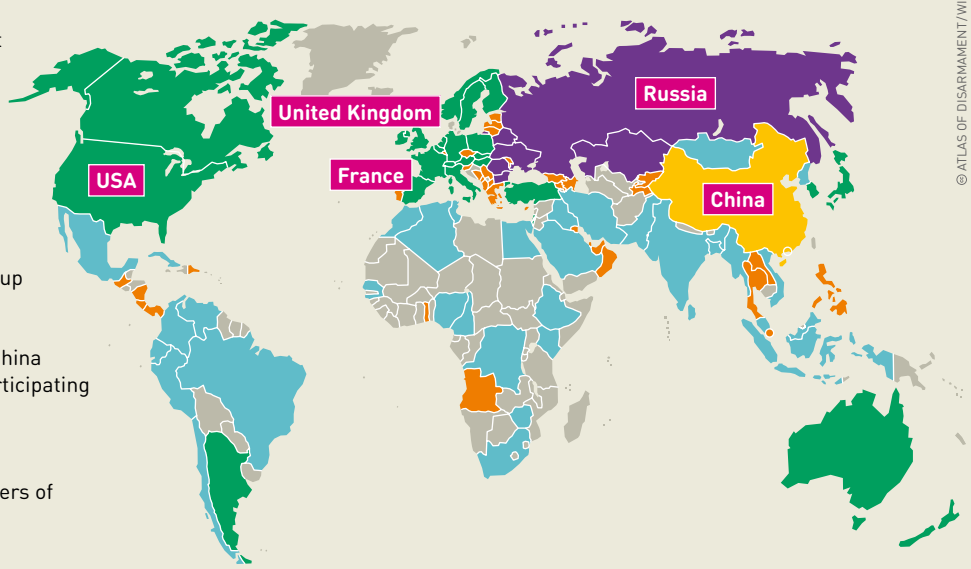
The arms situation after the First and Second World Wars were fundamentally different. In 1919 there were no weapons of mass destruction capable of deterring potential enemies. However, the poison gases that did exist were weapons of war and were used with terrible consequences in the battlefields of the First World War. But by 1945, the United States was the first country to possess nuclear bombs, which it dropped on Japan six weeks after signing the UN charter agreement. Some American politicians and military leaders then recognized their value as deterrence against the Soviet Union.

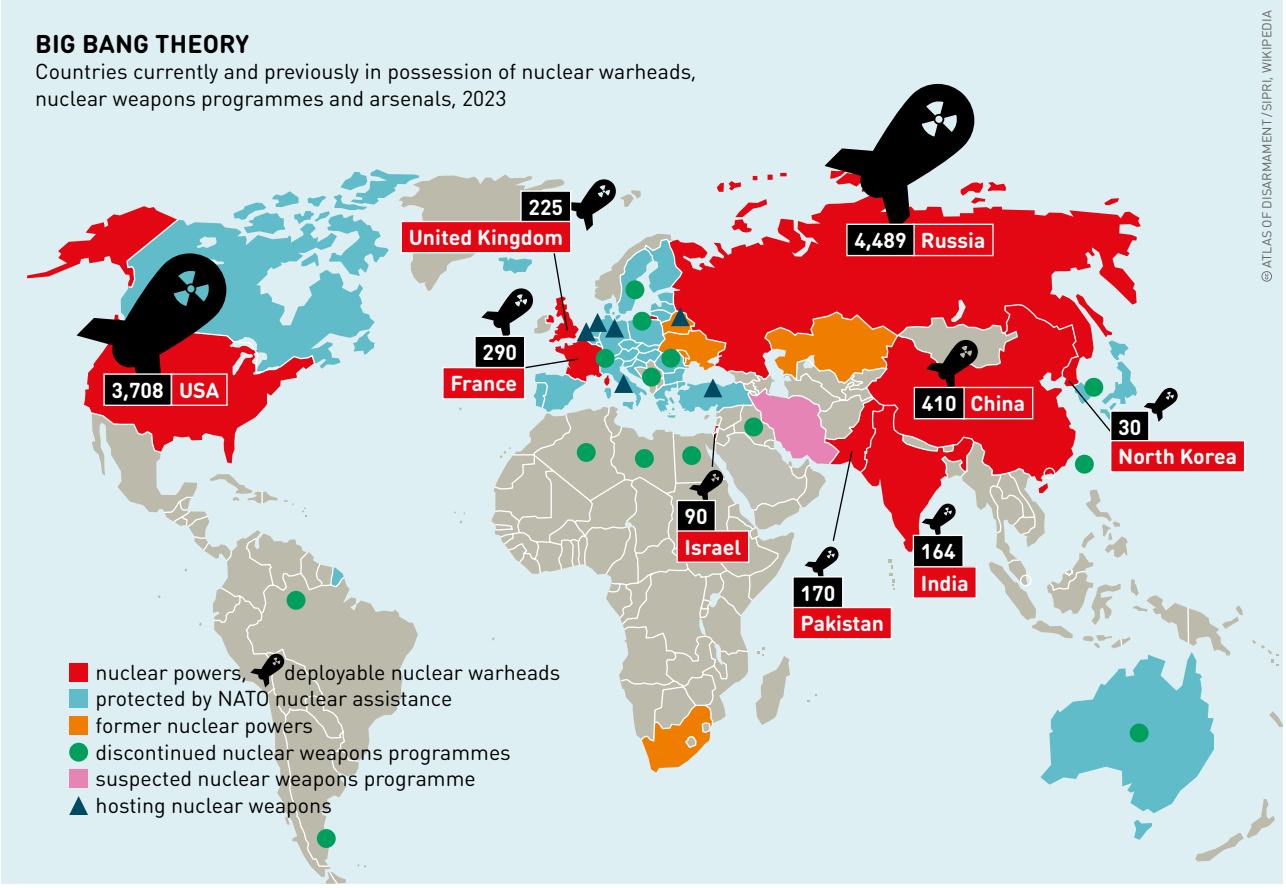
In 1950, the Soviet Union also became a nuclear power. By the mid-1960s, the United Kingdom, France and China had also achieved nuclear capability and were finally ready for the first multilateral arms control agreement since the founding of the UN. This was the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which came into force in 1970. It secured the privileged status of the permanent members of the UN Security Council (the "Permanent Five" or P5) as "legitimate" nuclear weapons powers because they had denotated a nuclear bomb before 1 January 1967.

The P5 have failed to fulfil their binding obligation set out in Article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to relinquish their nuclear arsenals, and they have not shown the slightest inclination to do so. That has left the UN only with enough political leeway for two very limited arms control agreements. Since 1963, the Partial Test Ban Treaty has banned the testing of nuclear weapons in the

The CD was a powerful stimulus for disarmament until the 1990s. Since then political manoevring has robbed it of much of its impetus

GONE OFF THE BOIL
Participation in the UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, 2024





Threats to use nuclear weapons currently come from two countries: Russia (against Ukraine) and North Korea (against the USA)

atmosphere, in space and under water. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, finalized in 1996, is not yet in force: of the nine current nuclear powers, only France and the United Kingdom have ratified it.

Until the end of the 1970s, discussions and negotiations about arms issues took place in small commissions, initially set up by the United States and the Soviet Union, with a maximum of 18 UN member states. In 1979, the UN General Assembly established the Conference on Disarmament, or CD, as a permanent subsidiary body with its seat in Geneva. The CD now includes 65 states, including the P5 as permanent members.

The biggest success of the CD so far has been the 1993 agreement of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons of Mass Destruction. Because, with the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States no longer regarded chemical weapons as a necessary mutual deterrent in Europe. The Chemical Weapons Convention has since been ratified by 193 states. It was a historical breakthrough, not least because of the extensive regular monitoring mechanisms and "challenge inspections", where states can request surprise inspections if they suspect an infringement, on the territories of all signatory states.

The Biological Weapons Convention, which was agreed by the UN General Assembly in 1971 still lacks such a monitoring and challenge regime. The draft to that effect was negotiated over 10 years ago, but it has been blocked in the CD solely by the United States, which cites fears of espionage by international inspectors on its territory. The blockade is possible because procedural rules forced through by the P5 allow agreements to be made only by consensus.

This consensus requirement is also the reason why in the three decades since the passing of the Chemical Weapons Convention, all efforts have failed to achieve arms control or disarmament of space weapons, of nuclear weapons-grade fissile material, of armed drones, and of munitions particularly dangerous to civilians, such as anti-personnel mines and cluster bombs. After a decade of futile efforts by the CD, and with the help of some willing states, a coalition of peace, human rights and humanitarian organizations initiated negotiations outside the United Nations that focused on these two last categories of weapons. This led in 1997 to the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 1997 and the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2007. Non-governmental organizations from all over the world also initiated the negotiation process in the UN General Assembly for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons, which entered into force in 2022. But this treaty has been rejected by all the current nuclear powers and all NATO members.

FINDING A WAY AROUND THE OBSTACLES

Disarmament can be uphill work. But the international campaign to ban landmines has shown a way forward: focus on a single category of weapons, show how the harm it causes outweigh any benefits, assemble a coalition of civil society and supportive governments, and gather impeccable evidence. The campaign took five years before the Ottawa Convention was adopted in 1997.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) was perhaps the most successful of the peace dividends advocated by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali after the end of the Cold War. The movement, initiated in 1992 by six non-governmental organizations from the United States and Europe, appealed for a ban on the use, production, trade and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines, and for more resources to clear mines and help their victims. This led in 1997 to the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or the Mine Ban Treaty, to which 164 states are now party. The ICBL was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997.

Before this, few were aware of the devastation caused around the world by anti-personnel landmines. Landmines had been a weapon of choice in the proxy wars during the Cold War, and in many countries they remained in the ground, waiting to explode. The initial movement gradually evolved into an unprecedented global network bringing together a wide range of groups: human rights, humanitarian mine action, children's, peace, disability, veterans, medical, development, arms control, religious, environmental and women's issues. They worked at all levels, from local to international, towards the goal of a mine-free world. Today, the ICBL is made up of over 1,400 organizations in some 100 countries worldwide.

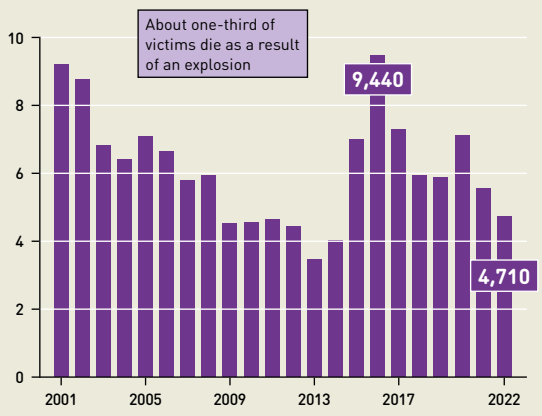
The idea of trying to prohibit a single conventional weapon – one used both by NATO and the Warsaw Pact – may seem both quixotic, given the scale of military spending, and too limited. Today's situation is indeed intractable: we are witnessing a deterioration in global security and a surge in organized violence. Warfare has made a comeback as a strategy to tackle international disputes.

However, the success in banning landmines is a historic landmark in peace activism and beyond. The campaign has been a breakthrough for civil society action in several ways. The ICBL's approach has been tested and

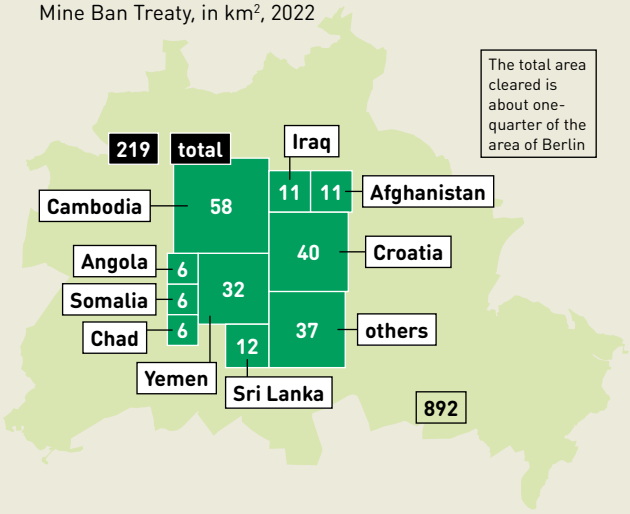
Too many victims, too little clearing. It was the International Campaign to Ban Landmines that first drew attention attention to the scale of the problem

BURIED AND DEAD

Victims of mines and unexploded munitions, worldwide, by year



Minefields cleared in member states of the Mine Ban Treaty, in km², 2022



replicated in other international campaigns, such as the Jubilee 2000 campaign, which led to debt relief in the developing world.

History helped. After decades of tension during the Cold War, it seemed unlikely that war would return to Europe. That focused attention on the long-term consequences of warfare and encouraged a focus on the need for peace. But the effort to ban landmines was no simple journey, and geopolitics threatened to derail it.

The ICBL had a strong original collation and a clear-cut and easily conveyed message – "ban anti-personnel mines". It set up national campaigns in countries that produced landmines, and pointed out the long-lasting indiscriminate killing, maiming and terror they cause, especially for children. A crucial decision was to move out of the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons process, after two years of static negotiations leading nowhere.

This move was courageous and fraught with risks. A handful of governments – such as Austria, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, South Africa and Belgium – had made the ban on landmines a diplomatic priority. It was thanks to them that a binding convention banning the weapon was adopted and submitted to the UN Secretary-General.

A further crucial component was a study by the International Committee of the Red Cross, "Anti-Personnel Landmines: Friend or Foe?" This showed that landmines are ineffective in warfare, so dismantling the military arguments for retaining them. Finally, the ICBL's Landmine Monitor, an independent body to track compliance with the ban, created a pool of disarmament researchers who gathered accurate data that often contradicted official government reports. It soon became the most reliable source of information on landmines.

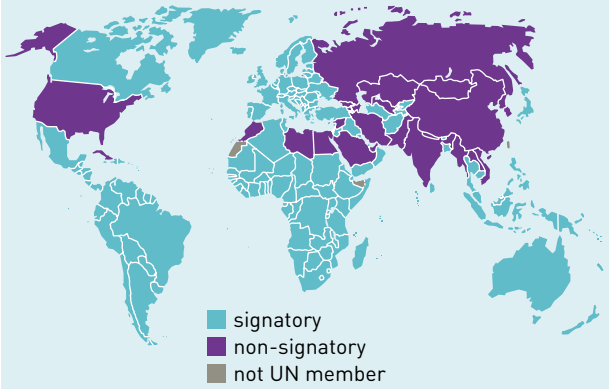
More than twenty-five years on, the Russian deployment of mines in Ukraine and their use in Myanmar have marred any celebration of the Mine Ban Treaty. The return of warfare, however, cannot neutralize the legacy of an unprecedented global campaign. It has generated follow-on initiatives such as the Cluster Munition Coalition, which led to the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Cluster Munition Coalition and the ICBL are closely associated with each other. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons was directly inspired by the ICBL; it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work to achieve the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017. The fight for peace against all odds is a never-ending agenda. But disarmament would not be the same without the inclusive, mobilizing, creative and daring example of the ICBL.

