Because measuring military spending is never a purely technical issue, ambiguities will persist. A considerable number of states remain reluctant to fully submit information on their military spending within a joint comparative framework to an international body. Even if established, however, such a database would only diminish, not eliminate, the ambiguities that mark the military expenditure data. Because measuring military spending involves a purely technical issue, ambiguities will persist. Such measurement is inherently political and, as a result, is subject to partisan disputes. During the Cold War, measuring Soviet military spending was a prominent point of contention in Western security debates. NATO’s current 1 percent defense buildup involves disputes over the definition of military expenditure. For example, does development of a new weapon system count as “preventive” military spending? The WMEST data quoted above shows how simply switching from one currency conversion mechanism to another allows for rather varied interpretations of the current state of great power competition between the U.S., China, and Russia. Calculated one way, China and Russia combined spent $112 billion compared to the U.S., which spent $641 billion. Calculated the other way, China, Russia, and the US combined can account for a military expenditure of $561 billion. For those who advocate increased US military spending, the second interpretation is far more appealing, while official Chinese statements prefer different relative measures and stress that China’s military spending is lower than that of other major countries, both as a percentage of GDP and in terms of per capita military expenditure. It is in light of this ever-present possibility of politicization that the seemingly uncontroversial situation of a leading global standard, with a variety of data providers and data series on military expenditures, also has its merits. Although it allows proponents of different political agendas to more easily cherry pick the figures that best fit their arguments, the existence of independent data providers such as the ISS and SIPRI acts as a critical check on the political uses and abuses of data on military expenditure: The independent data providers produce alternative reference points that allow critical security decision-makers about military spending and capabilities advanced in national and international political debates on security politics. That said, attempts to promote official global standards and databases for the comparison of military expenditures and capabilities via international bodies should not be dismissed as futile exercise. These negotiations help states better understand the comparative measures through which other states assess regional and global military developments. The likelihood of destabilizing impasse can thus be decreased. Moreover, globally accepted standards and data would facilitate future arms control negotiations by demonstrating that, and how, problems of comparability can be overcome. Fast arms control negotiations provide ample evidence that problems of comparability are often exploited as a convenient excuse for states that lack the political will to actually realize arms control and arms reduction proposals.