

National Security and Defense Expenditure in Africa: A Political and Economic Analysis

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Résumé: Bien que les dépenses militaires de l'Afrique ne semblent pas excessifs par rapport à la moyenne mondiale, l'image qu'on en ait devient trompeuse si on fait une comparaison pays par pays par rapport aux autres régions du monde. C'est dans le cadre d'une analyse de la capacité des économies africaines à absorber toutes dépenses improductives (y compris militaires) que cette capacité doit être appréciée. Si on tient compte de cette analyse, les dépenses militaires africaines sont plutôt élevées et dans la plupart des cas non nécessaires. La raison en est que dans la plupart des cas, ce qu'on considère souvent comme dépenses militaires n'est pas destiné en réalité à la défense contre des ennemis extérieurs mais plutôt contre la dissidence intérieure, qui dans tous les cas, résulte des mauvaises conditions économiques et des gouvernements inefficaces. Pour avoir une idée plus précise des coups d'Etat, de l'autoritarisme et du militarisme, qui ont un impact direct sur les dépenses militaires, il est important, dans toute analyse d'aller au-delà des politiques et de l'organisation militaires.

Introduction

Military expenditure has not always been linked to economic performance in macroeconomic analysis. In many instances, military expenditure - which to a great extent is also assumed to imply defense or "security" expenditure - has been regarded as a "Public Good" whose necessity and value is accepted without question (Kennedy, 1975; 1983). Thus Kennedy notes:

Defense is a public good. It is produced by and for the community. It differs from private goods produced in the market in that it is consumed by all citizens equally whereas private goods are consumed individually and exclusively by those who purchase them. Once a public good such as defense is produced it does not matter whether an individual wants to consume it or not, or whether he has paid taxes or not, his consumption of defense cannot be exclusive and at the expense of fellow citizens, nor can it be limited (1975: 40).

The statement by Kennedy assumes a lot of things, foremost among them being the existence of a nation-state, accepted as legitimate by the subject populations. This is an important point because in discussing military

expenditure for different countries, we are already acknowledging the imperative of the state to *legitimately* acquire and maintain the ultimate coercive machinery in society. However, this assumption may not steadfastly hold under conditions of political crises where the legitimacy of the state is constantly under challenge from internal groups. Nonetheless, what is important here is the recognition that the very agency (i.e. the state) which is supposed to ensure national security through defense expenditure may not have the political wherewithal to carry out such a task. What we have just stated would not be so significant if its persistence was not so widely present in African countries. In countries such as Ethiopia, the Sudan, Mozambique and South Africa, the very legitimacy of regimes in those countries is under strong challenge internally. For purposes of international comparison, Edward Kolodziej's statement could not be more appropriate:

The very success of the process of globalizing the nation-state as the basic unit of international relations is the single most important factor in explaining militarization of the developing world (1985: 44).

Kolodziej's statement could simply be interpreted as an observation of a "realist" view of international relations in the tradition of Hans Morgenthau (1948) and E.H. Carr (1946). The "realist" view of international politics assumed that all nation states would enter the international arena with a view to compete for power based on what was perceived to be a "national interest" broadly defined. In the process of interstate competition, defense expenditure and the acquisition of armaments would be part of this process given the uncertainties of an anarchical world which was based on competition between states. However, if we closely scrutinize Kolodziej's statement and apply it to Africa and many other countries of the Third World, the theory of the globalization of the nation-state becomes very problematic because of its non-attainment. As challenges to the states' legitimacy abound, there can be no "national interest" as such, given the divergence of interest between the various groups in society and the state itself. The implications for defense expenditure and militarism become even more serious. If the legitimacy of the state is under question, Kennedy's notion of the "Public Good" becomes highly questionable in the relationship between the state and civil society, for the notion of "Public Good" assumes an internal congruence between the interests of the state and those of civil society. In other words, globalization of the nation-state is yet to be achieved in many places. The continued civil strife in Africa should be sufficient testimony to that fact.

We therefore, in this paper, question the acceptance of *defense* as a public good in Africa. We raise this question in spite of the fact that, at least in theory, in virtually every country in the world, arguments with regard to defense expenditure are always about details - what weapons systems should

be produced or bought and cost figures attached to particular weapons systems - and not the fundamental question as to whether defense expenditure as such is necessary. Thus, apart from the theoretical question of the validity of the nation-state as an *operational* concept in African countries, this paper moves in another direction which many studies have neglected. It discusses the important question as to the possible direct relationship between military expenditure and economic performance, with Africa as the focus of the *investigation*.¹

This paper also investigates the possible relationship between military expenditure and regime types in African countries. This is an important question because in African countries militarism and/or militaristic behavior is in most instances tied to the level of defense expenditure. However, for the present purposes, the most important theoretical point is the relationship between military expenditure and militarism on the one hand and economic development on the other - given the persistent economic crisis that has characterized the African scene in the last decade or so. In a way, therefore, this study serves as an exploration of the thesis that increased military expenditure is one of the main reasons for Africa's economic decline in the past two decades.

A corollary point to the preceding thesis is that, as economic stagnation and/or decline is experienced, the African political system has tended to breed a new kind of authoritarianism which is far worse than the early authoritarianism which was experienced in the 1960s when a substantial number of African countries fell under military rule. (For the nature of African coups, see: Beinen, 1979; and Decalo, 1976.) The earlier authoritarianism and military dictatorship seemed to have been largely confined only to political and civil matters, e.g. freedom of the press, assembly, political expression and related areas. The new authoritarianism however, has encompassed all walks of life, and especially in the economic sphere, where the state has sought to fully and more directly engage itself in economic production despite fierce resistance by the population (Nyang'oro and Shaw, 1989; Rothchild and Chazan, 1988; Ergas, 1987).