Anti-personnel mines are still stockpiled ready for use in many locations. But some states have destroyed their stocks even without signing the Convention

WORK TO DO

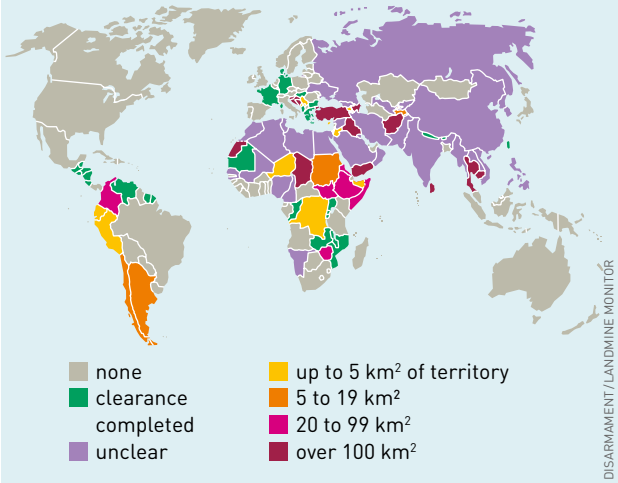
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention, 1999)

Accession status, 2024



Stockpiles of anti-personnel mines, 2018

Contamination with anti-personnel mines, 2018



No uniform country data collected after 2018

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

BAN THE BOMB

International treaties banned biological weapons in 1975 and chemical weapons in 1997. Of the three types of weapons of mass destruction, only nuclear weapons remained – until 2017, when an alliance of governments and civil society pushed through the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty.

Today there are over 12,500 nuclear warheads in the world, 9,500 of which are operational. Nine states possess such weapons. More than 8,000 of the warheads are owned by Russia and the US. At the same time, most of the world's nations – over 180 states – forego the possession of nuclear weapons.

The age of atomic horror began in 1945 with the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More than 200,000 people perished immediately; countless others died later of cancer and other chronic after-effects. Although dropping atom bombs on Japan triggered a global nuclear arms race, it initiated a continually growing movement against weapons of mass destruction. In its very first resolution in 1946, the United Nations called for the complete abolition of all nuclear bombs. In 1955, scientists associated with Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein published a call to nuclear-armed states to halt their arms buildup and to protect humanity from nuclear ruin.

In the 1950s and 1960s, an increasing number of states started work on their own nuclear programmes. As a result, civil society organizations against nuclear weapons were founded across the world. In 1968, the United Nations agreed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, also known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This agreement is often described as the foundation of multilateral nuclear disarmament and arms control. The five nuclear states at that time – the USA, the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom and China – assured the rest of the world that they would make honest efforts to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. In return, the remaining signatory states declared that they would not acquire nuclear weapons. The common goal of the treaty was a world free of nuclear weapons.

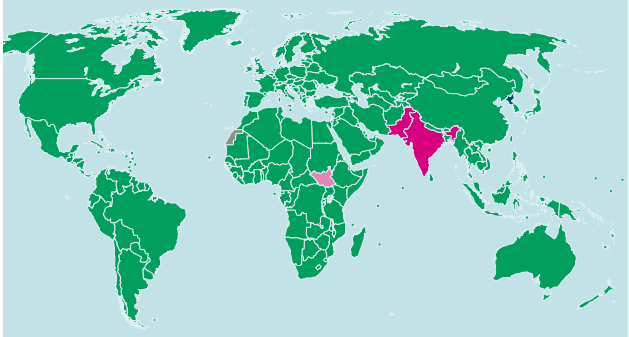
Almost all the world's countries are now parties to this international treaty. With regard to nuclear non-proliferation, it can definitely be seen as a success: along with the five official nuclear-armed states, "only" four others have acquired nuclear arsenals: India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.

But the majority of the parties to the treaty have for decades criticized the nuclear-armed states for not doing enough to disarm and for not keeping their side of the bar-

Acceding to the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty means no nukes. But the nuclear powers, NATO members and states with nuclear aspirations such as Iran refuse to join

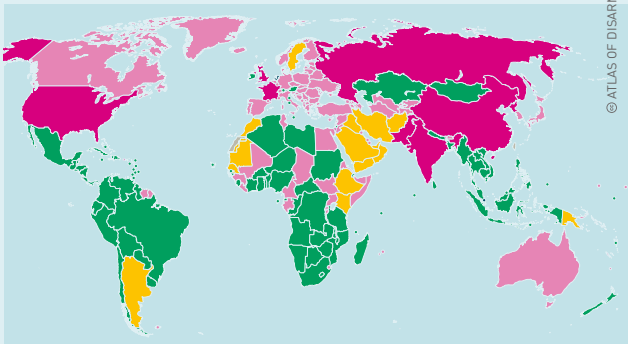
AGREEMENTS AGAINST ATOM BOMBS

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1968 (Non-Proliferation Treaty, NPT)

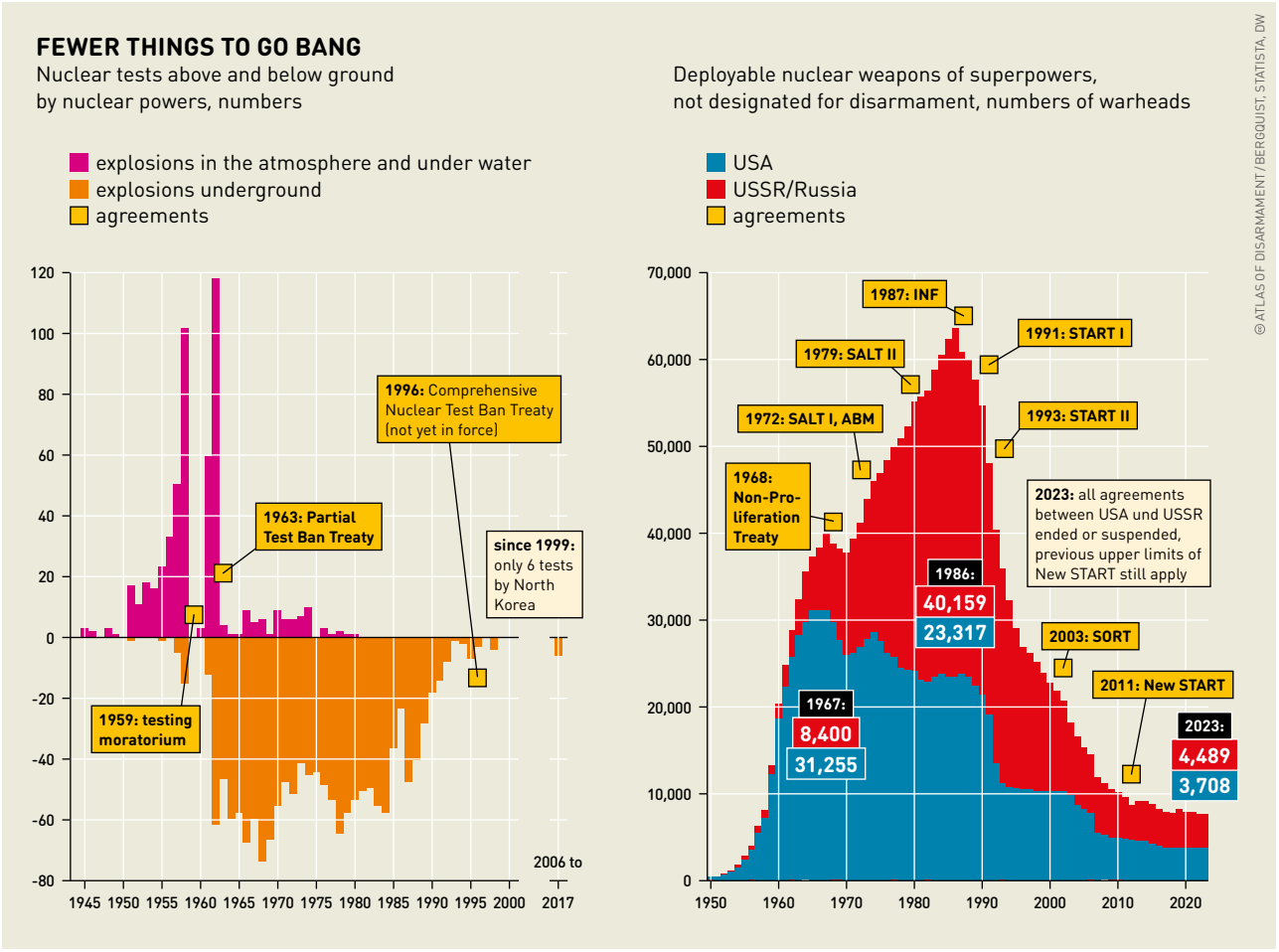


acceded
accession withdrawn: North Korea
non-parties, of which nuclear powers
no data

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, TPNW) of 2017 (in force since 2021)



acceded
voted to approve, no further steps
voted against: Netherlands, abstained: Singapore
not signed, of which nuclear powers
no data



The number of nuclear weapons has fallen. At the same time, the nuclear powers are modernizing their nuclear combat capabilities to make them more versatile

gain. They have a point: all five nuclear-armed states still hold onto their arsenals. None of them appears interested in a fundamental change in the nuclear status quo or the policy of deterrence.

So new ways of disarmament had to be found – if necessary without the nuclear powers. The solution came through a progressive alliance between science, civil society and the states pioneering nuclear disarmament. The successful campaigns against biological and chemical weapons, landmines and cluster munitions served as an example to follow: all these categories of weapons have been banned through international treaties. Even those governments that have not ratified the agreements have largely followed their provisions.

But there was still no treaty banning nuclear weapons. This would change with the founding of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, or ICAN, a worldwide alliance of hundreds of civil society organizations. Leading governments in this humanitarian movement organized conferences of states. Along with civil society, they developed options to counter the standstill in disarmament. These efforts ultimately resulted in negotiations within the United Nations over a treaty against nuclear weapons – albeit one that was accompanied by strong protests from the nuclear powers and some of their allies.

In 2017, the United Nations finally declared a ban on nuclear weapons. In the same year, ICAN received a Nobel Peace Prize for its central role in achieving this. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, also known as the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, was the first treaty in history to ban these weapons of mass destruction. Nearly half of the member states of the United Nations have already signed or ratified the treaty; they have a combined population of over 2.4 billion people.

To date, no nuclear power or NATO member has signed the treaty. The German government has declared that adopting it would conflict with its obligations to the NATO alliance. NATO membership is not an obstacle per se. But if Germany joins, it can no longer host nuclear weapons from other countries on its soil.

As with many other social movements, the people involved in the campaign are aware that their goal cannot be achieved quickly. But in times of global rearmament, the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty offers a glimmer of hope. Along with the bans on biological and chemical weapons, it provides a way to bring the era of weapons of mass destruction to an end.

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS

A STEP TOWARDS SANITY

As so often in international relations, governments need a push from civil society to get them to agree to meaningful change. Horrified by the harm caused by bombs and other explosives in urban areas, a group of NGOs launched an initiative to curb the use of these weapons. The result is a commitment by 83 states to protect civilians. It is not yet a treaty with legal force, but it is a step in the right direction.

Each year, tens of thousands of civilians are killed and injured by explosive weapons in populated areas. Gaza, Sudan, Syria and Ukraine are just the latest in a long line of conflicts where combatants have used air-delivered bombs, artillery projectiles, missiles, rockets and mortar bombs on a widespread basis in towns and cities. These have had devastating and long-term consequences for civilians.

When explosive weapons are used in populated areas, 90 percent of the victims are civilians. The survivors suffer life-changing physical injuries and long-term psychological harm. Bombing and shelling of towns and cities not only inflicts harm on the population; it also destroys homes and critical civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, as well as power and water networks. This damage has lasting effects, because it hinders the delivery of vital services to civilians. Explosions, and the destruction they cause, force civilians to flee their homes. After the conflict, the devastation, along with the presence of unexploded ordnance, hinder reconstruction efforts.

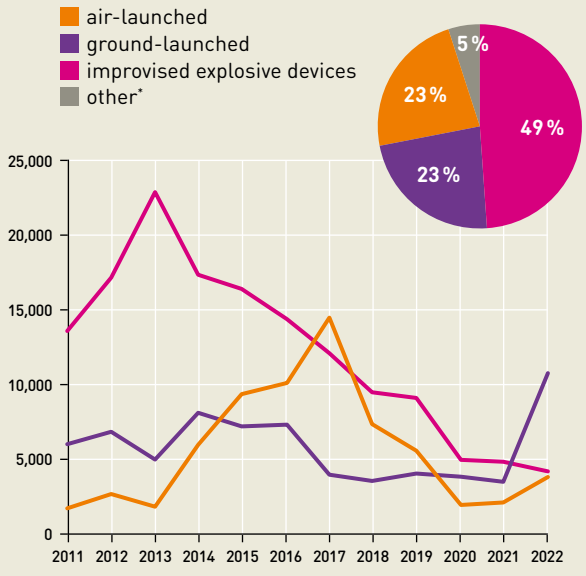
A coalition of non-governmental organizations known as the International Network on Explosive Weapons, or INEW, was formed in 2011 to advocate for the prevention of suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. It was joined by other NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations. In November 2022, after more than a decade of advocacy, 83 states endorsed a Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences of the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. This Declaration was the result of nearly 3 years of consultations, led by the Republic of Ireland. It is an international political commitment to address the devastating harm caused by using explosive weapons in populated areas. It aims to address both immediate and longer-term impacts of explosive weapons, both during and after a conflict.

The preamble to the Declaration describes how the risk to civilians has increased as armed conflicts have become more urbanized. It outlines the humanitarian consequences that arise from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, including their direct and long-term effects.

This preamble is followed by 14 operational commitments that the endorsing states will implement to protect civilians. They undertake to restrict or refrain from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas when they may harm civilians or civilian objects. When planning and conducting military operations, the endorsing states will consider the direct and indirect effects of explosive weapons. These states also commit to assist the victims of explosive weapons, their families and affected communities.

