

negotiations.

If and where, as a product of negotiations, war or elections, the possibilities reappear for a reformed or cleansed army to take shape, then reconversion can become a national and an international priority, and donors may be asked to assist. It may be the case--perhaps more in El Salvador than in Guatemala, more in Nicaragua than in Haiti--that the defense apparatus is willing to take part in redefining its own mission, in a way that enhances human rights, development and democratic governance, and indeed by making such objectives central to the mentalities, policies and training of the "new" armed forces.

### **The Politics of Defense Expenditures**

It is in this context, that donors must be aware that strict aid conditionality could inject tensions in a negotiation/transition context, as appears to be the case in certain Central American countries. While the stringency could appear to strengthen the hand of the civic component, one would not wish to see any part overplaying its hand to the point of becoming enmeshed in local politics.

Political discussions, including conditionalities, should also take into account what exactly is the nature of the military expenditure, or the breakdown of the proposed defense budget. Distinctions have to be made between spending for "defense" as opposed to security, including the national police. Where spending on the army is reduced, it almost becomes imperative--particular in transition situations--to step up support for police, particularly community policing, as a means of furthering demilitarization of citizen security. On the other hand enhanced development cooperation to countries where internal security forces are repressive even though there may no only a small army or none at all would not necessarily be welcomed.

Regional balance of forces are also difficult to ignore in determining level of military spending. Where boundary disputes exist, as in Central America, it is very difficult to envision significant reduction in levels of armaments and armies outside the framework of binding