

Reconstructing the Problem: Linkages, Causes and Consequences

The Narrow Construction of the Problem

Previous attempts to tackle the problem of security expenditures and development have pursued distinct tracks, depending on whether or not they were concerned with the economic development, or the conflict-security, side of the problem. Aside from all the other difficulties mentioned above, this bifurcation meant that both sides ignored important elements linking the two sets of issues. The more "economic development-oriented" analyses often ignored the issue of the legitimate security needs or threat environment of states, and focused too narrowly on purely the economic growth consequences (such as GNP/capita) of security expenditures. Other issues, such as the provision of a basic level of security for economic activity to flourish, the social welfare of a state and its citizens (investment in such things as health or education), or the impact of military expenditure on *political development* issues (such as democratization, civil-military relations, or communal conflicts) were neglected. On the other side, the more "conflict and security-oriented" analyses focused almost exclusively on *inter-state* conflicts and arms races, and ignored both the internal dimension of insecurity (for states, regimes and citizens) and any deleterious economic, social or political consequences that could follow from the single-minded pursuit of military security.

One goal of this report is to integrate these different approaches more fully, first by charting a wider range of determinants that might contribute to high levels of security expenditure, and second by broadening the range of possible consequences that should be considered. Both sides of the equation are important, since successful policies must be focused on appropriate aspects of the overall problem. Figure 4 illustrates (in a highly schematic form) these possible determinants and consequences of security expenditures.

To begin, security expenditures are determined both by external/systematic causes and by domestic internal factors and insecurities. As Mohammed Ayooob has pointed out, "security-insecurity is defined in relation to vulnerabilities - *both internal and external* - that threaten or have the potential to bring down or weaken state structures, both territorial and institutional, and governing regimes."¹ Among the external determinants, the most important are: regional inter-state conflicts or rivalries; alliance, assistance and security relationships with extra-regional powers; the pursuit of regional hegemony or status; and the existence (and nature) of regional security-building processes. Obviously, which of these factors are at work in any case (and in what combination) matters a great deal for the effectiveness of policies designed

¹ Mohammed Ayooob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State-Making, Regional Conflict and the International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 9, italics in original. See also Edward Azar and Chung-in Moon, eds., *National Security in the Third World: The Management of Internal and External Threats* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1988).