The signatories will share data to understand the humanitarian consequences of military operations, including the impact on civilians and damage to civilian infrastructure. They will also meet regularly, together with

INNOCENT VICTIMS
Civilian deaths and injuries in wars and conflicts by type of weapon



*combinations or unclear cause

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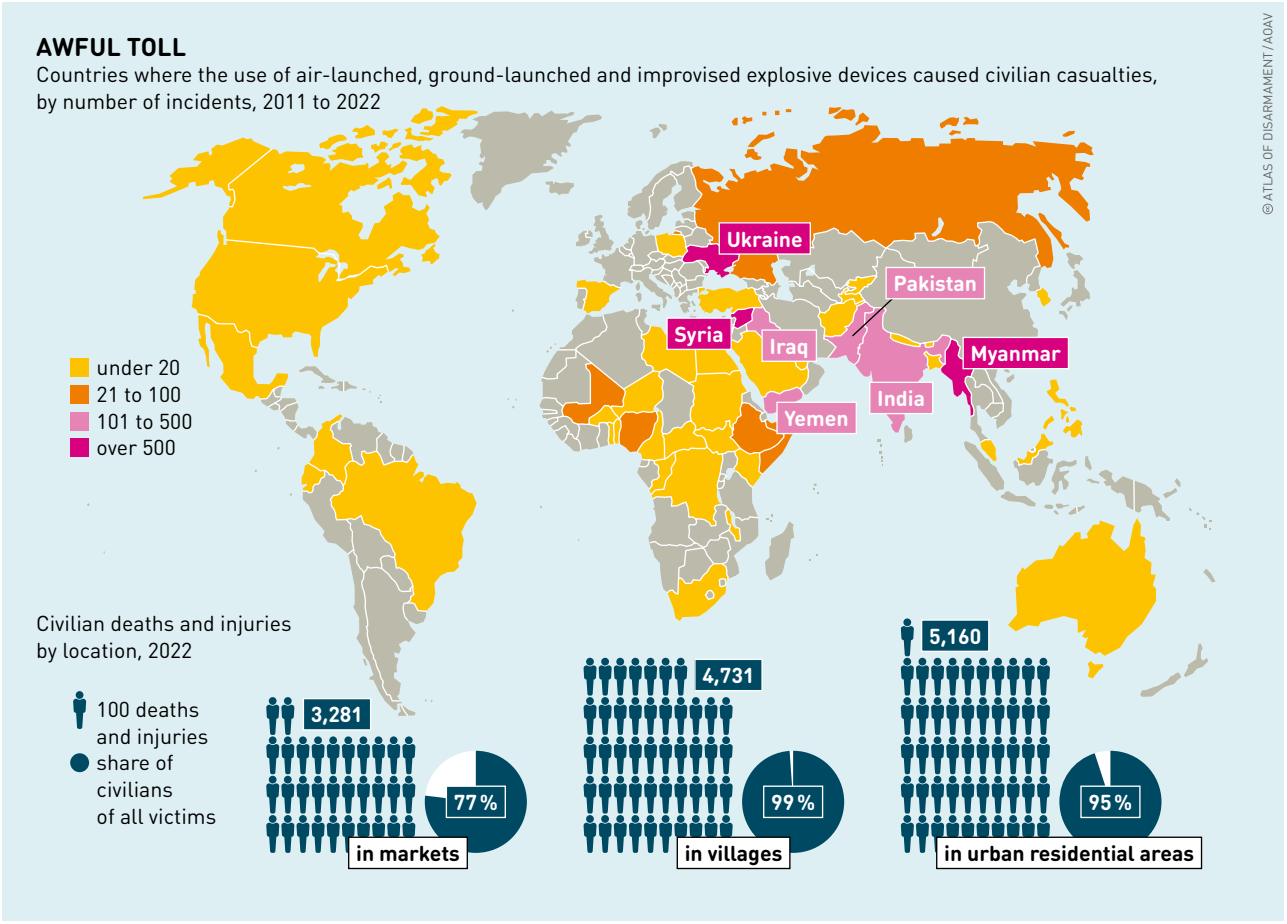
Every year, the British organization "Action on Armed Violence" publishes an "Explosive Violence Monitor" on the civilian victims of armed violence in the previous year



the United Nations, the Red Cross and civil society, to review the implementation of the Declaration, identify possible additional measures, and find ways to prevent or mitigate civilian harm. In addition, the signatories commit to promote the Declaration and press all parties involved in the armed conflict to adhere to its commitments.

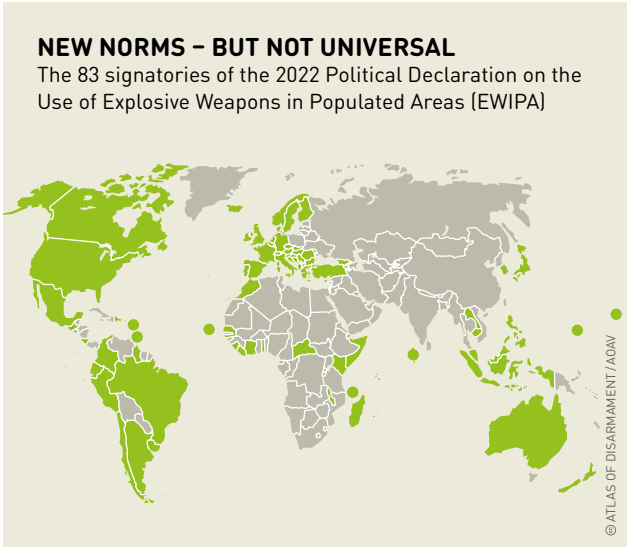
States that endorse the Declaration should move expeditiously to implement it. Even states that strive to protect civilians in military operations must intensify their efforts to avoid harm caused by the use of explosive weapons. They should examine their policies and practices relating to the protection of civilians, ideally in consultation with the United Nations, the Red Cross and civil society.

The Declaration is not an international treaty that creates legal obligations to signatory states. But those states agree – and will be expected – to act in good faith. These states should take steps to implement the commitments they have consented to. All states should endorse the Declaration, especially those that have and use explosive weapons. After all, the Declaration speaks to every state.

EWIPA is the most recent building block in an arduous process to bring justice to the conduct of war

Hundreds of thousands of civilians in 66 countries were victims of explosive weapons between 2011 and 2022 – often with limited military utility

Endorsing it recognizes the harm caused to civilians by explosive weapons in populated areas. Endorsement expresses solidarity with the victims and is a promise to prevent harm in the future, including that caused by others.



AMMUNITION

GUNS DON'T KILL, BULLETS DO

Until 2023, there was no globally agreed instrument to prevent ammunition from falling into the hands of criminals, terrorists, and armed groups. Ammunition was considered the orphan of conventional arms-control agreements. Now, the wait is over.

Every two minutes, someone is killed by a bullet or a shell, and many more suffer lifelong injury. The loss of lives and livelihoods caused by ammunition shatters communities in all corners of the globe, producing devastating human and socio-economic impacts.

Arms and ammunition cannot kill without each other. Yet, bullets and shells are subject to fewer regulations than the guns that fire them. Far less attention and resources are spent on developing effective ways of marking ammunition, maintaining records, keeping track of the ammunition as it changes hands, monitoring stockpiles and investigating anomalies. As a result, ammunition is difficult to trace, easy to steal or smuggle, and often misused in wars, crimes and human-rights abuses.

In December 2023, the UN General Assembly adopted the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management. The UN member states agreed to a set of political commitments to manage ammunition more effectively, to reduce the risk of accidental explosions, and to prevent their use in conflicts or by criminals. The past few years have seen geopolitical uncertainty, global rearmament, and despair for disarmament efforts. This new global Framework brings a ray of hope into arms control and multilateralism.

The Framework complements existing agreements in the multilateral disarmament architecture: the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Firearms Protocol, the Arms Trade Treaty, and similar regional agreements. It combines political commitments and technical guidance with a focus on regional, sub-regional and national implementation, supported by international cooperation and assistance. It is grounded in the principles of national ownership and seeks to build national capacities to manage ammunition effectively.

The Framework is designed to be flexible enough to apply to different situations. It lists 15 objectives, covering the whole life cycle of a bullet or shell – from manufacture, transfer, transport, stockpiling and recovery, to its eventual use or disposal. These 15 objectives include 47 enabling measures that all states commit to. It also lists a range of additional measures that can be used when the situation requires it.

Three aspects of ammunition management are covered by the Framework: security, safety and sustainability. Security risks relate to the risk of ammunition falling into the wrong hands. To reduce such risks, the member states commit to promoting transparency in supply chains, to track the ammunition to prevent its divertion when it is

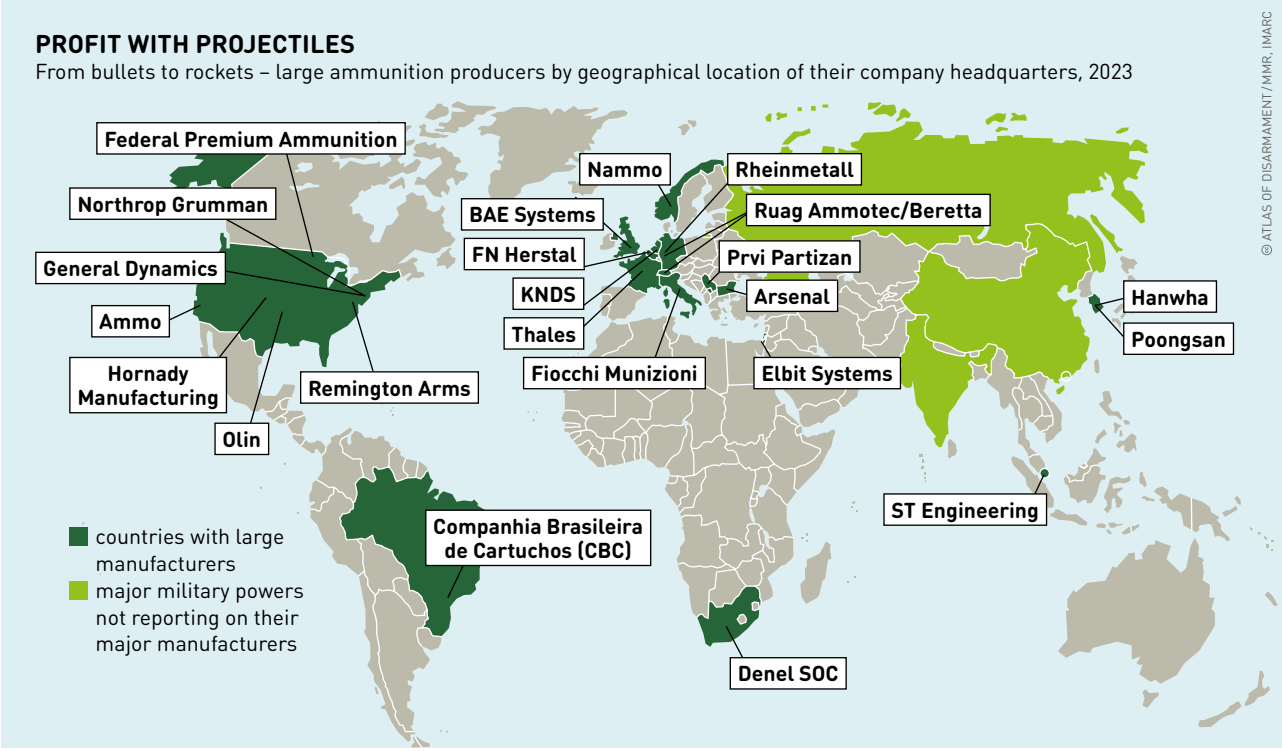
Time will tell whether the new management measures that have been agreed to will actually limit the market for illegal ammunition

HITTING THE TARGETS

Fifteen objectives for the safe and sustainable management of conventional ammunition during its entire lifetime

1. Improve standards for the management of conventional ammunition
2. Implement nationally and regionally adapted approaches to international cooperation
3. Support ways to manage ammunition at all stages from production to disposal
4. Support national authorities' ability to manage ammunition
5. Monitor ammunition stockpiles
6. Reduce the risks in managing stockpiles
7. Improve management and record-keeping
8. Prevent ammunition from being diverted from supply chains
9. Employ end-user certificates to prevent ammunition from reaching the wrong hands
10. Prevent criminals, terrorists and other unauthorized parties from getting hold of usable ammunition
11. Use marking and tracing to keep track of ammunition
12. Share information on misappropriation and smuggling
13. Collect and analyse data on misappropriated ammunition
14. Involve women in management
15. Involve civil society, academia, researchers and industry in improving ammunition management

Summary of the global framework on ammunition



bought, sold or transferred, and of it being used in gender-based violence. The Framework also encourages better data-collection, cooperation and information sharing, and the use of end-user certificates and non-reexport clauses. Marking ammunition and better record-keeping should make it easier to trace ammunition that is recovered from illegal hands.

Poor safety is a major problem with ammunition. Unplanned explosions kill thousands of people, displace many more, and result in huge economic losses. Such explosions are often the result of poor management. The Framework calls for better management of stockpiles: adequate and systematic surveillance, effective inventory systems, reduction of the quantity of explosives stored in one place, safe storage practices, and location of stockpiles away from inhabited areas.

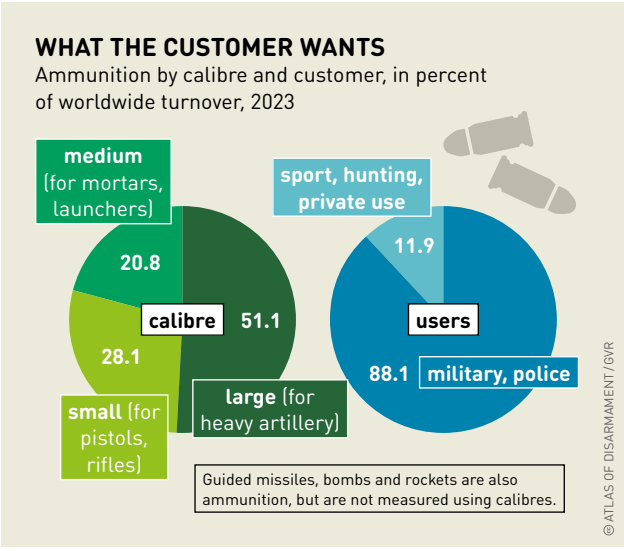
In terms of sustainability, better standards and adherence to good practices would be helpful. So too would a better understanding of how ammunition affects women, men, girls and boys differently, and ensuring women have a bigger role in managing it. The Framework also encourages states to work closely with civil society, academia, researchers and industry to find ways to improve security.

A follow-up mechanism will kick off in 2025, and a First Meeting of States will take place in 2027. In the medium term, states can consider how to translate into action their commitments under the Framework by designing activities at the regional and national levels.

Small-calibre ammunition is the biggest threat – by the use of guns in daily life, as well as through violence perpetrated by regular and irregular troops

It is almost impossible to compare data about the turnover and products of ammunition producers – and many release no information at all

Today's easy availability and illicit proliferation of ammunition feed instability. The development of better controls as a result of the Framework promise to help break the cycle of armed violence and conflict, save millions of lives and put economies and peace efforts on track. The Framework is an important step: one that the international community has been waiting for. It shows how compromise for peace, security and the greater good is in fact within reach even in these uncertain times.



