

have been somewhat more successful.¹¹ In light of the above figures, some international attention could also perhaps be given to the situations in Gabon and Congo, in order to avert potential problems in these states.

In general, the above figures paint a mixed picture of which states in Central Africa might be considered states that might be devoting excessive resources to the military, and the purely quantitative indices appear to be somewhat at odds with contextual factors. On the military spending as percentage of GNP scale, Rwanda and Congo stand out, with Zaire also being a concern. On the spending per capita and number of soldiers per thousand measures, Gabon and Congo stand out, with again Rwanda being also of interest. The appearance of Rwanda on these lists would not surprise anyone, given its recent history. But the appearance of Gabon and Congo on these lists belies reality in many ways. In spite of their relatively high proportion of GNP devoted to the military, high number of soldiers/thousand population, and/or high level of military spending per capita, these two states enjoy the highest living standards, and among the most civil and political liberties, in the region. Conversely, two of the region's problem cases, Zaire, Nigeria, tend to rank low on various indices of militarization, despite the fact that their overall political situation graphically demonstrates the destructive power of predatory or military rule.

The real issue for Central Africa (and perhaps Africa in general) may not, however, be the ability of the international community to identify particular outlier states that can be pressured into reforming their military establishments, but whether or not the states in question will survive as viable entities in the 21st century. The tragic example of Somalia, which collapsed into near-anarchy after the flight of the former ruler, Siad Barre, could be repeated, depending on the circumstances, in Burundi, Zaire, Nigeria, and perhaps even in seemingly more stable states such as Kenya. As Jeffrey Herbst provocatively poses the issue, "it is time to ask if some countries simply cannot develop because of the peculiarities of their own national design."¹² Obviously, the international community cannot in advance plot strategies to deal with failed states, but it can attempt to forestall this possibility by reducing the social, economic and political burden posed by the concentrated reservoirs of organized violence that African armed forces often represent, while at the same time exploring means for increasing the basic security of people in the region.

Coupled with this is the institutional weakness of any regional arrangements that might take on a security-building role, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose unsuccessful involvement in the Liberian civil war has imposed a great

¹¹ "Africa-Conflict: International Support Needed for Demobilization," *Inter Press Service*, 25 July 1995.

¹² Herbst, 153; Robert Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood," *World Politics*, 35:1 (1985), 1-24.