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DETERMINANTS OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

The present article focuses on the determinants of military expenditure in developing countries and their effects on the economy. After Benoit's (1973) work, numbers of researchers investigate the impact of military expenditure on the economy. It is argued that before examining the effect of military expenditure on the economy, at the first is needed to the determinants of military expenditure of a country. This article is both a review and an assessment of academic literatures issued on the determinants of military expenditure in developing countries and their economic effect. Economic and non-economic factors influence on military expenditure in developing countries. Whatever the determinants of military expenditure, governments of developing countries should allocate their scarce resources in different sectors carefully.

KEYWORDS

Military expenditure, Developing countries, Determinants of military expenditure, Economic effect.

INTRODUCTION

Scarcity must find the right balance between the discipline of the market and the generosity of welfare economics. The very first useful economic model that captures the essence of scarcity, choice and opportunity costs is the production possibility frontier (PPF). Samuelson takes guns-butter trade-offs to depict the difficult choices a country faces in allocating resources between defense spending and other valued pursuits (such as health care and education). Perhaps he tacitly chooses one less desired good "gun" and the other more desired good "butter" to make his point. Every beginner of economics discipline who must have developed a sense of disdain for the resources claimed by the defense spending. Human Development Report (1991) placed the issue of 'guns-butter' choice to reflect the above mentioned balance between the working of the invisible hand and the desirability of welfare economics when it states- "If a government chooses to spend more on its army than on its people, it can not be regarded as committed to human development". Military expenditure is increasing every year rapidly almost all countries of the world. This expansion in the military establishment has also stimulated much interest among economists regarding the effect of military expenditure on the economy. Benoit (1973) starts the very first research regarding the effect of military expenditure on economic growth. After his work, numbers of researchers investigate the 'guns-growth' relationship. It is argued that before analyzing the impact of military expenditure on the economy, it is needed to identify the determinants of military expenditure of a country.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are to identify the determinants of military expenditure in developing countries and to analyze their effects on the economy.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The article has been prepared mainly on the basis of academic literatures survey. Various relevant published and unpublished materials such as articles from different journals, books, conference paper, working paper etc. have been reviewed and assessed for the purpose of this study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study are as follows:

- Due to maintain a very confidential policy, many countries do not disclose the information of military expenditure properly.
- Due to lack of resources, it was not feasible to collect primary data, which would have greatly enriched the analysis.
- For lack of primary data, no statistical tool could be employed and no statistical relevance could be established.

DETERMINANTS OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE

Before analyzing the effect of military expenditure on economic growth, it is important to know what factors determine military expenditure of a country. Determinants of military expenditure may differ from country to country. Deger and Sen (1983) assume that defense expenditure is particularly determined by strategic considerations of security and threat. Harris (1986) finds out the determinants of military expenditure for Association for South East Asian (ASEAN) countries. He identifies that economic forces have moderate influence on defense expenditure but there is a tendency of defense expenditure to increase only modestly in the absence of a threat to security, and to respond to fluctuations in domestic economic well-being.

Determinants of military expenditure of a country can be divided into two broad categories:

I) Economic factors and II) Non-Economic factors.

I) ECONOMIC FACTORS

In most of the empirical researches on the relationship between military expenditure and economic growth, researchers assume 'military expenditure' as an explanatory variable. They consider either military expenditure as a percentage of GDP or central government expenditure or just growth of military expenditure as explanatory variable. Among them, Benoit (1973) begins such research at first. Economic factors like Gross Domestic Product/Gross National Income (GDP/GNI), Central Government Expenditure (CGE), and Foreign Exchange Availability (FEA) are considered as explanatory variables in their military burden equation. Harris (1986) suggests that wealthier countries are able to afford to allocate a higher proportion of GNI or government expenditure to defense. He also considers balance of payments and government revenue as explanatory variables in his military burden equation. Hewitt (1993) shows that when growth of GDP falls in some regions (Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and the Western Hemisphere of developing countries) during the period 1985-1990, the ratio of government expenditure to GDP also falls. Maizels and Nissanke (1986) consider GDP per-capita, GDP growth rate, CGE as ratio to GDP as explanatory variables in military burden equation. They find that oil exporting countries in the Middle East begin rapid military expansion following the sharp rise in oil prices in 1973 and 1978-79. Lim (1983) argues that foreign capital inflow might enable a country to increase its defense. Looney and Frederiksen (1986) consider GDP and CGE as explanatory variables in their military burden equation. Therefore, researchers mainly identify that GDP, CGE, and FEA are the three important economic factors which influence the extent and nature of the military expenditure of a country.

