

to tease out any obvious possible links.¹⁸ Again, no attempt to manipulate the data has been made (by tracking, for example, both series to search for statistically significant correlations over time). Studies that have done so have been cited earlier in the report, and their generally inconclusive findings noted.

The final indicator presented in each regional analysis offers a comparison of the number of soldiers per thousand population with the level of political and civil liberties. This has two purposes. The first is simply to offer an index of the military "presence" in society, to allow comparison between states on another axis of security expenditures. The second is to search for some possible link between security expenditures and political or civil liberties (as an indicator of "human security"). That there might be some link between these factors was suggested in Figure 3, although it compared military *spending* with political freedoms. Since spending does not exert an impact by itself, it made sense to look for a possible mediator, such as the number of soldiers and their relative societal "presence."

It is important at the outset to be clear on what can and cannot be discerned from the data. By themselves, a few data points for several states in a region allow no statistically meaningful conclusions to be drawn. Likewise, simple trend lines (such as declining military spending since the end of the Cold War), or apparent correlations between two variables, do not by themselves tell us what *caused* a change or whether or not the variables are causally linked (and in which direction!). The majority of the judgements made in the cases presented below thus reflect qualitative or contextual assessments, since few statistically meaningful conclusions can be drawn from any of the tables. But since the contextual assessments made in the world of policy-makers depend on *some* interpretation of the available data, it makes sense at least to present the available material systematically, as a springboard for a contextual discussion in different regional contexts.

A few other final caveats should also be noted. There are a range of other possible indicators that could be used and which might prove to be more appropriate (such as levels of political repression, overall government spending, regional conflict indicators). The case studies in this report also do not analyze the possible positive contributions to security that could be made (except by omission), nor do they tackle in a quantitative fashion any aspects of regional or inter-state security. These factors (such as whether or not a state has recently been engaged in a war, or is in a threatening environment) are more appropriately dealt with through "qualitative" analysis. A cursory examination of statistics in such matters is no substitute for detailed contextual analysis. Finally, each of the cases presented in a few pages here could be the subject as an entire report, which took the data provided here merely as a starting point. The purpose of this

¹⁸ Although it would have been preferable to make use of exactly identical time series, the distortion introduced here is not large at all, since three additional years have little impact on the average of ten.