Security Sector Reform: Ambitions and Reality[1]

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I. Background

1. Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes have increasingly become part of Peace Operations in recent years. Like these operations as a whole, SSR interventions are often characterised in ambitious terms, but it is not clear how successful they have actually been, nor, indeed, if there is any way of measuring what success they may have had in specific cases[2]

2. This paper deals with the challenges typically posed to SSR interventions as part of Peace Operations, and what further challenges may arise in the future, and tries to shed some light on the questions of why evaluating their success is difficult, and how they may be performed better. It deals with two sets of challenges; those that flow from conceptual difficulties and confusion with other disciplines and types of intervention on the one hand, and those that flow from the complexities of the situation on the ground on the other. Having described these challenges, and argued for a modest and focused type of SSR programme when such interventions are judged necessary, the paper attempts to provide some practical recommendations, together with suggestions for following them up. It is important to stress that there are occasions when SSR initiatives might be conducted in the absence of an international peace mission. This will typically be during a period of transition from an authoritarian to a multiparty political system, and can involve delicate changes in the relationship of the security forces to the civil population as well as the civil power. Because it is not impossible that such issues might arise during a peace missions also, they are briefly referred to in the text. But this is really another subject, which requires special treatment of its own.

3. Although many of the challenges posed to SSR interventions are generic, and can apply irrespective of the number of nations and institutions involved, there are obviously special considerations involved when different organisations are involved in handling the same crisis. The European Union, with its capacity to provide a wide spectrum of military and civilian assistance is a partner in many international operations in the world today. As part of its European Defence and Security Policy, the European Union is increasingly conducting SSR interventions in the context of wider international attempts at post-conflict stabilisation, and often in association with the missions of the United Nations. A particular example of this cooperation is the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[3] Relationships between the EU and the UN are well established and continue to develop. This paper therefore also considers issues of coordination between international organisations.

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[1] A Commissioned Paper for the International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations 2008, 20-22 October 2008, Ecole Militaire, Paris.

[2] For a discussion of the difficulties, see Anne Fitz-Gerald and Sylvie Jackson, "Developing a Measurement System for Security Sector Interventions", *Journal of Security Sector Management*, Vol 6, No 1, (March 2008).

[3] On 8 June 2005, the EU launched a Security Sector Reform mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, known as called "EUSEC DR Congo". Its task is to provide advice and assistance to the Congolese authorities in charge of security. On 1 July 2007 a new EU ESDP SSR Police Mission took over from the EU Police Mission in Kinshasa (EUPOL RD Congo), which was successfully concluded on 30 June 2007. The aim of the mission is to assist the Congolese authorities in reforming and restructuring the National Congolese Police and improving the overall functioning of the criminal justice system.

4. The security sector is the foundation of the stability of any state, and security in daily life is a precondition for economic and political development. A well-functioning security sector is therefore fundamental. If a security sector is incapable of performing its functions, because of lack of resources or because it has lost legitimacy with parts of the population, then any existing political crisis will be exacerbated and potential new crises created. History suggests that, after a crisis, and especially after an armed conflict, rebuilding the security forces is an urgent priority for the recovery of stability. Sometimes, this involves no more than the orderly return of the security forces to a peacetime footing, and to a size and with a budget appropriate to their peacetime functions. But on other occasions it can involve the integration of former combatants, and even policemen from different backgrounds, into a new security apparatus designed to serve an entire community. In other cases, the crisis itself can be one of democratic transition, or sudden political evolution. The security forces of a state may not require rebuilding as such, but their political status may have to change. The security forces may have been part of an authoritarian regime, or they may have acted to enforce the domination of a political party or an ethnic or religious group. They may have been exploited and politicised by a former regime, or they may have been kept in a position of subordination and weakness lest they became a threat.

5. The security forces are also the most basic means of gaining and maintaining political power. In many societies, control of the security forces is literally a matter of life and death, and their control comes before any considerations of effectiveness or public acceptability. In many other societies, there is a tradition of the politicisation of the security forces and their use for political advantage and the harassment of opponents. In still other societies, the very importance of the security forces requires a careful balance of senior appointments between communities[4] to avoid political problems. This can mean, for example, a security sector which is unnecessarily large and inefficient, but which is important in helping to provide political stability. Numerous local police forces might be more expensive than a single national one, for example, but might also be more politically acceptable in a divided society.

6. It follows from the above that, if a well-functioning security sector is essential for the running of a state, then great care needs to be taken in making changes to it, lest careful political balances be upset. In particular, it is important to be clear whether or not there are fundamental problems with the security sector itself, and if so what they are. It is generally better to err on the side of caution when considering possible SSR activities in societies which are themselves already unstable or have only recently emerged from conflict.

7. Finally, it is crucial to appreciate that there are many different traditions and experiences in the security sectors of the world. The developed world ideal (if not always the reality) of politically neutral, functionally differentiated, professional security forces acting under the law for the common good is very far indeed from the reality of how most security forces in the world have functioned for most of history. A system in which justice is used as an instrument of political control and the intelligence services spy on enemies of the government may well need changing, but this change cannot come about quickly or easily, and must be handled with great discretion.

