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# The Plight of the World's Children

## Worldwide

- Each day some 40,000 children under the age of five die from malnutrition and disease.
- Nearly 100 million school-age children have never stepped inside a classroom.

## In Third World Countries

- In Third World countries, only 50 percent of the children now have access to clean drinking water.
- In Third World countries, 40 percent of the children are malnourished.

## In First World Countries

- In the United States, 20 percent of children live in households below the poverty line.
- In New York City, 40 percent of youngsters grow up poor.
- The United States ranks only twentieth—Finland is first—among nations with the lowest infant mortality rate.
- The United States and Great Britain now have double the number of homeless people they had a decade ago; 25 percent of homeless people are children.
- In Canada, nearly 17 percent of youngsters go to bed hungry every night.

(UNICEF, 1990)

## The Needs of the Military Versus the Needs of Children

"Total military expenditures, in both industrialized and developing worlds, easily exceed *the combined annual incomes of the poorest half of humanity*. The diversion of even 5 percent or 10 percent of this vast sum would be enough to reaccelerate progress toward a world in which the basic human needs of all were met" (UNICEF's 1990 report on the state of the world's children).

"Somehow we always find the money for those things that our government believes are important, whether it is fighting a war in the Middle East or bailing out the savings and loans. Kids always come in dead last" (David Liederman, executive director of the Child Welfare League of America, quoted in "A Call to the World to Care—and to Act," *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 September 1990, page 10).