II) NON-ECONOMIC FACTORS

There are various non-economic factors that influence military expenditure of a country. These are as follows:

- a) Option good property/Psychological factor
- b) Geo-strategic factors
- c) Types of government

a) OPTION GOOD PROPERTY/PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR

Many people want to have their military stronger than others. They seem to treat a strong military as national pride of the country. They want to transform military into a well-equipped and trained the modern force. Therefore, the ruling governments allocate more resources on military. National security is assumed to be linked with the very presence of a stronger military; the psychological need to feel 'secure' is normally satisfied by military expenditure. Moreover, the mere presence of a good often gives a sense of 'security' is called the 'option good', and a stronger military endows the attributes of being an 'option good'.

b) GEO-STRATEGIC FACTORS

Geo-strategic factors influence a country's military expenditure. It may be influenced by two ways: i) Internal factors and ii) External factors. Internal or external threats can be conducive to larger military expenditures of a country.

i) INTERNAL FACTORS

Military expenditure may be motivated by the needs of security within the country. There are many countries in the world facing civil wars, separation movement etc. However, some external influences also exacerbate the situation. Countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar, Sudan etc. are facing these problems. These may cause of increasing the average level of military expenditure in developing countries. Number of military personnel of a country is also a determinant of military expenditure. Expenditure on armaments and military expenditure in total is not the same thing. The largest proportion of defense expenditure goes not only on armaments but also on personnel costs and on operations and maintenance. Harris (1986) shows that in common with developed countries, personnel costs made up almost half in Indonesia's military expenditure, and 'operation and maintenance' costs accounted for a further 28 percent in 1978-79. Again, Ball (1983b) estimates total security expenditure for 48 LDCs and finds that personnel and operations/maintenance costs made up over 90 percent of total costs in the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, and 75 percent for Malaysia in the late 1970's. Chletsos and Kollias (1995) analyze the Greek military data during the period 1974-1990, and find that more than half of military expenditure is allocated for military personnel. Many developing countries have a large number of military personnel. Therefore, a large number of equipments will be needed for larger personnel and the commensurate maintenance costs will be higher for these equipments.

ii) EXTERNAL FACTORS

There are many countries which are engaged either in conflict or show hostility among others. Therefore, they always remain involved in arms race. For example, the hostility between India and Pakistan or Arab states and Israel or South Korea and North Korea or Turkey and Greece or Peru and Chile or Peru and Ecuador etc. are believed to have led to an arms race between countries, which might have contributed to their increased military expenditures. Military expenditure is principally determined by strategic considerations of security and threat (Deger and Sen 1983). Thee (1982) has discussed the determinants of rapid military build-ups in developing countries. He distinguishes between external factors, such as imperial rivalries and ideological/religious conflicts, and internal factors such as vested interests of the military, the ready use of force as an instrument of diplomacy and the adoption of a national security doctrine are dependent on a strong military. He suggests that while globally (and this is particularly true for the super powers) internal factors are more important, armaments in developing countries tend to be animated by external factors (Thee 1982, p. 114). McKinley (1989) conducts a cross-sectional analysis for a large number of Third World Countries over the periods 1950-1982 and determines that military expenditure increases in response to an inter-state conflict and decreases following the cessation of the conflict. Another study conducted by Weedy (1986) argues that international competition and threats to national security led to higher military participation ratios and larger military outlays.

Territorial disputes and competitive arms race between adjacent/neighbor countries in the Third World are an obvious and major source of escalating military expenditure. Even in Latin America, whereby international standards, territorial disputes are not present, some increases in military expenditures that have been caused by regional rivalry among neighbors. Peru and Chile have a long standing conflict and are among the highest spenders in Latin America in terms of the share of GDP devoted to the military (Deger, 1986). Klein (2004) shows that Peru tends to increase its military expenditure when Ecuador and Chile increase their military expenditures.