GENDER

FEMINIST ACTION

Weapons and war harm different people in different ways. Most of those involved in combat – and most of the deaths – are men. But women, non-binary, and gender diverse people are affected and suffer in various ways. Class, race, sexual orientation, disability, age and other factors are equally important. And people with diverse experiences and perspectives can help achieve disarmament and demilitarization.

Feminists have long criticized the production, proliferation, possession and use of all types of weapons, from guns to nuclear weapons. They have focused largely on three issues. First, how specific weapons – and armed conflict in general – affect women, men and LGBTQ+ people differently. Second, how the military – and militarized concepts of masculinity – drives the acquisition and proliferation of weapons. Third, the importance of diversity in disarmament policymaking and negotiations.

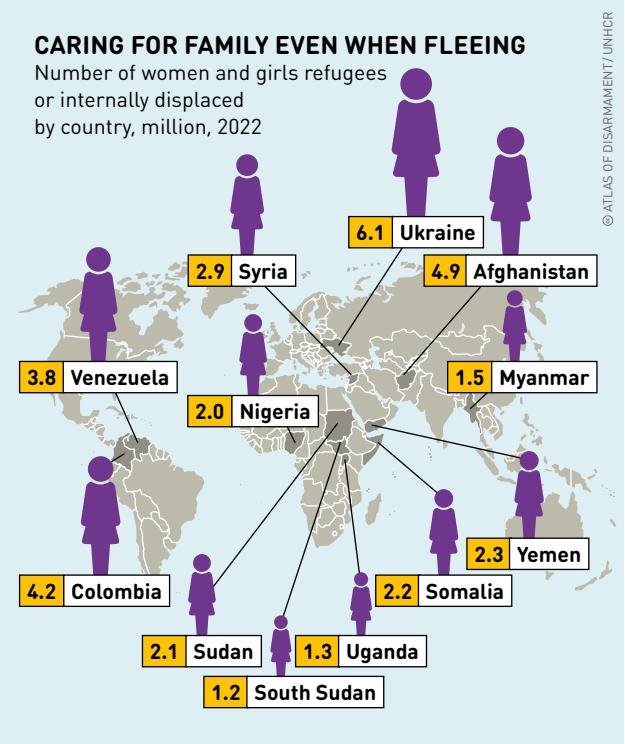
Certain weapons inflict disproportionate harm to people based on their sex or gender. Radiation fallout from nuclear weapons, for example, damages reproductive health. Guns, armed drones and explosive weapons may also have disproportionate gendered impacts. Most of the direct victims of armed violence are men, and they are sometimes targeted simply because they are men – which is a form of gender-based violence. But the number of women, girls, nonbinary and LGBTQ+ people harmed is disproportionate to the number who are directly involved in a conflict. These groups are less likely to wield weapons – but are still harmed by them. They are more likely to be targeted by gender-based violence, and they suffer when cities and towns are bombed. They may also face social and political inequalities and pressures, for example in getting assistance or participating in peacebuilding or post-conflict reconstruction.

Race is also important when it comes to the impacts that weapons have. Nuclear weapons, for example, have been tested for the most part on the land and waters of Indigenous peoples – and on their bodies too. Uranium is mined mainly on Indigenous lands. Nuclear weapons are developed, and radioactive waste is stored, largely in or near poor communities, especially those of communities of colour. Drone strikes have almost exclusively been conducted in countries of the Global South.

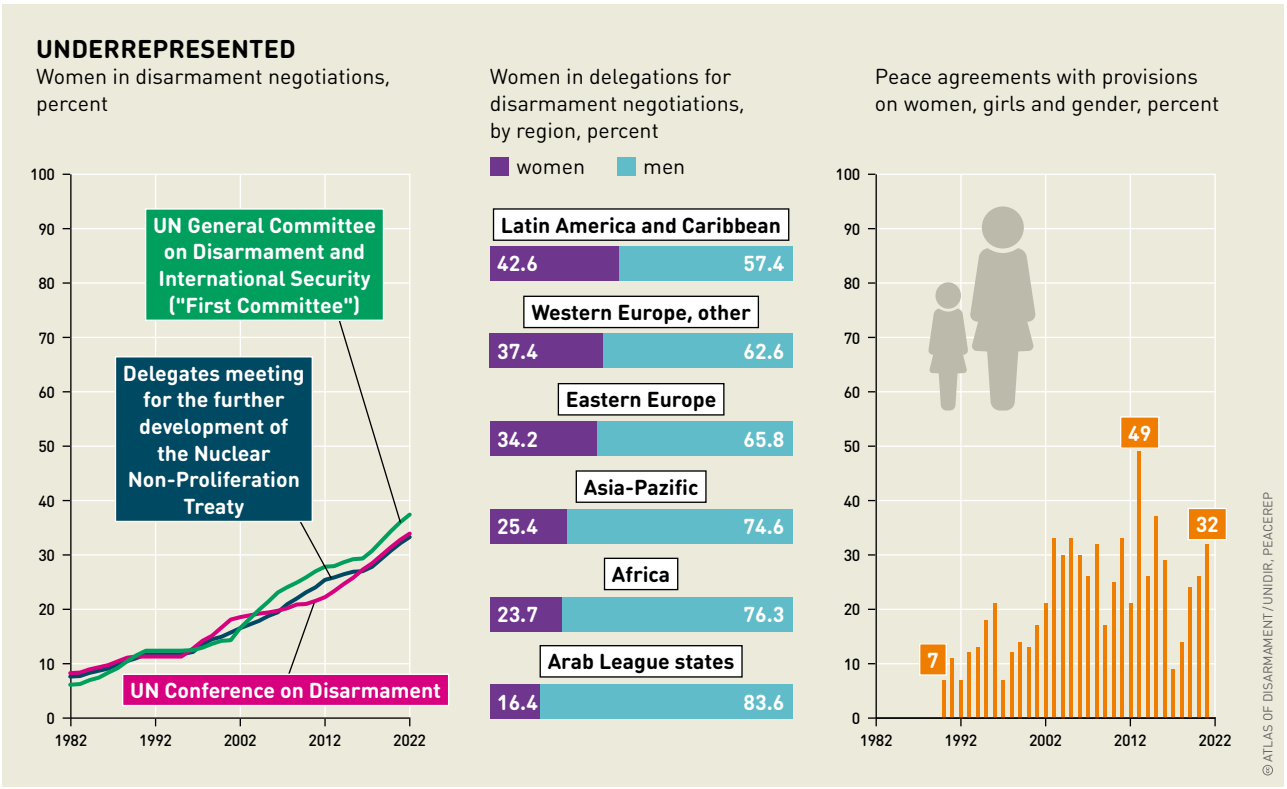
New technologies, such as autonomous weapon systems, will further increase the impacts of weapons and of war on people based on gender, race, disability, and other factors. Artificial intelligence and computer algorithms are discriminatory to people of colour, women, trans people, and others. They cause harm in policing and border surveillance and once they are weaponized, they will bring untold horror to people around the world.

Understanding such impacts is important to ensure that people get the care and assistance they need. But we should not simply focus on harm, as doing so risks viewing women or LGBTQ+ people only as victims. Such a focus can lead to the adoption of patronizing or tokenistic approaches with regard to the inclusion of marginalized or affected communities in policymaking.

This is evident in the dominant approach to improving diversity in disarmament, which has sought to increase the number of women in delegations or on panels. There are many more men than women involved in disarmament discussions and processes, and the men tend to be more senior and hold higher ranks. Women and other groups marginalized by gender, race, class, age and more have been deliberately silenced and their influence in disar-



Female refugees often have to care not only for themselves and their children, but also for their menfolk and other relatives – somehow



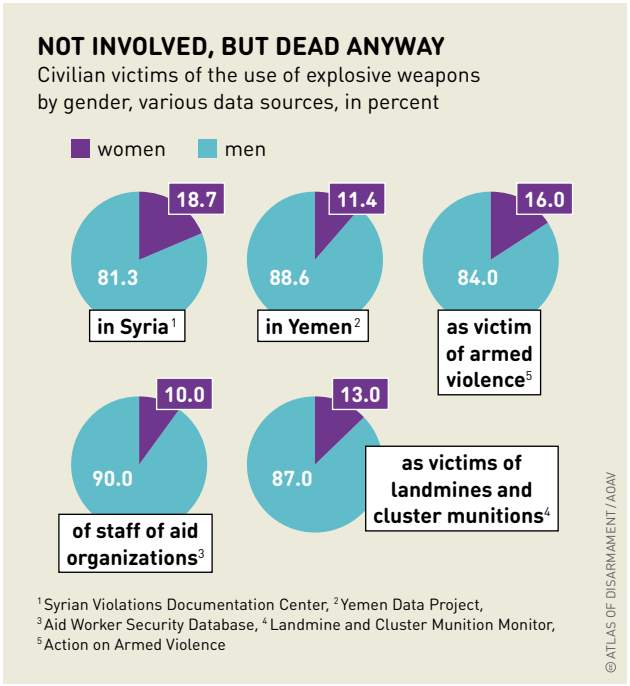
mament discussions kept to a minimum. This needs to change. But so far, most efforts to improve diversity have focused on the binary distinction between men and women. They have neglected the whole range of other identities that individuals have – not just gender but race, class, age and so on – and the various forms of oppression that lead to the marginalization and exclusion of certain people.

While increasing the number of women is important, it is not enough. It does not make sense to treat women as a monolithic group. Real diversity does not just mean adding bodies to meeting rooms. It also means creating space for alternative perspectives to inspire changes in policy and practice. Disarmament work needs people with a large variety of identities and backgrounds. People with feminist, queer, and other perspectives can challenge concepts that are currently treated as immutable truths, and can express alternative ideas of strength and security.

Feminists have highlighted biases in the arguments used to promote and sustain militarism, and dynamics in disarmament diplomacy. They have led the work to ban landmines, cluster munitions and nuclear weapons, and have challenged the arms trade and military spending. They have pioneered the provision of gender-sensitive care to those harmed by weapons and by war. Today feminists are trying to increase the diversity of those involved in disarmament, and they are challenging the patriarchal systems of power that perpetuate militarism. They advocate for investment in social equality, economic justice and human rights – instead of militarism, weapons and war.

Where the subject of discussion is controlling, negotiating and agreeing on disarmament and international security, women are woefully underrepresented

It is only since about 2010 that the numbers of female victims of explosive weapons has begun to be reported. The share is usually between 10 and 20 percent



COLOMBIA

A PEACE TREATY WITH UNFINISHED BUSINESS

One of the world's oldest armed conflicts came to a formal end in 2016, after more than half a century of fighting between guerillas and the government in Colombia. It took years of negotiations – and an agreement was possible only because both sides wanted peace. But that peace remains fragile.

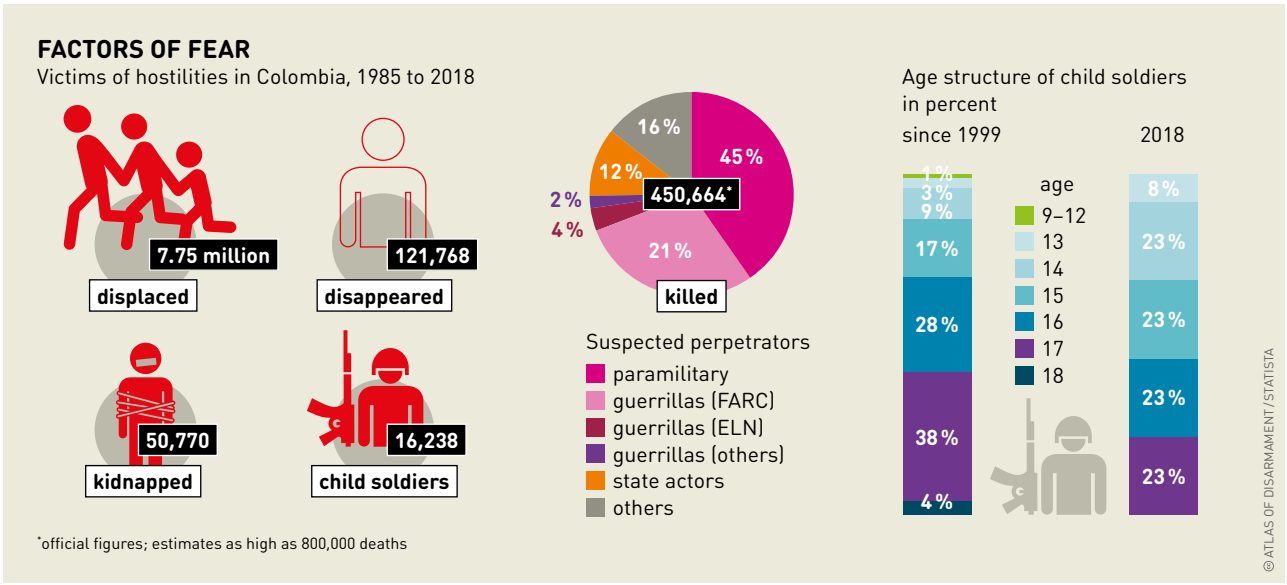
In 2016, the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) met in Havana, Cuba, to sign a Final Agreement to end their armed conflict and begin to build a stable and lasting peace. This marked the start of one of the most ambitious disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, peacebuilding and reconciliation projects in recent times. As part of the agreement, 7,000 FARC fighters were demobilized and their arms and ammunition were delivered to the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. These weapons were decommissioned and melted down to create three monuments to peace: in Colombia, in Havana (the site of the peace talks), and in New York (the seat of the United Nations, the guarantor of the implementation and verification of the agreement).