A Note on Methodology

As a preliminary to our investigation, we present three kinds of data. First, Table I is a summary of military expenditure as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the period 1979-1988 for African countries that

1 This is not to say however, that studies on this topic have not been conducted. The point is that for the Third World, most studies have concentrated on either Latin America or Asia. See, for example: Benoit, 1973; 1978; Ball, 1983; Looney, 1983; and Kick and Sharda, 1986.

are included in the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook for 1989.² The data in Table I help us in determining the yearly fluctuation in military expenditure especially for the 1980s when Africa faced its worst economic crisis in the postindependence period. Table Ia averages out the data in Table I. Secondly, in Table III, we present data that show the growth in economic production in Africa between 1965 and 1986. The latter dates are especially important for our purposes because the data for that period can be compared to the data in Table I to see if growth (or decline) in economic production correlated with levels of military expenditure. Finally in Table IV, we present data on African military expenditure in constant price figures to give a better picture of how much money is being spent on armaments. The relevance of Tables II and V will become apparent as the discussion on military expenditure will be related to the number of armed forces on the continent and the number of people who have lost their lives in Africa due to continued internal (civil) wars.

After the presentation of what is essentially static data, the discussion of regime types will be cast in a theoretical framework which seeks to look beyond simple military expenditure to the nature of peripheral (and especially African) political economy in general. The purpose of the theoretical discussion will, be among other things, to offer a critique of studies on African leadership which have tended to portray authoritarianism and personal rule in Africa as a political phenomenon that could be described as unique to the African situation, and which suggest that events which have led to such rule have little to do with the nature of the economy and its dialectical relationship to politics in African countries (See for example: Jackson and Rosberg, 1983; and Decalo, 1976).

Empirical Analysis

Tables I and Ia show that on average, between 1979 and 1988, military expenditure for all countries in Africa (including South Africa but excluding Egypt)³ was 3.8 as a percentage of GDP. The highest case is represented by Angola, which, between 1979 and 1988, spent on the average 18.4 percent of its GDP on the military. The lowest case is represented by Mauritius

2 SIPRI is one of the two leading reporters on international military expenditure and other issues related to security matters. The other reporting agency is the London based International Institute for Strategic Studies which publishes the annual *The Military Balance*.

3 Most computations exclude Egypt from the general calculations on Africa's military expenditure because of its involvement in the wider Middle East conflict and the substantial military assistance it receives from outside sources, especially from the United States. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Egypt received most of its armaments from the Soviet Union. However, since the 1973 October War, Egypt has increasingly turned to the West (especially the U.S.) for arms supplies.

which, in the same period, spent only 0.3 percent of its GDP on the military. Libya, which under Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, has acquired a reputation for big spending on armaments, averaged an annual military expenditure of 13.3 percent of GDP for the period 1979-1986 for which data is available. Thus in Africa, the cases that stand out are Angola (18.4%), Libya (13.3%), Mozambique (9.4%), Mauritania (8.6%), Ethiopia (8.6%), Chad (6.1%) and Zimbabwe (6.1%). In all these cases, on a preliminary basis, high levels of military expenditure can be attributed to regional conflicts in which these countries find themselves:

- (1) Perhaps the best illustration of regional conflict, Angola's border conflict with South Africa, and the latter's support for Jonas Savimbi's UNITA forces, which have refused to recognize the Luanda government's legitimacy, largely account for Angola's relatively high defense expenditure as a percentage of GDP;
- (2) Libya not only is involved in the wider Middle East conflict, but is also involved in an intense rivalry with Egypt and has had serious border conflicts with Chad;
- (3) In Mozambique, the government of South Africa has for the past ten years armed and supported the rebel movement RENAMO, which refuses to recognize the Maputo government's legitimacy;
- (4) Mauritania, along with Morocco, was for a while involved in the colonial conflict involving the POLISARIO movement in Western Sahara. In the last few years, Mauritania has considerably scaled back its involvement in Western Sahara. The high military GDP expenditure may be a reflection of time-lag in data reporting;
- (5) Up to mid-1991 Ethiopia has been involved in a regional conflict at two levels: against Somalia on the one hand and against a secessionist movement in the province of Eritrea in the Northeast part of the country. These two conflicts coupled with an increased pressure by other internal groups for more autonomy account for the relatively high military expenditures;
- (6) For Chad, see (2) above; and,
- (7) Zimbabwe's high military expenditure can be attributed to South Africa's presence on Zimbabwe's Southern border and also to South Africa's support for RENAMO in Mozambique. One of the tactics that RENAMO uses in Mozambique is the disruption of communication systems including the blowing up of ports and railways. Zimbabwe being landlocked and dependent on Mozambique for an outlet to the sea, has been forced to send troops into Mozambique to guard these facilities. Hence the high levels of military expenditure.

Table I - Africa: Military Expenditure as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product 1979-1988

