

## **Security Sector Reform**

# **Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation**

Edited by Clem McCartney, Martina Fischer and Oliver Wils

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Dialogue Series

Edited by Clem McCartney,  
Martina Fischer and Oliver Wils

# Security Sector Reform

Potentials and Challenges  
for Conflict Transformation

No. 2

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The Berghof Dialogue series is an offshoot of the Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation. Each topic in the series is chosen because it is particularly relevant to societies in conflict and the practice of conflict transformation, and because it raises important issues at the present time. The authors are all experts in the field and with different perspectives. The lead paper provides an overview of the current state of knowledge and practice and the other papers are written in response to it perhaps developing one of the issues or presenting an alternative point of view. We also invite readers to respond to the papers and interesting and stimulating contributions can be added to the web version of the dialogue.

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## Introduction:

# Dilemmas of Security Sector Reform in the Context of Conflict Transformation

Clem McCartney, Martina Fischer & Oliver Wils

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Violent crises and internal wars are often consequences of the failure of states to provide stability and security for their citizens. International organisations and development agencies became aware that development and peace processes can not be effective or take place in situations of threat, social disorder and violence. In order to overcome cultures of violence and to support nation building processes they have focused on security sector reform as an integral part of third party intervention in recent years. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was the first to argue that “Human Security” is one of the essentials and thus has widened the concepts of security. The European Union decided to shift this issue to the centre of its efforts for civil crisis prevention by emphasizing support for “the rule of law” and police reforms in conflict regions. And even civil society actors such as NGOs dedicated to disarmament, development and peace building have had the experience that initiatives for building civil society can only be successful if state structures exist which can assure security for international and local groups working in and on the conflict.

The conflict transformation community - to whom the Berghof Handbook is primarily targeted - does not have a particularly positive attitude towards the security sector. At least in the past, members of this community have seen the military as part of the problem and therefore to be avoided and marginalized, rather than as part of the solution to be engaged with. By and large they tend not to take a serious interest in security sector issues.

It is not hard to see why. Military solutions to conflict are based on a very different paradigm from conflict transformation. Most people are interested in peace but there are very different views on how to get there. In some conflicts the concept of peace through war is promoted, meaning that peace will be achieved through military victory over the opposition, whether they be insurgents or another state. It is the idea that one view must prevail and if one or more parties are not prepared to use non-violent means then force may be the only alternative. Conflict Transformation

on the other hand is based on trying to reconcile different interests and working with the different groups in conflict to see how a solution can be found which is compatible with the interests and needs of all parties. Even when one or more parties are willing to use force, the transformative approach believes the parties can be helped to see that an imposed solution is not helpful in the long run. Is it possible for such different approaches to complement each other or are they always operating against each other?

Further, people using a conflict transformative approach will often doubt the good faith of people committed to the military and military solutions. Some doubt the security sectors willingness to change and the capacity to change even if the willingness is there. Others claim that security sector structures are by their nature hierarchical and authoritarian and as such antithetical to values of conflict transformation. If they were to change, the security structures would lose their effectiveness. Some would go farther and point to militarism that they feel is endemic in security structures and pervasive in states which have a strong military influence.

If the security sector is part of the problem it has to be recognised that it is also part of the solution. The security sector cannot be ignored. It plays a central role in conflict, and often security sector personnel are the first to realise that a military solution will not solve the conflict, though they may not know how to bring about an agreed solution. The security sector also has an important impact on the process of rebuilding society. Major concerns of people in conflict zones are insecurity and a lack of confidence in the services that are established to provide security. Therefore in order for any solution to the conflict to be effective, the people in the community need to feel personally secure and have confidence in the security services. Often that does not happen and the settlement may collapse. To build that sense of confidence and security will normally require restructuring of the security service to ensure greater accountability and openness and, perhaps, the merging of the former combatants into new structures.

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What changes are needed in the security sector to create systems which can play a constructive role in the peace process and in peace building after and in nation building in general? If we acknowledge that officers and staff of the military and security agencies will find it difficult to introduce and implement such changes when they themselves have been working and serving within those agencies for a long time and are imbued with their ethos, then others have to be willing to engage with them and co-operate with them in taking the necessary reform measures. Otherwise reform will fail.

This issue of the Berghof Dialogue Series examines the arguments for engagement with the security sector and provides an analysis of the dilemmas that arise and suggestions for how they might be overcome. The lead paper provides an overview of the current state of knowledge and practice. Herbert Wulf, the former Director of the Bonn International Center for Conversion describes the historical development of thinking about the topic, acknowledging past scepticism in the wider development community but also noting the reorientation which obliges the wider conflict resolution and development communities to engage with the issue. He offers a typology of the different conditions that exist in states that indicate different capacities and commitment to reform and therefore suggest that different approaches are needed. He identifies the motivations for reform and the sources of the impetus for reform and he indicates the parameters and components of a programme of security sector reforms.

Laurie Nathan and Najib Azca then provide an insight into experiences in two different regions – South Africa and Indonesia. South Africa is often offered as an example of a successful process of conflict transformation and associated security sector reform and it had many advantages in terms of resources yet Laurie Nathan, former Executive Director of the Centre for Conflict

Resolution in Cape town and currently Visiting Fellow at the Crisis States Programme at the London School of Economics, shows that there were many problems and obstacles which had to be overcome and gives some insight into how they were addressed. He reinforces the point that failure is not always a sign of lack of political will, though finding a way to reconcile the different agendas of different groups is a political, not a technical process.

Indonesia is unusual in that the role of the army in society was uniquely important and systematic under the former Soeharto regime, and it is interesting to look at the approach taken to reform described in the paper by Najib Azca, from the Centre for Security and Peace Studies in Yogyakarta. He shows how some had an interest in keeping conflict going and thereby justifying the need for maintaining a power based model of social cohesion. In a substantial section of his paper he relates how the community tensions in parts of Indonesia have worked against reform in the security sector.

Both make the point that, as Laurie Nathan puts it “the higher the level of instability and violence in the nation and the region, the less likely will be reforms that have an anti-militarist orientation.” In Najib Azca’s words “communal violence can be perceived as a consequence of the poor performance of the security sector and, therefore, a symptom of a need for security sector reform.” On the other hand, communal conflict is likely to handicap the implementation of security sector reform, as is evident in the case of the communal conflict in Ambon. However, the South African case underlines the argument that the military may sometimes overcome militarism while a militarist perspective reliant on force remains imbued in the wider society.

The other three papers by Nicole Ball, Marina Caparini and Vanessa Farr look at ways of overcoming such problems and ensuring that appropriate reforms are introduced and that they are implemented effectively. Nicole Ball, who is Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy in Washington and is also associated with the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland, offers her security sector institutional assessment tool as a way to analyse what kind of reforms are necessary and feasible. This typology focuses on the context of the security sector in the state and in this way facilitates the identification of entry points for reform and indicates the essentially political nature of SSR, an aspect that Laurie Nathan had also noted. She particularly notes the poor prospects of reform in authoritarian states.

Marina Caparini, from the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces notes that security sector reform is rarely achieved in practice and argues that it requires a holistic approach with inter-agency co-operation. However inter-agency rivalry is more often evident. She also emphasises the importance of civil society involvement while recognising the lack of expertise within the wider community. She makes the interesting observation that specialist NGOs often are made up of ex-military personnel and those close to the military and therefore “lack critical distance” which allows them to introduce fresh perspectives. A significant part of her paper deals with the importance of dealing with SSR within a broader regional perspective.

Vanessa Farr, working with the United Nations Development Programme, takes up the question of civil society involvement and in particular the lack of attention paid to the weakest sections of society. She reminds us that they are acutely aware of issues that normally are overlooked and that it is not sufficient to listen to their perspectives but they need some leverage to ensure that their concerns are incorporated into any programme of reform and that the reform includes ongoing attention to their concerns. She also points to how groups such as women whose needs and roles have been ignored have through the use of creative and striking approaches been able to inform and change the debate about SSR. Vanessa Farr, in common with the other authors, considers that a rights-based approach is essential to make a real impact on ensuring that security sector reforms



address the individual's concerns about human security.

Some points of particular interest to those working in conflict transformation are only referred to briefly by the authors. In particular there is the question of reform in a post conflict situation and dealing with the legacy of war, as Nicole Ball mentions. What to do about past abuses of human rights under the old regime in the context of creating new structures and systems? Najib Azca refers to the question of immunity for past abuses of human rights under the old regime. Those implicated may impede the process of reform unless they are granted immunity. But is that a satisfactory outcome? There are also the problems associated with non-formal military units such as paramilitary groups, vigilantes, rebel fighters and so on. The existence of such groups will often make reform more difficult but there may also be scope for programmes of disarmament and demobilisation or integration of some groups into the state security services. Laurie Nathan touches on the question of how to integrate ex-combatants in new structures and how to manage potential ethnic tensions.

The authors open up the issues of what needs to happen to reform or transform the security sector but all are agreed that clarity is important because, as Nicole Ball puts it, much is done under the name of SSR which is not, and it may be used to describe programmes to strengthening military capacities without addressing the way in which the military operates within the state and in the community. All the authors agree that this issue is more acute at the present time, because in the context of major or perceived security challenges compromises are being made in tolerating abuses of rights and militarisation. They indicate how the war on terror and global crime are used as a justification for supporting regimes which abuse human rights and where the security sector is not open and accountable to democratic control. As Marina Caparini puts it, Western states are "subordinating human rights concerns to the requirements of improving military or security capacities." Herbert Wulf refers to it as "a lack of a coherent response and double standards". One might also describe it as hypocrisy.

This brings us back to the question of public participation because the real concerns of the people are lost sight of in this context. Laurie Nathan acknowledges the "lack of capacity in parliament, judiciary or civil society to allow oversight" and Vanessa Farr argues that even these bodies do not speak or understand the positions of the most vulnerable in society. Military personnel are by and large suspicious of outside influence especially from those who have not themselves had a career in the military. It is a vicious cycle because without participation the militarist culture and discourse will not change and without a change in the culture it will be hard for the system to hear other voices. In many ways the global security community is addressing the wrong questions and looking for answers from the wrong people. Herbert Wulf notes that "externally brokered and assisted reform has primarily addressed the warring parties rather than the forces advocating peace" and that there is a "feeling that security sector reform in a broad sense does not necessarily address the immediate security needs."

The public need some leverage but unless there is an informed public debate where the individual can consider what they require from the security sector and that those concerns have priority, the dominant discourse and culture will continue to reflect a militarist mind set. This is where the conflict transformation community can make an important input on, for example civil society engagement with security issues, systems of civil oversight of the security services, and conscientisation of military personnel to human rights issues and the maintenance of human security. We look forward to our readers' contributions to the debate and will publish on the web those that are interesting and original.

Berlin / London, July 2004

Clem McCartney, Martina Fischer and Oliver Wils

# Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries

Herbert Wulf

## 1. Security sector reform as a new paradigm

### 1.1 Defining security sector reform

Security sector reform<sup>1</sup> is a relatively recent concept in state transformation, development and post-conflict peace-building. Notions of democratising societies, good governance with transparency and accountability, peaceful transformation of societies, human security and poverty reduction programmes have recently made inroads in security thinking (UNDP 1994; Commission on Human Development 2003; Ball and Brzoska 2002; Ball et al 2003). People worldwide are concerned about armed conflict, terrorism, regional conflicts, failed states, violent crime and human rights abuses. The people-centred concept of human security ideally complements, but often contrasts or competes with the notion of state security, or even more narrowly the security of the political elite. These conceptual changes in the security debate happened primarily in developing but less so in transitional countries.

Security sector reform addresses security problems and tries to improve the situation through institutional reforms. Security and peace are seen as a public good (Mendez 1999). Society as a whole, as well as its individual members, benefits from an increase in security. Security sector reform must be understood as a broad concept, which also concerns a more efficient use of scarce resources to improve security. Democratic, civilian control over security forces is crucial

<sup>1</sup> In the official discussions within the OECD donor community the term security system reform has recently been introduced instead of security sector reform.

for the provision of security in the interests of the population. Democratic decision making requires transparency and accountability. Thus, the public at large needs to be involved. However, democratisation is no guarantee of improved security. The fact that democratisation has so often been associated with rising political violence is probably no coincidence since it challenges established privileges and raises political expectation which are not always fulfilled (Luckham 2003). Hence, the crux of the reform of the security sector is the development of both effective civil oversight and creation of institutions capable of providing security (Ball et. al. 2003, p. 268).<sup>2</sup>

The list of countries in need of security sector reform is long.<sup>3</sup> The reasons why security sector reform is necessary in each of these countries vary. They include post-conflict rebuilding, transition from military or one-party rule to participatory forms of government, recent independence, a lack of transparency and accountability in public affairs, a disregard for the rule of law, problem in conflict mediation due to an often conflict-exacerbating role by actors in the security sector, difficulties in the management of scarce resources, as well as inadequate civilian capacity to manage and monitor the security forces.

The concept of security sector reform has become increasingly popular since it was first put forward to a larger public in a speech by Clare Short, the then United Kingdom Minister for International Development, in London in 1998 (Short 1999; Ball 1998.) Its appeal lies in the visionary integration of a number of objectives under one intellectual roof: the reduction of military expenditures and their redirection to development purposes; security-relevant development; donor activities in conflict prevention and post-conflict situations; and improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of governance over those institutions charged with the provision of security (Brzoska, 2003).

#### **Box 1: What is the security sector and its reform?**

Security sector reform is the transformation of the security system which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions, so that it is managed and operated in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework. Responsible and accountable security forces reduce the risk of conflict, provide security for citizens and create the right environment for sustainable development. The overall objective of security sector reform is to contribute to a secure environment that is conducive to development.

Source: DFID 2003, p. 30, OECD/DAC 2001, pp. 11-35

When defining security sector reform and formulating the objectives, the problem arises that too narrow a definition (for instance an exclusive focus on the military) might lead to an inadequate programme. This is because security sector reform is not just about disarmament or reducing the size of the army, but also about security in the wider sense – the security of every single human being within society. Conversely, too broad a definition (that includes everything from protection against HIV to water resources management) might create a lack of clarity concerning the core of the needed reforms.

If adequately designed, the supply of weapons, materials and other equipment as well as military and police assistance can also be part of a programme of security sector reform, as the need for the right equipment by African peace keepers illustrates (Field 2004). One criterion for using the term security sector reform is that this assistance is integrated into an overall strategy of

<sup>2</sup> See Box 1.

<sup>3</sup> Governments in developed countries have implemented reforms in their security sector too. However, this paper addresses primarily security sector reforms in developing and transitional countries.

development and democratisation of the society. This implies that security sector reform can never be implemented as a stand-alone programme but has to be embedded in a general peace-building and development programme. The military assistance programmes, implemented during the Cold War, which were essentially ideologically motivated, did not as a rule comply with the concept of security sector reform in use today, since they aimed merely to strengthen or modernise the armed forces in question and consolidate the influence of the donor countries. But they did not seek to help establish a democratically controlled security sector that would be conducive to development.

### **Box 2: The historical perspective**

The recent debate on security sector reform is not the first period during which development theoreticians and practitioners had turned their attention to these themes. Back in the sixties – partially brought about by a large number of military coups d'état in Latin America, Africa and Asia – the development community was interested in helping identify an appropriate role for the military and the input of resources for the military sector. The debate focused on

1. the consumption or wastage of resources by the military, and the issue addressed in various UN reports of whether those resources should be employed for other purposes.
2. the role of the military in nation-building. Development theoreticians put forward the hypothesis that, in view of the often artificial borders drawn up in the decolonisation process, the military might play a role in uniting people and building nations.
3. the role of the military as a pillar of modernisation. Anglo-Saxon sociologists and political scientists in particular viewed the military as a key group for the modernisation and industrialisation of emerging third-world societies. In so doing they provided the legitimisation for extensive military assistance programs.

What had previously been a predominantly positive image of the military as modernisers had changed by the late sixties, if not before, when the predicted rapid development failed to materialise and the military in many countries had become anything but pillars of growth and development. The more empirical analyses of the seventies focused more closely on the causes of coups d'état and the consequences of policies pursued by military governments. Development co-operation – primarily in response to the negative role of the undemocratic, often repressive and state-terrorist armed forces – proceeded to keep its distance from these actors. The role of the military and paramilitary groups and the absorption of resources by them came to be seen as a highly sensitive area which was too political.

Presently, still existing reservations about security sector reform are attributable to the fact that development co-operation programs geared to the security sector have been viewed as support for the military. This aloofness from the military was problematic in that military assistance and other forms of co-operation with the armed forces in the third world was left largely or in most cases exclusively to the armed forces in the industrialised countries. These activities then took place in the context of the confrontation between East and West and the competition between the respective systems, the Southern dimension of the East-West antagonism. The support provided to third world countries by the USSR was founded almost exclusively on arms exports, and training for the armed forces or underground movements. Yet in countries like the USA and France too, where military assistance was declared as development co-operation, in purely quantitative terms military assistance at times dominated development co-operation. The focus was on military training and the supply of weapons,

whilst the issue of what might be the appropriate role of the military in society in general received little or no attention. In both the East and the West, rationales were sought to justify this support to the armed forces, and it took the end of the Cold War to bring themes involving military and security policy back into the mainstream of development policy debate.

Source: Wulf 2000.

## 1.2 Elements and actors of security sector reform

Often the reforms are limited and ignore the need for strengthening civil oversight and professionalising civil society for this task. The emerging security sector reform paradigm instead is based on broad principles such as democratic control and accountability, public participation and transparency, good governance and public expenditure management. Instead of single issue reforms, a holistic concept and approach is now called for especially by the donor community (Hendrickson 1999, Hendrickson and Karkoszka 2002). In many post-conflict countries of the world (e.g. the conflict zones of West and Central Africa and in the Balkans), security sector reform has been donor-driven. Donors have insisted on and assisted in security sector reform projects and made such programmes a condition of their post-conflict assistance. In other regions, particularly in many Latin American countries, as well as in some of the countries in transition in Europe, the democratisation of civil-military relations was also included on the national agenda (Diamint 2002, Born, Caparini and Fluri 2002).

### Box 3: Dimensions of Security sector Reform

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Political dimension:     | civil control  |
| Economic dimension:      | appropriate consumption of resources                 |
| Social dimension:        | guarantee of citizens' physical security             |
| Institutional dimension: | professionalisation of actors in the security sector |

Source: Brzoska 2000, Wulf 2000.

Security sector reform initiatives address four broad areas (Brzoska 2000, Wulf 2000, pp. 19-23):

- The *political* dimension: democratic, civilian oversight of the security sector forces. The core task of reform in this area is good governance, including the capacity of the civil society (e.g. media, NGOs, researchers, the public at large) to facilitate debate on security priorities as well as civilian oversight of the security forces.
- The *economic* dimension: the allocation of resources. The rational allocation of human, financial and material resources to the security sector is a precondition for its efficient functioning. An excessive security apparatus deprives other policies (e.g. sustainable development) from scarce resources and creates an inefficient security sector. At the same time, an under-funded security sector cannot ensure the security of the population. Reform here includes identifying needs and key objectives, determining what is affordable, prioritising resource-allocation and ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources.
- The *social* dimension: the actual guarantee of the security of the citizens. The prime task of the security sector and its actors is to guarantee the internal and external security of the population. Security is not identical with security of the state provided by the military. Rather, it includes the security of the population from attacks of all types on their life, health or property.