[4] This problem is not unknown in western societies where politics is about language and culture – Belgium, for example.

8. These difficult issues provide many challenges to the successful implementation of SSR programmes. As indicated, some of these challenges are primarily conceptual, and others are practical. They are discussed in turn, and recommendations are offered to address them.

II Conceptual Challenges

II.1 Problems of Meaning and Definition.

9. The Nature of SSR itself. Given the lack of an agreed definition of the security sector,[5] given also that SSR itself is "an ill-defined concept"[6] and given finally the lack of consensus on the meanings of key words and ideas employed,[7] the first and most important challenge is in deciding what the objectives of an SSR intervention actually are, and ensuring that there is a common understanding of them among all participants.

10. But the problem here is less one of theoretical confusion, important as that is, than of the disparity between the theoretical debate, with its uncertainties and contradictions, and the situations that an SSR team might actually find on the ground. For example, several scholars have studied the changes made in the former Warsaw Pact security sectors in the 1990s, and have concluded that the pursuit of "formal indicators" such as the number of civilians in a defence ministry, drawn from theoretical writings, hindered rather than helped the transformation process.[8] These changes were brought about by the need to bring the ex Warsaw Pact nations into the Partnership for Peace programme (and in some jcases later into NATO itself) and there was little time or inclination to take account of the specifics of the countries concerned. Existing SSR publications and doctrine, however, provide little assistance in such situations.

11 The disparity between theory and practice begins in the most basic fashion – in the definition of the security sector itself. The divergent views on its nature are not, fundamentally, doctrinal or conceptual, rather they are political. SSR itself has been described, in a recent report by the UN Secretary General as a "highly political process", [9] and this reflects the extreme sensitivity of the issues it encompasses, at the heart of the very existence of any state and government. Access to the security sector of a state provides an unparalleled opportunity for political influence, and it is not surprising that many groups, domestic and international, seek to acquire it. Moreover, since classical security issues

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[5] I have tried to address this issue in David Chuter "Understanding Security Sector Reform" in *Journal of Security Sector Management*, Vol 4, No 2, (April 2006)

[6] Philip Fluri, "Oversight and Guidance: The Relevance of Parliamentary Oversight For the Security Sector and its Reform" in Hans Born, Philipp Fluri, Anders Johnsson (eds.) *Handbook for Parliamentarians No 5, Oversight of the Security Sector: Principles, Mechanisms and Practices*, IPU/DCAF, Geneva, Belgrade, 2003, p. 16.

[7] The concepts and vocabulary of SSR are largely imported from the study of civil-military relations in Latin America, a discipline where, as one distinguished scholar writes "The lack of even minimal consensus on seemingly basic questions undermines our authority as scholars to speak on policy issues that are crucial." J Samuel Fitch, "Military Attitudes Towards Democracy: How Do We Know if Anything Has Changed?" in David Pion-Berlin (ed), *Civil-Military Relations in Latin America: New Analytical Perspectives*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2001, p. p.60.

[8] Larry Watts, "Reforming Civil-Military relations in Post-Communist States: Civil Control vs. Democratic Control", in *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol 30, No 1, (2002), pp. 51-70, p. 55. See also Christopher Donnelly, "Developing a National Strategy for the Transformation of the Defense Establishment in Post-Communist States", *European Security*, Vol 5, No 1, (1996), pp. 1-12, p. 12. For a detailed recent case see Peter K Forster, "International Factors Stopping Security
Sector Reform: The Uzbek Case," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Volume 5, No. 1 (2007) p. 61-66

[9] *Securing Peace and Development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform*
Report of the Secretary General, 2008, p.21.

themselves are complex and sensitive, some organisations will compete to define the security sector in broader ways, which then give them the possibility of acquiring influence over it. There is therefore no possibility of a true definitional consensus emerging, since different, and often conflicting, political objectives are involved. The result of all this is that consensus descriptions of the security sector (they are not really definitions) are frequently anthologies of different interpretations, containing something for all tastes. A typical result (from the same document just cited) is as follows:

> "Security sector" is a *broad* term *often* used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country. It is *generally accepted* that the security sector includes defense, law enforcement institutions, corrections, intelligence services, and institutions responsible for border management, customs, and civil emergencies. Elements of the judicial sector responsible for the adjudication of cases of alleged criminal conduct and misuse of force are, *in many instances*, also included. The security sector also includes actors that play a role in managing and overseeing the design and implementation of security, such as ministries, legislative bodies and civil society groups. Other non-State actors that *could be considered* as part of the security sector include customary or informal authorities and private security services.[10]

