

up-to-date data for most countries, and the ratios of armed forces per 1,000 people are roughly in line with other sources.

Once again, despite the intuitive appeal of this measure, it is subject to some uncertainty and interpretation. Assuming the size of the military (in persons) was determined accurately, the fiscal burden would still be uncertain since the per member cost of maintaining an armed force varies from country to country. Further, there are several countries that maintain paramilitary forces of sufficient means to support or replace regular military forces. Generally, paramilitary forces are not included in armed forces data. As an example of the potential magnitude of paramilitary forces, the IISS estimates that the Popular Mobilization Army of Iran has had as many as one million volunteers during periods of offensive operations.

Another potential problem with comparing armed forces' strengths internationally lies in determining their respective roles and influences in different countries. While a relatively large armed force could imply a lack of commitment to economic development (all other things held constant), it is possible that the military could also contribute to a country's rudimentary infrastructure or pass on basic skills to its otherwise unskilled members.¹

Total Deaths Due to Conflict

In determining whether a country's military expenditures are excessive, it is necessary to establish a context within which its military operates. In 1993, there were 27 developing countries that recorded civilian and/or military deaths due to major armed conflicts, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The activities of police/paramilitary "death squads" are not necessarily captured by the SIPRI data.

Of the 11 developing countries whose military spending represented the highest shares of GDP in 1993, five were engaged in major armed conflicts that resulted in deaths. Of the ten developing countries with the highest ratio of armed forces personnel per 1,000 people in 1993, three were involved in similar conflicts.

¹ Although most of the literature claims that military spending reduces economic development, some analysts point to the possibility of positive spillovers. For example, see R. Picciotto, "Comment on 'The Post-Cold-War World: Implications for Military Expenditures in Developing Countries', by R.S. McNamara", in *Proceedings of the World Bank Annual Conference on Development Economics 1991*, World Bank, Washington DC, March 1992, p. 133.