- The *institutional* dimension: the structure of the security sector and the institutional separation of the various forces and institutions. The different forces can only be efficient and be held accountable if the various institutional tasks are clearly defined. An institutional overlap between domestic public security and external defence increases the danger of intervention by the military in domestic affairs. The concept of a security sector should not become an excuse for militarised police forces or a major internal role for the armed forces.

#### **Box 4: The security community**

- *Core security institutions*: armed forces; police; paramilitary forces; coast guard; militias, and intelligence services
- *Security sector oversight bodies*: legislatures and legislative committees; ministries of defence, internal affairs, justice, foreign affairs; office of the president; and financial management bodies (ministries of finance, budget offices, auditor general's offices)
- *Non-core security institutions*: judiciary, customs, correctional services, and other uniformed bodies
- *Non-statutory security force institutions*: liberation armies, guerrilla armies, traditional militias, political party militias, and private security companies.

Source: Ball and Brzoska, 2002, p. 8.

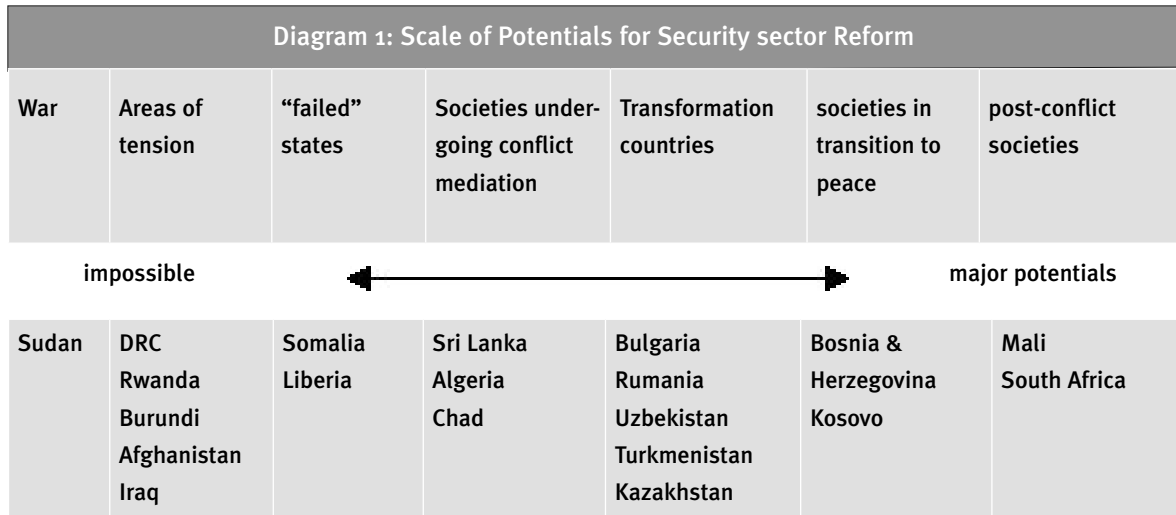
## **2. Empirical experiences and preconditions for reform**

### **2.1 Potential for security sector reform**

It is very difficult to generalise on the nature and the required steps of security sector reform, since the respective political, economic and social conditions, as well as the regional constellations, need to be taken into account. The context in which the security sector is to be reformed is vital, and the differences in the various countries are as critical as their commonalities. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made here to identify a number of general conditions and draw corresponding conclusions. A central prerequisite for the successful implementation of reforms is the will to reform on the part of various relevant partners in developing countries, although equally important is the situation in which the specific country finds itself.

The opportunities and potentials for reform in different situations can be measured on a scale, although categorising these countries on that scale is somewhat based on subjective judgement. The two poles are formed by countries at war (such as Sudan), and countries in post-conflict situations (such as Mali, South Africa and possibly Sierra Leone).

It goes without saying that, where *war and violent conflicts* are being pursued, there is no broad-based will for reform. On the contrary, the belligerent parties usually attempt to strengthen their martial potential in order to defeat the enemy. Reforms to introduce civil control of the military, the growing influence of civil society or demobilisation and disarmament cannot be expected in countries at war, or can be expected only on a limited scale. Nevertheless, this is the very situation in which civil society is needed as a watchdog or whistleblower. Plans for later programmes of demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration can already be drawn up during the conflict. Corresponding support measures are possible. Given the present situation, for example in Sudan, there is no basis for security sector reform. Hence, Sudan could even be placed outside of this continuum.



Similarly problematic is the situation in *areas of tension and countries with a high probability of war*. In these countries, there is usually a process of armament followed by mobilisation of the armed forces, whereupon civil norms cease to apply. External support is usually accepted by a government only to support its own war effort. In such cases, however, it is also conceivable that support be focused on civil society. Here too it is necessary to seek paths and support structures that strengthen human security.

Poor preconditions for comprehensive security sector reform also prevail in so-called “*failed*” or “*collapsed*” states. Characteristic of this development is the loss of state control over the monopoly of force. External assistance, even on a large scale, is no guarantee for success. In such situations, reforms of the apparatus of legitimate state coercion are virtually impossible. Somalia is a prototypical instance of such situations; the fragmentation of the individual militarily active groups and warlords demonstrates that groups are only willing to be disarmed under favourable conditions (for instance where alternative economic prospects are created). However, the preconditions are not in place for fundamental security sector reform.

Potentials are more conducive in countries where *conflict mediation* is under way, and where chances for solving or containing conflicts are good. However, there is often not sufficient mutual trust to be able to embark on comprehensive reforms during the conflict mediation phase. It is therefore important to plan and if possible reach agreement on security sector reforms during the phase of cease-fire and peace negotiations (as was the case for instance in the 1992 Rome Accord for Mozambique).

Overall prospects in *transformation* countries are good. If these countries aim at joining NATO or the European Union they can expect to receive assistance, including programmes for democratising the actors in the security sector. However, post-authoritarian experiences in many countries show that the Soviet legacy, continued authoritarian political leadership, nepotism, police involvement in criminal acts and corruption are the main hindrances for reform. Often civilian oversight is almost non-existent. Security sector reform has come mainly through external pressure and is triggered by bilateral or multilateral arrangements (International Crisis Group 2002).

In countries in *transition to peace*, the prospects for reform are also good. However, resistance by the security sector forces must usually be anticipated here. The inertia of the armed forces and police and their tendency to adhere to traditional structures and assumptions constrain necessary reforms. This position within the armed forces and police does not necessarily mean an

irrational or illogical opposition to reform on the part of the actors concerned, but can be explained by the threatened loss of privileges by the security elite. External support to the elements for reform (usually civil society, but possibly also elements within the security forces themselves) can help actually kick-start reforms.

In contrast to countries at war, potentials in *post-conflict societies*, where peace accords have been signed and where possibly even the reduction and adjustment of security forces have been agreed, are very positive indeed. Generally speaking, in such countries there is also a strong will to accept external support for reorientation and reform. The example of South Africa illustrates the deep structural transformation of the security sector. With the reform largely being completed, South Africa as a successful case might even be taken out of this continuum.

## 2.2 Domestic commitment and ownership: many, but limited reforms

Virtually every state is involved in some sort of reform that changes the way security institutions and actors operate. This, however, does not imply that these reforms can all be labelled 'security sector reform' as it is understood in the development community (see box 1). Questions remain about the direction of such reforms and how reforms are implemented. Often, the reform efforts are not directed at improving the security of the population but are exclusively aimed at rationalising or modernising armed forces and police to save money or to enhance their postures and capabilities.

We can identify several contexts or reasons for reforms with some of these categories obviously overlapping:

- Budgetary necessity (almost all countries with reform programmes)
- End of war or conflict and post-conflict peace-building (Afghanistan, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, East Timor, Mozambique, South Africa, Haiti)
- Continued war or unsettled conflicts with strengthening of the security sector organs (Columbia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Nepal)
- Transitions from military rule (several Latin American countries, Ghana, Benin, Mali, Indonesia)
- Post-authoritarian experience (all successor states of the former Soviet Union)
- Single-party authoritarian dispensation (Cap Verde, Tanzania, Laos, Vietnam)
- Participation in UN peacekeeping (several West African and Central European states, Argentina, Bangladesh)
- Joining military or political alliances or blocs (the new members or candidates of NATO and the European Union).

### Box 5: Intelligence Services

"The role of intelligence services in the security sector should be recognised and addressed. Practically all governments find it necessary to maintain specialised forces in this area... Intelligence agencies should be included in security sector reform where their work is concerned with internal security threats. In this area, donors have been reluctant to contribute, as the need for transparency that pervades all other efforts in security sector reform is difficult to reconcile with the development of secret services. To counteract the obvious lack of transparency, the intelligence agencies must be subject to some form of civilian control. A complete detachment of such services from a general process of reform may easily undermine constructive development in other areas."

(NUPI 1999. p. 19)



Different types of reform are implemented in various countries. The reform scenarios mentioned below usually do not fully explain the various and often overlapping path of reform:

- security institutions have partnered with civilians in transforming security institutions in a genuine effort of democratic transition (South Africa, several Central European States, Brazil)
- democratic change in many sectors of society with limited reforms in the security sector (Benin, Ghana, Mali, Chile, Indonesia)
- security sector reform is driven from above by the government with limited public participation or limited democratisation (Ethiopia, Uganda, Indonesia)
- reform rhetoric or lip service to reform mainly to please foreign governments and investors without much reform and even resistance in practice (Central Asian states)
- externally or donor driven extensive restructuring of the security sector without strong local ownership (Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Liberia, DR Congo, some Balkan states)
- fundamental restructuring of the security sector to meet standards of external partners (Central European countries)
- restructuring security forces, including warring groups in previous conflicts (Afghanistan, El Salvador)
- building new security forces with extensive foreign assistance (Baltic states, East Timor).

To be successful security sector reform requires both that democratic institutions are put in place and a principled acceptance of democratic politics by the government, civil servants and security actors. In terms of domestic actors, in most cases the executive branch of governments, assisted often by donors has driven reforms in the security sector. With few exceptions (most prominently South Africa), parliaments and the public at large have been relatively marginal. This is probably the reason for the often narrow focus of reforms. The executive acted on certain aspects when urgent and immediate problems required action. Typical examples are rampant crime and post-conflict reconstruction as well as economic crises, which required budget cuts.

### 2.3 Strong interest in the donor community but lack of coherence

Over the past few years, the debate on security sector reform has gathered momentum within the international donor community as well as in developing countries and countries in transition. A condition for security sector reform is local ownership. Unless this is ensured donor interventions are likely to have limited effects or might even be counter productive. In the past, external support for the security sector was often provided or withheld for strategic and political reasons (International Alert et al., 2002, p. 1). In recent years, the emphasis among donors has been that sustainable development and peace-building must be based on strengthening governance in the security sector in order to remove the barriers to the state's ability to provide security for its citizens as well as the threats to citizens' security. Compared to the high level of security sector reform needs in many countries, the resources made available are still far from sufficient. However, security sector reform has been accepted as a necessary condition for democratisation and development. In the absence of democratic, civilian control security forces are able to act with impunity in all the four areas mentioned above, with negative consequences for both human development and security.

In 2001 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a Conceptual Framework with six broad categories of recommendations for members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to develop security sector reform policies and more integrated approaches to security and development (OECD/DAC, 2001). In these six categories the OECD suggested

- to recognise the developmental importance of security issues
- to conceptualise a comprehensive security system reform that outlines the appropriate roles for actors
- to identify the required capacity and institutional reforms in donor countries
- to develop an effective division of labour amongst development and other relevant international actors
- to work towards the integration of security systems concerns in overall foreign and trade policy and
- to provide assistance to enhance domestic ownership of and commitment to reform processes.

The efforts of the OECD and its member states emphasise the need for a holistic and integrated approach and stress the governance dimension of security sector reform. There are significant differences in donor approaches and terminology. While some donors have developed a stand-alone programme, promoted the concept and undertook the internal institutional reforms to present a coherent policy, many governments are still grappling with the concept, terminology and its integration into their overall policies. The difficulties are mirrored in the complicated relations between development, defence, security and foreign policy actors in many OECD countries.

The World Bank for example is rather reserved about working too closely with the military. With particular reference to its own tasks and mandate, the World Bank emphasises transparency and management in the security sector, as well as the potentials of donor organisations and countries. It expressly identified, already in 1999, the development of civilian expertise for assessing security needs and security threats; setting security policy; effectively managing and overseeing the security sector; training for civil servants in developing control and accounting systems for budgets and expenditure planning; support for democratically elected parliaments to assess security issues; reform of the judicial, legal and penal systems; and strengthening the capacity of civil society to monitor these reforms. The World Bank suggests that the donor community should provide support for such programmes (World Bank 1999, p. 12).

#### **Box 6: Areas for Development Assistance in security sector reform**

##### **A. Enhancing state capacity and policy coherence**

- Security sector reviews
- Management of security expenditure
- Civilian expertise on security issues
- Regional confidence-building and peace-keeping capacity

##### **B. Reform and training of security forces**

- Military and police reforms
- Training assistance

##### **C. Demilitarisation and peace-building**

- Conversion of security resources to civilian use
- Demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants
- Regulation of small arms
- Child soldiers

##### **D. Strengthening democratic governance and the rule of law**

- Justice systems
- Civil society

##### **E. Building research capacity in developing countries**

Source: DAC/OECD 2000, p. 21 – 26.

Most donors are quick to embrace the paradigm of security sector reform but slow to implement it. In contrast, many have quickly promoted the US ‘war on terrorism’ notion. This is best illustrated by the enormous difference in financial resources available to the two policies. Resources for security sector reform projects are still scarce among most donors. While for a number of states the anti-terror campaign pays a dividend, security sector reform is primarily seen as a penalty. The US anti-terror campaign has suddenly greatly increased available resources (and interest by the US government) for key developing and transitional countries (Pakistan and Uzbekistan are among the most prominent examples, but also countries like Indonesia and the Philippines). The campaign has also disregarded civil rights and the liberal values of a democratic society. Another consequence of the US focus on global terror and on Iraq, has been the reduction of the importance of Latin America in the US agenda.

Direct donor engagement in security sector reform is still relatively rare. The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) has taken the lead in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Indonesia, and UNDP in the development in Mali. Political willingness, commitment and responsiveness of the government in the recipient countries have strongly determined the donor impact. In some countries with a strong domestic ownership of the programme (as in South Africa) assistance has come from several donors. Since non-state actors (crime, terrorism, warlordism, armed gangs, armed insurgencies, etc.) are increasingly a security problem in many developing and transitional countries, some donor assistance in security issues is directed against these activities. Assistance in fighting terrorism is mainly concentrated in the military realm. Police and judiciary reforms have been favoured by donors in addition to deploying civilian police as a major component to international post-conflict reconstruction.

The divergent views, policies and projects can be exemplified by four of the largest donors. *First*, the UK government combines the knowledge and resources of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In this ‘joined-up government’ initiative the departments concerned are encouraged to integrate their policy making and programme delivery and pool their resources in a Global Conflict Prevention Pool and another pool focussing on Africa (DFID, 2003). *Second*, U.S. involvement in security sector reform has been conducted through several agencies including the Department of Defence, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Department of Justice, and the Department of State. Yet this is not a government-wide concept, since their programmes frequently compete with each other, with little co-ordination, and tend to take a narrow view of foreign assistance. *Third*, the response in Germany is a strong emphasis on promoting civilian oversight of security sector institutions (Kloke-Lesch and Steinke, 2002). Support for justice and internal security and police reform is widely accepted. However, there is only limited engagement in working directly with the military. The generally positive response to security sector reform has not materialised in a comprehensive programme but is directed at pilot projects (GTZ, 2003). *Four*, France, although having traditionally strong ties to many security sector agencies in Franco-phone developing countries, has so far not explicitly taken on board the security sector reform paradigm.

Security sector reform has become, for a number of donors, a catchall phrase. There is a tendency today to include all economic co-operation projects pursued to date which might ‘somehow’ fit under the heading ‘security sector reform’: poverty reduction, crisis prevention, peacekeeping, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, de-mining, assistance to strengthen human rights etc. Traditional military and police assistance, which usually were implemented in the context of ideological conflict, and involved the supply of modern weapons or other equipment, are sometimes simply included under the new heading. Similarly, technocratic and apolitical notions

derived from previous, and often unsuccessful, projects in public sector reform (with, for example, arbitrary limits of a certain percentage of GDP for military expenditures). They are bound to fail as long as the power relations in society and the legitimate use of the state monopoly of force are not addressed.

### 2.4 Peacekeeping and police reform

In addition to the donor community, peacekeepers are also increasingly concerned with security sector reform. This reform is deeply embedded in the wider issue of peacemaking. Progress on peacemaking is often linked to security sector reform, particularly the reform of police forces. In the past, peacekeepers often had to take over police functions, including the training of domestic police. In recent years, the deployment of civilian police has been added as a major component to international peacekeeping efforts (Neild 1999). The United Nations’ post-conflict rehabilitation programmes in recent years have frequently included civilian police. In the 1960s, the UN in the Congo operation deployed civilian police and they have also been a part of the UN Force in Cyprus. However, not until the end of the 1980s, did civilian police become an important component in UN programmes. As of December 2003 out of a total of 4,581 peace-keeping personnel just over 10 percent served as civilian police, contributed by 67 different countries with the largest contingents from the Jordan, USA, Germany and India. The major contingents are being deployed in Kosovo, Liberia and East Timor. Their tasks include monitoring local police, conducting investigations and providing guidance aimed at building appropriate police services.

**Box: 7: UN civilian police operations as of December 2003**

| UN peacekeeping mission | Since          | Number of civilian police |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| UNMIK, Kosovo           | June 1999      | 3,691                     |
| UNMISSET, East Timor    | May 2002       | 319                       |
| UNMIL, Liberia          | September 2003 | 312*                      |
| UNAMSIL, Sierra Leone   | October 1999   | 130                       |
| MONUC, DR Congo         | November 1999  | 115                       |
| UNFICYP, Cyprus         | March 1964     | 47                        |
| MINURSO, Western Sahara | April 1991     | 13                        |
| UNOMIG, Georgia         | August 1993    | 10                        |
| <b>Total</b>            |                | <b>4,635**</b>            |

\* By October 2003 none of the authorised 1,115 civilian police was deployed.  
 \*\* The numbers given by the UN for the different missions add up to 4,637.

Source: [www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home.shtml](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home.shtml).

### 3. Problems and Dilemmas

The problems confronting African countries have aptly been described by Lauri Nathan (2001) as “The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”: He lists authoritarian rule, weak states, socio-economic deprivation and inequity and exclusion of minorities as the structural problems haunting Africa. A similar case can be made for many countries in other parts in the world. His contention is that the international community’s programme addresses primarily the prevention of violence rather than the structural causes. He concludes that the “four horsemen of the apocalypse” are the primary causes of large-scale violence. Domestic and internal initiatives to prevent violence and to provide security have to take these structural causes into consideration. Although police and military forces and their weapons in an unreformed security sector are part of the problem, they are usually not the cause of violence but an instrument in such conflicts. Hence security sector reform is a subset of a wider political and economic reform. This is not a question of theorising while parts of the world burn. Ambitions to reform the security sector have to consider the underlying causes of violence for such programmes to succeed. To remove these causes of violence and wars confronting many societies and laying the basis for peace and development can only be a long-term programme. Security sector reform addresses mainly the symptoms of violent conflicts and aims at short or medium term adjustments to facilitate the long-term process. This is certainly a significant objective – an objective, trying to reform the most important state instrument in the peace process. This reform is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the long-term goal of peace and development, good governance, transparency and accountability.

The security sector is a politically sensitive area. Reform processes encounter serious problems and are faced with dilemmas, which require very close attention.