12. This kind of tentative formulation is appropriate to a political consensus document, collectively drafted, which has to suit many interests. But clearly an operational SSR activity has to make some key practical judgements about what and what not to include in the consideration of the security sector of a particular country in the absence of concepts, or even a vocabulary, which is widely shared and understood.y How is this, in practice, to be done? Two observations may be helpful here:

- First, there is no Security Sector as such, but only the Security *Sectors* of different countries, and these vary enormously, in size, scope, organisation, effectiveness and many other things. Moreover, every security sector is placed in a very particular historical, social and political context which needs to be respected. The issue is thus the identification of the nature and extent of the task *in a specific country context.*
- Secondly, the fundamental distinction, often lost sight of, is, broadly, between the government and everything else. The apparatus of government, including operational security forces, courts and prisons and their mechanisms for political direction and management, reports to a Prime Minister or President who has the legitimacy which comes from the electoral process. This is the *executive* security sector, and the area where most SSR work is actually concentrated. There are then other parts of the government and political apparatus of the country (such as parliament and a constitutional court) who are consulted or involved as necessary, according to the provisions of the Constitution, and must *acquiesce* to the proposals of the government, in defence as in other areas, before they can be implemented. Their relationship with the executive part of the security sector is one of the most difficult issues in SSR. There are then many external organisations who *aspire* to influence the government, but have no constitutional or legal status. And of course parliament, and sometimes the judiciary, will have political agendas which they will seek to impose on a government in addition to their constitutional role. More is said about these issues below.

[10] *Ibid*, p. 10. Emphasis added.

13. These problems of definition are all the more acute when different organisations are involved. The UN and EU, as well as many other organisations, have produced their own SSR policies and doctrines, for internal and external readerships. All are consensus documents produced by large committees of non-specialists, looking for compromise wording which everyone can accept. This, of course, is how international texts are normally negotiated, but the results, given their circumstances of production, are not necessarily of much practical operational value. Moreover, different organisations will see SSR very differently. The OECD, for example, is essentially concerned with the development aspects of SSR, whilst NATO sees it as about political transformation of former Communist states.

14. Naturally, SSR interventions on the ground often proceed pragmatically, and the lack of a properly elaborated theory does not have to be a crippling handicap. But it is unsatisfactory if something as complex and sensitive as SSR does not have a robust body of theory and principles to support it. What happens, for example, if an SSR team deploys into a country recently at war, where the Defence Minister is a serving General, and where the security sector, including the intelligence departments, are heavily militarised. Most SSR concepts stress the need for something called "civilian control" without specifying what it is, or which civilians are to control what. The team will face immediate practical problems. Does this mean a civilian Minister? If so, could he or she be a retired General? Where can qualified civilian staff be obtained? What will their relationship to the military be? Who will do which jobs? To what level are political appointees necessary and acceptable? Can the civilians give the military orders, or overrule them? There are partial answers, at least, to all these questions, but there is little extant authoritative guidance for SSR teams to fall back on. Given that international organisations will increasingly cooperate on SSR operations in the future, there is a clear requirement for a standardised technical vocabulary and set of concepts which can be used by all. This should not be a consensus drafted document, but more of a discussion paper, which should also describe trends in security sector development in different political and cultural contexts, and illustrate choices which may have to be made. Work on such a document needs to begin promptly, and involve the major institutional actors.

15 Relationship to wider objectives. One pragmatic solution to the problem of definitions is to look at what needs to be done, by way of security-related initiatives, to support the objectives of the Peace Mission as a whole. Such objectives will obviously vary from mission to mission, but typically will involve returning the country to a situation of stability, such that the mission itself can more readily withdraw. The areas of the "security sector" however defined, where initiatives need to be carried out, will depend on judgements about what the threats to stability are, and how they should be addressed. This implies that SSR programmes should generally only be conducted when at least one of the following criteria is met:

- There are weaknesses or defects in the current security arrangements which materially provoked the crisis or are materially obstructing a return to stability, or
- Even if the above is not the case, initiatives can be undertaken to improve the security arrangements of the country which will themselves substantially assist in the restoration of stability.

In turn, these criteria imply that an order of priorities should be established. There are many security-related areas where initiatives could be undertaken which might in theory contribute to stability, but an SSR intervention should really be limited to those initiatives which demonstrably should have a major impact on the stability of the country. Theoretical writing on SSR, and also practice in certain cases, have both supported the idea of wide-ranging

transformational change in the security sector, to be conducted simultaneously. Whilst this may be theoretically attractive, it is difficult to do in practice, and can often lead to initiatives managed by different organisations in conflict with each other. In this way, it is not really necessary to have a theoretical debate over definitions, and the practice, for once, is less complex than the theory.

16 Generic Situations. Whilst every SSR intervention will be different, it is important to bear in mind the difference between two generic types of situation, which will have a great influence on how such an intervention can be conducted.

- Transition to democracy. This may have been largely or even entirely peaceful. Security forces and the government apparatus as a whole may have a high level of technical competence, but a history of identifying with a political party, regime or ethnic/religious group. They may also have been part of the government itself.
- Post-war. The war may have been an international conflict, or a civil war, or a mixture of both. The security forces may themselves need reconstruction, and security policy will have to be adapted to a peacetime environment.

