

On the statistical side, the publicly-available data is so poor that little confidence can be vested in it, and different states have very different standards of reporting and transparency. On the conceptual side, the determination of "excessive" spending requires a benchmark against which this can be measured, whether this is a regional comparison (between potentially similar states), or an internal one (against, for example, the record of economic growth). Nevertheless, despite data and analytic uncertainties, there remain good reasons to think that beyond a certain point, military expenditures do not contribute to enhancing the security (broadly defined) of a state and its citizens.

This report adopts a regional approach to analyzing the publicly-available data, and presents a set of short case studies that illustrate how such data can be used to sketch a preliminary comparative picture of the military burden of various states and regions, and to derive some *prima facie* conclusions about which states might be carrying excessive military burdens.³ These case studies are *not* a substitute for a detailed contextual analysis, and they cannot be expected to uncover the complex web of causes and consequences of security spending decisions in different regions. They can, however serve as a useful first step, by illustrating how a non-technical scrutiny of the data can help identify states of concern (for which additional information can be solicited), and can perhaps be a starting point for a regional dialogue over appropriate levels of security expenditures.

The rationale for a regional approach is two-fold. First, a regional analysis is more likely to control for politico-cultural, sociological and historical factors, which are more often shared by states in a particular region. Second, the "regionalization" of security issues since the end of the Cold War has meant that the problem of military expenditures might be more productively addressed in a regional dialogue, and with the appropriate multilateral and international interlocutors.

Each case study attempts two things. First, by simple visual techniques, it attempts to determine which states stand out in a regional context as carrying a particularly heavy military burden. The idea of an "excessive military burden," attempts to overcome the previous over-concentration on one or two measures of *expenditures* alone. It makes use of several different indices: absolute values of military spending (which are compared between states, over time), military expenditures as a percentage of GNP, military expenditures per capita, the number of soldiers per thousand population, and the size of the armed forces (when appropriate), in order to identify regional states of concern. Without entering into a detailed study, it offers some tentative explanations of why certain states might be regional "outliers," as an starting point for a more detailed contextual analysis that could follow.

³ The cases studied are: Central America, South America, North Africa and the Sahel, Southern Africa, Central Africa and Southeast Asia.