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1985	1987	1988
Algeria	2.1	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	(1.7)	(1.5)
Angola	14.0	12.8	13.8	11.9	16.5	22.0	28.4	28.4	-	-
Benin	1.9	(1.9)	(1.8)	(1.9)	(2.2)	2.0	2.0	(1.9)	-	-
Botswana	3.6	3.7	3.7	2.7	2.9	(2.4)	(2.2)	(2.2)	(3.0)	-
Burkina Faso	2.7	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.4	2.6	2.6	(2.9)	-	-
Burundi	(2.6)	(2.9)	(3.0)	(3.5)	(3.1)	(3.2)	(3.0)	(3.4)	-	-
Cameroon	1.5	1.2	(1.1)	1.7	2.2	2.1	(2.2)	-	-	-
Central African Rep.	2.0	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.8	-	-	-	-	-
Chad	-	-	-	-	(7.0)	(7.8)	(5.7)	(6.0)	(3.8)	-
Congo	3.7	2.8	(2.1)	(2.3)	(2.3)	(2.6)	1.0	1.0	(1.2)	-
Côte d'Ivoire	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	-	-
Ethiopia	8.8	8.5	8.4	8.4	9.0	(8.9)	-	-	-	(3.9)
Gabon	(1.9)	(2.1)	(2.4)	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.8	(3.9)	-	-
Ghana	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.4	(0.4)	0.5	0.5	(0.6)	-	-
Kenya	4.4	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.3	2.7	(2.2)	(2.7)	(2.8)	(2.6)
Liberia	1.5	2.8	4.8	4.3	2.3	2.4	2.3	(2.2)	-	-
Libya	(14.2)	(10.0)	(14.0)	(15.0)	(13.0)	(14.5)	-	-	-	-
Madagascar	2.9	(2.8)	3.0	(2.7)	(2.4)	2.3	2.2	2.7	1.8	-
Malawi	4.2	4.4	3.3	2.4	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.8	(1.6)	-
Mali	-2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.7	(2.3)	-	-	-
Mauritania	10.5	9.7	-	-	5.7	-	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	(0.2)
Morocco	5.6	6.3	6.6	6.5	4.9	4.7	5.4	5.1	(5.0)	(5.0)
Mozambique	-	5.6	7.0	8.0	10.7	12.1	11.7	(10.4)	-	-
Niger	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	(0.8)	(0.8)	-
Nigeria	2.5	2.5	2.3	1.8	1.9	1.4	1.3	1.2	0.8	-
Rwanda	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.9	-	-
Senegal	3.3	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.2	-	-
Sierra Leone	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.7	(0.6)	(1.1)	-	-
Somalia	6.8	4.9	4.3	3.4	3.8	2.7	1.8	(1.8)	-	-
South Africa	4.3	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.9	4.1	(4.1)
Sudan	2.0	2.3	1.7	1.5	2.1	(3.2)	(3.6)	-	-	-
Swaziland	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.9	2.6	1.8	1.7	1.7	-	-
Tanzania	7.1	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.2	3.3	4.1	(4.7)	(6.1)
Togo	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.8	(2.8)	(3.5)
Tunisia	2.2	2.2	2.7	5.9	6.6	4.7	5.2	5.9	5.4	(5.2)
Uganda	1.3	2.1	2.5	2.1	2.6	3.3	3.4	3.4	-	-
Zaire	3.0	2.5	1.3	2.8	1.2	1.9	1.4	(1.3)	(3.5)	-
Zambia	4.8	3.5	(4.4)	(4.1)	(3.9)	(3.0)	(2.4)	(3.7)	(3.5)	-
Zimbabwe	6.0	7.1	6.4	5.7	6.2	5.7	(6.2)	(6.5)	(5.8)	-

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 1989, World Armaments and Disarmament (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) pp. 190-191.

**Table Ia - Africa: Military Expenditure as a Percentage of
Gross Domestic Product 1979-1988 Average**

Algeria	1.6
Angola	18.4
Benin	2.0
Botswana	3.0
Burkina Faso	2.8
Burundi	3.1
Cameroon	1.7
Central African Rep.	1.8
Chad	6.1
Congo	2.6
Cote d'Ivoire	1.1
Ethiopia	8.6
Gabon	2.7
Ghana	0.5
Kenya	3.1
Liberia	2.0
Libya	13.3
Madagascar	2.5
Malawi	2.5
Mali	2.4
Mauritania	8.6
Mauritius	0.3
Morocco	5.5
Mozambique	9.44
Niger	0.7
Nigeria	1.7
Rwanda	1.8
Senegal	2.77
Sierra Leone	0.8
Somalia	3.7
South Africa	3.9
Sudan	2.3
Swaziland	2.2
Tanzania	4.4
Togo	2.5
Tunisia	4.6
Uganda	2.5
Zaire	1.9
Zambia	3.7
Zimbabwe	6.1
Average for Continent	3.8*

* Excluding Egypt.

Source: Calculated by author from SIPRI Yearbook 1989, pp.190-191.

The data on military expenditure for the entire African continent is interesting in a number of ways. The most important characteristic of this data is that, if we discount the seven cases we have analyzed above on the average Africa has a relatively low defense expenditure profile. At the worst, in percentage terms, they are not very divergent from the developed countries. As Robin Luckham's has noted:

Although the developing countries themselves spend much less on armaments than the advanced industrial countries . . . the proportion of their GNP devoted to military spending is roughly similar. Moreover, their arms expenditures have risen faster than those of industrial countries, leading to substantial increases in their arms imports (1973:35). Emphasis added.

But the data also tell us that as Africa's economic problems have worsened (Table III), and that governments in areas where regional conflicts do not exist have actually decreased their military spending as a proportion of GDP (see, for example, the cases of Botswana, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Malawi, and Swaziland). Furthermore, the data also conform to what Henry Bienen observed about a decade ago:

African armies are for the most part small and lightly equipped. The largest tropical African armed forces was under 50,000 (Ethiopia) until the expansion of the Nigerian army during the civil war [1967-1970]; and on a scale for inhabitants per serviceman and serviceman per square mile of territory, African armies rank low in world area comparisons (1978:100).

Although Bienen's observation was made in the late 1970s, the situation for the most part remains the same, as more recent studies have shown (IISS, 1988). The few exceptions have been those countries which have either been engaged in the Middle East Conflict or have had serious internal disruptions through civil wars, such as Ethiopia. Data on total armed forces are shown in Table II. As Table II shows, the majority of African countries have total armed forces of less than 50,000 each. The data also confirms Eboe Hutchful's observation of a few years ago:

Currently the [African] continent is divided into a small group of relatively well-armed countries (South Africa, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Ethiopia, and Nigeria) and a much larger group of countries whose military forces and armaments levels are no more adequate for the purposes of legitimate territorial defense (in many cases less than adequate) (Quoted in Ball, 1988:xixxx).

Table II - Africa: Total Armed Forces (Active)

Algeria*	139.000
Djibouti*	4.230
Egypt*	445.000
Mauritania*	11.000
Morocco*	203.500
Somalia*	65.000
Sudan*	57.700
Tunisia*	38.000
Angola	100.000
Benin	4.350
Botswana	3.250
Burkina Faso	8.700
Burundi	7.200
Cameroon	11.600
Cape Verde	1.200
Central African Rep	6.500
Chad	17.000
Congo	8.800
Equatorial Guinea	1.400
Ethiopia	315.800
Gabon	3.000
Ghana	10.600
Guinea	9.900
Guinea Bissau	9.200
Ivory Coast	7.100
Kenya	23.000
Liberia	5.800
Madagascar	21.000
Malawi	5.250
Mali	7.300
Mozambique	36.700
Niger	3.300
Nigeria	94.500
Rwanda	5.200
Senegambia	10.300
Seychelles	1.000
Sierra Leone	3.000
South Africa	103.500
Tanzania	400.500
Togo	5.900
Uganda	35.000
Zaire	51.000
Zambia	16.200
Zimbabwe	47.000

Source: IISS, *The military Balance. 1988-1989*.