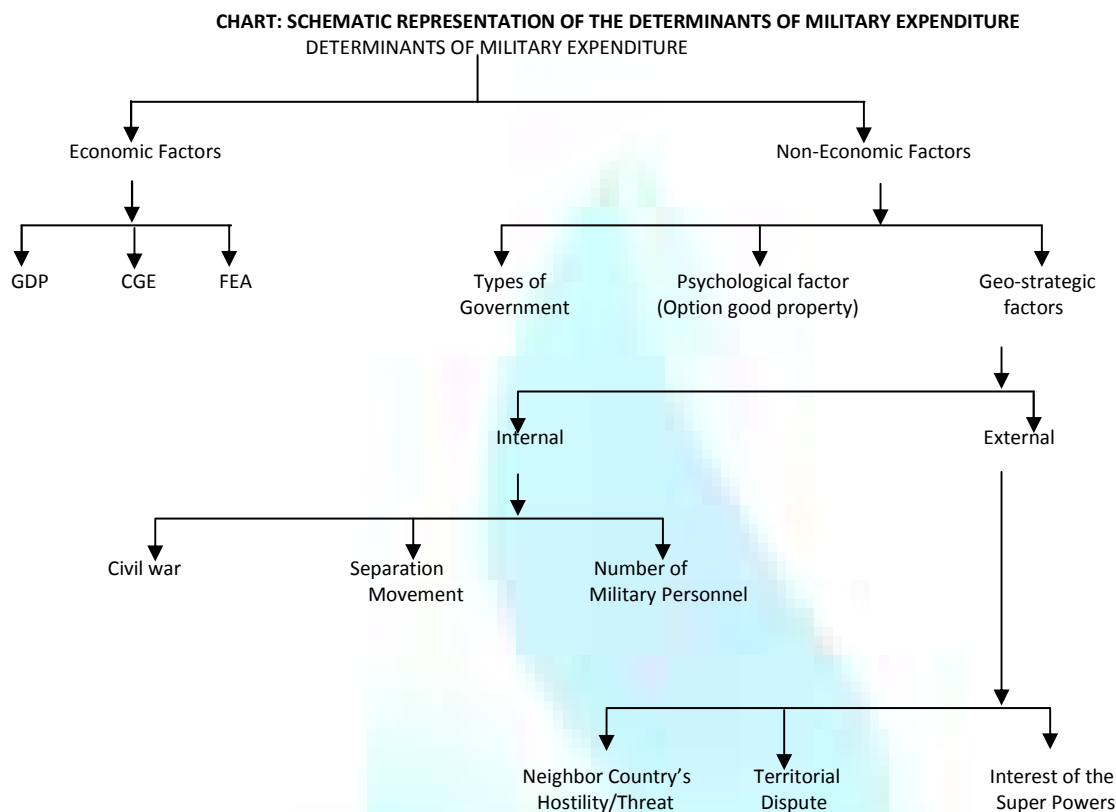
The world was divided into two super powers before 1990. USA was one hand and USSR was on the other. Then they tried to create military ally in favor of them. For this reason, they gave military aid to those countries. However, after the fall of USSR, USA becomes super power alone. Though France, Russia, Italy, Germany, China sell military weapons but USA is trying to capture all weapons market alone. Deger (1986) argues that supplier countries contribute in no small way to the internationalization of military spending and the consequent rise of defense expenditure. The exporting countries often encourage LDCs to buy or otherwise import arms, in order to gain economic advantages or political control of an ally. International salesmanship of weapons systems is very sophisticated and often high-level members of the government (including heads of state) are called into add their weigh to advertisement pressures. Maizels and Nissanke (1986) contend that to the extent a developing country adheres to a global political/strategic alliance, provides facilities for foreign military bases, and depends on a super power or its allies for its military equipment and personnel training, it may also come under pressure to expand its own military establishment, partly to enhance the potential of a foreign military base, and partly as an instrument in support of power bloc regional policy. Various empirical studies support the hypothesis that Greek's military expenditure is primarily determined by the Greek-Turkish conflict (Majeski 1985, Kollias 1991, Refenes et al., 1995). Dunne et al. (1999) find that there is a bi-directional linear causality between the military expenditures of both countries- India and Pakistan.

