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U.N. Development Programme (undp) Studies Use Of Foreign Aid

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In New York during a recent interview with Inter Press Service, UN Development Programme special adviser Mahbub ul Haq said the UNDP is urging Third World nation governments to reduce military spending. At present, the UNDP is conducting a study of the uses of foreign aid. According to Haq, a former Pakistani finance minister, less than one-twelfth of these budgets is currently linked to human priority concerns. Haq said the UNDP would like to see a restructuring of aid budgets both by individual donors and recipients. The UNDP currently the world's largest multilateral grant development assistance body recommends that if a foreign aid recipient government "chooses" to invest more financial resources in military spending than on "the education and health of its people," aid should be cut off. According to the UNDP, if only one-third of current foreign aid resources were committed to human priority areas, the aid allocation to health, education, etc., would increase by a factor of four. Haq pointed out that since 1979, only about 10 developing nations have been receiving nearly 70% of US aid. Of the annual average, about $14 to $15 billion of US economic and military aid, at least 33 to 36% goes to two countries: Egypt and Israel. In the current 1992 fiscal year, for example, Israel gets about $1.8 billion as US military aid and $1.2 billion as economic aid. Egypt has been allocated $1.3 billion as military, and $865 million as economic aid. At present, the lion's share of US military assistance is extended as outright grants, all of which must be utilized to buy US weapons systems only. After Egypt and Israel, the next largest share of US aid goes to countries where Washington has rights to military bases, including the Philippines, Turkey, Greece, Portugal and Spain. (Basic data from Inter Press Service, 07/25/91)

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