* These countries are classified as "Middle East" countries by IISS.

In the 1988 edition of IISS's *The Military Balance*, African countries with more than 50,000 people under arms were: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, Angola, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zaire; this in a continent which has fifty four countries.

It would seem on the surface that excessive military expenditure may not be a serious problem for African countries, given the figures that we have just cited. However, we need to consider another variable, i.e., the overall capacity of the economy, to see if we arrive at the same conclusion. Thus to get a better appreciation of military expenditure and its effect on the economy, it is important to look at the key *economic* indicators over the past decade. The economic indicators are presented in Table III.

Table III indicates that the average per capita income in Africa for 1988 was U.S. \$600 per year. *This* figure is certainly low if it is compared with that of developed countries such as the United States (U.S. \$17,480) or Britain (U.S. \$8,870) for the same period. (World Bank, 1988:). Even then, the U.S. \$600 average figure for Africa is still misleading in a fundamental way. It must be noted that the majority of African countries earn less than U.S. \$400 GNP per capita, as Table III shows. We find a small cluster of relatively high earners (i.e. U.S. \$800 and above) while over two thirds (2/3) earn much less. Furthermore, except for six countries - Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Cameroon, the People's Republic of Congo, and Algeria - all African countries experienced a severe drop in their income between 1980 and 1986. The country with the sharpest drop in absolute terms was Nigeria, whose per capita income dropped from U.S. \$1,010 in 1980 to U.S. \$640 in 1986 a drop of almost 40 per cent; a situation which has progressively become worse. In relative terms, however, other countries actually seem to have done worse than Nigeria because they had much lower income levels to begin with. Thus, for example, Malawi and Zaire's drops of U.S. \$70 from U.S. \$230 and of U.S. \$60 from U.S. \$200, respectively had much greater negative impacts than Nigeria's.

To reiterate an earlier observation: as a general trend, African countries seem to have reduced military expenditure in the 1980s. The exceptions to this rule were countries engaged in serious domestic conflict, e.g., Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa, as Table IV further illustrates. However, we must exercise caution in determining what those figures mean. If we simply look at levels of military expenditure in terms of its proportion to the GDP and in terms of constant price figures (Tables I, Ia, and IV), we risk overlooking the crucial issue in African military expenditure, which is how military expenditure relates to the economy in general, especially an underdeveloped economy.

Table III - Africa: Growth in Production

	GNP per Capita 1986 Dollars		GNP per Capita 1980 Dollars		GDP Growth	
				1965-80	1980-86	
Ethiopia	120	(20)	140	2.7	0.8	
Burkina Faso	150	(60)	210	3.5	2.5	
Malawi	160	(70)	230	6.1	2.4	
Zaire	160	(60)	220	1.4	1.0	
Mali	180	(--10)	190	4.1	0.4	
Mozambique	210	(20)	230	----	9.0	
Madagascar	230	(120)	350	1.6	-0.1	
Uganda	230	(70)	300	0.8	0.7	
Burundi	240	(+40)	200	3.6	2.3	
Tanzania	250	(30)	280	3.7	0.9	
Togo	250	(160)	410	4.5	-1.1	
Niger	260	(70)	330	0.3	-2.6	
Benin	270	(40)	310	2.3	3.6	
Somalia	280	(---)	----	2.5	4.9	
Cent. African Rep.	290	(-10)	300	2.6	1.1	
Rwanda	290	(+90)	200	5.0	1.8	
Kenya	300	(120)	420	6.4	3.4	
Zambia	300	(260)	560	1.8	-0.1	
Sierra Leone	310	(+30)	280	2.6	0.4	
Sudan	320	(-90)	410	3.8	0.3	
Lesotho	370	(-50)	420	6.6	0.9	
Ghana	390	(30)	420	1.4	.07	
Mauritania	420	(20)	440	2.0	1.0	
Senegal	420	(30)	450	2.0	3.2	
Chad	---	(---)	120	0.1	----	
Guinea	---	(---)	290	3.8	0.9	
Liberia	460	(70)	530	3.3	-1.3	
Morocco	590	(310)	900	5.4	3.3	
Zimbabwe	620	(--10)	630	4.4	2.6	
Nigeria	640	(670)	1,010	8.0	3.2	
Cote d'Ivoire	730	(420)	1,150	6.8	-0.3	
Egypt	760	(+180)	580	6.7	4.7	
Botswana	840	(----)	----	14.3	11.9	
Cameroon	910	(+240)	670	5.1	8.2	
Congo, Peoples Rep.	990	(+90)	900	5.9	5.1	
Tunisia	1,140	(170)	1,310	6.6	3.7	
Mauritius	1,20	(----)	----	5.3	4.4	
South Africa	1,850	(450)	2,300	4.0	0.8	
Algeria	2,590	(+720)	1870	7.5	4.4	
Gabon	3,080	(----)	----	9.5	1.5	
Libya	----	(----)	8,640	4.2	----	
Average	600					

Source: (1) The World Bank, *World Development Report 1982*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982 pp. 110-111; (2) The World Bank *World Development Report 1988*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988 pp. 224-225.

