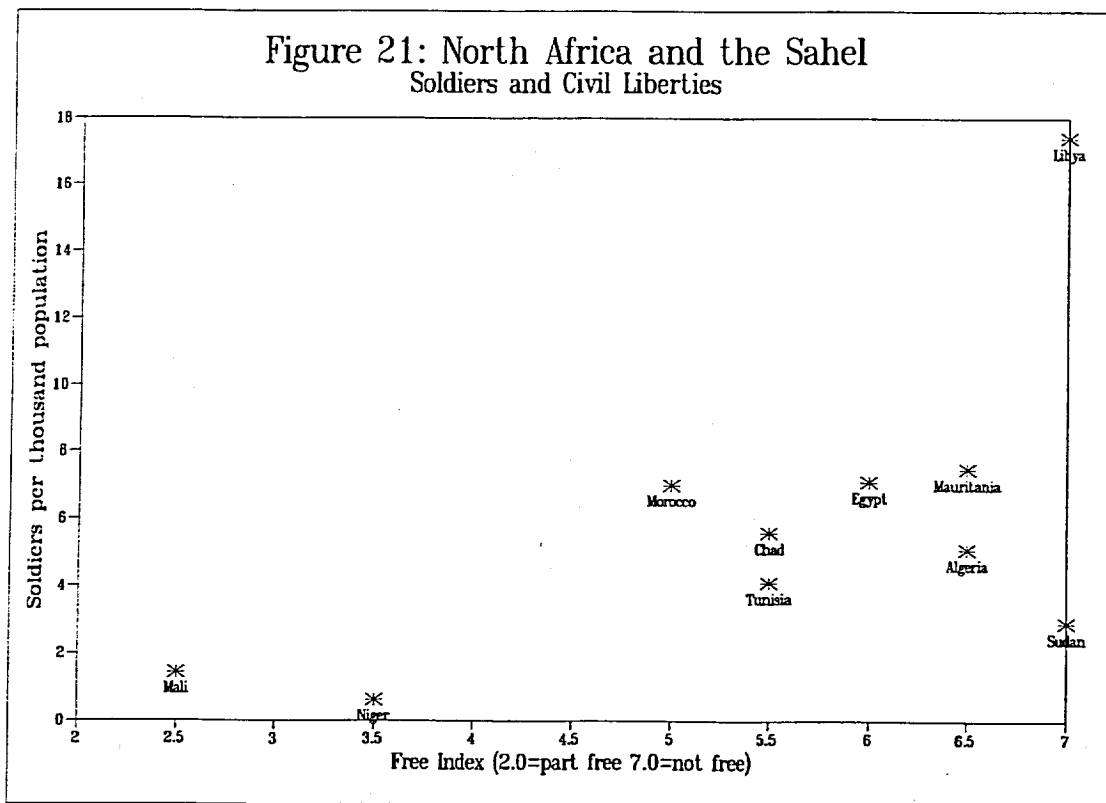


reason for this is that the primary function of the armed forces of many of these states is to maintain internal and regime security, since these states often face a wide array of internal threats, ranging from Islamist movements to inter-clan communal rivalries. In addition many of them are "weak states" with little historical tradition as states, and minimal state presence in outlying areas. Unfortunately, the armed forces frequently become caught up in local rivalries and are used to repress the population, and hence some international attention to demobilization and retraining programs might go some distance towards improving the political and societal climate, especially if coupled with a great emphasis on "good governance" issues that strengthen the state without resort to the institutions of organized violence.



Overall, three states in North Africa can be identified as potential candidates for "excessive military spending" on various indices of the resources they devote to the armed forces. Mauritania regularly scores above its Sahelian neighbours on most indices - military spending per capita, military spending as a percentage of GNP, and soldiers per thousand - and its military burden cannot easily be justified by its economic or political situation. This is especially important in light of the 50 percent devaluation of the