

experience of intense regional conflicts or wars. Nine of the twenty states noted (only seventeen are shown, since growth data for Angola, Iraq and Afghanistan was not available) are in the Persian Gulf or core Middle East; five others (Angola, Sudan, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Mozambique) have just emerged from or are still embroiled in major civil wars (and in Angola and Mozambique military spending has been declining). The remaining six (North Korea, Djibouti, Russia, Pakistan, Laos and Zaire) are scattered in different regions, and would appear to have dissimilar explanations for their high levels of spending. Twenty-one more states are captured by four percent thresholds, but here too there is no obvious pattern to their distribution, either in terms of geographical regions or level of wealth. This list suggests that a closer examination of particular regional contexts is absolutely essential in order to uncover any precise relationships. This should not be surprising, since there are a whole host of reasons why general relationships might not exist.

One could immediately draw one of two diametrically opposed conclusions from this brief overview of attempts to study the relationship at the most general level: either there is no relationship between military and arms spending and conflict or economic development; or our attempts to study this have all been preliminary and fundamentally flawed. Most analysts have adopted the second argument, and criticized the cross-sectional (many countries) and/or longitudinal (over time) quantitative studies as "substituting the computer for analysis."²⁴ As Nicole Ball puts it:

the considerable variations in the ways in which Third World economies actually function and in their potential for development, as well as differences in the size and nature of the security outlays of individual countries, greatly reduce the likelihood that one pattern could be discovered to describe the situation in all developing countries at all times.²⁵

These differences of course extend beyond the economy: the different responses of states in threatening versus peaceful regional environments, or which face intractable internal or communal conflicts, or which possess low levels of regime or state legitimacy, all suggest that a more discriminating and qualitative analysis must be employed to examine any possible linkage.

Likewise, there remain compelling logical reasons to think that there is *some* relationship between the conflict and threat environment, military spending, and economic, social and political development. Even if the linkages are more complex, defence expenditure still represents a significant drain on current government resources, a drain that carries opportunity costs. Although there may be some indirect benefits from military spending (such as a higher level of education and training, spin-offs to the manufacturing and managerial sector, or general "modernizing" effects on the economy), these must be weighed off

²⁴ Ball, *Security and Economy*, chapter 4.

²⁵ Ball, *Security and Economy*, 390, 123-157, 405-408.