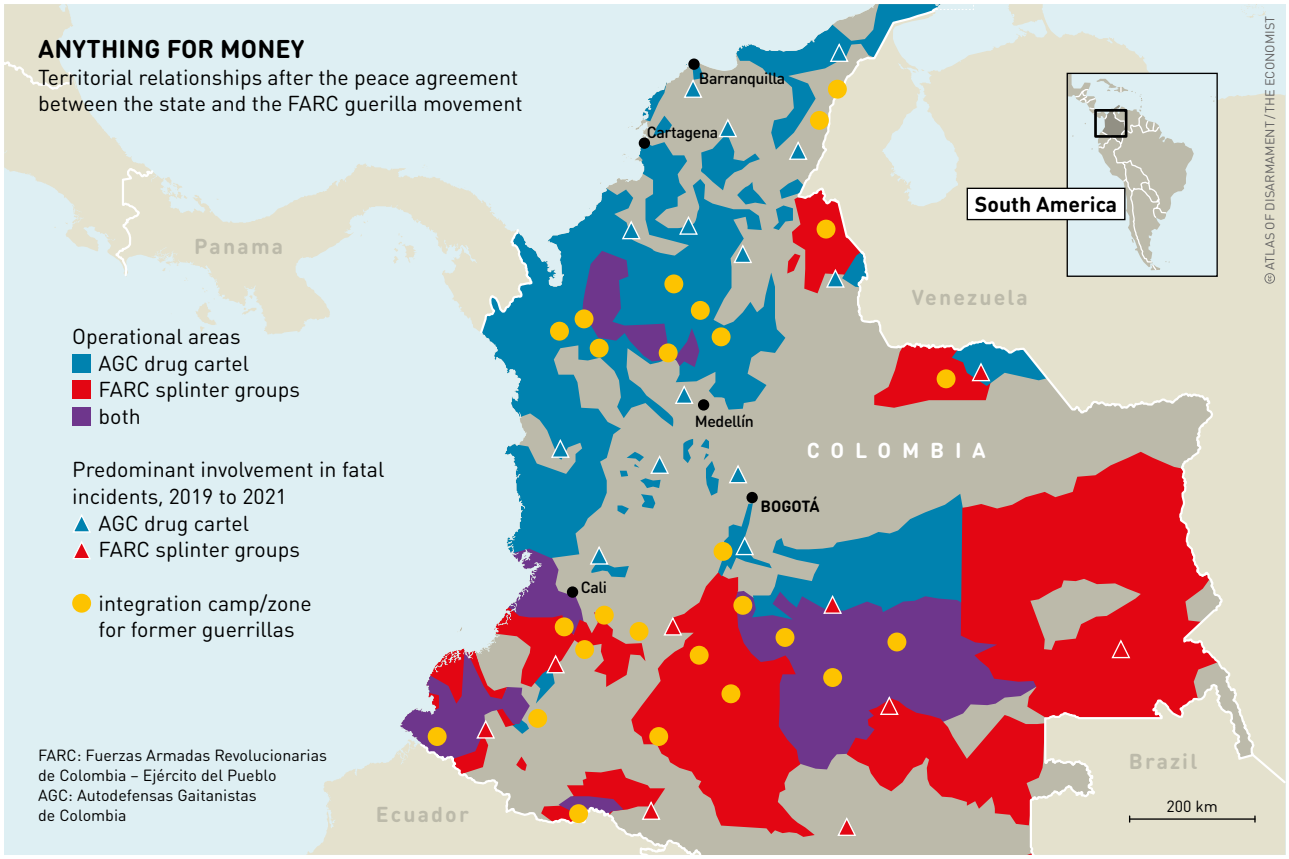
The agreement concluded one of the longest conflicts in the world. Negotiations between the Colombian government and FARC began on 4 September 2012 under the auspices of the governments of Cuba and Norway. The agreement included the political participation of ex-combatants and the population of the regions affected by the conflict, a ceasefire, the disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants, comprehensive reparations for the victims, a Truth Commission, and a Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Together with mechanisms to approve the agreement and processes to monitor and control its implementation, the aim of these components is to create peace and reconciliation, and to guarantee that violence will not recur.

The Final Agreement sought profound reforms of the country's economic and political system to address the structural causes of the conflict. These relate to inequalities, the concentration in land ownership, and the exclusive nature of the Colombian democratic system. Since the signing of the agreement, mechanisms have been established by civil society, academia and international organizations to monitor progress in implementation as well as to make recommendations to the Colombian government regarding the fulfilment of the goals and obligations of the agreement.

The aim of the agreement is to strengthen the political integration of historically marginalized regions and

Around 10 million Colombians were victims of fighting between guerrillas, paramilitaries and the state. And the child soldiers were getting younger and younger





In many places, a drug cartel and FARC splinter groups fill the power vacuum left behind by the demobilization of FARC fighters

social sectors. This is achieved by enriching democratic spaces and strengthening participation mechanisms to overcome the use of violence resulting from political exclusion. But despite progress, assassinations of social leaders and human-rights defenders remain common. In 2023, 188 social leaders and 44 signatories to the peace agreement were murdered. The United Nations has documented the assassination of 342 ex-combatants since the implementation of the agreements began. These violations represent a major challenge for the government, as problems with the security and integration of ex-combatants hindered previous attempts to achieve peace.

The agreement established 23 "transitory rural settlement normalization zones" and 8 encampments throughout the country. Former FARC fighters came to these zones to hand over their weapons. In 2017, the transitory zones became "territorial training and reintegration spaces", managed by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, to facilitate the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life.

The arsenal of rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers, mortars, anti-aircraft missiles, grenades and explosives was handed over to the United Nations. This took place in three stages. The guerrillas delivered 30 percent of the arsenal 90 days after the signing of the final agreement, another 30 percent 30 days later, and the final 40 percent after another 30 days, or 150 days after the agreement was signed. Following a detailed inventory by the United Nations, the materials were to be used to construct the three monuments. After the formal process of laying down the weapons was completed, FARC undertook to reveal the locations of more than 900 caches where it kept weapons, ammunition and explosives for the United Nations to excavate and destroy.

One of the most important points of the final agreement was the creation of a reparation system to compensate victims. This included the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the acts of recognition, land restitution and collective reparation, as well as guarantees of non-repetition through the implementation of the entire agreement.

Seven years after the final agreement formalized the commitments of the signatory parties to end the conflict, its implementation has demonstrated both the solidity of the legal framework of peace and the state's capacity to adapt its institutions to the agreement's provisions. But major challenges remain in complying with fundamental aspects of the agreement: democratic opening, guarantees for the political participation of ex-combatants, social movements and human-rights leaders, as well as land reform to ensure greater equality in land distribution. Land reform was one of the fundamental reasons why the armed conflict started and persisted for so long.

NIGERIA

A SOLUTION WITH BENEFITS FOR THE PERPETRATORS

Fifteen years of violence in northeast Nigeria have further impoverished an already poor region. Thousands of people have been killed; millions forced from their homes. The government's rehabilitation programme for former Boko Haram fighters has been a mixed success.

In 2009, the jihadist insurgent group Boko Haram announced its goal to form a province of the Islamic State in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states in northeastern Nigeria. The Nigerian government declared a state of emergency in 2013, responding to the group's guerrilla tactics which included suicide bombings, kidnappings for ransom and territorial occupations, by launching a police and military action in the region.

The conflict spilled over Nigeria's borders and affected neighbouring countries: Chad, Cameroon and Niger. The region around Lake Chad became increasingly unstable. The protracted conflict led to a severe humanitarian crisis, resulting in over 4.5 million internally displaced persons. Obtaining basic services, education and healthcare became a major problem in the affected regions.

In 2018, Boko Haram split into factions, including the Islamic State West Africa Province, which became politically entrenched and militarily powerful, and posed an even greater challenge to the Nigerian military than the remainder of Boko Haram.

The Nigerian government has responded with a programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The primary aim of the disarmament programme was to reduce or eliminate the insurgents' military capabilities, thus limiting the likelihood of armed conflict and the ability of groups to wage war. This significantly reduced the Islamists' ability to hold territory, and drove them to the shores of Lake Chad. Several of their arms suppliers were eliminated and arrested, and bomb makers were removed.

The government's military operations have made a decisive contribution to fighting the insurgency. Another key player is the civilian population in the region, particularly in those areas directly affected. Many live in camps for internally displaced people, or are young people who have formed the Civilian Joint Task Force. Regional and international actors such as the African Union, the United Nations and the governments of neighbouring countries have been engaged in diplomatic, humanitarian and security efforts to address the crisis.

A system of transitional justice was introduced to rehabilitate repentant Boko Haram fighters at a Deradicalisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration camp in Gombe State. Since 2016, "Operation Safe Corridor" has put repentant fighters through a six-month physical, psychological and rehabilitation programme to prepare them for reintegration. This gave them vocational training and psychological support, sports therapy, education and psychosocial rehabilitation before releasing them into their communities. Almost 160,000 Boko Haram fighters are living in various rehabilitation camps, and more than 2,300 have completed the programme. Several have opened businesses and receive monthly stipends.

In a secret scheme known as "sulhu" (Hausa for "reconciliation") repentant Boko Haram commanders

Financial transfers are made via company accounts, from which the required amounts can be withdrawn via ATMs at regional banks, even in small towns

MANY STREAMS FEED THE RIVER

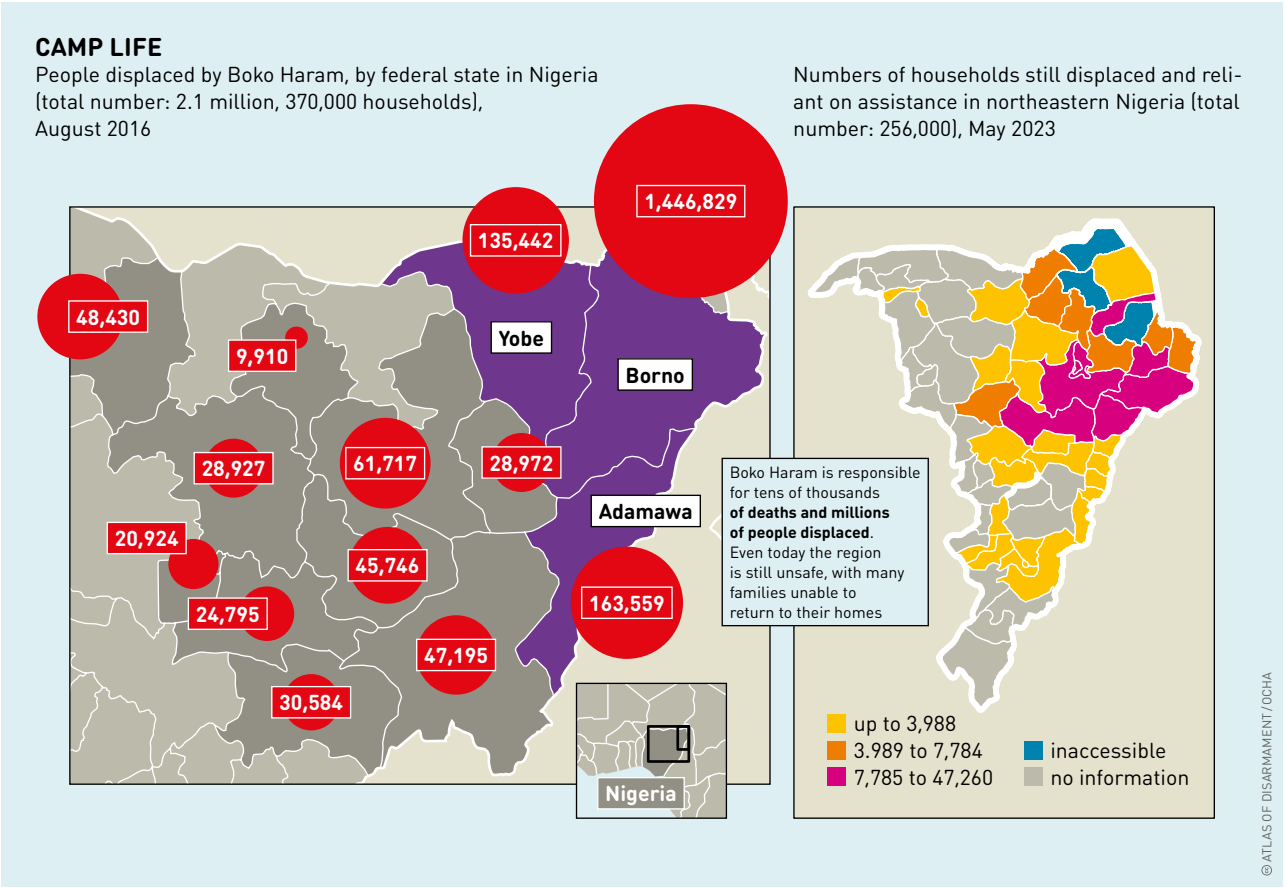
Funding and provenance of weapons of Boko Haram

funding sources

- ca 2002, Osama Bin Laden allegedly provided US$3 million in initial funding for groups in Nigeria
- donations from domestic religious sympathizers
- donations from abroad ("aid organizations")
- "tax" revenues in occupied territories
- tax on fish trade on Lake Chad
- begging by children, the sick and elderly
- blackmailing wealthy people through threats
- ransom from kidnappings
- protection money against repression
- robberies on banks and shops
- arms trade with neighbouring countries
- international drug smuggling through Nigeria
- cross-border money laundering
- similar activities in Cameroon

weapons

- transnational arms trade
- regional arms trade
- stolen from regular forces
- bought from regular forces
- donated by regular forces



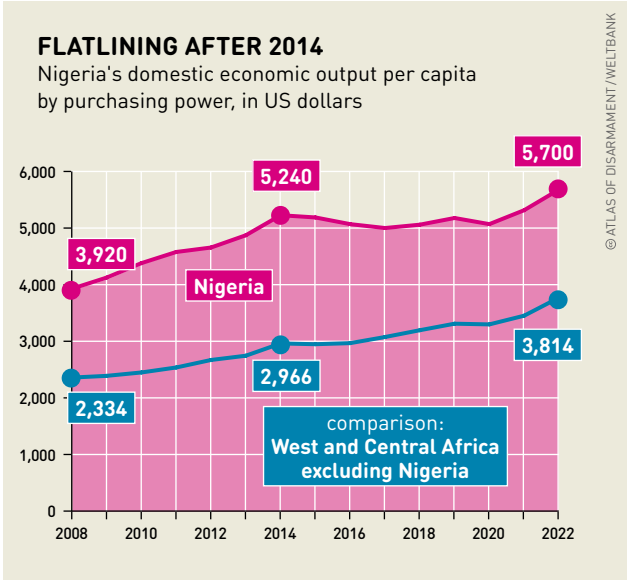
who have gone through the Operation Safe Corridor programme are moved to other locations where they are unknown, and are integrated into companies. This programme has been criticized for "pampering" terrorists and punishing their victims, who have not received any compensation from the government. Some former commanders are suspected of using their new status to work clandestinely for Boko Haram and recruit members from camps for internally displaced people. Rehabilitated Boko Haram members do not feel safe returning to their communities, preferring instead to stay in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, where their identities are unknown. Some former fighters have returned to the bush to renew the insurgency.

The Governor of Borno State, Babagana Zulum, has argued that the camps for internally displaced people did not allow economic and social development, and instead turned into slums where prostitution, drug abuse and thuggery were rife. The closure of these camps has reportedly led to the relocation of around 200,000 people to rural communities.

Although the rehabilitation programme has made progress, problems with transparency, community involvement and retribution, sustainability and the criteria for inclusion have hindered the programme's complete success. Instead, an approach that involves the whole of society is needed to overcome these problems and ensure justice for the victims of Boko Haram terrorism.

Since the elimination of the Boko Haram leadership, attacks, murders and kidnappings have been decentralized. Assistance still cannot reach some areas

A drop in the oil price pushed Africa's biggest economy into recession. It is now growing by some 3 percent a year – but the population is also rising by 2.4 percent a year



JOHAN GALTUNG

NO VIOLENCE IS NOT ENOUGH

Violent conflicts have indirect and structural causes, such as poverty, hunger, political discrimination and social injustice. The concept of "positive peace", developed by the Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung, aims to eliminate these aspects of violence in a preventive and sustainable manner.