#### 3.1 The right partners

It cannot be taken for granted as a matter of principle that the will to reform the security sector always exists or that governments will accept external involvement or support, which is after all a form of intervention. Yet this is a precondition for sustainable and systematic reform and demarcates the limits of external support.

Security sector actors have often played dubious roles that might disqualify them. For instance, is co-operation for reform possible with the former military responsible for the genocide in Rwanda? Is the bloody history of the military in Latin America a reason to remain cautious in co-operation even today, or to turn it down? Can co-operation in the judicial sector work with Islamic fundamentalists? Must co-operation be discontinued with countries with nuclear ambitions like North Korea? And if so, what about Pakistan, India or Israel? In many cases partnership in security sector reform will be more complicated than in other fields of economic co-operation. It might even be necessary to decline co-operation, for instance with a corrupt judicial apparatus or to turn down training programmes for the armed forces where there is a risk that direct military assistance may promote or legitimate activities that endanger human security. In cases of doubt, it is therefore appropriate to avoid direct co-operation with the security forces. Nevertheless, there are usually opportunities to strengthen instead and support primarily those elements responsible for democratic control of the security sector.

### 3.2 Donor Policy Coherence

Donor policies are often not harmonised, but in many cases diametrically opposed. Many international organisations that promote democracy as a universal norm do not necessarily adhere to these norms. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are guided by the principals of their important “Northern” shareholders while at the same time imposing structural reform programmes on recipient countries to achieve democracy and good governance. Even the United Nations is not a democratically organised body with many non-democratic members influencing their programmes.

The real litmus test in security sector reform for donors is the question of whether defence relations (especially arms export interests) are considered within their security sector reform programmes. None of the major donors seem willing to do this but pursue their arms export interest through their economic and foreign trade ministries and agencies while their foreign offices and economic co-operation agencies are pursuing the security sector reform agenda.

Thus, foreign assistance in this area is characterised by a lack of coherence among the different donors and, in addition, within many countries between the different agencies involved in economic and development co-operation. This stands in stark contrast to the generally broad positive response to the notion that lack of human security is a fundamental obstacle to development. As a minimum, involvement in security sector reform requires a strict application of the development criteria to “do no harm”.

### 3.3 Selecting Priorities in the Light of Scarce Funds

Policy makers have to weigh different relevant objectives, like poverty reduction, improvement of health situations, improvement of water supply, and many more against the need for security sector reform. Measures to increase public security can require the allocation of large volumes of resources – resources that might be needed for other programmes. Given the scarcity of funds it will be necessary to set priorities. By setting these priorities it should be kept in mind, that the security sector has control over the ultimate means of force. Hence, it is a specially important sector of the state. However, the general and valid assumption that security is a precondition to development is too broad to be a concrete blueprint for setting such priorities.

## 4. Lessons learned

The situation in many countries urgently in need for security sector reform is not exactly an enabling environment. It has to be accepted – although difficult to tolerate on moral grounds – that violent conflict and wars can usually not be prevented or stopped in the short term. Violent conflict has remained endemic, despite intense efforts, in a number of regions. This insight is not an advice to await peace that will come when the combatants have exhausted their bloody ambitions. It is not meant to propagate the dictum put forward by the old-fashioned proponent of real politik Edward Luttwak (1999) in which he puts The Beatles song upside down and requests to “give war a chance.” On the contrary, from a humanist perspective, there is no alternative to working towards peace and development. But the realities in many countries have to be taken into consideration. And these realities often mean that there will be no peace without a reform of the security sector. To expect peace to stabilise a society without touching the security sector is wishful thinking. It is

imperative that civilians drive this process and not leave it to the so-called security experts.

Many structural deficiencies and practical political barriers prevent easy and speedy reform. There are, however, also positive developments. The most illustrative example of a positive development is South Africa. Given the history and structure of the armed forces and police in that country, the conditions for reform of the security sector were not positive at the end of Apartheid. Nevertheless, within a brief period of time it was possible to carry out a thorough reform that integrated the former adversary armed forces, the various liberation forces and the Apartheid regime forces, into the new South African National Defence Forces. This process was facilitated by the engagement of many NGOs and an active role of the civil society at large in formulating and revising the Defence White Paper of 1996. Although the reform process did not end with Parliament's acceptance of this document, it clearly and unmistakably establishes the democratic control over security (Cawthra 2003).

The engagement in security sector reform has taught some lessons to both the international community and the countries undergoing reform. Traditional military and police assistance programmes of the Cold War period have little in common with the requirements of security sector reform. Among the most important lessons learned by the international community are the need to acknowledge that countries have legitimate security needs; the necessity of comprehensive and coherent external assistance; the need to secure the commitment of national and local leadership; the indispensability of carefully designed confidence-building measures in overcoming the suspicion between the security forces and the civilian population; and the necessity of a long-term perspective and commitment (Ball and Brzoska, 2002).

International and national actors do not always prioritise the same goals in security sector reform. To make security sector reform a success, it is important to consider the specific circumstances of a country, without losing sight of the overall principles and goals of security sector reform and the even wider goal of removing the causes for structural violence. It is important to constantly question what appears to be established wisdom, both specifically with regard to security sector reform as well as international assistance more generally:

1. *The role of the military.* While numerous examples of arbitrary action, despotism and political intervention by the military can be quoted from many parts of the world, there are also occasions when the military has intervened due to the incompetence, nepotism or corruption of the political elite. Thus, the role of the military needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Examples from African and Latin American countries illustrate that a weak and politically controlled military is by no means a guarantee for development. Moreover, 'irregular' forces, such as paramilitaries, which have no clearly defined role and operate outside of the main lines of command, are sometimes overlooked in reform processes.
2. *Appropriate civilian control and professional security actors.* The broad debate on civilian-military relations also has implications for security sector reform (Bland 1999). A first problem is described as the *praetorian problem*: the need to limit the political power of the military. A second problem is the need for *disciplined armed forces*, since an undisciplined mob of armed individuals can be ruinous for society. Thirdly there is a problem of *mutual control*: the military must be subject to civil control, yet at the same time the military must also be protected against politicians who might misuse them for personal or party political reasons. Fourthly, all governments face the problem associated with "modern" armed forces: the level of *expertise of civil control bodies*. How can a civilian government, which often lacks professional military or security expertise and experience, manage a professional military apparatus?

3. *Political conditionality*. Democracy, good governance and human rights have been presented as a condition (not always in a strict formal sense) for economic assistance. Good governance, often in conjunction with other conditions (such as the implementation of structural adjustment programmes), has become a core value of international assistance programmes. Particularly where social, economic, political and administrative development is weak, and is further weakened through globalisation, conflicts can be compounded by well-intentioned but ill-designed conditionalities. Every intervention by a foreign actor is based on a set of assumptions – explicit or implicit, theoretically valid or invalid. If the causes of insecurity are misperceived, then programmes or suggested remedies might be inefficient or even counterproductive.
4. *Strengthening and professionalising civil controls and civil society*. Security sector reform can be most successful where legitimate civil institutions possess the capacity and the expertise to control the security forces. The provision of support and training to government agencies, parliament, the civil service, non-governmental organisations and the press etc. must be a part of effective reform (strengthening of the legislative and executive capacities and of civil society in general).
5. *Reservations of the development community*. It is recognised in development co-operation that security issues can no longer be excluded, as was the case for a long time. This recognition has not led to embracing this theoretical knowledge in practical programmes. Reservations about co-operation with security sector actors remain (often for good reasons). In cases of doubt, it is appropriate to avoid direct co-operation with security forces, and instead to strengthen and support civil society enabling it to exercise more control of the security sector.
6. *Selectivity*. While the need for humanitarian intervention in cases such as the genocide in Rwanda or ethnic cleansing in the Balkans is understandable, the international community still grapples with the selectivity of its interventions. This applies to security sector reform as well: why does the international community intervene in some cases but not in others?
7. *Incoherence of donor policy*. While development ministries argue for a reduction in military expenditure commensurate with development needs, ministries of economic affairs and trade lobby for the arms industry. Similarly, while negotiations are under way on debt-cancellation programmes, arms imports are increasing foreign indebtedness. Donors should practice what they preach.
8. *Re-labelling of traditional programmes*. The present popularity of security sector reform concepts can lead to an undifferentiated strategy encompassing almost all areas of economic assistance, amounting in the end to nothing more than a re-labelling of traditional programmes under the guise of security sector reform.
9. *Turf wars*. Although co-operation among donors is a key concept in development co-operation, the reality often looks different. Competition between different international organisations, governments and NGOs, rather than joint efforts, make their imprint on programmes.
10. *Dilemmas of security sector reform*. A number of dilemmas have been mentioned above, namely to co-operate with the right partners, setting the right priorities and donor coherence. In addition, given the economic, political and social constraints in most of the developing and transitional countries a full-fledged security sector reform programme can mean overkill. A gradual approach, finding a compromise to fully engage local authorities and improvements in transparency that can be properly monitored would be more realistic. However, experience has also shown that when problems in the security sector are approached in a piecemeal fashion, security and governance are usually not improved significantly (Hutchful 2003).



## 5. Conclusions

The dilemmas show something of the problems of moving forward in this field. In order to overcome these problems and engage the right people in a meaningful way then we need to use an approach which is aware of these problems but nevertheless makes use of the opportunities that have opened up through the debate on security sector reform. This needs to be an engaged, but gradual approach and is not an “either/or” position. Security sector reform will achieve little without a broader process of transformation of the society. But the reverse is also true. The political reform process will get stalled without a thorough transformation of the security sector. It is a process that goes beyond the civil control of the armed forces; it needs to be a process of democratic control.

While the reform process is still ongoing in many countries it can be concluded that countries have performed unevenly in security sector reform, ranging from fundamental and solid progress toward democratic societies including the security system, to single issue or half-hearted reforms. Sometimes security agencies are excluded from the reform process and the executive routinely deploys police or armed forces and a judiciary under its control against political opponents. Security sector reform, so far, has also a mixed record in post-conflict societies because the externally brokered and assisted reform has primarily addressed the warring parties with the most direct involvement in violence, rather than the forces advocating peace. Such a short-term focus was often necessary to secure the end of hostilities. Nevertheless, it seems that fundamental changes in society, like a regime change or the end of war, are a solid ground for far-reaching reforms, while relatively stable societies are slow to seriously implement security sector reforms. An important conclusion is that the reform of the security sector is not regime-dependent and democratisation is not by itself a guarantee of reform.

Of course, there remain formidable barriers to comprehensive reforms of the security sector: lack of the most basic civil institutions capable of carrying out reforms; continued authoritarianism; continued strife, criminality, ethnic cleavage, warlordisms and other legacies in post-conflict situations; lack of political will and commitment in recipient countries; and last but not least, budgetary constraints. Key shortcomings of programmes are lack of domestic ownership, shortage of resources, ad-hoc and piecemeal rather than holistic or comprehensive programmes, lack of co-ordination among donors, even reluctance among donors to engage in the security sector and weak linkage to regional initiatives.

Donors have expanded and deepened their engagement in security sector reform during the last years which is evident from the numbers and kind of activities in which they are engaged and their policy formulations. Nonetheless, it is not always clear if the assistance that is being provided works towards a holistic and integrated approach to security.

The US-led anti-terror campaign has had negative impacts on accountability and transparency and ignores genuine security sector reform and good governance objectives. Rather, the aims are the strengthening of the operational effectiveness of uniformed security services and intelligence in a narrow technical sense. Here the cleavage between concepts of ‘human’ and ‘hard’ security doctrines (the latter based primarily on military or police force) becomes most obvious. The experience so far has shown that the military, due to its structure and traditional war fighting capability, has only a limited potential to fight terrorism. The enlightened military officers are ready to admit this and discuss this in their various journals (Wulf 2002). Often it is politicians who for the sake of public consumption over-emphasise the function of the military in anti-terrorism programmes. With this experience in mind it is advisable to engage with the military in a dialogue about their capabilities and limitations. Again, this process is laborious, since anti-terrorism has

become the new enemy image and serves a similar ideological function as anti-communism during the Cold War. But as history has shown enemy images can be transcended.

Interestingly and paradoxically, while much of the international political and academic debate has addressed concepts of wider security (with a non-military or defensive focus), many governments, both in developing and transitional countries as well as in developed countries, have become concerned with 'hard' security. This is largely due to pressing local and international problems like organised crime, internal wars and gross human rights violations which seem to call for an immediate domestic or international military or police response rather than a long-term reform concept. In part this is a response to a feeling that security sector reform in a broad sense does not necessarily address the immediate security needs. It is therefore worthwhile to take up this debate with the security planners.

In general, the international community has been not very forthcoming to promote security sector reform, although a few donors and recipient countries have propagated ambitious governance-related programmes. In practice, security sector reform initiatives have often been partial and selective. Despite some critical observations and shortcomings of reform programmes, on balance it can be considered a progressive development that security sector reform and security problems are no longer exclusively in the realm of 'hard' security advocates but play an important part in development discussion and assistance. At the same time, it has to be clear to the advocates of security sector reform that this approach addresses an important part, but only a certain part of the problem. The underlying structural causes of inter- and especially intra-state crises cannot be resolved through quick fixes. Security sector reform does not end with the cessation of the most obvious gross violence and warfare. It is a medium-range reform programme, which has to be embedded in a long-term process of peace-peacebuilding.

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# Obstacles to Security Sector Reform in New Democracies

Laurie Nathan

## 1. Introduction

The challenge of security sector reform in new democracies is fundamental for two reasons: military, police and intelligence organisations may be required to play a key role in protecting the new political dispensation and the rights of citizens, but they can also subvert those rights and undermine or destroy the democratic project.

This essay is intended to complement the article by Herbert Wulf. It focuses on the obstacles to security sector reform, drawing on the process of transforming the armed forces in post-apartheid South Africa. As Herbert notes, this process is widely regarded as a success. Given that success and given South Africa's relative political stability and economic strength for a developing country, the problems described below may be more severe in countries that are less stable and have fewer resources.

I focus on the obstacles because donors frequently underestimate the complexities and long-term nature of security sector reform in developing countries. They consequently tend to attribute a lack of reform to a failure of political will when other considerations may equally be at play.

The obstacles to security sector reform in emerging democracies are many and varied. They include a lack of vision, expertise and resources; an abiding tendency to view security in an authoritarian, militarist and secretive fashion; resistance to reform from politicians and/or security officers; manipulation by foreign powers and neighbouring states; and the on-going politicisation of the security services. The higher the level of instability and violence in the national or regional arenas, moreover, the less likely it is that reforms with an anti-militarist orientation will be introduced. These various problems can be grouped in the following overlapping categories.

## 2. The problem of complexity

Security sector reform in new democracies can be immensely complex because of the number of policies that have to be transformed, the fact that these policies may have to be changed more or less simultaneously, and the radical nature of the transformation agenda in the light of security culture under authoritarian rule. In South Africa, for example, the “principles of defence in a democracy” that constituted the agenda for transforming the armed forces required a dramatic reorientation of defence posture, doctrine and operations; force design and structure; military training and education; the institutional culture and human resource policies of the armed forces; defence expenditure, procurement and exports; and civil-military relations.

The management of such complex policy and institutional change would tax even the strongest of governments. It can be overwhelming to a new government that has no prior experience in running a state.

## 3. The problem of expertise

The problem of complexity is likely to be compounded by a lack of organisational, managerial, planning, financial and policy expertise in the new government. Leading a liberation movement or guerrilla army is hardly comparable with running government departments and conventional security services.

Following the transition to democracy, political decision-makers in South Africa were unfamiliar with contemporary debates on security and defence and with the range of policy options that were open to them. They were daunted by the uncertain consequences of their choices. The more technical a policy and the more radical the required change, the greater was the difficulty in this regard. A tendency towards conservatism and a reliance on ‘experts’ from the former regime, including security officers, is natural in these circumstances. This tendency might be reinforced by politicians’ awareness of the dangers that flow from misguided policies in the security realm.

South Africa pursued a number of strategies to address the problem of reliance on conservative experts from the former regime. Most importantly, it requested the Government of the United Kingdom to render advice to the South African Minister of Defence through the establishment of a British military advisory team in Pretoria. In addition, senior officers and civilian officials were sent on training and education courses in various democratic countries; progressive academics and the International Committee of the Red Cross were asked to assist the Department of Defence in designing and facilitating courses on the Geneva conventions and ‘military professionalism in a democracy’ for all uniformed personnel; and the Minister invited civil society experts to participate in the drafting of new policies and defence legislation.

Parliamentary committees in new democracies also typically lack expertise on security and defence issues, undermining their oversight and decision-making functions. For example, the parliamentary defence committee in South Africa accepted the logic of non-offensive defence as a matter of policy but it also accepted the recommendation by military officers for an offensive force design, mainly because the parliamentarians could not understand the technicalities of the force design options that were put to them. Similarly, the parliamentarians have struggled to grasp the technicalities of defence budgets.

The inexperience of parliamentary committees can lead to tension between parliamentarians and security officers. The officers might come to believe that the parliamentarians are ignorant and irresponsible, and the parliamentarians might feel that the officers are deliberately obfuscating matters in order to maintain the status quo. Adversarial relations between parliament and the security services impede the transformation process and can retard the democratic project.

## 4. The problem of capacity

Democratic governance is not limited to respect for basic rights, pluralism and the other basic features of democracy. It also entails efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling the functions of the state. These qualities are missing in many developing countries, which lack the skills, expertise, infrastructure and resources to meet the welfare and security needs of citizens. Without the requisite institutional capacity, the values and principles of democracy cannot be 'operationalised' and insecurity might consequently remain pervasive. In these circumstances, it is not unlikely that the state and sectors of civil society will seek to fill the security vacuum in a militarist fashion.

By way of example, many foreign politicians and analysts have expressed concern about the continued deployment of the South African army in an internal policing role. The concerns relate principally to the politicisation of the armed forces and to the militarisation of law and order. These concerns are well known to a South African audience and are addressed in the 1996 White Paper on Defence. Nevertheless, the practical problem of an inefficient, corrupt and poorly trained police service, unable to cope with widespread violent crime, has necessitated military deployment.

The problems related to limited capacity can be illustrated by other examples: adherence to the rule of law presupposes the existence of a competent and fair judiciary, police service and criminal justice system; the expectation that police respect human rights is unrealistic if they have not been trained in techniques other than use of force; democratic civil-military relations rest not only on the disposition of the armed forces but also on the proficiency of departments of defence and parliamentary defence committees; and illegal trafficking in small arms will not be stemmed through policy and legislative measures if governments are unable to control their arsenals and borders. The building of capacity in these areas is necessarily a long-term and difficult endeavour.

## 5. The problem of resistance to change

Members of the security services may oppose reforms for a host of ideological and political reasons. In addition, substantial organisational and policy transformation is inherently threatening and would give rise to resistance and conflict in most countries. This is especially the case in respect of conventional armed forces, which tend to be conservative given their primary function of defending the state.

In South Africa the process of transforming the armed forces has been hindered by what many political leaders regard as racism or a counter-revolutionary agenda on the part of officers who served the apartheid regime. Yet it is important to appreciate the extent to which resistance to change has stemmed from less sinister motives. Officers who served under apartheid were suddenly expected to implement new policies that were completely at odds with their training, education and experience over several decades. Government policy allowing the formation of trade unions in the armed forces, for example, was in conflict with their basic orientation as soldiers. Military opposition



to that policy was based on the not unreasonable belief that trade unions would undermine discipline and the chain-of-command. Similarly, opposition by South African officers to a non-offensive defence posture derived not from aggressive intentions but from a professional inclination to protect the country without undue restriction.

