

Abstract

MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC ACTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A TIME FOR RECONSIDERATION?

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A common view concerning the military in developing countries is that it should be detached as far as possible from economic, social and political life. If it engages in activities other than territorial security, this will encourage the military to claim a larger share of the national budget. In addition, its emphasis on the use of force to deal with disputes may spread through wider society.

An alternative argument is that the military often possesses human and physical capital which is in short supply in many developing countries and that these are underemployed. It makes economic sense to utilise such resources in the interests of development. There are ways, on this argument, to reap benefits from using the military for development tasks while minimising possible costs.

This paper will review these and other arguments concerning the role of the military in development. It will consider whether the environment facing sub-Saharan Africa has changed so that the employment of the military in development is now more desirable. It will examine specific tasks in which the military might engage. Finally, it will propose some safeguards which would minimise the risks of using the military in development tasks.