These two cases can, of course, be linked in whole or in part, but by no means always.

II.2 Components of the Security Sector

17. Components of Security. The following paragraphs look at some of the bodies which have been proposed as elements of the security sector. The purpose is not to ask whether, in some theoretical sense, they should be allowed membership, but rather to ask how likely it is, in practice, that they would be part of an SSR initiative aimed contributing stabilising the country.[11]

18. The Security Forces. In practice, this refers to the military (including paramilitary forces if any), the police, the justice system and the intelligence services. In spite of what is sometimes assumed, threats to the stability of a state rarely come from the security services in themselves. The idea that an "unreformed" security sector will spontaneously engage in wars or oppress the population is not borne out by experience. Rather, part or all of the security forces may involve itself in politics, usually on the side of one political party or tendency, or of a particular group. Even where the military seizes strategic control of the nation (as in Algeria or Pakistan) it does not rule alone, (and indeed probably could not have done so). Most so-called "military regimes" are in fact civilian regimes with a number of military officers included, but relying on the support of the existing apparatus of the state to govern. In very few cases do "the military" act as a whole; political tensions and even open conflict between factions can occur during what are described as "military governments".

19. The same is even truer of the police and intelligence services. The former, and even more the latter, do not have the organisation necessary to play a dominant political role – though of course they may seek influence where they can. A "police state" is a state where the police are used by the regime to suppress opposition, not a state run by the police. Likewise, judges may have been selected for political pliability or sympathy with the regime, but are unlikely themselves to take steps spontaneously to put innocent people in prison.

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[11] SSR initiatives undertaken outside the limited case of UN interventions might, of course, reach different conclusions, especially where the issue of stability is less significant.

20. There is an argument for including such bodies as the Coastguard and civil emergency services in the definition of the security sector for certain purposes. Whilst SSR interventions may involve these bodies in certain cases (rationalisation between the Navy and the Coastguard, for example) It is very unlikely that the issues would be important enough by themselves to be part of an SSR intervention as part of a Peace Mission.

21. Finally, the criminal justice system (as opposed to the police) may need help. Restoring public confidence in the state, as is sometimes necessary, means not simply that presumed criminals are arrested, but also that they are prosecuted promptly and, if they are found guilty, there are prisons to send them to, from which they cannot easily escape. In the absence of these factors, law and order is in jeopardy, and the growth of vigilantism is always a risk.

22 It will be clear that, collectively, the institutions listed above have to do their jobs properly if the country is to enjoy stability and the Mission is to conclude satisfactorily. They are therefore the main targets of any SSR intervention. How this should be done is considered in more detail below.

23. Ministries. There is a confusing tendency to talk about government ministries (defence, interior, justice) as though they were somehow responsible for "overseeing" the operational security forces of a country (cf above, p3). As usual, it is unclear what precisely is meant here, but it needs to be stressed that Ministries are not responsible for "control" of the security forces in the oppositional or coercive sense of that term; the two are distinct but closely related elements of the security sector.[12] Indeed, it is easier to look at the relationship from the other direction. Governments come to power with a series of policies, which they can only implement with the help of experts – the staff of a Ministry – who also advise them, provide ideas, manage programmes and help to explain and defend their policies. In a Health Ministry, some expert advice will come from doctors and other health specialists; in a security ministry, some of this technical advice will come from the military or the police – as well, of course as civilian specialists. As an education policy is pointless without schools and teachers, so a security policy requires operational security forces if it is to actually to be implemented. But there has to be an *effective* management of the security sector if stability is to be regained, and the sector itself needs to function as a coherent entity. For this reason, the organisation and function of the Ministries, as well as the relations between them, are very central to an SSR initiative. More is said on this below.

24. Parliament. Parliament intersects with the security sector even though it is not strictly part of it, and attempts at parliamentary reform will certainly have a security element to them. What, if any, attention is given to parliament as part of an SSR initiative will depend on the circumstances. A new democracy with a new and inexperienced parliament will require all sorts of assistance, and it may well be sensible to devote some effort to working with parliamentarians and their advisers to educate them on security issues. Such issues are complex, after all, and parliament cannot play a useful role if it does not understand what it is doing. On the other hand, the problem may be more the corruption of the political system of which parliament is part, and the solution (which goes wider, of course, than just the security

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12 Following Samuel P Huntingdon, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Practice of Civil Military Relations*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1957, civil-military relations theorists conceptualised everyday life in the security sector as a zero-sum game, in which the purpose of the civilians was to "control" the military, and stop them staging coups, by the "minimisation of military power"

sector) will include stronger oversight of the financial affairs of the parliamentarians themselves, especially where they have an influence over procurement issues. In neither case, however, is work with parliament likely to be a major factor in the reintroduction of stability. In certain cases, however, new political forces at odds with the security sector can control parliament, and may be looking for confrontation with the security sector or unable to avoid it. This, by contrast, is a situation which requires an urgent remedy.