**Table IV - Africa: Military Expenditure, in Constant Price Figures
Figures are in US \$M., at 1986 Prices and Exchange Rates**

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Algeria	1111	1264	1123	1177	1256	1222	1146	1161	1149	1090]
Angola	506	503	503	503	779	1068	1147	1155	1147	-
Benin	20.2	(24.0)	(24.8)	(31.8)	(35.5)	31.8	32.1	30.6	(24.8)	(27.8)
Botswana	25.0	26.6	24.2	19.2	19.5	22.2	24.6	-	45.6	-
Burkina Faso	31.5	30.7	35.2	36.9	35.2	35.4	33.2	40.0	-	-
Burundi	(26.7)	(33.9)	(32.7)	(37.8)	(33.8)	(36.1)	(37.5)	(41.9)	(22.0)	(189)
Cameroon	101	96.0	95.1]	161	212	222	[244]	(251)	-	-
Central African Rep.	19.1	15.0	19.0	20.9	24.0	-	-	-	-	-
Chad	20.9	-	-	-	(47.6)	(46.2)	(42.7)	(48.7)	(30.6)	-
Congo	51.0	50.6	(48.4)	(62.9)	(65.8)	(67.8)	(74.0)	-	-	-
Cote d'Ivoire	101	108	93.0	98.4	97.0	96.3	96.4	96.9	96.9	[92.8]
Ethiopia	474	467	450	454	476	466	(402)	-	-	-
Gabon	(66.0)	(90.8)	(115)	(112)	(115)	116	132	136	-	(117)
Ghana	36.2	22.2	28.6	28.1	(19.2)	21.6	35.1	45.0	(45.1)	-
Kenya	297	242	234	237	222	183	(153)	[206]	(229)	[215]
Liberia	18.3	33.1	58.6	50.2	26.3	25.9	25.2	(23.0)	(24.5)	[23.8]
Libya	[8.934]	[7.514]	[8.382]	[7.749]	[5.231]	[4.712]	-	2.766	-	-
Madagascar	86.9	(81.5)	76.0	[66.8]	[60.9]	59.4	56.8	58.9	50.5	-
Malawi	47.6	48.9	36.5	26.7	21.2	18.0	17.5	19.9	(18.1)	-
Mali	45.5	39.2	37.1	40.8	38.8	38.4	42.6	(37.3)	(48.3)	-
Mauritania	85.3	88.3	-	-	46.5	-	-	-	2.8	3.4
Mauritius	2.6	5.0	4.9	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.7	769	[793]
Monroco	731	841	857	893	676	638	771	751	-	-
Mozambique	91.4	108	141	169	203	252	252	275	(725)	-
Niger	15.2	15.5	14.0	12.4	13.2	14.2	(15.4)	(16.0)	-	-
Nigeria	2.321	2.498	2.017	1.580	1.359	(766)	763	711	546	(801)
Rwanda	28.2	31.3	36.3	33.8	32.6	28.7	31.1	34.8	32.7	[29.7]
Senegal	118	107	110	102	97.4	93.9	86.7	82.3	(86.8)	(88.8)
Sierra Leone	18.5	23.5	23.7	19.1	11.8	8.8	[6.3]	[7.7]	[4.4]	-
Somalia	106	72.5	68.8	55.8	64.6	46.4	33.0	(31.9)	(41.1)	[21.1]
South Africa	2.312	2.436	2.287	2.261	2.249	2.384	2.308	2.386	2.550	2.620
Sudan	223	259	208	175	204	259	231	225	(242)	(224)
Swaziland	11.2	11.3	10.1	13.0	10.3	9.6	7.6	7.1	6.7	-
Tanzania	546	255	256	227	195	174	173	216	(259)	(294)
Togo	22.3	21.4	21.5	19.1	18.0	20.7	26.0	(26.6)	(34.7)	(512)
Tunisia	151	165	218	483	568	426	476	520	510	-
Uganda	38.1	72.8	133	64.9	91.7	146	143	70.5	-	-
Zaire	70.8	65.0	35.4	71.7	33.5	58.7	49.5	[45.3]	(44.0)	(30.1)
Zambia	75.1	55.7	[70.9]	[60.6]	[55.1]	[42.2]	[34.7]	[65.7]	[61.0]	-
Zimbabwe	248	336	346	326	316	296	299	(333)	(353)	(326)

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 1978-9. World Armaments and Disarmament, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 185-186.

In 1988 and 1989 the economic outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa continued to be gloomy. The World Bank in its 1988 annual report estimated that the regional GDP in current terms fell from U.S. \$160 billion in 1986 to U.S. \$127 billion in 1987, continuing the steady decline in GDP experienced through the late 1970s and 1980s (World Bank, 1988). This fall in output represents a decline in GDP per capita from U.S. \$400 in 1986 to just over U.S. \$305 in 1987. These figures confirm and continue a trend which was observed at the beginning of the 1980s:

At a time of rising import prices, import values fell on average seven percent in Africa in 1981. In Madagascar they fell by forty percent, in Sierra Leone by thirty-six percent, in Ghana by twenty-nine percent, in Zambia by twenty percent, and in Tanzania by twelve percent. In 1983 they continued to fall. Such belt-tightening involves major reductions in both public and private consumption and investment expenditures, and inevitable conflict over whose real income will be cut the most (and least). The "import strangulation" associated with terms of trade deteriorations of twenty-five percent and more in recent years has created substantial underutilization and depreciation in existing capacity. Without crucial imports and spare parts, much of the capital stock - in transport, industry, agriculture, and even social infrastructure such as schools and hospitals - cannot function adequately. This results frequently in long term physical deterioration, often accelerated in tropical conditions. In some instances, the unavailability of fuel, imports, and spare parts has severely reduced the capacity to move potential foreign exchange earning export products to the ports. Thus the vicious circle is reinforced (Helleiner, 1983:20).

The figures and observations by Helleiner, therefore, should tell us much more about the impact of military expenditure on the economy than simple absolute figures of military expenditure itself. The primary issue in Africa's economy is under development, characterized by low productivity and low incomes and resulting in an economy that is severely constrained by low levels of socioeconomic development and highly dependent on the international economy (Rodney, 1972; World Bank, 1988; Ravenhill, 1986; Hyden, 1983). An analysis of military expenditure which fails to recognize *this* fact essentially misses the point. In an underdeveloped economy, military expenditures of any amount (including those for so-called "legitimate" defense) always involve a competition between the military and other sectors for very scarce resources. African countries therefore must recognize that they cannot continue the process of increasing military outlays while social needs go unattended. There are some who have suggested that African countries should build an armament industry to meet the various internal demands of the military. This is an inherently bad idea, especially given the nature of the economy in relation to technology. As

Victor Urquidi (1985:36) has noted, a modern arms industry, given the relatively high technology involved, does very little for an underdeveloped country's economy. Similar to the import substitution industries of the 1960s and 1970s, an arms industry would actually increase the Third World country's dependence on imported technology and other supplies, thus, in essence, making the economy more vulnerable to external economic shocks and adding to the already high level of external debt. Indeed Victor Urquidi concludes that:

[1] he reasons for setting up an arms industry of sorts in a developing country are not necessarily economic, i.e. cost-benefit in the economic sense is probably little considered in the decision making of a country embarking on the development of an arms industry (1985:37).