Military resistance to trade unions, disarmament, non-offensive defence and other major reforms might be found in stable democracies as well as in emerging democracies. In the case of the latter, however, many new policies may represent wholly new paradigms. In South Africa such paradigms have included a regional approach based on common security and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs); adherence to international humanitarian law; equal opportunity and affirmative action policies; recognition of soldiers' rights as citizens; and transparency, accountability and parliamentary oversight of the defence function. Precisely because these were new paradigms, representing a radical departure from previous thinking, resistance from military officers was inevitable.

In fragile new democracies where the political sector is weak and the security sector is strong, politicians might rely on the overt or tacit support of the security services to maintain their tenuous hold on power. They might avoid substantial reforms for fear of provoking a coup or lesser forms of resistance. For example, President Mandela appointed General Meiring, the chief of the apartheid army, to head the new defence force in the interest of stability and in order to ward off the possibility of a coup. The appointment retarded progress towards transformation until Meiring was replaced by General Nyanda who had served in the ANC's liberation army.


## 6. The problem of insecurity

To a great extent, militarisation in developing countries is a product of structural conditions that constitute a crisis for human security and/or the stability of the state. These conditions include authoritarian rule; the exclusion of minorities from governance; socio-economic deprivation combined with inequity; and weak states that are unable to manage normal societal conflict in a stable and consensual fashion. These conditions give rise to a security vacuum that the state, civil society groups and individuals seek to fill through the use of violence, sometimes in an organised and sustained fashion and at other times in a spontaneous and sporadic manner. The prospect of disarmament in such circumstances is limited.

While the problem of authoritarianism may be largely resolved with the introduction of democracy, other structural problems in emerging democracies continue to pose obstacles to disarmament. If people are hungry and have negligible economic opportunity, then some of them may turn to crime and banditry as a means of subsistence. If the state is too weak to maintain law and order, then criminal activity may flourish and communities may end up privatising security. And if the state lacks the capacity to resolve the normal political and social conflicts that characterise all societies, then at least some individuals and groups will settle their disputes through violence.

All of the above problems have occurred in South Africa, although in a less severe way than elsewhere. The state has been substantially demilitarised but civil society remains militarised, chiefly in the form of violent crime, private security and a proliferation of small arms, because gross poverty and inequity have not yet been ameliorated and because the police service is not yet able to perform its functions competently.

At the most fundamental level, demilitarisation depends on the resolution of these structural problems and the consolidation of democratic and stable governance. In mainstream



disarmament circles, a positive causal relationship is posited between disarmament, development and security. In reality, the positive causal relationship is between democratic and viable governance, security and disarmament.

## 7. Conclusion

Because of the complexities outlined above, there are no ‘quick fix’ solutions to the problem of security sector reform in new democracies. The international community should avoid the assumption that Northern models can be replicated easily or, indeed, that these models are appropriate in every respect to societies elsewhere. Democratic principles that are taken for granted in the North are truly radical in societies emerging from authoritarian rule, and the organisational capacity that is taken for granted in the North may be entirely absent in developing countries. The difficulties and obstacles related to formulating and implementing new policy on security and defence are substantial. Success is unlikely to be attained if the reforms are not shaped and embraced by the new government, civil society and the security institutions themselves.

The agenda for democracy and disarmament, promoted by countries of the North, is undermined by the failure of these countries to adhere to their own values. For several decades they have supported dictators and rebel movements engaged in terrorism; they frequently seek to impose policies on developing states; they remain massively overarmed; they flout violations of arms embargoes imposed by the UN Security Council; and they export armaments in a highly irresponsible manner. The endless flow of arms from the North to the South is not the primary cause of civil wars but it enables the combatants to sustain hostilities and inflict massive damage on civilian populations. Reform of security policy is as much a challenge in the North as in the South.



# Security Sector Reform, Democratic Transition, and Social Violence:

The Case of Ambon, Indonesia

Muhammad Najib Azca

## 1. Introduction

Wulf's paper presents the general framework of security sector reform in developing and transitional countries and places it under the umbrella of "general peace-building and development programme" (p.2). It also discusses some critical issues of security sector reform in developing and transitional countries and furthermore presents a valuable framework in analysing security sector reform.

The critical contribution of his paper to the discussion of the issue of security sector reform and conflict studies is: (1) identifying elements, actors and dimensions of security sector reforms; (2) formulating the scale of potentials for security reform in countries with various degrees of conflict and violence; (3) discussing problems and dilemmas of security sector reform; (4) formulating some lessons to learn in dealing with such a fragile and sensitive project like security sector reform. However, Wulf's paper does not discuss the linkage and the interplay between security sector reform programmes and problems and the trajectory of democratic transition. It also neglects to elaborate problems and dilemmas of security sector reform in the context of various conflict stages and situations.

In order "to fill in the gap" in Wulf's paper, I will attempt to discuss the security sector reform project in Indonesia, within the context of democratic transition and more particularly in the setting of communal conflict taking place in Ambon, in the eastern part of Indonesia. By the term "security sector", in this paper, I will refer particularly to military and police forces as the main elements of the security forces. I argue that security sector reform has become a major demand during the post Suharto era, but it then became complicated with the occurrence of social violence in many parts of the archipelago. I will then focus on the case of communal conflict in Ambon, and attempt to analyse the linkage and the interplay between communal violence and security sector reform that has been taking place during the transition period. I furthermore contend that the

eruption of communal conflict in Ambon (and other places in Indonesia) can be seen as a symptom of the poor performance of the security sector and simultaneously has brought some handicaps for the achievement of further steps of security sector reform.

## 2. Security Sector Reform in Transitional Country: the Indonesia's national panorama

The fall of Suharto in May 1998, according to the reformist Major General Agus Wirahadikusumah (1999), meant the end of the ‘invulnerability’ of the Indonesian armed forces or *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI). Following the extensive exposure by the mass media of the massive human rights violations and power abuse by the TNI in the New Order era, such as in Aceh, Irian Jaya and East Timor, as well as the kidnapping of pro-democracy activists, the poor image of the TNI reached its nadir. The abrupt breakdown in its public image, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG) (2000b, p. 3), led to a significant decline in the military’s state of mind and brought TNI to a defensive position never before experienced. Then, the abolition of “*Dwifungsi ABRP*” (the dual-function of the military) became a major demand of the pro-democracy movement (Said 2002, p. 169). Furthermore, a research team from the Indonesian Science Institute (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia*, LIPI), even argued that “*Dwifungsi ABRP*” was “the source of the national disaster” (*Sumber Bencana Nasional*) (Nusa Bhakti et al., 1999, p. 59).

Since 1966 General Suharto<sup>1</sup> had run the country under the banner of the ‘New Order’ with the military, the bureaucracy and the military-sponsored party *Golongan Karya* (Golkar, the Functional Groups) as its back bone. The critical features of the military during the New Order era were, first, a territorial structure throughout the archipelago paralleling that of the bureaucracy; second, the militarisation of the bureaucracy through ‘*Kekaryaan*’;<sup>2</sup> third, its control over intelligence services; fourth, its extensive involvement in building a wide business network. Through its territorial structure all over Indonesia from the national, provincial, district and sub-district to the village levels, the military developed an extensive and very strong instrument with which to play a key political role in society.<sup>3</sup> In addition, many military officers, either active or retired, occupied critical positions in government and the bureaucracy, from the national to the village levels (See Figure 3.1). Its dominant position was enhanced by its full control over intelligence services in both civilian and military institutions.<sup>4</sup> Military domination was expressed through the doctrine of “*Dwifungsi ABRP*” (the dual-function military)—an ideology by which the military legitimised and justified its multiple roles, as both a security and defence force as well as a social-political force.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the military was obviously the ruling force during the New Order era.

Responding to the public demand for the eradication of “*Dwifungsi ABRP*”, TNI

<sup>1</sup> Following his arrival at the pinnacle of power, President Suharto gradually but confidently accumulated power: his appointees controlled each of the key executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Thus, he shifted from the *primus inter pares* of a collegial army leadership to become the paramount figure, who stood at the pinnacle of a pyramid of power under the New Order regime (Jenkins, 1998, p. 13-14).

<sup>2</sup> ‘*Kekaryaan*’ is the placing of military personnel in bureaucratic and non-military posts.

<sup>3</sup> In 1980, military members occupied 53.5 percent of central government positions, such as ministers (47.5%), secretaries general (73.6%), inspectors general (29.5%), directors general (78.9%), heads of non-departmental institutions (44.4%), ministerial secretaries and assistant ministers (53.5%). They were also appointed as governors (70.3%), heads of district (56.6%), mayors (33.3%), and ambassadors (44.4%) (Notosusanto, 1984, p. 378-379).

<sup>4</sup> The intelligence organisations of the Indonesian state, as discussed by Tanter (1992) in his excellent account, were used by Suharto and the military to exert their totalitarian ambitions and practices. In a comparative study of domestic intelligence regime types, the Indonesian intelligence was characterised as conducting a low level of violence but an intense degree of surveillance, targeting many groups with a low sophistication of control (1992, p. 268).

<sup>5</sup> Concerning the manner in which the ‘*Dwifungsi ABRP*’ worked to legitimize military rule in the New Order era and to maintain the regime, see, for example, discussion in Langenberg (1992) and Azca (1998).



Headquarters then declared on 5 October 1998 a set of political reforms within the TNI called the “*Paradigma Baru*” (New Paradigm) of the TNI. The New Paradigm of the TNI included the following elements: first, a change in its position and methods such that [TNI] would no longer necessarily be in the forefront; second, a change from the concept of occupying to influencing; third, a change in the method of influencing from direct to indirect means; fourth, a readiness to engage in political role-sharing (joint decision-making in the case of important national and governmental issues) with other components of the nation.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 3.1 The Pyramid of Power (civil-military links)**

| President         |                             |                                     |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Other Ministers   | Minister for Home Affairs   | Commander Armed Forces              |
| Provincial Office | Governor (Gubernur)         | Territorial Commander (Kodam/Korem) |
| District Office   | District (Bupati)           | Territorial Commander (Kodim)       |
| Sub-District *    | Sub-District chief (Camat)  | Territorial Commander (Koramil) *** |
| Village **        | Village chief (Kepala Desa) | Village NCO (Babinsa) ****          |
|                   | Neighbourhood associations  |                                     |

**Notes:**  
 \* : Other ministry matters at sub-district and village level were handled directly by officials from the district office, by the sub-district or village chiefs or heads of executive.  
 \*\*: Not all districts had a dedicated military commander. Some encompassed two or more districts or sub-districts in remote areas such as Kalimantan and Irian Jaya/Papua.  
 \*\*\*: Similarly, the Babinsa normally covered a cluster of villages.  
 \*\*\*\*: Relative ranks are Kodam—major general, Korem—colonel, Kodim— lieutenant colonel, Koramil—captain/ lieutenant, and Babinsa—Non-Commission Officer (NCO).

(Lowry, 1996, p. 60)

The New Paradigm then translated into several programs (Sukma and Prasetyono, 2003, p. 23):

1. the separation of the police and the military;
2. the liquidation of social-political posts within the military at national and regional levels;
3. the replacement of the office of social and political affairs (Kassospol) with territorial affairs (Kaster)
4. the winding down of the posts responsible for assigning active members of the military to undertake civilian positions;
5. the requirement of the military officers to choose between military and civilian careers, either through early retirement or tour of duty;
6. the reduction of the number of military representatives in the national and local parliament;
7. the termination of ABRI’s involvement in day-to-day politics;
8. the severance of organizational ties with Golkar political movement and a stance that takes an equidistant position with all political parties;
9. the exercise of neutrality in elections;
10. change of relationship between the TNI and the TNI’s big family;
11. revision of the TNI’s doctrines according to the spirit of reform and the role of TNI in the twenty-first century;
12. changing the name of ABRI into the TNI.

<sup>6</sup> This English version is based on a translation by Crouch (1999, pp. 138-9). The original source is ABRI Abad XXI, Redefenisi, Reposisi, dan Reaktualisasi Peran ABRI dalam Kehidupan Bangsa (1998, pp. 17-18). According to Salim Said (2002, p. 169), the New Paradigm was first launched on 18 July 2003 by General Wiranto in Bandung. The declaration of the New Paradigm, according to Anwar et al (2002, p. 44), was a follow up to the Seminar held by Sesko AD on 23-24 Sept. 1998.



This new paradigm, according to the Editors of *Indonesia* (2001, p. 141), redefined the role of the military in politics in terms of power-sharing with civilian authorities, impartiality in elections and between political parties, and the separation of the police from the military. Not long after its launch, the reform-oriented Wirahadikusuma (1999, p. 7) stated that the TNI needed more than just “redefinition, re-actualisation, and repositioning”. It needed a complete change in its perspective and in the concept of “*perang rakyat semesta*” (the total warfare doctrine). Furthermore, according to Bhakti et al (1999, pp. 285-7), the internal reforms made by the TNI were just half-hearted (“*reformasi setengah hati*”), since they were only a response to public criticism and therefore were aimed at persuading people to accept the TNI’s non-military role.

Even though the reputation of the security forces in the post-Suharto era had significantly declined, they, particularly the army, still controlled huge residual resources through which it was possible to exercise political influence. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG) Report (2000b; ii-iii), there were at least three resources belonging to TNI that contributed to its political influence: first, its territorial structure throughout the nation; secondly, its strong representation in the state and military intelligence services; and thirdly, its access to funds through business enterprises and other means. Furthermore, there were indications of military officer involvement in activities that seem designed to erode the government’s authority, such as antagonism to government policy in Aceh, Maluku, West Timor and Irian Jaya.

In a different formulation, Sukma and Prasetyono (2003, p. 41) write that “there are some residual problems of the military reform in Indonesia”.<sup>7</sup> First, there is a gap in the reform of institutional bases for the TNI’s transformation to be a professional defence force. Second, there has been an unfinished project to revise the doctrine and to restructure the organisation of the military. Third, the lack of capacity of a civilian Defence Minister resulted in its defence policy and strategy being less comprehensive. Fourth, the government has not been able to address the problem of military impunity. Fifth, there is lack of civilian capacity to perform an oversight role. Lastly, the lack of capacity of government to provide an adequate military budget has given space for the military to gain extra financial resources and eventually resulted in the lack of government control of the military.

As discussed by Wulf, one of the critical dilemmas of security sector reform is to choose the right partner in doing such work. In the case of Indonesia, this problem appeared during President Abdurrahman Wahid’s term, particularly when he chose Maj. Gen. Agus Wirahadikusumah, a leading reformist officer, as one of his main partners in doing security sector reform. This manoeuvre then provoked resistance from conservative officers who were against his progressive ideas in reforming the military such as liquidating the military territorial structure, one of the most important political resources belonging to the military. Thus, in contrast to the relatively calm government-military relations under the previous President Habibie, the situation changed significantly under President Wahid. Even though the military Commander General Wiranto and several senior military officers were appointed to the cabinet, tensions immediately escalated. Soon after his election, President Wahid began to erode Gen. Wiranto’s position by, for instance, replacing some of his allies (Editors 2001, p. 145).

<sup>7</sup> Sukma and Prasetyono (2003) confusingly present different lists of residual problems in their paper. They display five residual problems under the subtitle “The Residual Problems in Military Reforms” (p.24-26) but explained six residual problems in the Conclusions (p. 41). The missing point in the earlier explanation is the lack of civilian capacity to perform an oversight role.

Further tensions arose between President Wahid and Gen. Wiranto with the plan to reorganise the army's territorial structure<sup>8</sup> proposed by Wiranto. Rather than support the plan, Wahid backed the idea of dismantling the army's territorial structure as put forward by Maj. Gen. Agus Wirahadikusumah before a parliament committee on 13 December 1999. One of the critical issues between Wiranto and Wirahadikusumah's camp was their disagreement on reform programs for the army territorial structure. Wiranto and friends had an idea to sustain, and even to expand, this structure, while Wirahadikusumah and colleagues wanted to liquidate it. Wirahadikusumah and his groups were well known as the pro-reform military officers.

The strains increased when President Wahid appointed Maj. Gen. Agus Wirahadikusumah as Kostrad Commander in March 2000, replacing Maj. Gen. Djaja Suparman, a close ally of Wiranto. The tensions reached a peak when the National Human Rights Commission for East Timor named Gen. Wiranto and some army and police officers as people to be investigated.<sup>9</sup> President Wahid finally suspended Gen. Wiranto as Coordinating Minister on 14 February 2000, soon after returning home from a long overseas trip. Gen. Wiranto formally resigned from his position on 16 May (Editors 2001, p. 145-7; Said 2001, pp. 338-47).

Another climax was reached in October 2000 when Wahid tried to promote Maj. Gen. Wirahadikusumah<sup>10</sup> as army Commander in place of Gen. Tyasno Sudarto. This maneuver, however, was opposed by many senior army officers. Forty-five generals signed a statement calling on the army Chief of Staff, Gen. Tyasno Sudarto, to bring Maj. Gen. Wirahadikusumah before a military court for his undisciplined behaviour. The culmination of this military resistance to Wahid was the military's support for the first memorandum adopted by parliament against him on 1 February 2002. This eventually led to Wahid being toppled from the presidency (Said 2001, pp. 334, 351-353).

The fall of Wahid from power has held back security sector reform and gave the victory to the 'conservative camp' of the military. The continuing preservation of the military territorial structure, referred to by Anwar (2000, p. 197), indicates a victory for the 'conservative camp' within the military. Anwar (2000, p. 195) suggests that this group basically resisted civilian supremacy over the military and the idea of bringing the military back to the barracks. In contrast to the 'progressive camp' that supported the idea of gradually dismantling the military territorial structure as part of democratisation, the 'conservative camp' believed that it is a critical instrument in the maintenance of national integration.<sup>11</sup> The leading figures of the 'progressive camp' were the late Lt. Gen. Agus Wirahadikusumah and Maj. Gen. Saurip Kadi, who openly articulated their support for the gradual liquidation of the military territorial structure but they, however, were marginalised from key positions.

<sup>8</sup> As the legacy of guerilla warfare conducted during pre and post independence, the Indonesia's military belong to a military territorial structure throughout the archipelago, from national to village level. This structure, which was parallel to administrative governmental structure, was part of the hegemonic political structure of the Indonesian military during Suharto's New Order. In the aftermath of the fall of Suharto, dismantling of the army territorial structure was one of major demands by student and pro reform groups.

<sup>9</sup> The English version of this report is in *Masters of Terror: Indonesia's Military and Violence in East Timor in 1999* published by the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra (2002).

<sup>10</sup> When General Wiranto was listed as one of those responsible for the East Timor violence by the Joint Fact Finding Committee, Maj. Gen. Wirahadikusumah, then the Commander of the Wirabuana Kodam, responded publicly asking Wiranto to resign. Maj. Gen. Djaja Suparman, on other hand, then commented that this call had provoked unrest among soldiers. Wirahadikusumah's comment provoked fury among senior officers (Said 2001, pp. 343-5).

<sup>11</sup> The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Rymizard Ryacudu, quoted by detikcom (9 July 2003) says: "The existence of military territorial structure is final".