25. Civil Society. Even in an area where definitional problems are the norm, the concept of civil society is especially confused and opaque, and the term is often used in different or contradictory senses in the SSR debate. As the Centre for Civil Society at the London School of Economics notes, the concept itself is "contested historically and in contemporary debates." It is held to include "a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups." In theory, such groups represent "shared interests, purposes and values" and should be distinct from the state, as well as from the family and from economic markets, although in practice such boundaries "are often complex, blurred and negotiated." [13]

26. This definition – one among many – is sufficiently elastic that it includes almost everything, but two points are worthy of mention. First, even if "civil society" can be said to exist, it cannot have any political influence as an abstraction, but only through the activities of groups. Secondly, such groups cannot, by definition, have "a role" in the management of the security sector in the sense that parliament or the courts have a constitutional role, since they are self appointed, and, in practice, the agendas of the different groups are often in conflict with each other. There are some severe practical problems with the involvement of civil society groups in SSR, as discussed later, but, even at the conceptual level, it is not clear that the idea of "civil society" exists, or would be understood, outside the developed West.[14]

27. In practical terms, the debate is somewhat different. There are essentially two civil-society-related issues which Peace Missions may face. First, given the politically-sensitive nature of most SSR projects, all sorts of groups outside the security sector will wish to be involved in them. Some may seek influence, others may fear losing it, some may hope to benefit financially or politically, others may feel they have a special right to be consulted. Such groups may well be involved in discussions about changes to the security sector, although not in SSR programmes as such. Consulting them publicly is often good politics, and demonstrates a willingness for dialogue which may be politically useful, although this does not necessarily mean that what they say is always valuable in itself.

28. A more difficult issue is the involvement of civil-society groups in the SSR process itself, because of some special skills or experience they may possess. Whilst this is unlikely, it is not impossible in certain special circumstances. In both South Africa and Ghana, civil society groups actively assisted defence transitions by acting as intermediaries and

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[13] See http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/

[14] E.g on Africa, Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, Oxford, James Curry, 1999, p. 18; on the Balkans Catherine Götze, "Civil Society Organisations in Failing States: The Red Cross in Bosnia and Albania," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol 11, No 4, Winter 2004; and on China Thomas A. Metzger, "The Western Concept of the Civil Society in the Context of Chinese History" in S. Kaviraj and S. Khilnani, eds., *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* , Cambridge University Press, 2001.

facilitators. Groups with a recognised social and moral position – churches, for example – can act in this way if the circumstances are right. It is important, though, that any such group has the confidence of both sides, and does not just issue moral lectures. It is also possible that, in a transitional situation, special expertise might be available in civil society that is not available to a government; this happened to a degree in South Africa after 1994, but has since largely corrected itself as the new government gained experience and confidence.[15] On the other hand, expertise about justice issues, as well as ideas for constitutional change, laws on privacy etc. will be much more common in civil society groups, many of whose members will themselves have legal training. With due regard to the problem of elite-group domination, discussed below, civil society organisations such as legal reform groups can often be of value.

II.3 The Aims of Security Sector Reform

29. The next question to explore is that of the aims of any SSR programme. If the restoration of stability in the country is the strategic objective of the Mission as a whole, then what specific activities need to be undertaken with the security sector itself in support of that objective, and which can come under the heading of SSR? The last qualification is important, because it is common for activities to be carried out in the security sector which are not part of SSR, but are *often believed to be so*. *This can lead to confusion about what SSR actually is. In particular, SSR is a long-term process, whose success or failure is generally measured in decades. It is not an instant solution to problems of instability, still less a quick fix to enable peace operations to conclude sooner. Two particular areas of confusion may be noted here.*

30. Retraining of the Security Forces. Clearly, the security forces of a country will not be able to do their jobs unless they are properly trained in their technical skills. The training of the military, in particular, has been going on for decades, notably by ex-imperial powers, the United States, the former Soviet Union and now China. The motivations were a mixture of altruism, enlightened self-interest and the desire for political influence. It is therefore not uncommon to be told by military colleagues that "we have been doing SSR for years." But this is not really true. The technical capability of the security forces is only one of the necessary conditions. Depending on the context, quite profound organisational and political changes may also be necessary, and of course SSR itself, as the term implies, is much more concerned with the organisation and functioning of the security sector as a whole than it is with the expertise of its individual members. A Peace Mission may therefore include a large retraining element for the security forces, but this has to be distinguished from SSR as such.

31 Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) The question of the relationship, if any, between DDR and SSR cannot be resolved finally, since either process can be defined so as to resemble, or not resemble, the other. The real issue is not one of terminology but of practice; whether procedures for the demobilisation of former combatants are going to be undertaken during a Peace Mission in the timescale of an SSR initiative, and, if so, what the interrelationship between the two processes will be. Obviously, SSR programmes are often undertaken in situations where there has been no war, and therefore there are no former combatants. Where DDR processes are taking place, they need to be kept conceptually, and to some extent practically, separate from SSR.

