

were more heavily dependent on their military spending, and more distorted by it, their adjustment to its reduction has been even more difficult than in the West.

However, the general difficulty of any such fundamental economic change is another of the main explanations of why so little benefit has yet been felt from reduced defence spending in any country. The resistance to spending reductions is naturally fierce, in some countries quite literally so, among military establishments themselves, and among the regions, localities, and industries likely to be most directly affected. In countries still only half-emerged from the bureaucratic depredations of central planning, the natural economic systems for the re-allocation of resources are under-developed, and many are tempted to slip back into their old patterns, trying to plan "conversion" from military production at an industry or even an enterprise level, rather than recognizing that the conversion must take place at the level of the economy as a whole. Even in the market economies, the reallocation of capital and technology, and the adjustment of the labour force and defence-dependent communities, is gradual and painful, and doubly so in recessionary times.

None of this is to suggest that the reduction of defence expenditure and the recouping of economic and social benefits will not occur, at both the national and international levels, as long as the gains and pace of arms reduction can be maintained, and constructive pressure for other economic and social priorities sustained. It does underline that the "beating of swords into ploughshares" will be a gradual, indirect and pervasive set of processes rather than any simple transfer.

In the Third World, aggregate military spending edged upward in 1990, but this increase was accounted for by a few states, since the more general trend of decreased spending continued for most countries. Reliable figures for 1991 are not yet available, so it is not possible to say whether the trend of declining military expenditure as a result of economic strain has continued. Nor is it yet clear whether the "lessons" of the second Gulf War have spurred more governments to try to upgrade their military capabilities, or to abandon this course as futile and turn their resources to other ends.

Some governments, of course, see no choice but to continue investing heavily in the military, because of perceived threats from within or outside their territories. Movements toward more democratic practices should ultimately reduce the role of armies in the control of civilian populations,