

This Is the World's Largest Air Force ***Josie Green - 24/7 Wall Street journal***

The United States has the largest defense budget in the world, spending over \$778 billion on its armed forces in 2020. It also has more aircraft than the next five nations combined. All branches of the military fly some form of aircraft, including the Air Force, Marine Corps, Army, and Navy. With 13,247 aircraft, the U.S. air fleet makes up 24.9% of the global fleet.

To determine the 25 countries with the largest air forces, 24/7 Wall St. reviewed the 2021 report from [FlightGlobal](#), an online news and information website that covers the aviation and aerospace industries. Countries were ranked by the number of aircraft in their active military fleet. Military expenditure data came from [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#).

The countries with the next largest air forces after the United States are Russia and China, with 4,173 and 3,285 aircraft, respectively. [Here are the countries with the largest militaries.](#)

Military aircraft include combat jets and helicopters as well as in training, transport, and special missions aircraft. The F-16 Fighting Falcon is the most common combat aircraft in the world, with 2,248 active worldwide, including 930 in the U.S. Air Force. Originally developed by General Dynamics for the U.S. Air Force, to date, over 20 other countries have procured F-16s.

The second most common combat aircraft is the Soviet-designed Sukhoi SU 27/30, with 1,063 in service, including 423 in Russia.

The total number of active military aircraft in the world is 52,271, 292 fewer, or 0.6%, than the previous year. Reductions in the number of aircraft can generally be attributed to the retiring of certain models of older aircraft.

The Asia-Pacific region boasts eight of the 25 countries with the largest air forces in the world. The region's fleet size declined by 2% from the previous year. Japan retired the last of its nearly 50-year-old F-4 Phantom fighter jets in 2021. Meanwhile, the Royal Thai Air force retired 33 of its Aero L-39 Albatros training jets and 76 of its Bell UH-1H "Huey" helicopters.

The Middle East was the only region that increased its total fleet size, with the addition of 73 aircraft, representing an almost 2% rise. Four of the 25 countries with the largest air forces are in the Middle East, two are in Northern Africa, eight in Europe, and three in the Americas. While massive militaries can often equate to global power, there are some countries that do not have a military budget at all.

1. United States

- > Active fleet: 13,247 aircraft (24.9% of global fleet)*
- > Most common aircraft: F-16C combat aircraft (5.9% of fleet)*
- > Military expenditure, 2020: \$778.2 billion (40.3% of world spending)*



2. Russia

- > *Active fleet: 4,173 aircraft (7.8% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: Mi-8/17/171 combat helicopter (18.9% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$61.7 billion (3.2% of world spending)*



3. China

- > *Active fleet: 3,285 aircraft (6.2% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: J-7 combat aircraft (12.7% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$252.3 billion (13.1% of world spending)*



4. India

- > *Active fleet: 2,167 aircraft (4.1% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: Dhruv ALH/Rudra combat helicopter (13.8% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$72.9 billion (3.8% of world spending)*



5. South Korea

- > *Active fleet: 1,595 aircraft (3.0% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: MD500 combat helicopter (17.1% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$45.7 billion (2.4% of world spending)*



6. Japan

- > Active fleet: 1,449 aircraft (2.7% of global fleet)
- > Most common aircraft: T-4 training aircraft (13.8% of fleet)
- > Military expenditure, 2020: \$49.1 billion (2.5% of world spending)



7. Pakistan

- > Active fleet: 1,387 aircraft (2.6% of global fleet)
- > Most common aircraft: F-7 combat aircraft (9.7% of fleet)
- > Military expenditure, 2020: \$10.4 billion (0.5% of world spending)



8. Egypt

- > *Active fleet: 1,062 aircraft (2.0% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: F-16A/C combat aircraft (15.8% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$4.5 billion (0.2% of world spending)*



9. Turkey

- > *Active fleet: 1,057 aircraft (2.0% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: F-16C combat aircraft (14.9% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$17.7 billion (0.9% of world spending)*



10. France

- > *Active fleet: 1,055 aircraft (2.0% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: Rafale B/C combat aircraft (9.5% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$52.7 billion (2.7% of world spending)*



11. North Korea

- > *Active fleet: 946 aircraft (1.8% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: FT-5 training aircraft (14.3% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$1.6 billion (0.1% of world spending)*



12. Saudi Arabia

- > *Active fleet: 897 aircraft (1.7% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: F-15C/S/SA combat aircraft (23.5% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$57.5 billion (3.0% of world spending)*



13. Italy

- > *Active fleet: 864 aircraft (1.6% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: Eurofighter combat aircraft (10.6% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$28.9 billion (1.5% of world spending)*



14. Taiwan

- > *Active fleet: 742 aircraft (1.4% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: F-16A/V combat aircraft (15.1% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$12.2 billion (0.6% of world spending)*



15. United Kingdom

- > *Active fleet: 693 aircraft (1.3% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: Euro-fighter Typhoon combat aircraft (17.2% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$59.2 billion (3.1% of world spending)*



16. Brazil

- > *Active fleet: 669 aircraft (1.3% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: EMB-312 training aircraft (15.2% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$19.7 billion (1.0% of world spending)*



17. Greece

- > *Active fleet: 633 aircraft (1.2% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: F-16C combat aircraft (18.0% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$5.3 billion (0.3% of world spending)*



18. Germany

- > *Active fleet: 617 aircraft (1.2% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: Eurofighter combat aircraft (21.7% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$52.8 billion (2.7% of world spending)*



19. Israel

- > *Active fleet: 597 aircraft (1.1% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: F-16C/I combat aircraft (29.3% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$21.7 billion (1.1% of world spending)*



20. United Arab Emirates

- > *Active fleet: 554 aircraft (1.0% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: F-16E combat aircraft (10.1% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$. billion (.% of world spending)*



21. Algeria

- > *Active fleet: 552 aircraft (1.0% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: Mi-8/17/171 combat helicopter (25.0% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$9.7 billion (0.5% of world spending)*



22. Iran

- > *Active fleet: 543 aircraft (1.0% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: F-4D/E/RF-4E combat aircraft (11.6% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$15.8 billion (0.8% of world spending)*



23. Spain

- > *Active fleet: 503 aircraft (0.9% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: EF-18M/F/A-18A combat aircraft (14.3% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$17.4 billion (0.9% of world spending)*



24. Mexico

- > *Active fleet: 469 aircraft (0.9% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: T-6C+ training aircraft (14.7% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$6.1 billion (0.3% of world spending)*



25. Thailand

- > *Active fleet: 469 aircraft (0.9% of global fleet)*
- > *Most common aircraft: F-16A combat aircraft (7.9% of fleet)*
- > *Military expenditure, 2020: \$7.3 billion (0.4% of world spending)*