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15 Governments do, of course, consult outside experts all the time on complex subjects, but that is really another issue.

32. The Need for Precision and Control. Any SSR intervention undertaken during a Peace Mission has to be focused on those elements which will increase stability. There are two particular dangers which need to be guarded against.

- The first is the temptation towards a kind of fussy perfectionism. There are few organisations, from police services to human rights NGOs, which are organisationally perfect, and which absolutely reflect desired ethical and political norms. But there is a limit to the amount and speed of change that any organisation can accept without becoming dysfunctional. The risk of what Gavin Cawthra has described as "transformation fatigue" is always present.[16]

- The second is competition between actors to define an SSR programme. Frequently this takes the form of a competition between funders, and in the end an SSR programme can amount simply to an anthology of initiatives for which finance is available, irrespective of internal coherence or even requirement. This is a particular risk when international organisations with very different outlooks are involved.

33. Defining Stability. Although it is common to talk of "Peace" Operations, stability is an easier objective both to understand and to achieve. (A formal state of peace can co-exist, of course, with great insecurity and even violence). Although the local population may not conceive of stability in organised and structured terms, in practice, it is convenient, perhaps, to imagine it operating at three levels, adopting classic military terminology:

- The Strategic level of stability implies peace in the region and among neighbours, but also freedom from foreign interference, from the indirect effects of conflict elsewhere, and from such problems as smuggling, illegal fishing and theft of natural resources. Some of this will be the responsibility of the military, but many other actors – foreign ministries, intelligence services, customs and frontier guards – will also be involved.
- The Operational level is concerned with the stability of the country as a whole, and with threats from nationally-organised crime, ethnic or regional tensions and violent dissidence, either political or separatist in nature. The police and, in, certain cases the military will be involved.
- Finally, there is the Tactical level, which is stability in daily life. This is the ability to go about one's life free from crime and the threat of violence. It is essentially the responsibility of the police, but of course an efficient justice system is also important.

34. It will be seen that, at each of these levels, there is a need for coordination between services and ministries; this is the essence of security *sector* reform, and why, indeed, it is so called. It is not possible to carry out these functions properly unless the system as a whole operates effectively.

35. Why is Stability Important? Stability is obviously not an end in itself. Its importance is that it permits other things to happen, notably economic growth and political progress. However, it is important to appreciate that, whilst stability *permits* both of these things, it does not *cause* them. There are many other factors which can undermine political and economic life, and so cause instability which even a perfectly-functioning security sector may be unable to cope with. Similarly, any SSR programme has to take into account

[16] Gavin Cawthra "Security Governance in South Africa," *African Security Review,* Vol 14, No 3 (2005).

countervailing pressures from elsewhere; for example, in the absence of economic growth and tax revenues, it may simply not be possible to pay the salaries of the police and army.

36. Stability and the Economy. It is often argued that "there is no development without security and no security without development." This is an understandable politically-balanced formulation, but of course only the first half is observably true. History rather disproves the second half – in many parts of the world, for much of history, there were stable states without development. Indeed, development itself (with the problems of urbanisation, for example) can be a cause of insecurity, notably in encouraging crime. Conversely, renewed stability does not necessarily produce economic recovery, as has been demonstrated in Bosnia in recent years. What does seem to be true is that *sudden* economic changes for the worse can help to undermine political stability, especially when a government seems incapable of responding to them. Thus, the economic woes of both Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia in the 1980s helped to pave the way (assisted, it must be admitted, by the activities of economic donors) for the violence which followed. Yet in both those cases, it was the political polarisation of divided societies, brought about by western demands for competitive elections, that probably made a violent solution inevitable.

37. It is therefore essential to understand that SSR interventions are not conducted in a technical vacuum, but rather in a sensitive and often very difficult political and economic context. These latter two factors may between them swamp any positive impact an SSR programme may have, and, in turn, SSR activities themselves can further destabilise an already delicate situation, as happened in Rwanda with the 1993 Arusha Peace Agreement, for example. In general, therefore, prudence is to be encouraged in the pursuit of SSR activities.

38. Public Acceptability. The word "accountability" is often employed when describing the results of SSR interventions, although not always consistently. In some cases, the kind of accountability described is to "civil authorities" (itself an ambiguous term);[17] in other cases, accountability to parliaments, the public, or even to civil society seems to be implied. There are, in fact, three or four quite separate ideas here, and it is convenient to take them one by one, since they have major implications for how the SSR component of a Peace Mission might be carried out.

39. At its simplest, it can be said that the security forces of a country depend on a certain measure of public support if they are to function effectively. The security forces of a country will never be large enough to physically coerce entire populations, and even the most brutal dictatorship only survives with at least the passive acquiescence of much of the population. But for the security forces to be effective, more is required. Candidates have to come forward to join, parliaments have to pass laws and vote money, non-uniformed individuals have to apply for jobs alongside uniformed security services, and, most importantly, members of the public have to actively support the investigation and prosecution of suspected criminals.

