

into the ODA process, within the context of other priorities and country or regional strategic frameworks."¹⁹

On the security side, the objective is to encourage security dialogues within the appropriate regional forums concerning the appropriate "size, technical composition, investment patterns, and operational practices of all military forces"²⁰ in the region, along the lines suggested by the concept of "cooperative security" that was outlined above. One of the first elements of all regional security dialogues is often an attempt to reach a consensus on the nature of the "problem" (if any). States that are encouraged by the process to explain the thinking behind their security expenditure decisions (or even to explain why publicly-available data may misrepresent their situation) are already engaged in a rudimentary exercise in transparency and confidence-building, which might even serve in itself to defuse regional and domestic tensions. The deescalation of rivalry and tension between Argentina and Brazil after their return to democratic rule, for example, highlights the possible impact of such transitions on regional security issues.²¹ With respect to domestic transparency, greater involvement by NGOs or other stakeholder groups in security policy-formulation could be encouraged by increasing the amount of information that is publicly available. Similarly, a reluctance to increase transparency in the security budgeting and decision-making process does at least imply that a state is not fully engaged in or committed to democratic norms of openness and good governance. But all of these measures presuppose a careful diagnosis of the nature of the problem (if any), of excessive security expenditures. The report begins with an exploration of these issues through a presentation of the situation in Central America.

¹⁹ From the framework for action of "Reduction of Military Expenditures in Developing Countries: Canadian Strategy Document," 18 June 1996. See also *Military Expenditures in Developing Countries and Arms Control*, report of the consultations sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the North-South Institute, 26 March 1996.

²⁰ Ashton Carter, William Perry and John Steinbrunner, *A New Concept of Cooperative Security*, (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1992). 6.

²¹ See Thierry Riga, *Une approche coopérative de la non-prolifération nucléaire: l'exemple de l'Argentine et du Brésil*, UNIDIR Research Papers 29 (1994).