

security institutions and expenditures are often designed to keep the lid on potentially explosive civil unrest. Often this concern is directly reflected in the design of the armed forces: the regimes in Syria, Zaire and Myanmar, for example, all devote large resources to internal security, in the form of paramilitary or "republican guard" type forces. Initiatives that assume that security expenditures are determined by the external threat environment would be entirely ineffective at changing policies in states where the regime feels threatened from its own citizens, or from its weak institutional capacity to resolve social conflicts.

Bureaucratic and institutional capacities and interests also play a role in the allocation of state resources. In many cases, the institutional weight of the military is strong, and even when not in power, it represents a potential threat to the stability of the governing regime, and hence can only be satisfied with a relatively free claim on scarce resources.⁵ In such cases, high levels of military spending may not be dictated by external threats at all, but the security dilemma virtually ensures that a large military establishment can be perceived as a threat by neighbouring states. Institutional inertia and bureaucratic decision-making processes are also a potentially relevant factor: the best predictor of next year's military spending is almost always last year's spending level, and moving resources from one "basket" to another is never a simple process.⁶ Thus policies must be sensitive *not* simply to absolute or relative levels of spending between states, but the trends this spending manifests. Declining spending, from whatever level, may represent a signal of an openness to engaging in a regional or domestic security-building exercise.

Likewise, the economic condition and prospects of a state play a significant role in determining whether or not any of the above sources of insecurity can be overcome. A state with a weak and heavily dependent economy, with few resources or great scarcity, is much more insecure and vulnerable than one which has a "margin of manoeuvre" to aid its citizens or buy off discontented groups. The image of unpaid soldiers threatening a regime, or of inter-group conflict over scarce resources, is not uncommon. Likewise, access to the world economy can make a huge difference in the ability of a state to mobilize resources to meet citizen's basic needs. Finally, all of these domestic factors are filtered through the lens of "political cultural" factors. Traditions of leadership (which may facilitate the rise of personalist rule), conflict resolution mechanisms, and the role of "social justice" ideas in civil society, can all play a role in determining the place and weight given to the institutions of organized violence in the social order. Such factors are, however, difficult to examine in a systematic or general way.

⁵ This points to an obvious flaw with studies that attempt to determine if military expenditures rise after the military has taken power, since one can argue that in many cases nominally civilian governments are forced to keep the military from taking power with higher military spending. See, for examples, Ball, 59-67.

⁶ For a summary of these findings see West, "Determinants of Military Expenditure in Developing Countries," in Lamb with Kallab, *Military Expenditures and Economic Development*, 123-126.