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Shameful Spending

February 11, 2011 marked the end of the 30 year reign of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. However, it did not signal the end of U.S. Military Aid which has gone to Egypt over the last 30 years. \$1.3 billion dollars was sent to the Egyptian Military, annually, in the form of Foreign Military spending since 1979(1.). This is not including the approximate \$800 million sent annually to Egypt as economic Aid (1.); the \$1.3 billion is solely used for military purposes. The United States spends about 46% of the world's military spending (2.), much of it going to foreign countries or private companies such as Halliburton, Lockheed Martin, and Boeing to build incredibly expensive military equipment. We cannot uphold this level of spending, and with bases in over 130 countries, it cannot be justified as national defense. Americans cannot support this much spending and even if only gradually, it needs to be reduced, and the money returned to the people who are paying, the American people.

Dwight Eisenhower was famous for being the General who cut defense spending. He had seen what happened on the battlefields and in the foxholes, and knew that massive military operations were necessary only in dire circumstances. With military spending at about a total of \$1.3 trillion dollars a year, we must be in the direst of circumstances. How else can we explain to the multitude of underfunded public programs, such as social security, schools, infrastructure, welfare, and federal pensions that their money is being sent to Egypt so they can throw tear gas at civilians?

The U.N. was established after World War II, and its founding charter committed to preserving peace through social progress and to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It spends roughly \$30 billion dollars a year (3.), which is less than 3% of the world's military budget, and faces huge financial difficulties. The U.S. owes the U.N. 80% of its unpaid dues as of December 31, 2010 (3.), money that goes directly to countries that are poverty stricken and war torn, nations that have no money for food, perhaps even struck by genocide and radical groups. The U.N. has had many additional mandates put onto it, most arising from the U.S. humans rights policies, but has had to cut back drastically in its budget to make ends meet. They cannot borrow endlessly with bonds and credit, like the biggest spender in the world can, so they have to make a budget that is plausible; whether or not they get the money they were promised.

The next time there's a news story about unemployment, poverty, and desperation in the United States, remember that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld admitted once that \$2.3 trillion dollars was misplaced and no one knows how it was spent (4.), that \$115–\$454 billion is spent on Interest on debt incurred in past wars (5.), and that in 2006 over \$441 billion dollars was sent directly to 63 countries as Foreign Military Aid (6.).

Appendix

1. U.S. State Department. (2010, November 10). *Profile: Arab Republic of Egypt*. [Online]. Retrieved March 8, 2011. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm>
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3. Global Policy Forum. (2010, December 31). *United Nations Finance*. Retrieved April 24, 2011 <http://www.globalpolicy.org/un-reform/un-financial-crisis-9-27.html>
4. CBS Evening News. (2002, January 29). *The War on Waste*. Retrieved March 8, 2011.
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6. U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants. (2011) *USAID*. Retrieved April 24, 2011.
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