Making Military Expenditure Data Relevant

Wuyi Omitoogun

Introduction
The traditional definition of security, which emphasizes the defense of the state and the armed forces, is steadily giving way to another that places the individual at the heart of the security equation. According to an observer of the evolution of the security concept, "if the 20th century can be characterized as the century of conflict, ideology and 'national security state,' perhaps the 21st will unfold under the sign of 'human security.'" The traditional concept of security focused on the armed forces as the main instrument of securing the state. In the new and expanded definitions of the concept, the individual is the referent object and a menu of instruments other than the military is available to meet the emerging security challenges. Military expenditure data (MILEX) have been one of the tools used in the analysis of traditional state-centric security and for decades have been useful as a measure of the resources that the state commits to military activities as opposed to expenditure on providing other public goods. The implication of deeper and broader definitions of security, and in particular the shift from the state to the individual as the referent object, is that military expenditure data are no longer a sufficient measure of resources devoted to security activities, since security is no longer synonymous with the security or defense of the state.

Milex and expanded definition of security
The new conceptualization also has implications for how security expenditure is defined. The expansion of the concept of security beyond the state and the military implies that several security-related expenditures other than military expenditure are relevant for our understanding of security. Unfortunately, data on expenditure on other parts of the security sector are either not sufficiently developed or do not yet exist in a format that will allow their use in the same manner as military expenditure data. To date, a well-developed definition of expenditure exists only for the military sector with standardized data that are processed and analyzed by a few institutions such as SIPRI.

Although such datasets have a number of reliability and validity problems, they are sufficiently well developed to allow for some time series analysis and cross-country comparison, exercises that aid our understanding of expenditure dynamics of security policies.

For other parts of the security sector, the data situation is much less satisfactory. As a result, these data are difficult to interpret and not particularly useful in complementing other indicators to measure total security expenditure.

Thus, there is a need to focus on some areas of the expanded security concept (especially internal security) that could complement military expenditure data and facilitate our understanding of the new security issues through quantitative data as well as provide a comprehensive picture of resources being devoted to security broadly defined. Military expenditure already has a relatively established definition, and available datasets that can allow a discussion of traditional security expenditure with a focus on the armed forces. This will require a pilot study, because countries have different traditions and practices when it comes to internal security. A study of a few countries will therefore be useful to identify the relevant components of internal security on which to collect quantitative data, do a conceptual clarification of these components to limit the extent of coverage, assess the feasibility of accessing national data on a regular basis, and describe how they would aid our understanding of the
new security environment.

**Complementing milex with internal security data**

What both definitions have in common is that the individual is the referent object, rather than the state, as in the traditional definition of security. In developing a complementary indicator for military expenditure data to measure total security expenditure, this short piece proposes a focus on the more limited definition of human security, conceptualized as freedom from fear.

1. Many poor people in developing countries have identified physical safety (freedom from fear) as their greatest need. The *Human Development Report 1994*, which first introduced the idea of human security, identified physical safety of the individual as one of the greatest challenges to human security. Internal security forces handle the task of mitigating this fear in most countries of the world. In addition, this aspect of human security seems closest to the traditional definition of security to which military expenditure data have been most useful as an indicator. To develop a new data series on internal security would therefore be both relevant and feasible, and would contribute to the understanding of the full extent of resources devoted to the new, broad definition of security.

2. In the developing world the dividing line between the external role of the armed forces and the internal function of other security forces is blurred in many countries. This is mainly because of a lack of (or lack of regard for) differentiation between external and internal security tasks for the armed forces and other internal security forces (police in particular) in the traditional Western sense. Developing a new data series on internal security expenditure would therefore, along with military expenditure data, capture the totality of expenditure on security in most of the countries in this group. In addition, adding only the physical safety aspect of the human security definition will provide the opportunity to examine the extent of resources for providing security for the state and its people, compared to the resources devoted to meeting the other aspect of human security—namely the freedom from want, or what may be called the development aspect of security.

3. Since the 9/11 events in the United States, the dividing line between internal security and external defense has begun to be blurred, even in the developed world, which again supports the view that expenditure for both aspects of security be combined to get the true picture of expenditure on security. The Task Force on A Unified Security Budget for the United States has already commenced an annual exercise of assessing the total security expenditure of the US in view of the new security demands since 9/11 and the seemingly unchanged pattern of security expenditure of the US. The Unified Security Budget for the United States project is not, however geared towards developing any index or indicators.

There is no doubt that military expenditure data have been useful for security analyses over the years. There remains a need to develop complementary datasets on emerging security challenges such as internal security, to complement military expenditure data series for a comprehensive analysis of total security expenditure.

*Wuyo Omitoogun (Nigeria) is a Researcher with the SIPRI Military Expenditure and Arms Production Project and is the co-coordinator of the SIPRI/African Security Dialogue and Research project on Military Budgetary Processes in Africa. He previously worked at the Centre for Trans-Saharan Studies, University of Maiduguri, and Obafemi Awolowo University, both in Nigeria. His publications include 'Arms control and conflict in Africa' in *Arms Control and Disarmament: A New Conceptual Approach* (UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, 2000) and *Military Expenditure Data in Africa: A Survey of Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda*, SIPRI Research Report no. 17 (OUP, 2003). He has contributed to the SIPRI Yearbook since 2000.*
Economists for Peace and Security
http://www.epsusa.org