Urquidi's point is an important one because it exposes some of the non-economic reasons for underdeveloped countries wanting to build an arms industry. Usually political considerations - such as prestige - far outweigh economic ones in such decisions. For the most part however, African countries have not been able to create domestic armament industries because such an enterprise would be difficult to justify even in political terms. Thus only South Africa and Egypt have any armament industries to speak of, both producing weapons under licence from major powers.

For that matter, the primary economic point about military expenditure remains. Military expenditure by any one country represents an economic (or opportunity) cost to that country. In economic terms, the point is a relatively simple one: military expenditure uses up resources which might alternatively be employed to provide consumer satisfaction either in the provision of either private or collective goods and services (Blackaby, 1983:17). In the case of Africa, given the lack of resources, the point is an obvious one. Any diversion of resources from the economic side to the military has tremendously serious consequences. As an example: in 1986 and 1987, while the world was concerned about starving children in Southern Sudan, the central government was spending approximately U.S. \$500,000 a day in its war effort against guerrillas of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). In June 1989, the Sudanese government under Prime Minister Mahdi was overthrown when it became apparent that it could neither resolve the military crisis nor the economic crisis which had resulted in, among other things, the starvation of hundreds of thousands of its citizens and a mounting foreign debt.

Theoretical Analysis

Conceptually, the issue of defense (or military) expenditure is a complex one. Indeed a preliminary question would be *what* constitutes defense? Furthermore, what constitutes *adequate* defense? Most analysts dealing with this issue suggest that there are no clear cut answers to these questions. As

Frank Barnaby notes, estimating military expenditure has always been a problem for three basic reasons:

- (a) there is no agreed definition of the term "military expenditure";
- (b) many countries fail to include in their official military budget significant categories of military spending; and
- (c) the underestimation of the real value of some of the resources employed by the military - e.g. the undervaluation of conscripted manpower (1978:8).

The three issues raised by Barnaby are important conceptually because they bring into sharp relief problems associated with measurement, including of course, the issue of what we are trying to measure. Given the history of military bureaucracies, which have a tendency to exaggerate defense requirements, it is not difficult to see how this could be a problem. The clearest case that comes to mind is that of U.S. involvement in Vietnam where the Department of Defense (DOD) came under strong criticism for having exaggerated both the threat and strength of the enemy in order to boost its own position in the bureaucratic politics of Washington (Gelb with Betts, 1979). The point is that when examining military expenditure, the assumption that pervades the analyses is that countries generally underestimate their military expenditure.

Such underestimations of military expenditure could have even more serious implications for African countries because it would involve a greater diversion of resources from much needed social investments. However, there is also a practical (*realpolitik*) side to the consideration of this issue. It can be argued that defense expenditure has to be viewed in the traditional sense of national security and hence is a necessary evil which translates into a "Public Good." Furthermore, defense expenditures must be viewed within the context of the politicomilitary environment (e.g. regional conflict) in which a country finds itself (Kennedy, 1982:2). The relevance of this argument is that defense expenditure as such cannot be viewed simply in terms of a "guns versus butter" tradeoff scheme, but rather must be seen as performing a legitimate function of national security. Thus it would seem that a "guns versus butter" argument isolates the "tyranny of choice" involved in decisions about defense expenditure by governments. In light of these considerations, let us apply the argument to African countries to help us determine how far the tradeoff argument can be taken. Given the low levels of socioeconomic development, and the need for more investment in the social sphere, arguably in the postindependence period, security expenditure in Africa has not been a simple equation of guns versus butter. Indeed, defense expenditure has not properly reflected so-called legitimate defense. This point can be illustrated by way of international comparison.

Nicole Ball, for example, has contrasted security expenditures in developed countries and those of the Third World:

In the industrialized countries, security issues are viewed primarily from the perspective of potential external conflicts, and the role of the armed forces is to protect governments and citizens alike against external threats. In the Third World, internal security considerations often tend to outweigh those of external security and the foremost task of many armed forces is to protect governments and elite groups against the mass of the population. (1988:32). Emphasis added.

It would seem therefore, that for purposes of our argument, military expenditure *per se* is not the central issue but rather its interconnection to two other variables: the level of socioeconomic development, and the use to which military power is put. In Africa, there have been many instances in which the military has been put against the mass of the population as opposed to actually defending them. Perhaps the most obvious examples are those of Uganda under Idi Amin (1971-1979) and Milton Obote's second regime (1982-1985); the current conflict in the Sudan whereby the central government in Khartoum has unsuccessfully tried to impose its authority on Southern Sudan; the case of Ethiopia where the Mengistu regime fought an increasingly hopeless battle against the various nationalities seeking autonomy from Addis Ababa; and the notorious case of South Africa where the apartheid policies of the nationalist regime have placed the government squarely in conflict with the interests of seventy-five (75) percent of its non-white population.

It is my argument that the above examples from Africa throw into question Kolodziej's (1985) thesis of the globalization of the nation-state. For example, as the Ethiopian state struggled to deal with the nationalities question, one of the mechanisms for control and establishing legitimacy has been the use of military power. Consequently, Ethiopia consistently had one of the largest armies in Sub-Saharan Africa. The fact of a large army however has not necessarily deterred the various nationalities fighting against the central government. As a result, these groups have made it necessary for the central government to channel all the available resources into the military instead of social spending (see for example: Schwab, 1985; Keller, 1988 and Markakis and Ayele, 1978). The Ethiopian case is fast being replicated in the Sudan with the conflict between the central government in Khartoum and the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army in the south. But the Sudanese conflict also reflects the tragic results of the European colonization process which consciously or unconsciously disregarded deep seated differences between peoples - ethnic groups and linguistic groups, for example - and artificially bound them together in single countries.