At a time when security is increasingly being redefined in military terms, and military confrontation and war are again seen as valid means to resolve conflicts, it may seem idealistic – or even naïve – to speak of "positive peace". Admittedly, efforts so far to find a solution to the multifaceted current social, ecological and socio-political problems have met with little success. The search for solutions necessitates the rethinking and further development of peace-policy approaches like those proposed by Johan Galtung. In the view of the Norwegian mathematician and co-founder of peace and conflict research, overcoming crises such as those we face today requires the ability to confront conflicts with empathy, non-violence, creativity and nonconventional thinking. This is because violence often arises from a non-productive way of dealing with conflicts.

The starting point for Galtung's considerations is the concept of "positive peace". He differentiates "negative peace", or the absence of physical force, from "positive peace", a just and desirable state in every respect. This leads to the distinction between peace as a goal and as a process. While "negative peace" corresponds to a situation merely without war, "positive peace" is a dynamic process that creates juster socioeconomic and political relationships, or hinders potential outbreaks of violence in the first place by shaping the relationships between the actors. The starting point for peace is not after the damage is done.

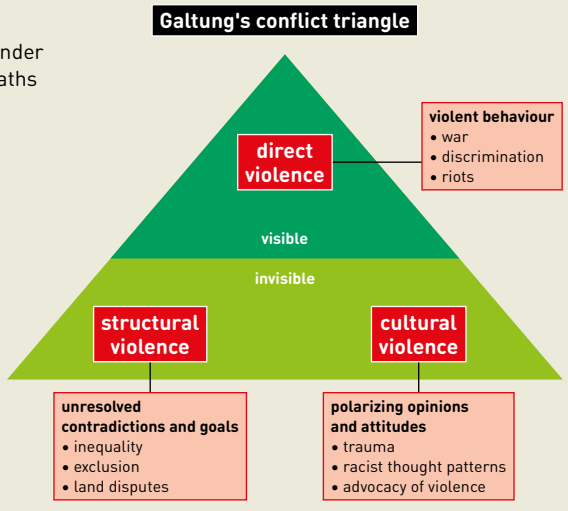
The distinction between negative and positive peace is based on the expansion of the concept of violence to include all the negative consequences of social, political and economic conditions and relationships. Galtung emphasizes systemic factors, basing his definition of violence on the discrepancy between what is and what might be. He regards "structural violence" as being built into the system and manifesting itself in unequal power relations. It is thus independent of whatever social actors might do. For Galtung, exploitation, repression, racism and sexism, unequal educational conditions, ecological destruction, and huge wealth alongside bitter poverty are examples of "structural violence", provided that these inequalities or deficits are objectively avoidable or can be eliminated.

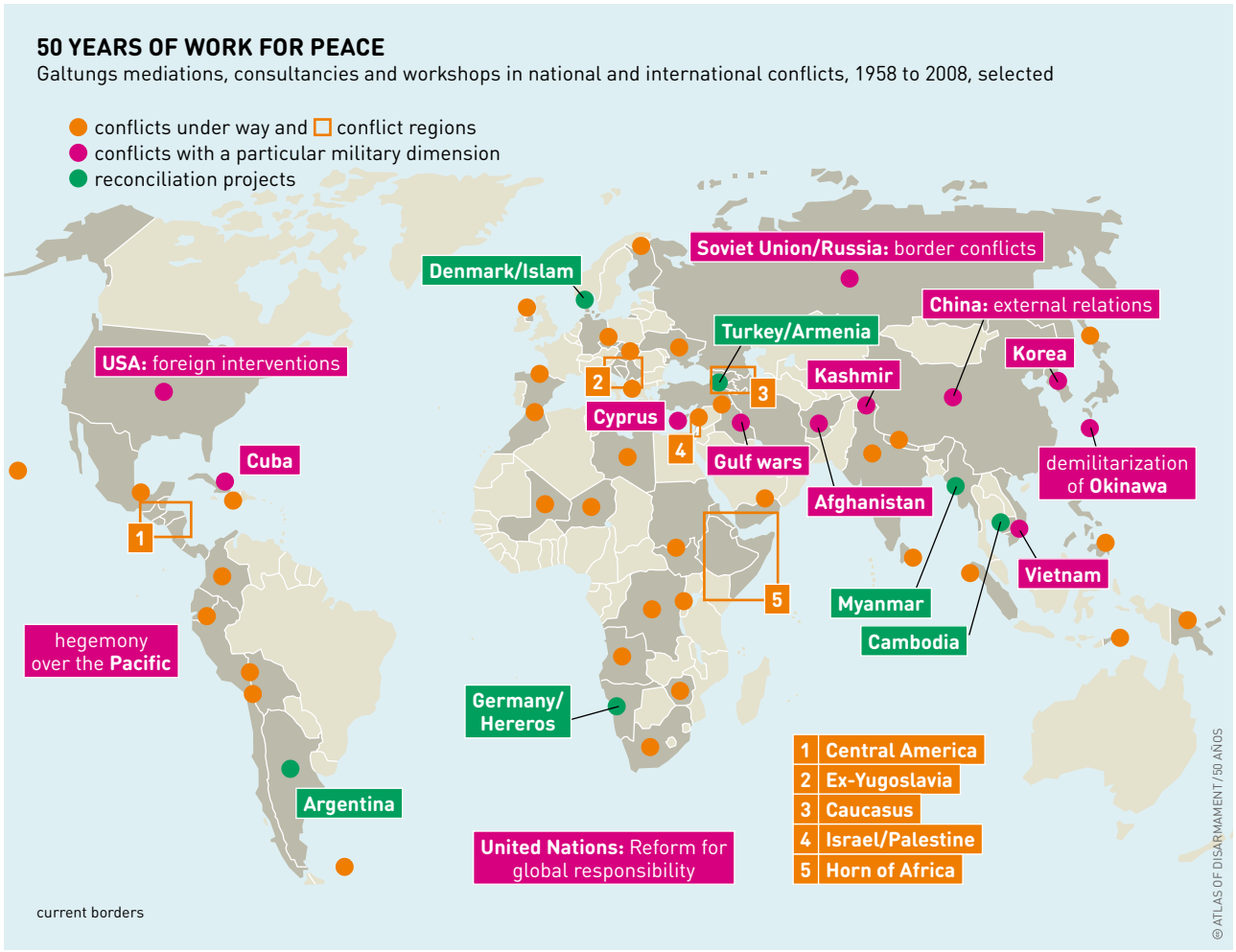
Galtung visualized the various components and levels of a conflict in the so-called "ABC triangle". This is based on the premise that conflicts consist of three compo-

Peace and conflict research that goes beyond military and geopolitics has existed only since the 1950s – thanks to Johan Galtung

THE LIFE AND WORK OF A PEACE RESEARCHER

The Norwegian **Johan Galtung** (1930–2024) is regarded as the founder and leading thinker of **peace and conflict research**. He studied maths and sociology. His conflict theory with its "conflict triangle" takes into account factors at all social levels. He also coined the teams **"cultural"** and **"structural violence"**. In 1959 he founded the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), in 1992 the Transcend Peace University (TPU) and in 2011 the Galtung-Institut for Peace Theory and Peace Practice (GI); the TPU and GI now work online. Galtung published around 160 books and 1,700 scientific articles, and mediated in a large number of conflicts. In 1987 he was awarded the Right Livelihood Award, known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize". Galtung was a sharp critic of **US policy** and **UN structures**. In 2012 his statements among other things about the alleged influence of Jews in the media and at universities led to accusations of **antisemitism** against him. Galtung regarded this as defamatory and referred to his research on prejudice, racism and antisemitism.





It is impossible to establish a track record for peace efforts. They are not sustainable if the root causes of the conflict remain

nents: Attitudes, Behaviour and Contradiction. The root of the conflict is the contradiction between incompatible goals. The ABC conflict triangle can be used to identify deeply rooted attitudes, behaviours and contradictions. These control or influence the surface, i.e., what people express as their thoughts or feelings, their observable behaviour and their various goals. Here, "deep" means the unconscious that is hidden beneath the surface. Galtung therefore speaks of "deep culture".

Galtung says that working for peace means working against violence – by analysing its form and causes, by prognosis (anticipating problems) as the basis of prevention, and finally through preventative and curative actions. Conflicts have their own life cycle: they go through stages. Phase I, according to Galtung, occurs before the outbreak of violence; this is the time for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Phase II is while violence is going on; this is the time for peacekeeping activities and the start of creating peace zones. Phase III begins after the end of the violence. This is when reconciliation can start, and infrastructure and societies can be rebuilt.

Galtung says that a thorough diagnosis and thus a visualization of all components of the conflict are vital to transform the conflict (or conflicts). Only then will it be possible to define a therapy – a course of action – for all conflict parties to pursue jointly, and to determine how it is possible to transform the current conflict. As part of his comprehensive concept of conflicts, crises and peace research, Galtung developed a special approach to conflict transformation, the so-called "transcend method".

The starting point of this method, and at the same time its pivotal point, is dialogue between the conflicting parties. Based on a communication process, the original conflict can in an ideal situation be transformed into jointly viable, future-oriented solutions, as long as the conflicting parties are actually willing to do this. The creation of a "transcendent" conflict resolution, one that goes beyond the existence of the actual conflict components, makes possible a transformed, "transcendent" situation in which the conflict parties create a joint future in the sense of a common set of structures. Precisely this seems to be urgently needed in view of the current world situation. The fact that the conflicting parties may refuse this is a confirmation, not a repudiation, of this necessity.

PATIENCE AND PERSPECTIVE

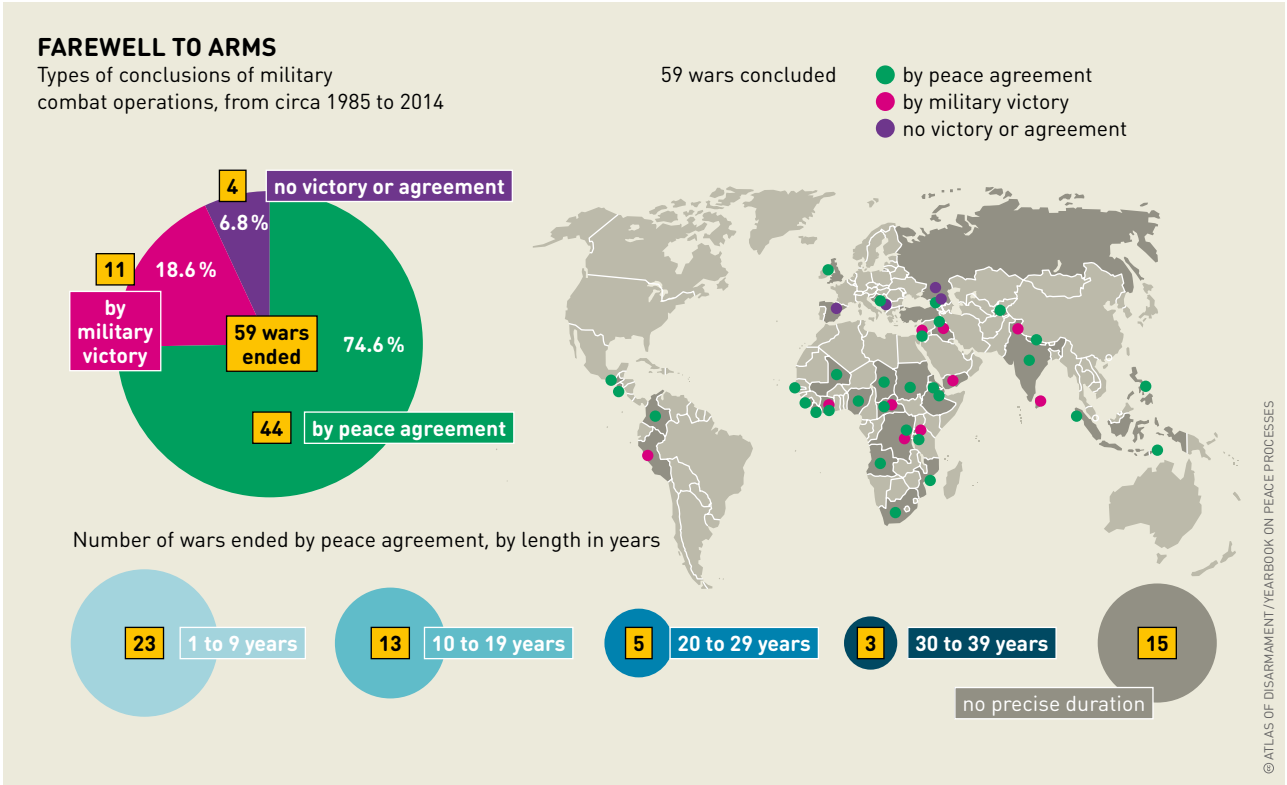
Breaking the cycle of violence is hard. And once the violence is over, it is difficult to pick up the pieces. It is much better to avoid descending into violence in the first place. Civil conflict management approaches can help in all these situations. In Germany, new supportive institutions have emerged.

Civil conflict management is a term that covers a wide range of approaches and methods. It is about dealing with conflicts without resorting to the use of force. It aims to think through those interests of the conflicting parties that are considered legitimate, so as to achieve a sustainable, peaceful and just coexistence. Civil conflict management is also regarded as a less costly and less damaging alternative to the use of arms and military intervention. This is because the short term use of force of arms to stop a conflict very often leads to a renewed outbreak of violence later on, frequently with far more destructive outcomes. In addition, the negative consequences of wars and military interventions, are often accompanied by massive violations of human rights.

Civil conflict management operates in two domains. One is at the level of governments, the community of nations and a small number of politicians. The other is in civil society: it is a growing area of activity for non-governmental groups in almost every country around the world. The prevention of violent conflict is the best civil conflict management. It is the attempt to guide conflicts in a constructive direction through dialogue, mediation, and measures such as the introduction of minority or autonomy rights.

