The number of people in armed forces worldwide in 2002 was two thirds of those in the armed forces in 1985. By 2002, there was an average of 3 armed forces personnel for every 1000 people living in the world. The highest proportion of the population in armed forces were in Eritrea: 43 in every 1000. The lowest proportion were in Ghana at 0.34 in every 1000. Both these proportions are higher than their equivalents in 1985. Two fifths of the 1985-2002 reduction in armed forces was in the Russian Federation.

The largest armed forces in 2002 were in China, followed by the United States and then India. Worldwide there were a total of 19 million people in armed forces.

Territory size shows the proportion of armed forces personnel worldwide, serving that territory.

“Older men declare war. But it is the youth who must fight and die.”  
Herbert Hoover, 1944