In some ways, we may argue that the repressive nature of the post-colonial states in Africa is to be expected, given the origins of the state itself during the colonial period. During the establishment of colonial rule, European powers used brute force to subdue African groups which resisted colonialism. Examples of military suppression on the continent are numerous: the Maji Maji rebellion in present day Tanzania; Samori Toure's war against the French in Guinea; and the Shona/Ndebele uprisings against the British in Zimbabwe (Oliver and Fage, 1966). Thus, the military element became one of the principal features of the colonial state. With the attainment of independence, the post-colonial state could not escape the realities of the state structures it had just inherited. The following observations can be made regarding the post-colonial state:

- (1) The ethnic and linguistic differences that had existed prior to the colonial government, but suppressed by the colonial government, reemerged after independence. This put tremendous pressure on the new states to maintain the territorial integrity thus leading to militarism and increased military expenditures. Examples: Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the Sudan;
- (2) Not unlike the colonial government, welfare notions of development have been neglected because of lack of resources available to the new states. The result has been increasing restiveness on the part of the population, who expected better economic conditions after independence.

A combination of these two elements has therefore worked to put pressure on the new states which, like their colonial predecessors, find it easier to militarily suppress dissent rather than try to work out problems in a democratic manner. Dissent then is regarded as a security problem.

Given the difficulties that seem to plague the new states, and the reaction by these states to internal dissent, it might seem that the internal security problem should carry added weight in the analysis of military expenditure in Africa for another reason. The non-resolution of the national question (tribal, ethnic, linguistic differences) in the various countries makes governments jittery about internal opposition - regardless of the merits of the opposition. The governments have increasingly become less tolerant of dissent. As a result, millions of people have fled their homelands in fear of their lives if they happen to fall out of favor with the government. Africa today has about 50 percent of the total world refugee population: over 5 million people have fled their homes on the continent. Internal wars, which can only be waged through increased military expenditure have resulted in the deaths that are reported in Table V.

Table V - Africa: International Wars and War-Related Deaths Since Independence

	Number of Deaths		
	Civilian	Military	Total
Algeria 1962-63	1.000	1.000	2.000
Angola 1975-89	320.000	21.000	341.000
Burundi 1972-1988	105.000	10.000	115.000
Chad 1980-87	2.000	5.000	7.000
Ethiopia 1974-83	515.000	63.000	678.000
Ghana 1981	----	----	1.000
Mozambique 1981-89	365.000	50.000	415.000
Nigeria 1967-70; 1980-81; 1984	1.000.000	1.000.000	2.000.000
Rwanda 1956-65	102.000	3.000	105.000
Somalia 1988	5.000	5.000	10.000
Sudan 1963-72; 1984-89	750.000	256.000	1.006.000
Uganda 1966; 1971-78; 1978-79; 1981-87	601.000	12.000	613.000
W. Sahara 1975-87	3.000	13.000	13.000
Zaire 1960-65	----	----	100.000
Zambia 1964	----	----	1.000
Zimbabwe 1983	2.000	----	2.000

Source: Calculated by author from: Ruth L. Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures* Washington, D.C.: World Priorities, 1989, p. 22.

This brings us full circle to the issue of the tradeoff model and indeed to the question of the military expenditure as a "Public Good." It is true that a simple tradeoff model between guns and butter is not a substitute for a deeper analysis of the historical, social, economic, strategic and international factors which operate on decision makers to determine the actual levels of defense (or military) expenditure at any particular time. It is also true that in a community, once a defense capability is established, theoretically every citizen benefits from that capability. However, when that "defense capability" is unleashed on the citizens the way it was in Uganda under Amin or, more recently, in Equatorial Guinea under Francisco M. Nguema, it is no longer a public good. Instead, it becomes a national liability. In this regard, we need to recall Paul Baran's observation in his now classic book, *The Political Economy of Growth*.

The conclusion is inescapable that the prodigious waste of the underdeveloped countries' resources on vast military establishments is *not* dictated by the existence of an *external* danger. The atmosphere of such a danger is merely created and recreated in order to facilitate the existence of comprador regimes in these countries, and the armed forces that they maintain are needed primarily, if not exclusively, for the suppression of *internal* popular movements for national and social liberation. (1973:414). Emphasis in the original.

As we noted earlier, Nicole Ball (1988) essentially makes the same point for the contemporary period. The important question then becomes: What are the prospects for change in terms of lowering military expenditure? If not, what are the conditions which make high military expenditures inevitable?

A Prospective Analysis

Historically, increased military expenditure in African countries in the postindependence period has been associated with the intervention of the military into politics, and its eventual usurpation of state power. The most obvious examples are those of Nigeria and Ethiopia. In Nigeria, an army of less than 50,000 men rose by almost 400 percent between 1966 (the year of the two coups) and 1970 (the end of the Civil War), necessitating increased allocation of resources to the military. Currently, Nigeria has an army of 94,500. In Ethiopia, an army of 50,000 men under Haile Selassie had by mid-1980s grown to 315,000 men and women under arms, with an increase of several thousand times in military expenditure. It seems, therefore, that as long as there is continued military intervention in politics, we are bound to see increased military expenditure.

But what prompts military intervention into politics? In standard development literature, there are two main types of explanation of military intervention. The two types have been summarized by Samuel Decalo whose study claims to shift:

... attention away from the discipline's fixation upon the systemic weaknesses of African states and the organizational features of African armies as reasons for coups to the internal dynamics of African military hierarchies, their officer cliques, and corporate and personal ambitions. It is essentially here that the motivations for military upheavals can be found with the fragmentation of power in society at large allowing, or even encouraging their unfettered expression (1976:3).

Decalo's study is thus a critique of the thesis propounded by Samuel P. Huntington, among others, who saw military intervention in politics as a reflection of broader things in society. In 1968 Samuel P. Huntington wrote that:

Military explanations do not explain military interventions. The reason for this is simply that military interventions are only one specific manifestation of a broader phenomenon in underdeveloped societies: the general politicization of social forces and institutions. In such societies, politics lacks autonomy, complexity, coherence, and adaptability. All sorts of social forces and groups become directly engaged in general politics . . . society as a whole is out-of-joint, not just the military (1968:194). Emphasis added.