### 3. Security Sector Reform and Communal Conflict: The case of Ambon

The religious communal conflict in Ambon first erupted on 19 January 1999 – eight months after the fall of Suharto in May 1998. Just prior to President Suharto being toppled, there were two major outbreaks of riots in Jakarta (13-14 May) and Surakarta (20-21 May). In the following days during the early post-Suharto era, a series of communal conflicts erupted throughout the archipelago. Soetrisno et al. in a report of the Research Center for Rural and Regional Development (*Pusat Penelitian Pembangunan Pedesaan dan Kedaerahan*, P3PK) (1998) note that there were 13 riots in several cities in Indonesia from October 1996 to June 1997. Of these, however, the conflict in Ambon has been one of the longest and most severe in terms of casualties and damage to public and private property.

Indonesia's transition period was marked by the emergence of communal riots throughout the country. A study by Tadjoeeddin (2002, p. 34-5) contends that the outbreak of communal violence was an important feature of the Indonesian transition period. The scale of violence and the number of incidents and deaths increased significantly over time. While in 1997 there were 12 incidents and 127 deaths, the number increased significantly to 75 incidents and 1,300 deaths in 1998. In 1999 the number of incidents rose slightly to 139 and the number of deaths to 1,442, and then continued in 2000 with a further increase in the number of incidents (170) but a decrease in the number of deaths (1,150). However the number of deaths presented by Tadjoeeddin is probably an under-estimate if, for example, we include the documented deaths in Maluku, where more than 3,000 were killed in the first two years of the conflict.<sup>12</sup>

The increasing mass violence during the transition period can be seen as an indication of the chronic crisis facing Indonesia as a whole. According to the International Crisis Group (2000), the lack of resources, capacity to govern and national cohesion in addressing the national crisis was evident in Maluku as well as in the rest of the country.

We can also link the spread of social conflict during Indonesia's transition period with the issues of governance and security sector reform. The linkage between security sector and violent conflict factors can be described as follows: (1) the security sector and structural causes of conflict; (2) the security sector and trigger factors; and (3) the security sector and perpetuating factors (Clingendael, International Alert and Saferworld, 2002, p.2-3).

First, structural causes of conflict refer to relatively permanent factors that lead to cleavages and disparities within society that can be a source of tension and possible violent conflict among people. The security forces often reflect such structural causes and can perpetuate or amplify their impact. Second, the security sector can be a trigger factor that brings underlying tensions to the surface and cause an escalation of violence. the security sector as a trigger factor can also be linked to the structural factors of conflict. For instance the security forces may respond to political turmoil with unnecessary violence because they are unaccountable or they are protecting an unrepresentative regime. Third, the security sector can also be part of the perpetuating factors, in which the dynamics that contribute to prolonging the violence and make the conflict become protracted, such as the existence of war economies and the ready availability of small arms and light weapons.

In the case of Ambon the security forces, particularly the police, reflect structural causes of conflict, where its members were predominantly Christian. Thus, from the very beginning of

<sup>12</sup> I thank Dr. Jaap Timmer for pointing out this matter. Tadjoeeddin's work is based on only two national press sources, Kompas and Antara. This is most likely the main cause of its lack of accuracy.

the conflict, police was perceived by Moslems as biased towards Christians. On the other hand, soon after the conflict some army battalions (from Makasar and Eastern Java, areas which are predominantly Moslems) were deployed to Ambon and they were predominantly Moslem. This fact resulted in a common perception among Christians that the army was biased towards Moslems.

The security sector was a trigger factor in the conflict particularly when some of its member either responded to the riots with unnecessary violence or performed a partial role by siding with their co-religionists. Thus, in the early period of the conflict, there were two stages in the role of the security forces; first, the “security forces stand by” phase, which began from 19 January, and then, the “security forces open fire” phase, starting from 13 February, due to a clash in Haruku Island (Human Rights Watch report, 1999). Whereas the first phase was marked by most casualties being caused by civilians and traditional weapons, the second phase saw most casualties being caused by the bullets of troops. Thus, since the second stage of the conflict, security forces sometimes have played a role as a trigger factor in instigating further clashes.

A prominent example of the security forces’ role in perpetuating the conflict was the case of “co-operation” between a group of Christian militia named the Coker (*Cowok Keren*, Handsome Boys) and a couple of personnel of the army special forces (*Kopassus*, *Komando Pasukan Khusus*) from the end of 2001 to mid-2002. The story began to be exposed when a member of the Coker gang was arrested by police in early May 2002 and from him police extracted information about the role of the Coker gang in many violent incidents in Ambon with the support of Kopassus troops. (*Sinar Harapan*, 22 October 2002). According to a police investigative report, Berty’s gang was involved in 13 cases of terror in Ambon – in which 9 cases allegedly involved Kopassus troops (Tempo, No. 46, 13 January 2003). Those cases included the bomb blast on the ship ‘California’ in December 2001 (6 died, 43 injured), a bomb blast at Yan Pais street (6 died, 61 injured), conflict at Porto and Haria, two Christian villages, in April 2002 (8 died, dozens injured, 40 houses burnt) and an attack on Soya village in March 2002 (12 died, one church burnt, 20 houses burnt). Though clear motives behind their involvement in such terrors are still blurred, it certainly resulted in prolonging the conflict.

The story of conflict in Ambon was also very connected with security sector reform which began to be implement in the post Suharto era. Whereas the eradication of the army territorial structure was one of the most demanded political reforms, the communal conflict in Ambon had the reverse outcome. Just four month after the conflict began in January 1999 the military territorial structure institution in Ambon was upgraded—from the sub-regional military command (Korem, *Komando Resort Militer*) led by a colonel to the regional military command (Kodam, *Komando Daerah Militer*) led by a brigadier general. When the clashes escalated, operational command and control to deal with security affairs was transferred from police to the army. It was a backward step. The reform era has decided to separate police from the military and installed a new division of roles between police and military: According to the new regulation (Tap MPR No.VII/MPR/2000), the major responsibility for domestic security is now in the hands of the police and the police force is able to call for support from other forces when necessary. In the case of the conflict in Ambon, however, army deployment outnumbered the police and in some cases took over operational command and control in the field.

A further setback to security sector reform took place in May 2002, when a new security structure was established in Maluku. Under the *Komando Operasi Pemulihan Hukum dan Keamanan* (*Koopslihkam*, *Operational Command to Restore Law and Security*), the Pattimura regional army commander was placed at a higher level than the Head of Maluku provincial police. The rank of the army regional commander was also upgraded, from a brigadier general to a major general. The reason behind this change is likely to overcome the problem of the ineffectiveness of the security

forces under the previous system, wherein the Head of the Maluku Polda was the chief while the Pattimura Kodam Commander was the deputy. The main sources of the problems was probably the fact that the two commanding officers had the same rank and because army personnel outnumbered police in Ambon and Maluku. In addition, the superiority complex of army officers towards the police as a legacy of the old structure in the New Order era probably did not help.

The structure of Koopslihkam has been liquidated since 5 October 2003 and operational command control has been brought back to the police from the military, coinciding with the anniversary of Indonesian armed forces and the cessation of the state of civil emergency in Maluku which was introduced in June 2000. However, the rank of a commander of Pattimura Kodam is still major general—higher than brigadier general for the head of Maluku Provincial police. However, security sector reform to some extent resulted in improving the capacity of police in dealing with crime investigation and security affairs in general.

The success of police in investigating some cases in which some Kopassus troops allegedly took part, as discussed above, is one of the striking examples of the positive consequence of separating police from the military and the improvement in its capacity. It would be hard to imagine that the police would be able and encouraged to expose such cases if the police was part of the military. The increasing capacity of the police institution in handling critical cases was evident later, for instance, when it dealt with the Bali bombing at the end of 2002. After conducting hard and careful work and investigations, the police amazingly succeeded in capturing almost all of the main actors and in disclosing its network.

## 4. Conclusion

To sum up, the outbreak of communal violence can be seen as a symptom, and also a consequence, of the poor performance of the security sector during the transition period. The lack of capacity and the unprofessional attitude and behaviour in dealing with social unrest led to the eruption of social or communal violence in some areas in the archipelago. It is evident in the mushrooming social violence in many parts of Indonesia. Furthermore, the outburst of communal violence will probably hinder security sector reform as discussed above in the case of Ambon. In contrast to demilitarisation and demilitarism<sup>13</sup> as the agendas of political reform in the post Suharto era, what has happened in Ambon was the reverse: the intensification and expansion of military involvement in the public space through its personnel and institutions, and the intensification and internalisation of military values and norms in society.

Expansion and proliferation of the army territorial structure not only occurred in Maluku, but also took place in Aceh and, will probably happen, in Poso, Central Sulawesi. Following the revival of the Pattimura Kodam in Maluku in 1999, the Iskandar Muda Kodam was also revived in Aceh in 2002 to deal with the prolonged separatist movement there. In the aftermath of the communal violence in Poso, that began to occur in December 1998 and escalated in 2000, a new Merdeka Kodam is, in all likelihood, in the process of being launched in Central Sulawesi (Aditjondro, 2002, p. 1).<sup>14</sup> According to Aditjondro (*ibid.*), the rationale behind the creation of a new military territorial structure in Poso was to maintain the military's political hegemony and, more particularly, its elite economic and political interests.

<sup>13</sup> According to Shaw (1991, p. 11-13), 'militarisation' means 'a military build-up', while 'militarism' means 'the influence of the military organization and values on social structure'.

<sup>14</sup> It began with enlarging the number of army troops deployed in Central Sulawesi from January 2003 onwards, from one to two battalions (Aditjondro, 2003, p. 3).

In sum, the relationship between communal violence and security sector reform can be formulated as follows: communal violence can be perceived as a consequence of the poor performance of the security sector and, therefore, a symptom of a need for security sector reform. On the other hand, communal conflict is likely to handicap the implementation of security sector reform, as is evident in the case of the communal conflict in Ambon. The eruption of communal violence will be a (new) justification for the military to support the police in handling the riots and, furthermore, to return to its 'old' function as security force — rather than defence force. All these phenomena can be understood in the context of the early stages of a democratic transition period in which the military continues to have huge political and economical residual resources. Thus, as reflected in the case of Ambon, the way to genuine security sector reform in Indonesia is still a 'long and winding road'.<sup>15</sup>

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# Dilemmas of Security Sector Reform

## Response to "Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries"

Nicole Ball

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In thinking about security sector reform from the perspective of conflict transformation, there are two points raised by Herbert Wulf's chapter that seem to be worth closer examination. The first relates to the definition of security sector reform; the second to the notion of a "scale of potentials for security sector reform."

### 1. What is, and is Not, Security Sector Reform

Security sector reform consists of a broad range of activities involving a wide variety of local stakeholders and external partners. The unifying factor is the focus on democratic governance.

The emphasis on democratic security sector governance is an outgrowth of the relative lack of attention to the application of accountability, rule of law, transparency and participation in Cold War-era security assistance programmes of the major providers in both East and West. These programmes almost always took the form of training and supply of equipment designed to enhance the operational capacity of security bodies with no concern for democratic governance or rule of law. They also focused heavily on the military. During the same period, the donors of development assistance consciously avoided interaction with the security sector, and democratic governance and rule of law considerations were also largely absent from their assistance programmes.

The result was tolerance of politicised security bodies, war as a means of resolving disputes, flagrant disregard for the rule of law on the part of security bodies, serious human rights abuses by security bodies, and high security budgets, among other things. In short, by contributing to insecurity, instability and various forms of conflict, the security bodies were a major part of

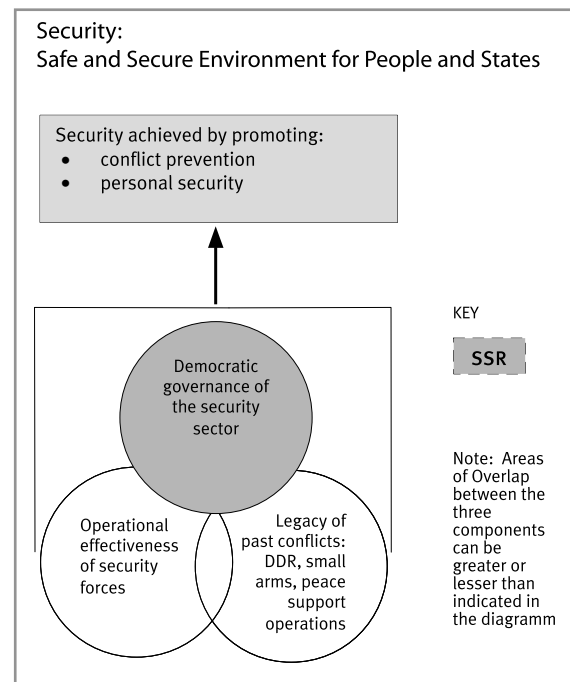
the problem confronting developing and transitional countries as the end of the 20th century approached.

During the 1990s, it became increasingly evident that the security bodies urgently needed to be made part of the solution. Neither people nor the states they live in are able to achieve democratic consolidation, poverty reduction, or sustainable development without adequate security. It also became increasingly accepted that democratic governance of the security sector is essential to the achievement of appropriate levels and forms of security. Security bodies that are poorly managed and that engage in political and economic affairs with impunity tend to be professionally weak and therefore are unable to adequately protect people and the states they live in against aggression, internal subversion, criminality and other security problems. In many cases, these weaknesses are tied to the quality of democratic governance in the security sector. By the same token, because politicised or ineffective security bodies and justice systems are themselves often a source of the instability and insecurity, they cannot be marginalised in the quest for sustainable development, democratic consolidation, and societies that function by the rule of law.

However, developing democratic governance of the security sector does not by itself guarantee the existence of a safe and secure environment. As the figure below shows, two other factors importantly influence the ability of security bodies to provide the necessary security. First, security forces need to be able to carry out their constitutionally mandated tasks in an effective and professional manner. Second, for countries emerging from violent conflict, the legacies of war need to be addressed.

The figure also shows that there is a certain amount of overlap among these three factors, the precise nature and scope of which varies according to the environment in which SSR is undertaken. It is these intersections plus the core democratic governance activities that constitute security sector reform. An activity may contribute importantly to enhancing security, but not be “SSR”. This distinction is more than academic, since the concept of “SSR” was developed precisely to ensure that the governance-related aspects of security that have historically been ignored receive adequate attention.

It is within this framework that the following assertion in Herbert Wulf’s paper should be assessed: “If adequately designed, the supply of weapons, materials and other equipment as well as military and police assistance can also be part of a programme of security sector reform, as the need for the right equipment by African peace keepers illustrates.” While certain types of assistance to the military and police may be considered “SSR,” the supply of “weapons, materials and other equipment” cannot. Effective peacekeeping forces are important to creating an environment of security, and have the potential to disseminate SSR concepts in conflict-affected regions. Ensuring that they have the appropriate “weapons, materials and other equipment” is an important component of improving their operational effectiveness and in combating the legacies of war. It does not constitute an improvement of democratic security sector governance.



## 2. “Scale of Potentials” or Contextual Approach?

Herbert Wulf posits that “The opportunities and potentials for reform in different situations can be measured on a scale....” He identifies seven categories of states, where the potential for SSR runs from “impossible” (countries at war) to “major” (societies in transition to peace and post-conflict societies).

Herbert Wulf is not alone in seeking to distinguish among different types of countries. Work carried out for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2001-2002 came up against the same question. Countries were initially viewed in traditional categories: conflict-affected countries, countries emerging from conflict, countries in transition to democracy and so on. It proved, however, to be extremely difficult to capture the full range of responses to country situations with this sort of categorisation. An alternative approach, which identifies approaches to SSR based on contextual criteria rather than categories of countries, was thought to have greater potential.<sup>1</sup> The seven contextual categories proposed were:

- Political context
- Psychosocial context
- Normative context
- Economic context
- Institutional context
- Societal context
- Geopolitical context.

Within each of these categories, it is possible to identify a range of subcategories and for each subcategory, suggestions for possible approaches for enhancing security sector governance. This process is demonstrated in the matrix below, and the examples provided in the matrix are intended to be no more than illustrative.

As Herbert Wulf’s “scale of potentials” suggests, weak states offer particular challenges in this regard given their significant institutional and human resource deficits. Improving security sector governance may therefore seem a second or even third order issue for these countries.

However, since poor security sector governance has contributed in no small measure to the decline of economic and political governance in these states and therefore to the occurrence of conflict, it is impossible to strengthen overall governance without attention to the security sector. In fact, the agenda for strengthening security sector governance is very much a human and institutional capacity-building agenda, and by definition recognises that states seeking to implement the agenda do not have strong institutions or abundant human resources.

Herbert Wulf acknowledges that identifying where on the “scale of potentials” any given country lies “is somewhat based on subjective judgement.” It is also fraught with dangers, as the examples in the “transformation countries” category indicate. According to Wulf, “Overall prospects in transformation countries are good” despite the “Soviet legacy” which can create obstacles for reform. The reality in the three Central Asian successor states to the Soviet Union suggests that the prospects are often considerably less than “good.” In at least two of these states – Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – “government” is no more than personalised rule by an authoritarian leader backed

<sup>1</sup> Nicole Ball, “Enhancing Security Sector Governance: A Conceptual Framework for UNDP,” October 9, 2002, <http://www.undp.org/bcpr/ruleoflaw/index.htm>.



by the security bodies. In all three countries, the security bodies are instrumental in harassing and intimidating the leader's political opponents – real or imagined. Organisations such as Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group have been documenting abuses by the state security system for some years now.<sup>2</sup> The following description of life in Uzbekistan is typical:

There's ... no sign of political liberalization. The new Liberal Democratic Party turns out to be just another pseudo-party set up by the government, neither liberal, nor democratic. Opposition parties remain unregistered, ensuring that parliamentary elections in December 2004 will be a government-controlled farce. Members of human rights groups and controversial NGOs continue to face harassment and arrest. Ordinary people who speak out against abuses by local officials can expect a visit from the police, advising them to keep quiet. Push further and they can expect to find themselves charged with religious extremism, drug smuggling, or any other trumped-up charge that comes to mind.

On human rights, too, there's no evidence of improvement. Regular horror stories of beatings and torture emerge from trials. When a judge dared to throw out evidence on the basis that it had been obtained under torture, he was immediately placed under house arrest. A much wider range of abuses goes on that is rarely reported: people are often too afraid to complain to international organizations. The police have become a state within a state, and there is no real political will to do much about it.<sup>3</sup>

A good argument can be made that there is more political will to engage in SSR in Sierra Leone, an extremely weak state that is slowly emerging from over a decade of violent conflict, than in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan combined.

By adopting a contextual approach, one avoids entirely the problems of determining which category holds the most promise and attempting to shoe-horn countries into rigid categories. A contextual approach is built on the understanding that every state has its share of obstacles to reform. It also facilitates identifying entry points for reform where they exist.<sup>4</sup> What is more, by adopting a contextual approach, the essentially political nature of security sector reform can be addressed. Because of its highly political nature, improving democratic security-sector governance cannot be addressed solely by technical measures. Rather, it is essential to understand critical political relationships among key actors, how and why decisions are made, and the incentives and disincentives for change. Strategies need to be developed for supporting reformers and minimizing the impact of spoilers. This is a particularly critical aspect of contextual analysis, and requires looking beyond formal legislation and organisational structure to develop a picture of how local institutions actually function.

At present, formal contextual analysis is not widely used by external actors seeking to support improvements in security-sector governance. However, the UK Defence Advisory Team (DAT) – whose activities have expanded beyond the defence sector to encompass the entire security sector – carry out assessments that seek to develop as comprehensive a picture as possible of the context in partner country security sectors. The DAT have not, however, produced

<sup>2</sup> See Human Rights Watch, [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org), and International Crisis Group, [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org).

<sup>3</sup> David Lewis, "Uzbekistan: Halting the Money Train," *Transitions Online*, March 18, 2004, <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=2546&l=1>. Lewis is Central Asia Project Director for the International Crisis Group.