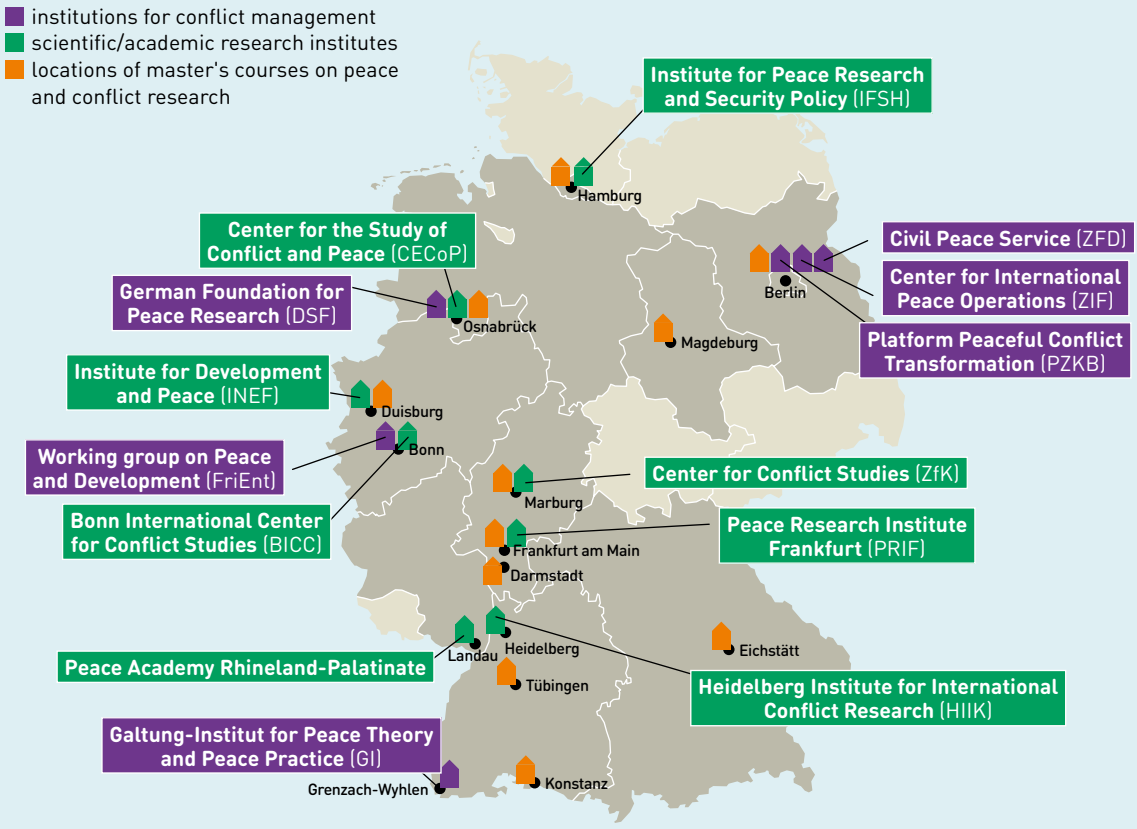
The Åland Islands in the Baltic Sea are an excellent example. Historically part of Finland but inhabited by Swedish speakers, they were claimed by Sweden after the First World War. The League of Nations resolved the conflict in 1920 by demilitarizing the islands and granting the inhabitants extensive autonomy. Similar autonomy regulations have contributed to resolving many other conflicts around the globe. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which contributed to disarmament and the easing of tensions up to the turn of the millennium, is another example of successful prevention work at the international level.

Around 20 percent of the wars studied ended with a military victory, some three-quarters with a peace agreement



INSTITUTIONS FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH IN GERMANY

Umbrella organizations and associations, scientific institutions and study programmes, selected



Civil conflict resolution is operated and coordinated by non-governmental organizations. Many joint institutions are located in Berlin and Bonn

The means of civil conflict management also played a role in the disarmament initiatives that non-governmental organizations have launched, such as the ban on landmines (from 1999) and cluster bombs (from 2010). But even if a conflict escalates into violence, there are instruments for dealing with it non-violently. One of these is peacemaking – the task of reaching an agreement between armed parties. Most inter-state wars end through negotiations. This often involves international mediators who bring together the conflicting parties and make proposals for agreements. International arbitration tribunals such as the International Court of Justice in The Hague are instruments that can be deployed in conflicts between states.

But most of the instruments of civil conflict management are not in the field of peacemaking but in peacebuilding, where the aim is to deal with the causes and consequences of violent conflict. This includes all types of disarmament and arms-control activities, demobilization and reintegration of combatants into society, dealing with injustices and reconciliation work, establishing or reestablishing a functioning state with justice and executive organs, an education system and independent media, along with trauma healing and social work with the goal of overcoming ethnic or religious divides, and much more.

A further aspect of civil conflict management is peacekeeping – the task of containing or preventing the use of force and restoring security. Civil peacekeeping is an approach used by non-governmental organizations throughout the world.

Unarmed civilians accompany those under threat on the ground, mediate between armed actors, encourage dialogue and the establishment of local early-warning systems, among other activities. Such concepts have also found their way into politics in Germany: new institutions such as the Civil Peace Service (established in 1996), the German Foundation for Peace Research (DSF, 2000), the Working Group on Peace and Development (FriEnt, 2001) and the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF, 2002) are just a few examples. But with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, political interest in such approaches has declined sharply. This is even more unfortunate as prevention and civilian approaches are markedly more cost-effective than arms build-ups and military operations.

SWITZERLAND

QUITE SUCCESSFUL TROUBLEMAKERS

The "Group for a Switzerland without an Army" is perhaps the most successful disarmament organization in Europe. The Swiss organization has been launching peace policy debates for the last 40 years.

The debate ended with a clear defeat, on 26 November 1989, when 64.4 percent of Swiss voters said "no" to a popular initiative to abolish the country's army. The revolution that the "Group for a Switzerland without an Army" (known by its German acronym GSoA) wanted to instigate was put on hold. But the vote still led to fundamental political and social changes in the role of the Swiss army.

First there was the fact that more than one-third of the voters, more than a million people, voted in favour of the GSoA initiative – a shock for the right-wing conservative power bloc. Before the vote, the Federal Council, the Swiss government, announced that Switzerland did not have an army: it was an army. The November 1989 vote, which followed an exceptionally emotional campaign, showed clearly that young people regarded the army not as a meaningful model but as a necessary evil.

Despite the defeat, the vote ushered in a whole series of reforms. In the following year, policymakers set peacebuilding as the army's new task, increasingly putting domestic disaster assistance at the forefront. The number of military personnel fell sharply, from 780,000 in 1990, to 426,000 in 1995; today the figure is 150,000. Between 1968 and 1996, some 12,000 young men were jailed for refusing military service. This practice decreased noticeably after 1989; in 1996 young men were permitted to do community service instead of joining the army. In addition after 1989 a stint as an officer was no longer a prerequisite for a professional career.

The abolition initiative of 1989 certainly left its mark on Switzerland. But the collapse of the Soviet Union had a much more dramatic influence on the country's security policy and the makeup of its army. So too did the accompanying fundamental changes in the military and geopolitical situation in Europe.

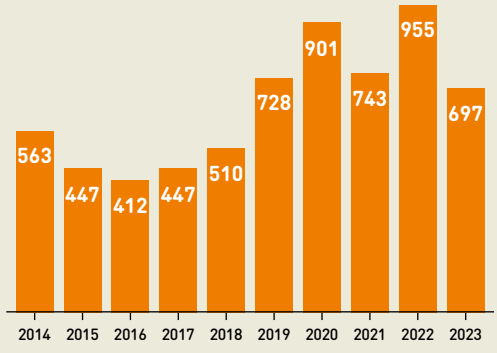
The GSoA is organized on a grassroots democratic basis and is funded by donations. What distinguishes it is its stability. Its number of members has stayed steady at around 20,000 for years. In its over four decades of existence, it has brought seven popular initiatives (its own initiatives, which require collecting 100,000 citizens' signatures), and two referenda (about laws, requiring 50,000 signatures) to the vote.

The GSoA makes strategic use of these two grassroots democracy mechanisms – a Swiss speciality. Gathering

Arms exports from Switzerland vary strongly according to individual orders and the relevant approvals. Around 85 percent go to NATO members

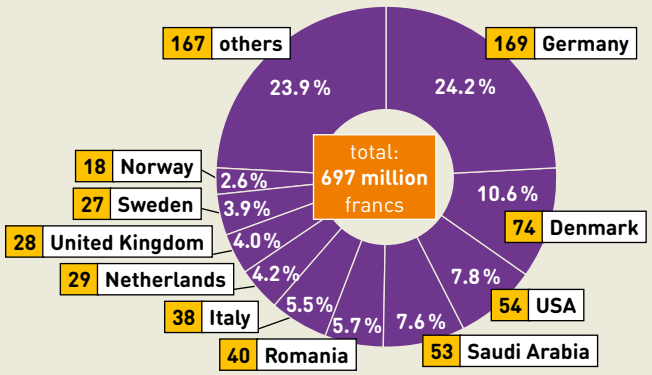
NEUTRAL? YES, WE SUPPLY THE WORLD

Exports of defence materiel from Switzerland, million Swiss francs*



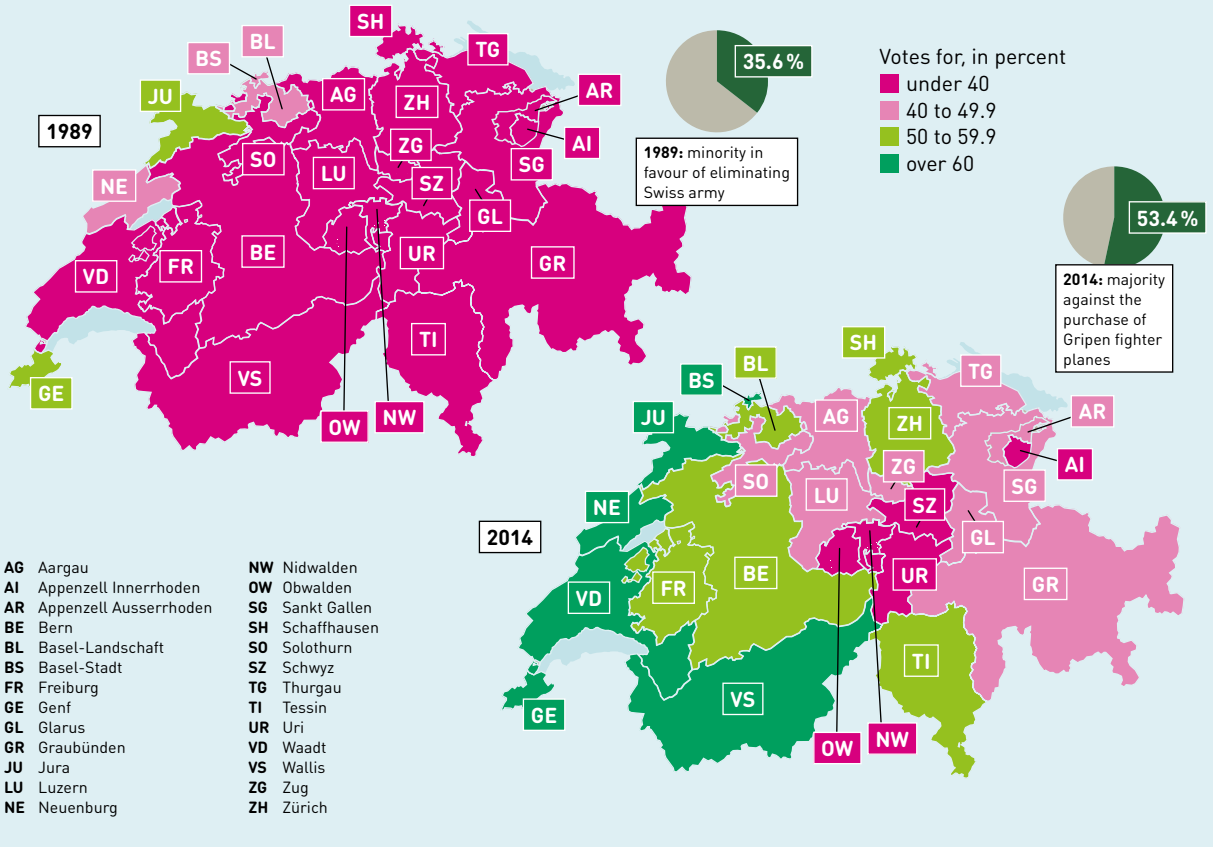
* one Swiss franc equivalent to 1.04 euros (status: 15 March 2024)

Exports of defence materiel by purchasing country, 2023, in million Swiss francs* and percent



FIRST ONE-THIRD, THEN THE MAJORITY

Results of the two most important referendums instigated by the "Group for a Switzerland without an Army" (GSoA), 1989 and 2014, by canton



Antimilitary initiatives attract more approval in francophone cantons – very different from in the traditional areas of central Switzerland

signatures and voting campaigns mobilize support and create media attention and political debates. The GSoA not only works towards its original goal, abolishing the army, but also tries to promote disarmament policies. Its aim is a stricter arms export control, or to stop them altogether. It wants to ban state-owned investors from investing in arms firms. In 1993, an initiative to stop the acquisition of 34 F/A-18 Hornet US fighter jets failed, but a referendum in 2014 against the purchase of 22 new Gripen fighters from Sweden was a sensational success. In 2023, a GSoA general assembly decided to launch an initiative to oblige Switzerland to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

There has been a longstanding close cooperation on certain subjects between the GSoA and the two main political parties that are critical of the army, the Social Democrats and the Greens. It is not uncommon for politicians to start their careers with a spell of working with the GSoA. The two best-known examples of this are Jo Lang (Greens) and Andreas Gross (Social Democrats). Both were active in the GSoA in the 1980s and went on to become influential figures in Swiss national politics.

But challenges also exist. At the end of the 1990s, the NATO mission in Kosovo split the GSoA. A second initiative to abolish the army in 2001 garnered only 22 percent of votes in favour; many regarded the initiave as an obstinate course of action. The current situation with the Russian war against Ukraine is not easy. The GSoA has so far rejected the idea of Swiss military support for Ukraine but criticizes Switzerland's role as a financial centre and raw materials hub that permits Russia to make financial profits that go to feed its war economy.

The Left rejects joining NATO, especially the GSoA, but also the Greens. The Social Democrats are not entirely categorical about this issue. The party with the largest share of votes, the right-wing nationalist Swiss People's Party, even claims that Switzerland can, and should, be able to defend itself alone. Therefore, there is no majority for joining the alliance. Surveys indicate that such a move to NATO would also be unpopular among the population. Neutrality has a long tradition in Switzerland and is valued by all; joining NATO would be a break with this. Nevertheless, a rapprochement is under way: one sign is the purchase of 36 F-35 fighter jets for six billion Swiss francs. These planes were chosen because their systems are compatible with those of NATO.

DONALD TRUMP

ONEROUS ALLIANCE, ONEROUS OBLIGATIONS

American presidential candidate Donald Trump is questioning the future of NATO. It is not just a question of funding, but also a desire to free the United States from international agreements. It is uncertain whether Trump plans to withdraw from NATO or merely to render it impotent.

February 2024: Former US president Donald Trump, the presidential candidate for one of the two parties that dominate American politics, said at an election rally that he would not defend a NATO ally that had not met the alliance's spending guidelines on defence. "No, I would not protect [that ally]," said Trump. "In fact, I would encourage [the Russians] to do whatever the hell they want." In doing so, he publicly called into question the core component of the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO's founding document. Article 5 of the Treaty says "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force [...]".

