

Headlines:

- **Iran Revelations**
- **World Military Spending Continues to Rise**
- **US Recognizes Armenian Genocide**

Details:

Iran Revelations

The New York Times has revealed a three-hour-long conversation between Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and an Iranian academic recorded as part of a history project and not intended for publication. According to the *NYT* and the *Iran International*, which obtained the tape, Zarif told Zarif that the Zionist entity had conducted at least 200 attacks on Iranian assets in Syria. The attacks were a surprise for Zarif, who is taped revealing that he is oftentimes kept out of the loop on Iran's own political course, saying that it is largely set by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Zarif also revealed he had clashed with the late Brig. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, head of IRGC's Quds Force, killed in a US drone strike in 2020 on a number of occasions and accused him of working with Russia, which sought to prevent a thaw between Iran and the West, to jeopardize the 2015 nuclear deal. This revelation reveals that the Iranian clerical regime is run by just a handful of people and the relative impotence of Iran's diplomatic service, undermined by the country's military and the Supreme Leader's office.

World Military Spending Continues to Rise

Last year saw an increase in global military spending despite the damage the coronavirus lockdowns did to the world's economy. A new study from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) found total global military expenditures rose to \$1.98 trillion in 2020, representing a 2.6 percent increase from 2019. The 2.6 percent increase came as the global gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by 4.4 percent. Military spending accounted for 2.4 percent of the global GDP, a figure known as the military burden. As always is the case, the US was by far the biggest spender. The SIPRI study estimated that the US spent \$778 billion on its military, accounting for 39 percent of the global total. US military spending saw a 4.4 percent increase from 2019. The study said 2020 marked the third consecutive rise in military spending for the US after seven years of continuous reductions. Following the US in spending was China at \$252 billion, a 1.9 percent increase from 2019. India came in third at \$72.9 billion, followed by Russia at \$61.7 billion. Notably, Russia's spending was 6.6 percent lower than its military budget for the year. The UK was the fifth-highest spender at \$59.2 billion. Whilst much of the people in the developed world were suffering from the pandemic, their leaders who all struggled to deal with the outbreak found plenty of time to continue selling arms to the world.

US Recognises Armenian Genocide

This week America designated the killing of Armenians during WW1 as a 'genocide,' by the Ottomans. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned that the move, which he called a "wrong step", will hinder US-Turkey relations. Successive US administrations from both major parties had refrained from describing the killings as a genocide. Biden became the first US president to use the term since Ronald Reagan, who mentioned "the genocide of the Armenians" in a passing reference in 1981. Erdogan did not announce any retaliatory steps against Washington and both leaders are set to meet on the side-lines of a NATO summit in June. Despite all the services Erdogan has rendered to the US, the US doesn't see Turkey as an ally but as a slave whose job is to execute US instructions. Erdogan just never realised this.