<sup>4</sup> A more elaborated contextual analysis which focuses on five entry points is Nicole Ball, Tsjeard Bouta and Luc van de Goor, *Enhancing Democratic Governance of the Security Sector: An Institutional Assessment Framework*, The Hague: Clingendael Institute for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003, [http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/2003\\_occasional\\_papers/SSGAF\\_publicatie.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/2003_occasional_papers/SSGAF_publicatie.pdf). The five entry points are: 1) rule of law; 2) policy development, planning and implementation; 3) professionalism of the security bodies; 4) oversight; 5) management of security expenditure.

a formal methodology. While care must be taken to prevent formal methodologies from becoming a straightjacket, it is also important that both external actors and local stakeholders in reforming countries have some form of concrete guidance to ensure that assessments are as comprehensive as possible. The decision of the Netherlands government to test its security-sector governance assessment framework during 2004 is a hopeful sign in this regard,<sup>5</sup> but clearly there is a long way to go before formal contextual analyses are widely employed.

| Tailoring Support to Country Context   |  |
|--|--|
| Contextual categories  | Possible approaches  |
| <p><b>Political context</b></p> <p>1) The capacity of the civil authorities to exercise oversight and control over one or more of the security bodies is weak.</p> <p>2) Democratic accountability of security bodies to civil authorities is inadequate or deteriorating.</p> <p>3) Power is centralized; attempts to increase participation are opposed; public officials exhibit disregard for rule of law.</p> <p>4) There is a tendency to resolve disputes domestically and with other countries through the use of force, but the country is not at war.</p> <p>5) The country is engaged in war.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist legislature as a whole and relevant legislative committees to develop capacity to evaluate security sector policies and budgets.</li> <li>▪ Assist finance ministry, ministry of defence, office of national security adviser and other relevant executive branch bodies to improve capacity to formulate, implement and monitor security policy and budgets.</li> <li>▪ Help strengthen/create oversight bodies such as auditor general’s office, police commission, human rights commission.</li> <li>▪ Support national dialogues on issues relating to security sector governance.</li> <li>▪ Encourage participatory national security assessments.</li> <li>▪ Provide professional training for security bodies consistent with norms and principles of democratic accountability, such as the role of the military in a democracy, democratic policing, human rights training.</li> <li>▪ Encourage national dialogues on security sector governance, leading to development of national strategies for strengthening security sector governance.</li> <li>▪ Support civil society in its efforts to, for example, train civilians in security affairs, defence economics, democratic policing; monitor security-related activities; offer constructive advice to policy makers.</li> <li>▪ Where feasible, support civil society in efforts to encourage dialogue within society and between civil society and government on rule of law, human rights protection, democratic governance.</li> <li>▪ Assist civil society to build capacity on security-related issues.</li> <li>▪ Work to develop an appreciation for democratic accountability of civil authorities to population.</li> <li>▪ Identify and support potential reformers in government, security bodies</li> <li>▪ Reduce access to weapons by all parties, for example through arms sale moratoria.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen democratic accountability of civil authorities to population.</li> <li>▪ Support the development of a capacity to defuse conflicts, thereby reducing the likelihood of a resort to violence. § Encourage parties to conflict to discuss security sector governance in the course of peace negotiations.</li> <li>▪ Support post-conflict demilitarisation efforts such as demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, disarming ex-combatants, irregular forces, population-at-large.</li> <li>▪ To the extent possible, train civilians in areas relevant to capacity to manage and oversee the security sector.</li> </ul> |

<sup>5</sup> Ball, N. Bouta, T and van de Goor, L, Enhancing Democratic Governance of the Security Sector. This assessment framework is intended to be used by governments of reforming countries, in collaboration with external partners.

Tailoring Support to Country Context

| Contextual categories  | Possible approaches  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Psychosocial context</b></p> <p>1) Civilians experience difficulty in interacting with members of the security bodies.</p> <p>2) Unaccountable security bodies create a sense of insecurity, within the country as a whole, among certain communities and groups</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote confidence-building measures, such as facilitating dialogue between civilians and security body personnel in a neutral setting and arranging for local stakeholders to observe constructive civilian-security body interactions among international and regional stakeholders.</li> <li>▪ Arrange for security body personnel to learn behaviour appropriate to democratic societies when interacting with civilians from other security bodies, either in the region or a trusted international partner.</li> <li>▪ Train civilians in security-related issues in order to increase their confidence on substantive issues when dealing with members of the security body.</li> <li>▪ Encourage greater accountability through, for example, requiring security body personnel to wear identification badges, requiring security body vehicles to be easily identified, supporting unofficial citizen monitoring activities where feasible.</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage human rights, gender sensitivity training.</li> <li>▪ Encourage dialogue between civilians and security body personnel in a politically safe space if conditions permit, i.e. reprisals against civilian participants seem unlikely.</li> <li>▪ Support the creation of police councils and other civilian bodies to monitor behaviour of the security bodies.</li> <li>▪ Identify underlying causes of unaccountability and devise strategy to address these.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Normative context</b></p> <p>1) The legal basis for democratic accountability of security bodies to civil authorities is not well developed.</p> <p>2) The legal basis for democratic accountability of security bodies to population is not well developed.</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support revisions of legal framework consistent with democratic principles and norms such as civil supremacy, appropriateness of means in the use of force, rule of law.</li> <li>▪ Support regional efforts to codify democratic principles such as non-recognition to governments coming to power through coups d'états.</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support reviews of national legal framework for consistency with international law and democratic norms, especially protection of human rights and laws of war; support for revisions as needed.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Economic context</b></p> <p>1) One of more of the security bodies has privileged access to state resources.</p> <p>2) The security bodies receive inadequate financial resources to fulfill their missions.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support incorporation of security sector into government-wide fiscal accountability and transparency processes.</li> <li>▪ Support anti-corruption activities.</li> <li>▪ Assist civil society to develop the capacity to monitor security budgets.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen the capacity of legislators and economic managers to assess security budgets, carry out oversight functions.</li> <li>▪ Encourage participatory national security assessment which would have as a major objective developing missions within a realistic resource framework.</li> </ul>  |

## Tailoring Support to Country Context

| Contextual categories   | Possible approaches  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Institutional context</b></p> <p><i>Fundamental institutions are poorly developed or do not function adequately. For example:</i></p> <p>1) Criminal justice system</p> <p>2) Financial management system.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist in development and implementation of criminal justice policy.</li> <li>▪ Support democratic policing, judicial strengthening, legal training.</li> <li>▪ Support efforts to demilitarise police, for example by separating them from armed forces and promoting democratic policing.</li> <li>▪ Support efforts to depoliticise the judiciary.</li> <li>▪ Support civil society’s ability to monitor the activities of the criminal justice system and to provide training for members of the criminal justice system.</li> <li>▪ Support the development of regional policing capacity to address cross-border problems and to strengthen commitment to democratic principles and practices.</li> <li>▪ Assist national stakeholders to develop mechanisms to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identify the needs and key objectives of the security sector as a whole and the specific missions that the different security bodies will be asked to undertake.</li> <li>b) determine what is affordable.</li> <li>c) allocate scarce resources according to priorities both within and between the different security sectors.</li> <li>d) ensure the efficient and effective use of resources.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Societal context</b></p> <p>1) Civil society is prevented from monitoring the activities of the security sector and working to promote change.</p> <p>2) Civil society lacks substantive knowledge of security-related issues.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the members of the security sector to enhance public transparency.</li> <li>▪ Encourage regional confidence building measures aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability of the security bodies.</li> <li>▪ Provide training in democratic policing principles and practices and human rights protection for the security bodies.</li> <li>▪ Where feasible, seek ways of empowering civil society, for example, by encouraging changes in legislation that limit civil society activities, inviting Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local security experts to participate in meetings, or soliciting civil society opinion.</li> <li>▪ Support efforts to develop indigenous training capacity.</li> <li>▪ Provide scholarships in security studies, defence management, law and other relevant subjects.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Geopolitical context</b></p> <p>1) Trans-border crime is a major problem.</p> <p>2) Regional tensions create arms races, provide justification for greater resource allocation to security bodies.</p> <p>3) Neighbouring countries seek to destabilize government, for example by arming dissidents.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the development of regional policing capacity.</li> <li>▪ Encourage development/strengthening of regional security mechanisms.</li> <li>▪ Encourage regional dialogues on security issues.</li> <li>▪ Encourage development/strengthening of regional security mechanisms.</li> <li>▪ Encourage regional dialogues on security issues.</li> <li>▪ Work to reduce access to arms.</li> </ul>   |



# The Relevance of Civil Society

## Response to "Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries"

Marina Caparini

### 1. Introduction

In his concise yet comprehensive overview, Herbert Wulf has set out the main parameters of the emerging paradigm of security sector reform, including some of its advantages and limitations. This response piece will expand on certain of his points and examine some issues that are generally overlooked in the literature. I write from the perspective of someone who has worked in an organisation that for almost the past 3 years has made the study and facilitation of security sector reform its primary mission, with particular emphasis on defence and military reform in Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. My insights are based on our efforts to collect information and documentation on the subject, help develop the concept in analytical terms, and help to operationalise and apply security sector reform in transition and developing countries. The statements in this piece nevertheless reflect my personal views and do not necessarily reflect those of the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

### 2. Observations

#### 2.1 SSR as a holistic concept

The concept of SSR is slowly spreading in acceptance and its agenda is being endorsed by a growing number of donors for implementation in various countries. However, SSR as it aspires to be – holistically conceptualised, planned and implemented – has so far rarely been undertaken or achieved in practice. In the past, reform of security institutions has tended to be undertaken in piecemeal fashion, often in isolation from other related parts of the security sector, and often for

reasons other than establishing good governance of security institutions. Also, as discussed by Wulf, there is visible today a degree of creative re-labelling, with, for example, defence modernisation or intelligence sharing being repackaged under the category of SSR. Security sector reform is a much broader concept that deals with the various dimensions and levels of analysis, including not only state security from external military threats, but also security of individuals and communities from crime, persecution, instability, corruption and injustice. While SSR is a concept whose appeal is spreading, there is a danger that, used indiscriminately and as a catch-all phrase for activities that do not, on their own, constitute security sector reform, it will lose value as a prescriptive approach to guide policy.

The fact remains that although efforts are being made to bridge the gap, we continue to lack the inter-disciplinary perspectives and understanding to fully implement SSR. The SSR community is looking to integrate knowledge about (admittedly partial) reform processes in various categories of countries – developing, post-conflict and developed – to further their understanding of what individual components of SSR entail. Efforts have gone into developing assessment frameworks aimed at helping a government and donors supporting SSR determine how best to go about strengthening democratic governance of a country's security sector.<sup>1</sup> The gradual accretion of knowledge from these experiences would constitute a rich source of lessons learned for the further development of the concept and methodology of SSR, but it should be borne in mind that these are but building blocks of SSR, and not SSR as a whole. There are many security-related aspects in the fields of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, governance and democratisation, whose experiences and insights should be incorporated into thinking on security sector reform. Unfortunately, the fragmentation of the policy and academic communities across these various approaches and schools remains an obstacle to 'joined-up' thinking that is essential for effective institutional reform. Furthermore, competition for resources and influence over policy and academic agendas among governmental and non-governmental actors in these fields acts as a further impediment to co-operation.

There is also a latent disagreement within the security sector reform community between those who remain focused on its close ties to the developmental agenda and, as a result, on the developing, transition and post-conflict group of states, and those who maintain that it should have a broader application to include mature democracies. I believe that the more inclusive view of SSR does not dilute the concept but rather captures the notion that security is a perennial concern for people, and its effective and accountable provision is a fundamental basis of the legitimacy of the modern democratic state. One of the primary functions of the state is to provide security and protection to its people, and in democratic states that includes the protection of basic human rights and freedoms. This requirement is of continual concern in both developed and developing contexts.

As Wulf points out, SSR must deal both with effectiveness in the provision of security (capacity, efficiency) and the effectiveness of oversight of the security sector (accountability, transparency, control, responsiveness). One of the two requirements is sometimes ignored, for example in discourses stressing the need above all for effective security measures, as was the case during the Cold War and superpower efforts to build up the military capacities or internal security apparatuses of allies, or in prevailing approaches in the current so-called war on terrorism. In both instances, human rights concerns are subordinated to the requirements of improving military or internal security capacities. Similarly, countries in transition from authoritarian regimes to

<sup>1</sup> The Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael' for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Enhancing Democratic Governance of the Security Sector : An Institutional Framework*, (2003). Available at : [http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/2003\\_occasional\\_papers/SSGAF\\_publicatie.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/2003_occasional_papers/SSGAF_publicatie.pdf)

democratic ones frequently experience sharp increases in crime rates, spurring calls for harsher approaches to crime control. Reforms aimed exclusively at building capacity or modernising armed forces and police do not necessarily amount to SSR, although they may be couched in such terms. Neither is SSR served by an exclusive focus on democratic control. Having a democratically controlled military or police is only half the task of security sector reform; these organisations should also be proficient at fulfilling their legitimate responsibilities for providing the public goods of external security and public security. An armed force which is under firm civilian and democratic control, yet which is weak and has insufficient capacity to defend the country from external attack, does not contribute to security. Similarly, a police organisation that is efficient in the performance of its law enforcement and public order tasks yet which is unaccountable or uncontrolled or commits human rights abuses with impunity does not serve the safety and freedom from fear of individuals and communities or the wider public interest. Whether because of lack of resources, lack of capacity or corruption, ineffectiveness requires further reform. The value of SSR is that it serves as a constant reminder that both functional efficiency and democratic oversight considerations should guide institutional development and reform. For that reason, it is a useful guide for framing transformation in both developed and developing states.

Developing and implementing a holistic approach embedded in a ‘multi-sectoral strategic framework... based on the security needs of people and the state’<sup>2</sup> is very difficult in practice to achieve. Many analysts bring a functional focus (for example, specialising in specific areas such as defence and national security, civil-military relations, development, criminal justice, the legal framework) or bring a specific area expertise to SSR, contributing to what has been called intellectual ‘stove piping’ – the compartmentalisation of knowledge as a result of entrenched academic disciplines and public bureaucracies – with the result that knowledge is not effectively integrated across disciplines, nor are the potential synergies of reform activities realised. Military and defence analysts, for example, may not have expertise in peacetime border management or policing or judicial /rule of law issues. The narrow focus and fragmentation of knowledge in stove piping undermines efforts to implement security sector reform holistically, such as in peacekeeping missions where police reform has been undertaken and undermined by the failure, at least initially, to address judicial reform (Haiti and Sierra Leone, the Western Balkans). One of the lessons learned in efforts to reform policing is that it cannot be undertaken in isolation and must be planned and occur with transformation of the penal and judicial systems. Boundaries are blurring and peacekeeping methodologies and issues now visibly segue into police reform and security sector reform more broadly. Those scholars and practitioners who could claim expertise in civil-military relations and defence reform typically in the past did not consult closely with those having expertise in rule of law or criminal justice. These boundaries are beginning to erode and the complexity and multidimensionality of security sector reform is increasingly appreciated, as experts diversify and seek to determine to what extent they can apply their knowledge in related areas. However, there is far to go in comparing methodologies and gauging the extent to which methods, standards and benchmarks in reform are fungible and transferable from one component of the security sector to another. Understanding each of the functional components of the security sector requires specialised knowledge of the key institutions involved, types of policy issues that arise, in addition to knowledge of the local culture and political system. Thus, while SSR underscores the need to understand and consider all related areas, doing so will require substantial pooling and synthesis of intellectual resources.

<sup>2</sup> OECD, Security System Reform and Governance : Policy and Good Practice, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, 2004, p. 18. Available at : <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/39/31785288.pdf>



Limitations to holistic, system-wide reform also exist in the form of domestic politics, donor resources and competing donor interests. The idea of ‘sequencing’ becomes relevant here, not only because it may not be realistic in terms of resourcing to undertake wide-ranging reform across multiple sectors simultaneously, but also because gaining the support of political and other actors with vested interests may require that reforms be implemented in stages. Sequencing is an ongoing requirement that must respond to changes in the internal and external environment. As a political process, it must involve communication between host government, security sector representatives and donors in an ongoing dialogue.

## 2.2 The relevance of civil society in SSR

The participation of citizens in decisions that affect their lives distinguishes substantive democracy from formal or procedural democracy, which refers mainly to the institutions and procedures of democratic systems, particularly the occurrence of free and fair elections. It has become accepted in the field of democracy studies that democratic politics go beyond the periodic electoral contests that characterise formal democracy, and are based on a culture of participation in which citizens can seek to exercise their voice actively through multiple possible mechanisms, such as an active civil society (NGOs, social movements, other autonomous organisations), political parties and pluralistic media.<sup>3</sup> A vibrant civil society performs an informal oversight role in democratic systems and improves the likelihood of good governance through its decentralised expertise and autonomous interests that are affected by, and may seek to influence, various aspects of security policy. When civil society actors are able to question knowledgeably government and its decisions, provide alternative analyses and options for policy, and fulfil an educational role both to policy-makers and the broader public on specific issues, they contribute to the quality of governance in a democracy.

The SSR literature holds that civil society contributes to good governance of defence and security affairs, largely through the watchdog function of representative organisations, interest groups and NGOs. Inclusion of civil society is adjudged to contribute to more effective and equitable policy making and implementation by providing policy-makers with a wider range of information, perspectives and alternatives. The input of civil society is recognised as crucial for the process of democratising a security sector, particularly through the development of independent civilian expertise that governments, parliaments, the media and other actors can call on to provide independent perspectives, analysis and advice on security policies and issues. Alternative perspectives are valued as a counter to vested bureaucratic interests that may inhibit reform or colour analysis and policy recommendations made by members of security institutions or those closely linked to them.

Yet while frequently invoked in SSR circles, civil society tends to be understood superficially, discussed in narrow terms, and is the subject of little systematic research. The role and contribution of civil society and the media are especially poorly understood by those in the defence and military sector. Some maintain that civil society actors tend to be too critical of government policy in the defence sphere and do not provide constructive and informed alternatives, resulting in their being frozen out of dialogue and consultation exercises within the security community. For others, civil society may serve as a reservoir of expertise, such as is found in research institutes, NGOs, pressure groups, think tanks and other autonomous bodies dealing with defence and security issues. While this is a valid and valuable role, it is also true that individuals who belong to such institutes and organisations often have close links to the institutional bodies on which they are

<sup>3</sup> Robin Luckham, Anne Marie Goetz and Mary Kaldor, ‘Democratic Institutions and Democratic Politics’, *Can Democracy be Designed? The Politics of Institutional Choice in Conflict-Torn Societies* (London & New York: Zed Books, 2003), p. 20.

commenting, as former ministers, ministry officials, advisers or as former members of the security institution in question. While this may give such individuals an insider's perspective, including a more accurate understanding of the constraints and opportunities faced by policy-makers and officials in these domains, it may also result in a lack of critical distance and continued close identification with the interests of the ministry or security institution itself, as opposed to serving the broader public interest.

Such civil society organisations may also rely on research or programme funding provided by the government or ministry concerned. Financial dependence may in practice impose limits on the extent to which such organisations are willing to criticise government policy and performance. The co-option of 'civil society' (in particular, specialised expert groups in defence affairs) is not only a phenomenon in developing countries, but is clearly visible in most Western states as well. There is an implicit acknowledgement that the state plays an important role in actively supporting civil society in the domain of the security sector – that is, the state contributes to building good governance of the security sector if it helps to build capacity and empower civil society groups. At the same time, this element that is often necessary in building civil society in this specialised domain raises the possibility of 'captured' or 'co-opted' civil society actors and organisations.