Trump had described NATO as "obsolete" in January 2017, shortly before his first term in office. But it was still surprising that he would go as far as he did in 2024. During his term in office from 2017 to 2021, he announced a partial withdrawal of troops from Germany, which was then revoked by his successor, Joe Biden. And the end of the NATO mission in Afghanistan was ultimately negotiated with the Taliban by the Trump administration, even if the chaotic withdrawal, which he then criticized, took place during Biden's term. Trump even seriously considered taking the US out of NATO.

In response, Senators Tim Kaine, a Democrat from Virginia, and Marco Rubio, a Republican from Florida, included a provision in a defence budget bill that requires any president to notify the relevant committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate at least 180 days before planning to suspend, terminate, denounce or withdraw from NATO. In addition, a withdrawal would require an act of Congress, i.e., passed by both chambers, or the approval of two-thirds of the senators present. But if Trump declares that the United States would no longer comply with Article 5 and even encourages other countries to attack NATO partners, he would not have to leave the alliance. The result would be the same.

At first sight, this rejection of the transatlantic alliance does not seem to fit the role of the United States. Only in the most recent part of its 250-year history has the United States regarded itself as the global policeman. In its early years, it had to concentrate on its own affairs; later, protected by two oceans, Canada and Mexico its inhabitants felt quite safe from external enemies. Its participation in the World Wars was controversial, and its entry into the Second World War was precipitated only by the attack of the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service on the US Pacific fleet in Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

This turned the tide, at least for the next eight decades. After the Allied victory, the United States justified its global military operations and alliances by claiming that it wanted to protect the international order. NATO's 1949 founding treaty invokes the Charter of the United Nations and the international law based on it. But neither the United States nor NATO felt bound by these when they stood in way of their interests, as shown by the NATO air war in Yugoslavia in 1999 and the US and British war in Iraq.

During the Cold War between the Soviet Union with its Warsaw Pact allies and the United States with its NATO partners, there was little discussion in the United States regarding its NATO membership. The alliance was one tool in the US foreign-policy toolbox. By no means was the United States active in NATO in Europe merely for charitable reasons. The United States' own interests – which often, but not always, coincided with those of its European allies, were foremost.

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization – the military alliance between the Soviet Union and its partners – might have offered the opportunity to create a new peace order. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which in 1995 emerged from the Helsinki Process and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), could have provided a framework for this that would have included the United States. But the victors in the East–West conflict, and especially the United States, decided to follow a different path. NATO

remained in existence and – this is part of the truth – a number of countries from the former socialist bloc applied for and were granted membership. During this period, the political scientist Francis Fukuyama dreamed of the "end of history", in which market economics and parliamentary democracy would spread throughout the world.

The leading member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a certain Joe Biden, went even further. "This, in fact, is the beginning of another 50 years of peace", he said in 1998. He was proud to have contributed to the bipartisan vote approving the admission of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to NATO. But there was also opposition. "We have no idea what we're getting into," said Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Biden's fellow Democrat from New York, in the same debate, provoking a furious riposte from Biden. There was opposition from politicians and the public during each round of NATO expansion, but it was mostly muted and came from a minority. However, when President George W. Bush wanted to admit Georgia and Ukraine to NATO in 2008, resistance in the United States became louder and the European allies finally said no.

The dispute about who in the alliance spends how much on the military has long been an issue in the organization. There are no "bills" that have not been paid by the Europeans, as Donald Trump repeatedly claims. But there are indeed declarations of intent. Since the founding of the alliance, the United States has consistently spent more money on missiles, tanks and ammunition than other members. The well-known figure of two percent of gross domestic product was first mentioned in Prague in 2002, when the Baltic states, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia were invited to join NATO.

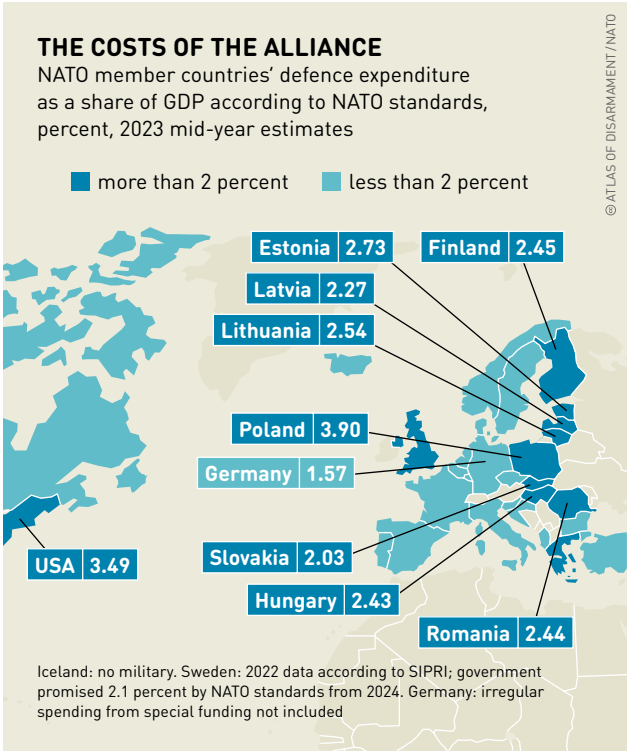
This benchmark was given to future members as a condition for their level of defence spending. For existing members, the figure was at first formulated as a target. In Wales in 2014, after Russia illegally annexed Crimea, the governments of the NATO member states decided to move towards the two percent target within the next ten years.

There was immediate criticism in the German parliament. The sum would represent a doubling of military spending, and the budget was under the control of the parliament, not the government. The use of the gross domestic product as the benchmark was also questioned. The two percent target might be achieved without any change in military spending if the economy were to slip into a severe recession. And finally, the technical focus on a target figure ignored the political question of how much military is needed, and whether more military would bring greater security.

Russia's invasion of its neighbour changed the debate. Nineteen countries, including Germany, are expected to reach the target agreed to a decade ago in 2024. However, the criticism from Washington since President Barack Obama's term in office has been misleading. Obama called for the burden to be more justly distributed across the NATO member states. But there has been no serious discussion in US politics about using such changes in financing to reduce American military expenditures and raise social spending. Ultimately, it was never about burden-sharing, but always about more arms.

The Democrats regard NATO as a key pillar of transatlantic collaboration and defend it accordingly. There are few discussions about alternatives. The Republicans, on the other hand, have converted themselves into a Donald Trump fan club. For them, NATO serves merely as a topic to mention in election campaign speeches. They want the United States and its mighty military to be able to do what they want, without being held back by treaties and agreements. For them, alliances mean setting their own goals and requiring everyone else to follow along. Donald Trump claims that he will keep the United States out of wars, which is indeed a popular position in the country. But he rejects international organizations such as the United Nations and treaties such as the Paris Climate Agreement, both of which are known to help avoid or end wars and conflicts. If Trump is re-elected, it will not make the world a more peaceful place. Rather, the opposite is likely to occur.

In Donald Trump's reckoning, Russia would be permitted to invade many NATO countries – but not the Baltic states, once part of the Soviet Union



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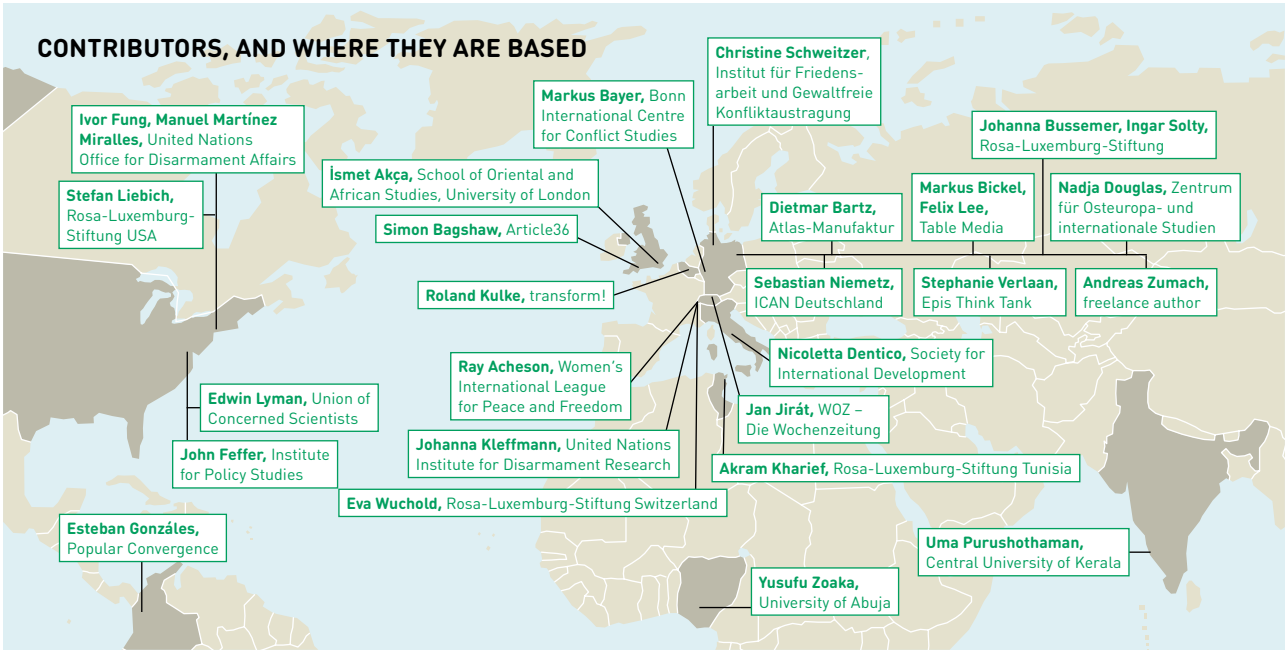

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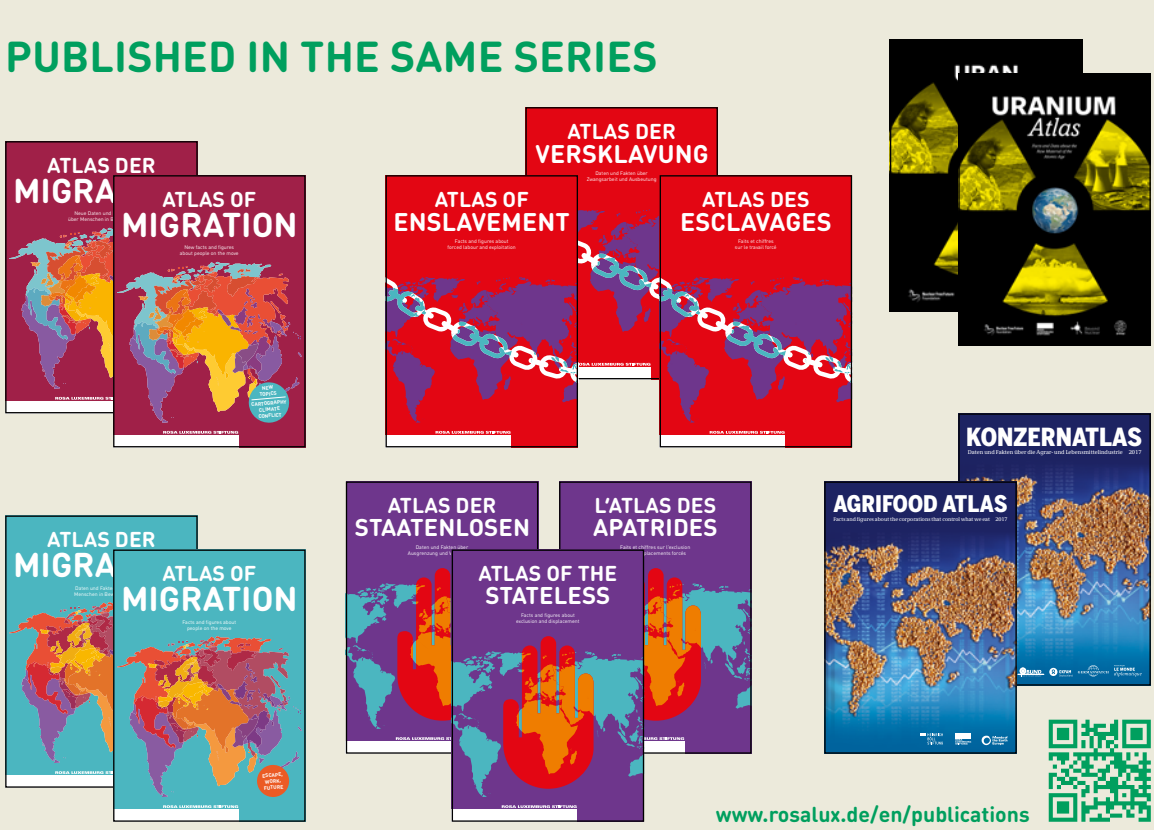

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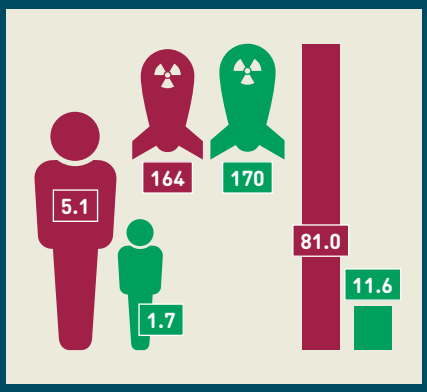

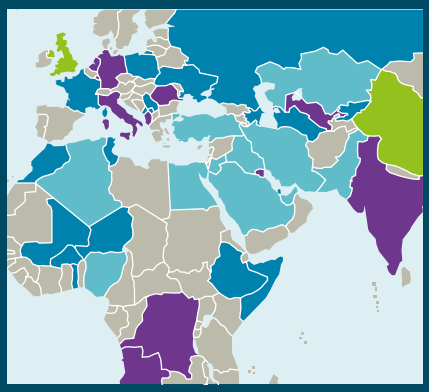

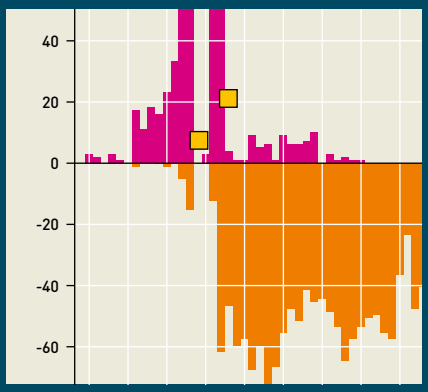

Today's complex conflicts, emerging technologies and cascading crises represent an extraordinary stress test for all.

from: **ARCHITECTURE OF ARMS CONTROL ON SHAKY GROUNDS,** page 38

The first wave of conversions showed that funds must be made available for the sustainable financing of these projects.

from: **DREAMS OF PEACE,** page 28

The success of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines is a historic landmark in peace activism and beyond.

from: **FINDING A WAY AROUND THE OBSTACLES,** page 42

Neutrality has a long tradition in Switzerland and is valued by all; joining NATO would be a break with this.

from: **QUITE SUCCESSFUL TROUBLEMAKERS,** page 60