40. The nature of this support varies from society to society, from sullen acquiescence to enthusiastic cooperation, and depends on a range of factors. The most basic is technical competence. Nobody will be enthusiastic about joining an Army which is poorly trained and badly equipped, and few taxpayers will want to fund it. A police force which has no vehicles or radios (a common situation in parts of the world) and which is useless at catching

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17 For example in the OECD's Introductory Briefing, available at http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/26/52/35785462.pdf

criminals, will not have any public support, and thus will be even less able to do its job. In addition, of course, security forces which are untrained and unpaid frequently resort to corruption and brutality, both as a way of surviving, and of trying to do their job. A judicial system which takes years to bring people to trial, and where cases are dismissed for lack of evidence, positively invites public disdain and recourse to vigilante methods.

41. The Wider Background. Security forces are not corrupt, incompetent or brutal because it is in their nature to be so. There are societies where people join the security forces because of opportunities for corruption, but that is a problem of the society itself before it is a problem of the security sector. Likewise, police and soldiers who are not paid may prey off the local population, but would be less likely to do so if they were paid properly. Unskilled police officers pressurised to reduce levels of street crime may resort to brutal tactics because they are not actually trained in professional investigative techniques. It is therefore misleading to think that one can reform a security sector in isolation from the rest of a society, or that public acceptability depends on no more than changes in the sector itself. In many cases, disenchantment with the security forces is only a special case of estrangement from the government and the political system as a whole, which such forces support.

42. In this sense, accountability implies that the security forces of a country are seen as responsive to the needs of the population. That population expects to be protected against crime and civil disorder, as well as foreign interference and instability. It also expects that the security forces themselves will act in a professional and ethical manner. The latter means, among many other things, that suppliers of goods to the military are paid promptly, that visitors to police stations are received with courtesy, that crimes reported are professionally investigated and that trials are fairly conducted.

43. There is often a tendency to draw too stark a contrast between the functions of "reformed" and "unreformed" security forces. Very few such forces were ever devoted *exclusively* to "regime protection" and "external threats". Few regimes themselves, indeed, have ever considered that they are illegitimate, or and acting against the interests of the people, and security forces themselves have often been viewed as legitimate even in non-democratic societies, provided they performed effectively. External defence may be as big a priority for a "reformed" military as it was in the bad old days, and a "reformed" police force may spend its time investigating much the same crimes as it always did. It is the political context, and the behaviour of the security forces themselves, which have changed. Even in a democracy, there are threats to the state, which the public will demand should be met. What has changed is not, in general, the tasks implied in meeting these threats, but rather basis on which the state claims legitimacy in protecting itself.

44. In addition, the public has a right to expect that the security forces in a democracy are as transparent as possible; the taxpayers want to know where their money is going, and also that the security forces themselves are acting within the law at all times. One should not over-stress this second point, however. In most democracies, citizens are more concerned about their own rights than the rights of others, especially those they disagree with or think dangerous. The security forces are much more likely to be criticised, by public and media, for being too restrained than for being too vigorous.

45. There are special problems in societies divided by ethnicity or religion, especially where the security forces have been used to institutionalise the control of one group over another. In societies like the Former Yugoslavia, where the security forces and their targets

were both multi-ethnic, they were tolerated, if not necessarily liked. But once that country began to fragment, elections produced national and local governments that were often mono-ethnic, and purged the security forces to ensure ethnic control. This often created insecurity among other ethnic groups, who responded by forming militias for "self-protection".

46. Broadly, we can say that, in a democracy, accountability means that the security forces act with general public support, with missions and methods of operation approved of by most of the population. There is then the question of whether formal structures of accountability are necessary, and if so what priority they should have. The answer obviously depends on the specifics of the experience of the country concerned.

47. There are certain characteristics of a democratic system which apply generally, and therefore to the security forces as well. Governments should explain and defend their policies, parliament should be entitled to ask questions and receive answers, as well as pass legislation and vote on budgets, the public and the media should be informed and have a chance to ask questions as well. These are fundamental features of a democracy, and they should be incorporated without question into any new arrangements for the security sector. (Obviously there are differences between the sensitivity of, say, intelligence documents and documents on education, but these are differences of degree, not of type.) Why should the security forces be thought different?

48. Part of the problem is the assumption (not borne out by experience) that the security sector is inherently uncontrollable, and is likely at any moment to start oppressing the population. It must therefore be "controlled" and "accountable". Peace Missions will rarely encounter such situations on the ground, however. The real issue is the way in which the security forces fit into the structure of the country's political system. The most obvious priority, especially in transitional situations, is that the government should control the apparatus of the state, including the security forces. It is then free to make use of those forces for its policies, within the limits of the constitution and law, as voted by parliament, and as enforced by a court if necessary. Parliament usually has ultimate control of the finances, and has the right to question ministers and officials. In principle, this is the same as for any other area of government policy.