Unless there is a clear effort to open the policy process to a diversity of groups, including human rights and civil liberties groups, this 'inclusiveness' is in practice limited to other elites and specialist groups. A participatory approach is necessary to build a sense of local ownership in reforms, and hence the legitimacy of reforms. Strengthening civil society's capacity to play a role in oversight of the security sector is worthy but largely overlooked. Much neglected are opportunities to open up the defence or security policy-making process and the political system more generally to the wider interests of audiences in civil society, such as through public meetings and consultative exercises. NGOs and civil groups contain much expertise and information that is relevant to public security reform, such as police and the criminal justice system, but that is often untapped by those planning reforms.

There is also typically very little engagement with civil society and the local community on the long-term development of police systems and rule of law in the context of peace support operations. Civil society tends to be more vocal in its criticisms of policing than its support of good practice, and the perception of overly-critical social groups may engender a defensive and closed attitude among police. Nevertheless, the involvement of civil society groups is vital to the success of police reform and democratic policing because they serve to link the police to the broader community. Bar associations and human rights groups should be involved in the planning and monitoring of police reform. In countries that have undergone regime change and are vetting employees of security institutions, especially police organisations, panels composed of respected members of civil society could be involved in the vetting process. Ways and means of civil society inclusion is an area where the conflict transformation community can contribute to developing the agenda and understanding of the dynamics of security sector reform.

The minor role that civil society has played in SSR in some regions is explained in part by the sheer absence of members of civil society with sufficient interest or expertise in security affairs. In many post-communist countries, for example, dismantling of the state security apparatus was a priority immediately after the transition and new democratic regimes were in place. But there was very little public interest in dealing with police or intelligence reform on a longer-term basis and in addition an aversion to dealing with internal security issues. On the donor side, civil society involvement was minimised by an initial preoccupation with legal frameworks and institutional reforms and direct military-military and police-police contacts and assistance. This trend largely

continues today through military assistance programs, co-location of institutional experts, and twinning programs.

More generally, the security sector is traditionally one that is executive-dominated and characterised by a necessary level of secrecy. It has traditionally not been very accessible, even to other members of the political sector. Parliamentary oversight of intelligence agencies, for example, is a relatively recent development in mature Western democracies and is still far from adequate in most countries. The idea of broader inclusion in the monitoring and control of security institutions, and broad public input into security policy, is being very slowly accepted but still encounters many obstacles. That extends to the role of the press, in particular formal and informal curbs on media freedom to report on security-related issues and corruption within the security sector, which remain formidable in many states.

The need to examine closely the role of civil society in security governance also suggests that we might gain from questioning other canons of security sector reform. One such principle is the essential role played by the legislature in overseeing and scrutinising the work of the government. While this may certainly hold true for specific political systems, in others, especially those where strong party discipline prevails within the legislature and its committees, the oversight role of parliament may in practice be highly constrained. In Canada, for example, parliament has been criticised for surrendering its already limited powers to oversee the executive and functioning as a rubber stamp for policy decisions, the overwhelming majority of which are made in a highly centralised fashion by the prime minister and his/her political and senior cabinet advisors.<sup>4</sup> In defence and security policy, the legislative committees and subcommittees have not served as effective mechanisms of oversight<sup>5</sup>, and according to one former insider, there are no truly substantive discussions of defence policy taking place in the Canadian parliament.<sup>6</sup> This brief example shows that legislative oversight of the security sector even in a 'mature' democratic system such as Canada leaves much room for improvement, and that improving oversight is not just a question of reforming state institutions, but may invoke broader political reform. It further demonstrates the truism that formal structures and mechanisms provide only part of the picture of oversight and control; one must also look to less easily quantifiable factors such as tradition, political culture and other informal rules of behaviour in a political system to gain insight into the accountability of public institutions. Finally, it suggests that contrary to the common assumption that a democracy will sustain itself once a structural base is established, even strong or consolidated democratic states can falter due to serious political or social problems. Established democracies need to continually resolve problems that arise, and maintain their legitimacy through constant strengthening of the social contract whereby they provide essential public services, perhaps most notably that of security, and good governance of the state bureaucracy through which a government exercises its authority.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.3 Changes in donor approaches required

SSR implies a holistic approach on the donor side, improving co-ordination and co-operation among donors in terms of reform assistance. This can be a challenge, as competition and resistance to co-ordination among donors and intergovernmental organisations often hamper

<sup>4</sup> Donald Savoie, *Governing from the Centre : The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics* (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Douglas L. Bland and Roy Rempel, 'A Vigilant Parliament : Building Competence for Effective Parliamentary Oversight of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces', *Policy Matters / Enjeux publics*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (February 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Roy Rempel, *The Chatterbox: An Insider's Account of the Irrelevance of Parliament in the Making of Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Ezra Suleiman, *Dismantling Democratic States* (Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 2003), pp.1, 7.

coherent and effective delivery of international assistance.<sup>8</sup> Co-ordination may be difficult even in the context of the assistance provided by a single donor country, which may channel funds bilaterally via various departments, agencies and task forces prone to similar types of rivalries and lack of communication. In some instances, a regional organisation or NGO may strive to function as an honest broker to help identify gaps in assistance or duplication of effort. However, identifying gaps does not necessarily mean that donors will act accordingly to fill them, as donor policies may be more influenced by domestic constituencies and priorities than by the overall effectiveness and coherence of assistance delivered to a recipient.

There is also a growing recognition in security sector reform that some problems, such as organised crime and trafficking, are regional in nature and scope, and must be dealt with at the regional or sub-regional basis. There is similarly growing attention to regional and sub-regional groups of political and civil society actors that can contribute to enhancing local ownership of security sector reform.<sup>9</sup> Donor approaches that support the development of regional networks might help to mitigate the competition at the local level.

Some interesting insights on donor practices in SSR can be drawn from the highly topical issue of border management. Considerable attention has been focused on strengthening border security of Western states since the events of 11 September 2001. In Europe, the process of creating a common market with no internal borders for the free movement of people, goods and capital throughout the European space has been developing quickly since the early 1990s. With the accession of new members to the European Union from Central and Eastern Europe in May 2004, attention has also shifted to strengthening the new external frontiers of the EU. In Southeastern Europe, this has translated into vigorous efforts by donors to assist states in the region in combating organised crime, trafficking and corruption more effectively.<sup>10</sup>

There are at least three things to note in this trend that are interesting from a SSR perspective. First, there has so far been a clear emphasis on efficiency with little effort to address oversight issues of border control and customs agencies except insofar as corruption compromises the efficiency of border policing. Second, capacity-building has not been approached holistically across sectors of the security system, as in some cases in the Western Balkans border police are being paid several times what regular police are paid, and are the recipients of modern equipment and computer systems donated by EU member states. The funnelling of assistance towards border control has drawn off recruits, personnel and resources from regular policing and their capacity to provide public security. Third, the border management discourse from donors to recipients focuses exclusively on the 'sending' countries, and has avoided dealing with the 'pull' factors at work in developed Western destination countries, such as lack of enforcement of regulations against employment of illegal migrants, corruption, official complicity and tolerance of underground and unregulated workers in certain sectors of industry (such as the service industry, prostitution, and agricultural industries), and corruption of police, border, consular and other state officials in the destination countries. The SSR discussion has not adequately broached the issue of drivers of donor

<sup>8</sup> For a regional discussion of donor competition in security sector reform, see Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, 'Preliminary Gaps Analysis', Security Sector Reform in South Eastern Europe : An Inventory of Initiatives web page, URL: <http://ssr.yciss.yorku.ca/>.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Chris Ferguson, ed, Conference Proceedings of the Latin America and Caribbean Security Network Symposium, Kingston, Jamaica, 20-21 April 2004, published as GFN Paper Number 66, 10 May 2004.

<sup>10</sup> The European Union's strategic approach in the Western Balkans prioritises improving regional capacities in policing and border management, in particular combatting organised crime, drug trafficking, illegal immigration. See Commission of the European Communities, Report from the Commission : The Stabilisation and Association process for South East Europe. Third Annual Report, COM (2004) 202/2 final (Brussels : European Commission, 2004), pp. 20-21. Available at : [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/see/sap/rep3/strat\\_pap.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/sap/rep3/strat_pap.pdf)

support and the politics of conditionality. Until it does, reform of security institutions touching such sensitive areas as migration control will remain a one-way dialogue from donors to recipients with questionable implications for issues such as local ownership.

The so-called global war against terrorism highlights other features in contemporary donor approaches concerning reform of security institutions. Wulf points out that while many donors have embraced SSR, they have been slow to support SSR through funding or conditionality of aid. In contrast, many donors have jumped onto the counter-terrorism bandwagon. The war against terrorism has affected the countries receiving funding for security reforms, but this has not amounted to SSR. Rather, it often involves shoring up military capabilities, even though these are of questionable utility against terrorist threats, in addition to internal security (law enforcement and intelligence) capabilities. The war on terror has justified building up the institutional capacities of security institutions, but not the capacities of those who oversee the security providers. Moreover, it has focused on building up institutional capacities linked directly to counter-terrorism, deflecting attention from continuing deficiencies in public security in regions such as South America.<sup>11</sup>

Western states have also been preoccupied with domestic capacity-building and improving inter-agency co-ordination and intelligence-sharing; oversight issues have been clearly subordinated to the perceived requirement of bolstering internal security. At this point it is unclear when the prevailing preoccupation with reinforcing security will be balanced or overtaken by a concern with preserving human rights and civil liberties. In a similar vein, systematic human rights abuses of governments in countries such as Pakistan and Indonesia have been overlooked in the quest for the co-operation of strategic allies in the war against terrorism.<sup>12</sup> There is an effort among some donors and Western actors to understand better how conditions in the underdeveloped parts of the world affect the international security environment, specifically how exclusion, despair and alienation lead disaffected individuals and groups to support terrorism, and to develop assistance strategies that aim to prevent the development of terrorism as a strategy in development co-operation.<sup>13</sup> However, despite the rhetoric of addressing the root causes of terrorism, there has been little evidence that efforts to combat terrorism have acted as spurs to reforms emphasising good governance, whether in general terms or with specific reference to the security sector. To the contrary, the anti-terrorism agenda is being used across Asia to consolidate state power, resulting in the stifling of political opposition, criminalisation of internal dissent, and suppression of movements for democracy and human rights.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. Conclusion


In summary, security sector reform is a worthwhile concept, but it still requires much work to be done at both the conceptual and practical levels, in particular more effort must be expended in integrating the insights of relevant cognate disciplines and co-existing areas of study and foreign assistance. Such areas include the overlapping fields of conflict management, civil-military relations, peacebuilding and democratisation. More effort needs to be invested in linking the distinct

<sup>11</sup> Ferguson, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> Amnesty International, Amnesty International Report 2004, available on-line at URL : <http://web.amnesty.org/report2004/index-eng>

<sup>13</sup> OECD, 'A Development Co-operation Lens on Terrorism Prevention : Key Entry Points for Action', DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, 2003, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Liz Fekete, 'People's security versus national security', *Race and Class*, Vol. 44, Issue 3 (2003).



literatures that exist on security institutions, including police, intelligence services, armed forces, and border management, in order to identify common processes, overlapping functions and insights from past reform processes. Other perspectives, such as human rights or human security, also help to break down stove-piped institutional perspectives. Indeed, such alternative frameworks may end up challenging or supplanting SSR if the latter's proponents fail to clearly delineate and uphold its normative aspects and to reject the privileging of efficiency over the good governance aspects of democratic control and accountability that is emblematic of the Bush administration's global war against terrorism. Deeper familiarity with the history, local conditions and culture of the countries constituting the subject of security sector reform is also required. Specific outreach activities that can further advance understanding of security sector reform include improving the security literacy in civil society to include the requirements of security in a democracy, both in terms of capacities and control. By raising public awareness and debate on the real security problems and threats faced by a society and state, it becomes more likely that security policies and the security sector reform agenda reflect local and national priorities.

In the current hyper-securitised climate of the so-called global war against terrorism, the concept of SSR contains the reminder that essential values of transparency, accountability and democratic control of security institutions need to be respected in democratic systems even in the face of perceived heightened security threats. In underdeveloped, transition and post-conflict countries, as well as in mature democracies, SSR offers an antidote to approaches that concentrate on building capacity while ignoring transparency and accountability issues.



## Voices from the Margins:

### A response to “Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries”

Vanessa A. Farr

In his review of “the relatively recent concept” of security sector reform (SSR) in developing and transitional countries, Herbert Wulf observes that such reform has the potential to be excitingly broad in its scope, since it should be undertaken with the intent not only to disarm a society or reduce the size of its armed forces, but to fundamentally change civilian-military relations by installing democratic control over the security sector. To successfully institute this process, he observes, it will be necessary to address “the security of every single being within society.” In my response, I shall interrogate this key phrase more closely to address what I see as a problematic vagueness in his paper: who, in precise terms, are the individuals who should participate in, take ownership of, and ultimately benefit from SSR?

This rejoinder starts from a similar political position to that upheld by Wulf, using as its cornerstone, as he does, the contention that several forms of social exclusion must necessarily be addressed if a society wishes to advance to that state of universal well-being characterised by peace and security, good governance and positive civil-military relations, and the egalitarian participation of all social actors in decisions about security. My objective, however, is to show that such an observation runs the risk of being hollow and ineffectual without a careful and detailed enumeration of precisely who is excluded from participation in security-related decisions and an honest assessment of how this exclusion comes about and is maintained. To overcome traditional lacunas in debates about the security sector and its potential for reform, I argue, a political commitment has to be made on the part of those who write about this area to include in their reviews non-mainstream voices, and to acknowledge marginal or grassroots interventions which may not always have received the recognition they deserve.

Since it is clear that not “every” social actor has, either historically or contemporaneously, been allowed to determine what constitutes security, or indeed, to offer their views on how the positive potential of the security sector might be better realised, I argue that those who wish to



advance the debate on security sector reform have a responsibility to do the following:

1. Identify the individuals and/or social classes who have been marginalised from this conversation—this includes, among others, most women, the urban and rural poor and ethnic/racial minorities;
2. Ask whether most of these individuals have expressed opinions, ideas and policies on how their personal security might best be assured;
3. Discover how these have been articulated, to whom, and in what fora;
4. Ascertain if anyone in a position of authority and power is paying attention to what the least powerful people believe and say about their security needs.

Although I cannot fault his carefully-detailed critique of the problems, contradictions and failings of existing efforts at social security reform and how these can best be overcome, my response is driven by discomfort that Wulf, in his otherwise comprehensive review, should have overlooked the significant contributions made to discussions of what constitutes security, and how it can best be implemented, that have been made by some of the world's most under-represented people. From a feminist perspective, as well as from the perspective of people in indigenous peace and sovereignty movements, none of the issues raised in this “new” debate are really all that new. Wulf recognises the decades-old contribution made to this conversation by the development community, but it would have been interesting to see him engage in more detail with some of the diversity of these discussions. In my view, what makes the richness of our contemporary vision of security sector reform possible is precisely the fact that “the development community” is not homogeneous: while it may have paid increasing attention to the need for security sector reform/transformation since the 1960s, it was a relatively small proportion of activists – those engaged in expanding and challenging prevailing notions of what makes us safe – who led us to where we are today. When I think about security sector reform, then, I include in the scope of the debate much more than the work of the past forty years, and do not confine my purview to that which has been focused on developing and transitional countries.

In the face of the all-too-frequently disempowering and even destabilising programmes endorsed by politicians, the military, and sometimes even the development community itself, courageous, consistent and endlessly innovative voices have been raised “from the margins” of society where they play a significant role in raising awareness of hidden security concerns, all the while expanding debates and developing and implementing policy reform. Without these voices, the breadth of contemporary conversations about security sector reform would be far more limited.

I would like to propose that versions of the current security sector reform debate have been ongoing since at least the middle of the 19th century, choosing that date rather than any other because since that time, indigenous peoples, the poor and women in every corner of the world have, in innumerable interventions, challenged and expanded “traditional” concepts of security and the institutions through which these are implemented and maintained.

As early as 1915, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) issued a plea for the transformation of the “culture of militarism and war to a culture of peace and non-violence,” stressing that attention must be paid to the interconnections between economic, social and cultural issues on the one hand, and conflict, the production and sales of arms and war on the other. WILPF has worked ever since “for economic and social justice and the promotion and protection of individual and collective human rights and the rights of women.”<sup>1</sup> When he observes that the potential breadth of the scope of SSR will only be realised by means of “an overall strategy

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see the website of WILPF – <http://www.wilpf.int.ch/history/hindex.htm>.

of development and democratisation of the society” under review and argues that SSR must be “embedded in general peace-building and development” and come about through holistic processes of reform, Wulf endorses once more the ideals of this venerable organisation. His argument, in other words, is very similar to one that has been central to interdisciplinary feminist research, analysis and policy in both the security sector and beyond.

WILPF’s founders also anticipated the contemporary observation, as articulated by Wulf, that security sector reform is deeply embedded in four broad pillars – the political and economic spheres, social definitions of what constitutes security, and reform of the institutions which govern the security sector in all its aspects. Women peace activists have long asserted that it is these pillars of social power that are most in need of overhaul if security sector reform is to be achieved. In enumerating these, then, Wulf echoes an argument that has consistently been articulated by feminists and post-colonial critics and activists as central to overcoming the systematic social exclusion of the world’s most marginalised people and the poverty, violence, illness and despair in which they are mired as a result of this exclusion.

What a pity it is that current discussions of security sector reform do not adequately acknowledge their debt to the tireless activism of people who have themselves experienced the violent impacts of segregation. Without their efforts, the very concepts and terms used in the debate on security sector reform would be impossible: it is they who have developed the language with which we now describe the institutionalised racism, sexism and class inequality of dominant social, economic, political and, sometimes, cultural structures. Contemporary advocates of security sector reform must recognise the contribution of this community of civil society activists that has identified, named, and made visible the mechanisms of violence through which institutions maintain their exclusionary power. It is largely their resistance that has forced the opening of spaces in which the amelioration of such violence can begin.

One of the most striking places in which this shift in discourse can be seen has been in the growing capacity of disempowered people to bring to light the full extent, and impact, of “the everyday violence of HIV/AIDS, of racism, of domestic abuse, of ethnic conflicts and massive displacements of people”.<sup>2</sup> In particular, women have taken on the enormous task of bringing to light the horrifying rate of gender-specific violence around the world. They have insisted on the importance of treating this violence as a rights-based issue and thus capable of being addressed through existing mechanisms for ensuring women’s right to live free from fear and harm, and they have made some impressive impacts, at both the local and international levels, in the process.

Yet it is simultaneously true that violence against women and the insecurity it promotes remains, outside of feminist circles, the most under-scrutinised topic in discussions about the security sector. This lacuna should serve as a warning that even in the circles where reform is debated, certain topics remain taboo: while women’s particular insecurity in times of war has been more prominently brought to light since the beginning of the 1990s when sexual violence, especially rape, was first named as a specific weapon of war, it remains true to this day that in times of peace, domestic violence is a silent killer not only because it is improperly addressed by the security and judicial systems but because it is still shrouded in secrecy.