c) TYPES OF GOVERNMENT

Military is a critically important actor in domestic politics in the Third World countries. Democratic system of the developing country is fragile. This system of the most developing nations did not able to establish on the strong base yet. Political instability is the common scenario of these states. Military often occupies the state power driving away many democratic governments of the developing countries. In Thailand, military occupies state power for 17 times in its history. Though controversy remains among researchers about the relationship between types of regimes (civil or military) and levels of military expenditures, a familiar intuitive proposition is that when in power, the military will allocate more to the defense sector. Schmitter (1973) studies on 19 Latin American countries over the period 1950-1970 and concludes that military coups are associated with changes in military expenditures, but the direction of change is indeterminate. Zuk

and Thomson (1982) study for 66 LDCs over the period 1967-1976 and find no relationship between the occurrences of coups and military expenditures as a proportion of central government expenditure. Whynes (1979) studies on 10 Latin American countries over the period 1959-1975 and concludes that there is a positive relationship between the occurrences of coups and military expenditures. Grindle (1986) identifies positive relation between regime change and military expenditure. This study is conducted on 18 Latin American countries over the period 1967-1980. However, Looney (1987) identifies no relation between regime change and military expenditure as a proportion of central government expenditure for Argentina over the period 1961-1982. Deger (1986) contends that it is not always true that military governments necessarily spend more on defense than their civilian counterpart.

Determinants of military expenditure may differ from country to country. The determinants of military expenditure of a country, which are shown in chart below:



Where, GDP= Gross Domestic Product, CGE= Central Government Expenditure, FEA= Foreign Exchange Availability.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE DETERMINANTS OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE

Economic factors influence on the economy in several ways. After Benoit's (1973) work, researchers empirically investigate the growth effect of military expenditure considering military expenditure as an explanatory variable. Joerding (1986), Chowdhury (1991), LaCivita and Frederiksen (1991), Kusi (1994), Heo (1999), Dakurah et al. (2001) and others' empirical investigation suggest that there may be four possible causal ordering between military expenditure and economic growth: bi-directional causality between military expenditure and economic growth, unidirectional causality from growth to military expenditure or vice versa and the absence of any causal relationship. High growth rates of GDP may cause high military burden and high military burden may cause higher rates of growth. Researchers argue that military expenditure may have positive spin-off effect on the economy. Militaries of some countries administer schools, colleges, universities, medical colleges that help to create human capital to the society. Moreover, they conduct some industries by which skilled human resources are created. Military as an organized and disciplined force helps in the process of modernization, provides technical skills, educational training and creates infrastructure necessary for economic development and also rescues the society, when a country falls in trouble like natural disaster. They also argue that this spin-off effect may occur by creating effective demand and increasing productivity through technological advancement. Empirical evidences in favor of positive spin-off are provided by, among others, Benoit (1973, 1978), Dixon and Moon (1986), Ward et al. (1991), Alexander (1995), Chletsos and Kollias (1995), Sezgin (1997, 2000), Dunne and Nikolaidou (2001), Yildirim and Sezgin (2002), Yildirim et al. (2005). However, it is difficult to measure empirically the spin-off effect of military expenditure on the economy. Again, researchers who find negative relationship between military expenditure and economic growth suggest the presence of crowding-out effect of military expenditure. They claim that military expenditure may retard economic growth by crowding-out civilian consumption, more productive civilian investment, health, and education expenditure and infrastructure development and creates a balance of payments problem. Support for this proposition has been provided by, among others, Deger and Sen (1983), Lim (1983), Faini et al. (1984), Lebovic and Ishaq (1987), Mintz and Huang (1990), Ward and Davis (1992), Antonakis (1999), Dunne and Vougas (1999), Galvin (2003). One argument behind the negative military-welfare trade-off is that government funded research and development programs are primarily concentrated in the military industry, while non-military research and development programs are much less amply funded. Support for the proposition of negative trade-off has been provided by, among others, Russet (1970), Harris et al. (1988), Apostolakis (1992), Frederiksen and Looney (1994), Ozsoy (2002), Yildirim and Sezgin (2002). Another argument suggests that there is no negative or even a positive relationship between military expenditure and social programs. Accordingly modern society moves towards a warfare-welfare state in which decision makers must buy off the electorate with welfare goods [Peroff and Podolok (1979), Apostolakis (1992)]. No trade-off and positive trade-off are reported by, among others, Peroff and Podolok (1979), Harris et al. (1988), Hess and Mullan (1988), Davis and Chan (1990), Frederiksen and Looney (1994), Sensen (2002), Yildirim and Sezgin (2002).