The problem with both Decalo's and Huntington's studies is that they do not go far enough in explaining the phenomenon of underdevelopment, especially the peripheral state, of which military intervention is only a manifestation. Decalo's study is too narrowly focused to offer adequate explanation for military intervention because it concentrates too much on the institutional framework of the military establishment in seeking reasons for military intervention. On the other hand, Huntington's study, to its credit, incorporates what he calls "all sorts of social forces," but his analysis concentrates too much on the political, putting less emphasis on the fundamental and necessary dialectical relationship between an underdeveloped economy (in its domestic and external dimensions) and the political aspects of that underdevelopment-manifesting themselves in militarism, military coups d'état and "overdeveloped" state structures (Duvall, et al., 1981:313). As Asbjorn Eide and Marek Thee have argued:

From a dialectical point of view, militarism, [and military coups], especially in the Third World, can be seen as essentially a response to weakness: social, economic or political. The military seizes power either at moments of political stress or in times of crisis. It tries to discipline society and impose solutions in line with its socio-political outlook. Use of violence acquires central importance. The outcome is seldom successful: socio-political problems are not amenable to resolution by force (1980:23).

Eide's and Thee's point is an important one, especially in light of the social and economic development of African countries during the last decade (see Table III). In the 1950s and 1960s, some people argued that the military in the Third World was a progressive institution because of the relatively higher education levels of military officers over the rest of society. Given their efficiency and organization, the argument went, perhaps the military's role could be extended to running the government in replacement of bungling politicians and inefficient and incompetent bureaucrats (Janowitz, 1964; Johnson, 1962). The military was seen primarily as a savior in an increasingly hopeless political and economic situation of underdevelopment.

In the case of Africa, it didn't take long after independence before there was a wave of coups d'état. Thus as Ruth Collier (1977:295-330) tells us, the first military coup in Sub-Saharan Africa actually occurred in 1960 in the Congo (Zaire), just a few months after independence. In 1963 more coups followed: Congo-Brazzaville, Dahomey (Benin), and Togo. In the next two years there were *four* more coups; *three* of these occurred in countries which already had experienced coups. By 1989, there had been more than Seventy coups or serious military intervention in politics in Africa. Yet the economic crisis continues. Military interventions have not

underlying structural problems both in the polity and economy: socio-political problems are not amenable to resolution by force.

It is imperative therefore, that even more penetrating questions be raised in attempting to identify the particularity of the state and its role under conditions of underdevelopment such as those which are found in Africa. For example, how do we account for the peripheral state's propensity for economic intervention despite overwhelming evidence indicating its incompetence? Dependency theory had a partial answer to this important question because it recognized that:

... dependence and the distorted pattern of economic development lead to the suppression of interests of the laboring classes, and increasing inequality among social classes. In turn this leads to class conflict which promotes the imposition of coercive, authoritarian rule of the state (Duvall, et al., 1981: 317).

Dependency theory highlighted the nature of the peripheral state as coercive and authoritarian, arising from the contradictions generated by underdevelopment. In postindependence Africa, as economic problems have increased, civilian authorities have attempted to use the military as a basis for their protection in light of increasing discontent among the masses leading in many instances to the usurpation of power by the military. However, in recent years, the military has shown a reluctance to intervene given the hopeless economic situation that prevails in most African countries.

But perhaps there is a simpler explanation for the state's propensity for economic intervention, which in turn yields a particular kind of authoritarian rule. As economic problems have persisted on the continent and as the mass of the population has sought to "disengage" itself from the state due to its inability to bring about economic development, the state has sought to reestablish its authority by military means (Rothchild and Chazan, 1988). We may ask: how is it possible for the state to achieve this objective given the reduced resources it has at its disposal?

Robin Luckham provides an explanation that seems to fit the African pattern nicely. He notes that it doesn't seem that authoritarian regimes spend much more on armaments than their neighbors because:

Some of the world's most repressive regimes - Haiti [under Duvalier], Malawi, Swaziland, Paraguay, Nicaragua [under Somoza], Uganda [under Amin] etc. - are proportionately low military spenders. This is partly because the financial cost of internal repression are not usually high since it is not capital intensive and is often underwritten by large powers. Low spending is possible, furthermore, because many such countries - particularly in Africa and Latin America - are relatively

*insulated from the major sources of international conflict (1978:41).
Emphasis added.*

Luckman's point is simple but compelling. It is possible to run a ruthless and authoritarian regime cheaply - especially in countries which are underdeveloped.

Conclusion

Which Way Militarism and Economic Expenditure?

The above analysis leaves open many troubling questions especially as they relate to the capacity of the state in dealing with its citizens. Africa seems to be especially vulnerable to authoritarian rule because of its relatively low level of socioeconomic development. This fact makes it possible for example, for armed bandits to roam the countryside and pose a serious military challenge to a legitimate government. But it also opens up the possibility of an authoritarian regime emerging without being seriously challenged by the mass of the population, given the monopoly of the coercive machinery of the state.

It is not clear however, that military expenditure *per se* leads to economic decline, although it is clear that military expenditure in the African context neither contributes to economic growth nor enhances internal security. The concern of this study can be summarized by Robin Luckman's observation:

... it is a serious matter to divert resources from schools, hospitals and welfare services to guns, tanks and jet air crafts and most probably can only be done by governments which are prepared in the final analysis to repress the discontent it brings about (1978:44).

This statement also suggests that it is erroneous to look at the state as a neutral institution in society. Thus we accept the conclusion by Alfred Maizels and Machiko Nissanke as applicable to the analysis of military expenditure and its consequences in Africa:

[The assumption] of a politically neutral state weighing the security needs of the nation against the welfare losses arising out of reduced consumption to pay for defense, may not have much significance for most less developed economies. Rather, state security in these countries will generally involve the need for safeguarding the legitimacy of the ruling elite as well as the suppression of domestic opposition groups. In addition, of course, there will be the need for protection against possible external aggression. Defense spending, therefore, should be related to the need for military force to keep the ruling elite in power as well as to deter possible threats from aggressors. This will be particularly true for military governments - and these now seems to be

in the majority - but also for civilian governments which will try to use their control over the military for similar purposes (1987:130).

This dual contradiction is in essence the contradiction of politics in Africa.

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