Yet there can be little doubt that women’s combined efforts to name the scourge, wherever it is manifest, and to measure how it underpins violent social structures, have impacted on societal understanding of what really constitutes security. Even though we may have little or no access to the corridors of power, women activists have insisted on the importance of listening to what women say

<sup>2</sup> Charlotte Bunch, 2003. “A Feminist Human Rights Lens on Human Security.” Paper delivered at the National Research in Women Annual Conference, May 2003.

about their security needs. As a result of this action-oriented research, we are challenging militarised views of what constitutes safety, including in our purview such issues as access to healthcare and adequate nutrition. We have also succeeded in offering a clear assessment of whose safety actually counts. We know, and protest the fact, that it is not we who are most likely to control those institutions that are meant to make individuals feel secure, and have courageously drawn attention to the problem of “secondary” victimisation through the ill-treatment or actual abuse of victims when those in charge of security are confronted with certain forms of violence.<sup>3</sup>

Women activists have brought to public attention the fact that violence against women, usually perpetrated in the home although facilitated by public social structures that refuse to treat the problem as a serious crime, is a universal social phenomenon and has enormous political and economic implications wherever it takes place. Because we have insisted that this problem be measured, we now have global statistics that show it is the single biggest source of injury and death to women (and also to children) in developed and less-developed countries alike.<sup>4</sup> We continue to stress that these figures still fail to record the enormity of the burden of violence that women endure, because even in countries with a vigorous women’s movement and an advanced commitment to gender-equitable judicial and security sector reform, violence that takes place against women in the private sphere remains drastically under-reported. When systems break down in the face of war, even fewer records are kept of how women’s security, including their health and nutrition, is impacted. This lack of record-keeping then leads to all kinds of impunity for abusers of women and girls – some of which are even being initiated by those who are sent to restore security.<sup>5</sup> Our increased knowledge of the enormity of levels of violence against women graphically proves that for many of the world’s most dispossessed people, even the capacity to make decisions about their personal security remains an impossible dream. The voices of this silent mass are still not being heard.

How should proponents of security sector reform respond to this crisis? Given that political, economic and social institutions are globally dominated by elite men, an in-depth assessment of security sector reform is impossible unless those who undertake research, develop policies and implement reform processes are scrupulous about gaining access to, and reflecting on, the insights of those who are in marginal social positions because they are female, poor, ill or infirm, ethnically/racially dominated. As they have no access to the corridors of power, it is difficult for them to influence decisions made about security at the national, or even, in many cases, the personal level: but this does not mean they are not speaking out. Their opinions can and should be included through such measures as consulting with specialists in participant-oriented research methodologies, making a political commitment to a consultation process that is broader and more inclusive than at present, and reading the writings of those whose lives are most affected by various manifestations of “everyday violence.” It can also mean a clearer focus on how transitional justice and police reform take into consideration invisible crimes such as domestic violence. Finally, to succeed in its goals at all, security sector reform must come from a rights-based approach that is reinforced by already existing legal frameworks. The precedent for developing holistic approaches to what constitutes human rights has been set for many years (for example, at the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights), meaning that the security sector can easily find models on which to base its approach to reform.

<sup>3</sup> Information on global rates of domestic and other forms of violence against women can be found at [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org). See also the current international campaign against violence against women at <http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/index-eng>.

<sup>4</sup> The World Health Organisation estimates that violence is the leading cause of death for women aged 15-44, more than cancer, traffic accidents and malaria combined ([www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-genderviolence.html](http://www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-genderviolence.html)).

<sup>5</sup> Public outrage over a number of recent events, such as the information that peacekeepers have been implicated in incidents of sexual violence and people trafficking, has begun to increase popular awareness of just how vulnerable women and girls can be.

In my reading, when Wulf recognises, as has the women's peace movement since its inception, that security sector reform must derive from and be supported by the will of the society, and particularly its leadership, to endorse far-reaching changes, his argument reaches a new level of complexity. It touches the place in which most resistance is to be found: after all, women have been campaigning about our right to influence the structures of power, including military, peacekeeping and police forces, for over one hundred years. Yet, whether in conflict zones or places in which high rates of violence result from poverty and dispossession, or even in developed countries without proactive policies to support women's entry into the public sphere, women remain marginalised. The numbers of women in security sector institutions, especially in leadership positions, remains abysmally low—and the incidents of violence against women perpetuated in them or endorsed by them remain alarmingly high.

What can be done to change this situation? Years of activism has finally introduced effective language into the realms in which decision-making takes place. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, for example, calls on governments to take a more proactive stance to promote the entry of women into the security services.<sup>6</sup> This may not, of course, be enough to change the way in which these services do their work, since it should never be assumed that all women share the same approach to women's, or indeed, any human rights.<sup>7</sup> The mere inclusion of women workers into security sector jobs is unlikely to produce a sea-change, although there is evidence from peacekeeping missions that a core of women operating in a mission can produce a fairly dramatic change in a unit's approach to its tasks. In the end, however, awareness-raising through careful training and monitoring and evaluation of those (women and men) who have participated in such training will remain an essential part of the process of changing the psychology of security sector workers. This is why women peace activists continue to fight for the rights of women to be heard whenever and wherever security-related decision-making takes place.

Here are just four suggestions. In each case, their implementation relies on a coherent strategy which includes the following: a) creating links with existing activist movements at both the international and grassroots level through such initiatives as the World March of Women,<sup>8</sup> indigenous people's forums, and other local peacebuilding initiatives; b) public education campaigns through which to involve communities, leaders and the security sector alike in understanding the principles of human rights and their role in upholding these. Special care must be given to education about gender-based violence and strategies must be developed to address it as a matter of national security policy; c) legislative, judicial and economic reform; d) greater economic investment in social support systems.

1. *The scourge of violence against women, whether it is perpetrated at home or in public spaces, must be addressed as a matter of extreme urgency through legal reform and legislative initiatives supported by public education.* No aspect of security sector reform should fail to address this problem because in the absence of a genuine, measurable commitment to ensuring the safety and protection of women, no security sector reform can be said to have taken place. One example of proactive change comes from South Africa where, since the end of apartheid, the government has developed a national Crime Prevention Strategy, Sexual Offences Guidelines, a Gender Policy


<sup>6</sup> The text of SCR 1325 can be found at <http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>. Accounts of women's activism to promote it are at [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org), among others.

<sup>7</sup> Recent images of U.S. women soldiers assisting men in the humiliation and torture of Iraqi prisoners of war are ample evidence of the fact that, circumstances and attitudes permitting, women are no different from men in their capacity to abuse human rights.

<sup>8</sup> The World March of Women is an international feminist action network connecting grassroots groups working to eliminate poverty and violence against women. It is composed of 5500 participating groups in 163 countries and territories (see [www.worldmarchofwomen.org](http://www.worldmarchofwomen.org)).

for the Department of Justice, a National Plan of Action for children, and other such far-sighted legislation. Even these reforms, however, are not effective enough in a place where the poorest members of society continue to live in ignorance of the law and are thus at the mercy of institutions that continue to subvert their rights. South African activists recognise the government's proactive stance as a good basis, but are now calling for the establishment of public education programmes to inform individuals of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a democracy.

2. *Women's participation in all aspects of political decision-making must be actively promoted.* This can include such measures as quota systems in elections, but should also include specific efforts to campaign for the right of women to vote, educating women about their political rights, and protecting them, where necessary, when they exercise their political rights.
3. *Women's participation in all aspects of peace-making and security must be prioritised.* This means including women in positions of authority at peace talks; recruiting and promoting them in the military, police, judiciary, financial and all related security sector institutions; appropriately training them as advocates of women's security; taking seriously their theoretical and operational contributions to the discourse on security and its implementing structures, and training more women as military observers and as experts in demobilization and all aspects of disarmament. Government funding, not just the money of international donors, should go towards this process so that it is nationally owned. There is a growing body of evidence from the field that women are taking it upon themselves to enter into weapons collections programmes, to better understand arms control and management, and to inform themselves about decisions made on national spending so that they have a voice in how security budgets are determined. Initiatives include the Women's Network of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its pioneering work on gender responsive budgets, and UNIFEM's contributions to United Nations policy and practice on demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) processes.
4. *The current male domination of the security sector, and male culpability in violence against women, whether as perpetrators or through passively condoning such violence, must be acknowledged and actions put in place to address and overcome its root causes.* This is probably the biggest challenge facing the security sector today: that communities have lost faith in institutions which, instead of assuring the security of societies' most vulnerable people, are seen to, or perceived as, actively participating in their exploitation. It may seem as if institutional violence cannot be overcome, but there are several excellent examples, both national and local, of programmes of action to redress historical inequality. Comparative studies should urgently be undertaken of how countries (such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Canada and South Africa) have instituted legislative reform on gender-based exclusion that has made momentous changes in the lives of women and men alike. Careful attention should also be paid to local men's movements, such as the Canadian-instituted White Ribbon Campaign, South Africa's Men Against Rape (MARS), Australia's Men Against Sexual Assault, the Men to Men Initiative in Kenya, Malawi, Namibia and South Africa, and Men Against Sexual Violence, USA. These organisations form a global network of men who have allied themselves with the women's movement against violence, and they form the foundations of a movement which could become global in scope. Such a movement, initiated, organised and run by men, could begin to make inroads into the highly masculinised institutions of state security by educating other men on how to empathise with those less powerful and act from an ethic of care.



These examples are intended to give readers a taste of the breadth and inventiveness of current initiatives that parallel security sector reform, and hopes to broaden the parameters of the security sector debate so that these initiatives will also be included in its purview. The harsh truth, however, is that more than one hundred years of strong, active, broadly-based, creative and persistent women's peace and anti-violence movements has failed to ensure that all women are actively able to participate in exercising their fundamental human right to a life free from fear and harm. Violence against women, and against others in subordinate positions, persists today because our social structures, including even those structures whose mandate is to promote security, permit it. There is a general culture of impunity which allows men of all cultures to exploit women, and this culture "reinforces at the gut level that violence wins, that domination succeeds, whether at home or in wars" (Bunch: 2003).

It is idealistic to assume that those who wield power within violent and exclusionary structures will easily give it up. To move the debate forward, then, analysts should consider whether it is indeed *reform* that will suffice: for those who have historically been excluded from engagement with any aspect of the security sector, nothing short of its *transformation* will help them take their rightful place as democratic co-owners of control over the forces and institutions that are intended to ensure the safety of all.



## Chances, Dilemmas and Obstacles of Security Sector Reform

Herbert Wulf

The need for security sector reform in new democracies or countries in transition towards democracy is undisputed. The papers by Azca, Ball, Caparini, Farr and Nathan underline both the necessity of such reforms as well as the challenges and obstacles to implement them. This is also emphasized in new guidelines recently published by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD).<sup>1</sup> The terms ‘system’ and ‘governance’ in the title of the OECD/DAC guidelines are intended to highlight that it is the interplay between various actors of the security sector (not just the military) that require attention and, furthermore, as it says in the opening policy statement of these guidelines, that „security is important for improved governance“ since „inappropriate security structures and mechanism can contribute to weak governance and to instability and violent conflict...“ This is a broad and ambitious agenda and the OECD/DAC guidelines go on to broaden the issue area by drawing a line from the establishment of security to poverty reduction and ‘human security’.

I do consider the papers by Azca, Ball, Caparini, Farr and Nathan as a welcome complement to my ‘Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries’. The case study on Indonesia by Azca illustrates the negative consequences of a half-hearted or poorly implemented reform while the case study on South Africa underlines the obstacles to security sector reform even in a case of relative political stability, economic strength and a widely acclaimed positive transition process. The call for a security sector reform and the emphasis on the need for such reform as a precondition for governance and development should not underestimate the obstacles to implementing it. The existence of the daunting problems related to such a reform process are the reason for me to deliberate on the dilemmas of security sector reform in my paper – dilemmas that exist in this politically sensitive area in the new democracies themselves as well as in the policies of the donors who want to assist in implementing such a reform.

<sup>1</sup> OECD/DAC, Security System Reform and Governance, Policy and Good Practice. OECD, Paris 2004. ([www.oecd.org/dac/conflict](http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict)).



Marina Caparini's paper is written from the perspective of a practitioner with experience in both developing and transitional countries. Her emphasis on the need to design and implement security sector reform as a holistic concept is an important reminder that stop-gap measures might miss the objective, namely to ensure the security of people. She strongly underlines the approach in my paper that security sector reform „must deal with effectiveness in the provision of security (capacity, efficiency) and the effectiveness of oversight in the security sector (accountability, transparency, control, responsiveness).“ And furthermore, that reform aimed exclusively at modernizing the security actors does not necessarily contribute to reform; inputs from civil society are required. As a practitioner she also realizes that in many cases civil society has played a minor part, due to sheer absence of informed and engaged members of civil society.

Vanessa Farr's paper 'Voices from the Margins' addresses a dimension that goes very far beyond what I consider to be security sector reform. She not only addresses the security concerns of marginalized people, with an emphasis on women, but she discusses it in such broad terms that the same text could be used for a debate on the failures of democracy or development. Not to create any misunderstanding, I agree with most of her analysis that women's particular insecurity in times of war and peace need to be of great concern, not only in security sector reform debates. But do these topics remain, as she suggests, really a taboo? Her suggestion to identify the individuals and social classes „who have been marginalised from this conversation“, to ask whether these „individuals have expressed their opinions“, to „discover how these have been articulated“ and to „ascertain if anyone in a position of authority and power is paying attention“ are good intentions. I wish she would have articulated in more detail how this can be done. To „support women's entry into the public sphere“ remains such a general appeal, that probably everybody supports it, at least in theory. What is needed are concrete measures for the current programmes in countries in which security sector reform is being tried with best intentions and still fail to result in a sea-change. I would argue that most of the proponents of a genuine democratic security sector reform need not to be convinced that the „voices from the margins of society“ should play a more significant role. This is a widely accepted notion. And in Vanessa Farr's own country, South Africa, this acceptance has resulted in an unprecedented participation of the general public in debates on security, defense white books, arms exports etc.

Nicole Ball emphasizes that security sector reform „consists of a broad range of activities involving a wide variety of local stakeholders and external partners“. This is very much in line with the new OECD/DAC guidelines that confirm donor commitment to a security sector reform process that adheres to the following principles.<sup>2</sup> Security sector reform should be:

- “People-centered, locally owned and based on democratic norms and human rights principles and the rule of law, seeking to provide freedom from fear.”
- “Seen as a framework to structure thinking about how to address diverse security challenges facing states and their populations through more integrated development and security policies and through greater civilian involvement and oversight.”
- “Founded on activities with multi-sectoral strategies, based upon a broad assessment of the range of security needs of the people and the state.”
- “Developed adhering to basic principles underlying public sector reform such as transparency and accountability.”
- “Implemented through clear processes and policies that aim to enhance the institutional and human capacity needed for security policy to function effectively.” (p. 8)

<sup>2</sup> The agreement between Ball's statement and the new OECD/DAC guidelines is no surprise since Nicole Ball was one of the main authors of the OECD/DAC guidelines.

I want to take up two points where Nicole Ball disagrees with my paper. First, she rightly emphasizes that the seven categories of states, described in my paper, where the potential for security sector reform runs from 'impossible' to 'major potential' is too mechanistic. Indeed, the proposed scale cannot be more than a heuristic instrument to classify countries. And, as often with classifications, it is usually possible to find exceptions to the rule. She mentions Uzbekistan as one such deviant case. My statement that transition countries have a good potential for reform does not imply that this potential is being used in each and every case. I would hasten to add that I am well aware of the difficulties of reform in Uzbekistan. In another study I have referred specifically to Uzbekistan as a case where „on paper Uzbekistan is the most promising country of the region in implementing security sector reforms, the results on the ground are disappointing and frustrating.“<sup>3</sup> The contextual approach, suggested by Nicole Ball, also with seven categories of different contexts and several factors in each category, is more ambitious, less mechanistic but also extremely difficult to apply in the real world.

Another point of disagreement is my controversial statement that the supply of „weapons, materials and other equipment“ can be important components of security sector reform, if that reform is adequately designed. Nicole Ball maintains that „it does not constitute an improvement of democratic security sector reform.“ Why not? Whether we like it or not: If security sector reform is about establishing the legitimate monopoly of force in a country – and the term 'legitimate' implies appropriate democratic control – than the institutions of organized violence need to be given the instruments to exercise this monopoly of violence. It is a given, and I have criticized this in many publications, that in the process of transferring weapons and other materials to the police and the military all too often corrupt, criminal and irresponsible practices prevail. I am not pleading for an indiscriminate transfer of weapons to the police and the military but want to emphasize that security sector reform can also mean spending more resources on the security sector actors, including on weapons.

Security sector reform is a laborious process and many hiccups are likely to slow down or even derail this process in certain cases. I fully agree with Nathan's conclusion: „Because of the complexities ... there are no 'quick fix' solutions to the problems of security sector reform ...“ He is also right in emphasizing that the security sector reform policies of the donor countries, their emphasis on democracy and disarmament are undermined by the failure of these countries to adhere to their own values. To engage in security sector reform requires practicing what you preach. This is, however, often not the case. Marina Caprini reminds us that „in the current hyper-secured climate of the so-called global war against terrorism, the concept of SSR contains the reminder that essential values of transparency, accountability and democratic control of security institutions need to be respected in democratic systems even in the face of perceived heightened security threats.“

3 Bonn International Center for Conversion, Conversion Survey 2004, Nomos Verlag, Baden-Baden, p. 63.



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Ball has edited a handbook on security sector governance for African practitioners written by African security and development specialists (forthcoming, Centre for Democracy and Development, Lagos, 2004) and has worked closely with Clingendael Institute (Netherlands) and the Netherlands Foreign Ministry to develop and test a security sector institutional assessment tool. Ball has also co-authored a background paper on accountability in the security sector (with Michael Brzoska, Kees Kingma and Herbert Wulf, BICC) for the UNDP Human Development Report 2002, as well as a background paper (with Dylan Hendrickson, King's College, London) that informed the policy statement and policy paper endorsed by OECD development ministers at the OECD Development Assistance Committee's April 2004 High Level Meeting.

Other publications include "Transforming Security Sectors: The IMF and World Bank Approaches," *Conflict, Security, Development*, Issue 1:1 (2001): 45-66, "The Challenge of

Rebuilding War Torn Societies,” in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall, Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2001, and *Off-Budget Military Expenditure and Revenue: Issues and Policy Perspectives for Donors*, CSDG Occasional Papers #1, King’s College London, January 2002 (with Dylan Hendrickson).

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### **Vanessa Farr**

Dr Vanessa Farr is a graduate of the Women’s Studies Programme at York University, Toronto. She focuses on women’s experiences of violent conflict, including the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) of women combatants after war, the impact on women of prolific small arms and light weapons (SALW), and women’s coalition-building in conflict-torn societies. She has conducted field research on women’s involvement in disarmament in Albania and Kosovo, trained women on DDR in Democratic Republic of Congo and provided inputs to the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Greater Great Lakes, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville), the Solomon Islands, Central and South America, Somalia, Uganda, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire.

Her work includes the production of a guide to ‘lessons learned’ about the need for gender awareness in DDR, and she has made recommendations for the improvement of future DDR and micro-disarmament processes conducted by the United Nations. She has produced a practical “checklist” and seminar materials for the implementation of gender-aware DDR and published several articles in academic journals and in public media and activist forums. She lectures widely on gender mainstreaming in DDR and disarmament in various forums at the UN and at universities and international conferences.

Farr is currently engaged in analysing gender mainstreaming in weapons collection programmes and DDR processes, undertakes research on the gendered impact of SALW for the Small Arms Survey, and is co-editing a book on SALW for the United Nations University. She is also a volunteer with the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Women’s Network.