

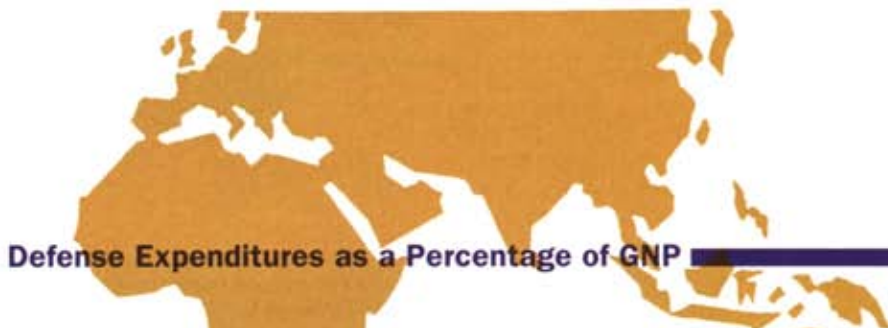
The Chart Page

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Tracking Regional Instability



What factors lead to conflict in a given area? The 1992 Joint Military Net Assessment cited two principal trends. Instability often occurs when contending nations devote unusually large portions of GNP to the military. The same is true when they maintain large standing forces. These factors upset the balance of power and regional stability and delay economic growth.



Defense Expenditures as a Percentage of GNP

North Korea	20–25% (est.)
Yemen	20.0%
Vietnam	19.4% (est.)
Saudi Arabia	16.9% (est.)
Israel	13.9%
Iran	13.3% (est.)
Jordan	12.4%
Libya	11.1%
South Africa	11.0%
Syria	10.9% (est.)

The percentage of GNP dedicated to defense is one measure of a nation's commitment to military strength, but this figure does not reveal whether the force is offensive or defensive in orientation. Nor does it reflect investment in fairly inexpensive weapons of mass destruction or the amount of military assistance given by other nations.

Ten Largest Active Armed Forces

China	3,200,000
Russia	2,000,000–2,500,000 ^a
United States	1,870,000
India	1,200,000
North Korea	1,200,000
Vietnam	750,000
South Korea	700,000
Pakistan	500,000
Iran	460,000
Iraq	430,000

Although none of these is currently at war, there is a risk of conflict between and among many of them.

^a The formation of the Russian armed forces in the spring of 1992 and the chaotic state of the conscription system make it very difficult to establish the force size of individual armies with any degree of precision. However, the goal of the Russian Defense Ministry is to reduce the size of the Russian armed forces to 1.2 million–1.5 million personnel by the end of the decade.

Source: US Department of Defense, 1992 Joint Military Net Assessment.