# International Spending on Nuclear Weapons Reaches $91.4 Billion in 2023, Driven by US Budget Increase



International spending on nuclear weapons saw a significant increase in 2023, reaching $91.4 billion, a 13% rise from 2022, as reported by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). This $10.7 billion increase was predominantly driven by a hike in the United States' defense budget. The US, China ($11.9 billion), and Russia ($8.3 billion) were the largest spenders among the nine nuclear-armed nations, which also include the United Kingdom, France, India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg disclosed on June 17 that China has provided technological support to Russia, aiding its prolonged invasion of Ukraine. Stoltenberg highlighted that 90% of Russian microelectronics originated from China and noted Beijing's role in enhancing Russia's satellite capabilities. White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby reiterated that China’s support has bolstered Russia's defense industrial base.

Stoltenberg's remarks coincided with NATO's preparations for its summit in Washington, emphasizing Europe’s increased defense spending since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. On June 18, Russian President Vladimir Putin commenced a two-day visit to North Korea to discuss expanding military cooperation with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un amid mounting Western concerns over this alliance.

Furthermore, Ukrainian forces launched a kamikaze drone attack on an oil depot in Azov, Russia, on the night of June 17, causing substantial fires. The attack occurred just before Putin's visit to North Korea and marked another instance of Ukraine targeting Russia's energy infrastructure amidst ongoing conflict.