Analyzing the impact of military expenditure as a share of CGE, one should consider the following issues:

- The tax effect consequent to a rise in military expenditure, and the possible mobilization of additional resources for non-military needs;
- The implications of budget deficits in the monetary process via the government's financial constraint;
- The short-term multiplier effects consequent to an increase in any form of government expenditure (Deger 1986, p. 61).

Here Deger argues that if military expenditure is financed by additional taxation, tax effort of the society may be improved. After the improvement of the tax effort of the society, if the military burden goes down in later years, the total saving potential may have been increased for the economy. Then additional military expenditure can have fiscal effects which may lead to the mobilization of resources. This analysis assumes that after improvement of tax effort, the military burden will go down in later years. But military burden of the society has been increased every year. Again, military expenditure puts pressure on

nationals by heavier tax burden, reduces private savings and investments that affect on the economy negatively. Moreover, when government allocate resources in different sectors by borrowing money that put pressure in the credit market resulting in higher interest rates which also hamper private investment. Multiplier effects have been used to support the claim that a security-based autonomous increase of military expenditure may have expansionary effects on the economy. Expenditure on armaments and military expenditure in total is not the same thing. The largest proportion of defense expenditure goes not only on armaments but also on personnel costs and on operations and maintenance in the developing countries. Almost 70% to 80% of their allocation remains for these two purposes. Multiplier effects of military expenditure should be considered in terms of consumption and this consumption effect of military expenditure should be accounted with compare to civilian consumption. Again, expenditures on military hardware imports put pressure on developing countries' stock of foreign exchange reserve. As a result, developing countries may not be able to import other more desired productive capital goods due to shortage of foreign exchange.

It is difficult to identify the impact of non-economic factors on the economy. If the primary purpose of military expenditure is to maintain security and protect the country from threats, a rise in military budget should increase domestic stability. In principal, a higher military outlay should contribute to 'peace and security', thus allowing people to take a lower inter-temporal view of the consumption/saving decision making (Deger 1986, p. 95). Recently, Todaro and Smith (2003) in their well-known text book 'Economic Development' state that military build-ups often seem to lead to war, which, as the many recent wars in Africa show clearly, has devastating consequences for economic and social development. They also state that whatever the reasons, it is now clear that high military expenditures are draining developing economies of scarce resources needed to finance long-term development efforts. Research sponsored by UNICEF (1996, 2000) states that there is no doubt that security is important in all countries, regardless of income level. But many facets of security that are emanated by the military create big armed forces and weapons technologies and as a result they exclude many other important aspects of security. Again, high levels of military spending do not necessarily deter armed conflict, keep a country's citizens safe from violence, or generally improve the quality of life in a country. Rather poverty and lack of development fuel hatred and escalate more violence and hostilities and that improvement in such areas as nutrition, health, education, water, sanitation and family planning would go even further to reduce the underlying causes of so many battles.

CONCLUSION

In this article, it has been demonstrated that various economic and non-economic factors influence on military expenditure of developing countries and they affect on the economy. It is clear from analyzing the academic researches that if GDP, CGE and FEA of a country increase, its ability to allocate more resources in defense purposes will be greater. Again, non-economic factors also influence on the military expenditure of developing countries. But controversial prevails among defence economists about the impact of military expenditure on the economy. Considering the determinants of military expenditure of a country and their effects on the economy, governments of developing countries should allocate their scarce resources in different sectors very carefully.

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