49. In some cases, a political transition from a dictatorship or authoritarian state will be taking place during the mission. Such a transition is delicate, especially as regards the security forces, which almost always act as a pillar of states of this kind. Even if, as is normal, the regime itself has some political support within the population, large elements will necessarily be excluded, and confidence-building gestures are often useful and important. So the constitution of a parliamentary defence committee, whilst in itself not of overwhelming significance, can be a useful symbolic move, to demonstrate a new relationship between the military and the democratic process.

50. This concludes a brief examination of the main conceptual problems which SSR interventions might face as part of Peace Missions. The concluding part of this study is devoted to the more practical problems.

III – Practical Problems and Possible Solutions.

III.1 - Problems

51. Imbalance of Power. SSR interventions usually take place in weaker, poorer states and are organised by states which are stronger and richer. Money is normally on offer. Whilst the current emphasis on "ownership" of SSR programmes by locals is in itself praiseworthy, the fact is that SSR interventions generally take place, not in isolation, but in a wider political and economic context which strongly influences how the programme is seen. In Latin America, SSR initiatives were part of a move to democracy after the Cold War. In Eastern Europe they were part of the price demanded for the possibility of closer relations with the EU and NATO. In Africa, where Peace Operations have mostly been conducted, they are often part of wide-spectrum, very expensive, interventions, involving many national and international actors. Few governments offered a foreign-funded SSR programme in such circumstances will feel able to turn it down. If "ownership" is essential therefore, it is also likely to be readily conceded, and, in the end, may not mean very much. Much more work needs to be done on the concept of ownership, and its practical implications. In particular, it has to be acknowledged that what local communities or governments want cannot necessarily be assumed to be the same as what donors think they should want. The recent OECD "Whose Ownership?" initiative may well prove to be useful in this context.

52. Manipulation. It is increasingly recognised that local actors are capable of using – and abusing – SSR programmes for their own benefit. In particular, in any kind of divided society, changes in the roles and powers of the security forces will necessarily have implications for the relationship between various political forces. A government drawn from one faction or factions may be very happy to approve an SSR programme for an army largely drawn from other factions. The smaller and weaker the army becomes, the stronger is the government's position and the larger will be the role played by other parts of the security apparatus which it does control, or militias which it might sponsor. Conversely, SSR interventions should not scruple to use personal ambition and careerism as ways of encouraging forward-thinking individuals into positions of influence. Manipulation is also possible using the very confusion of SSR terminology as a weapon. SSR theory often refers to both "depoliticising the military" and "putting the military under political control", sometimes in the same document. These two notions are not necessarily in opposition to each other, but they are both complex and subtle ideas, easily misused. So a new government intending to use the security forces against its political opponents may dismiss uniformed professionals from positions of influence and replace them with its political appointees, all the while claiming to be following good SSR principles. *Likewise, we should remember that the western assumption of functionally-differentiated professional security forces does not exist everywhere. Not only may security forces be linked to political parties, they may overlap with organised crime, and indeed engage in criminal acts themselves. The security forces one sees may not be the only ones, or even the most effective. Ethno-criminal militias may be as powerful as the security forces if not more so, and the distinction between such forces and the overt security forces of the state is often not clear.*

53. Stability. Whilst it is often argued that "one cannot overemphasize the crucial role of Security Sector Reform for stability and consolidation of peace,"[18] in fact it is important to understand that what is really meant here is that a *well-functioning security system* is essential for these purposes. SSR as a process is not necessarily stabilising, especially when it is still under way, and can indeed be very negative for stability and political progress. This is easy enough to understand. Not only do SSR programmes create losers as well as winners (and often more of the former) but in many countries control of the security forces is a matter of

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18 Remarks by Jan Kubiš, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Geneva 4 March 2008.

political survival, and sometimes literally a matter of life and death. Especially in divided societies, control of the security forces can be part of a complicated balancing act which ensures the overall stability of the country. As already noted, this can result in many different and overlapping security organisations, employing between them more people than are strictly necessary. But an efficiency-driven reorganisation may undermine the stability of the nation, even if it saves money.

54. Part of the problem is that SSR initiatives often do not take enough account of what the security sector is actually *for*. Too often, liberal Anglo-Saxon assumptions about peace and security, mixed with the traditional suspicion and distrust of the security sector displayed by civil-military relations and development experts, leads to a technocratic management-style exercise (strengthen this, weaken that) which can miss the point. For example, in the abstract, most people would agree that the military should not have a political role. In practice, the military may be a force for stability, as the only genuinely multi-ethnic force in a country, and reflexive demands to place it "under political control" may not be heeded locally. Most people in most countries will put stability ahead of all other concerns, and SSR programmes need to take account of this. "First, do no harm" is an injunction taught to doctors throughout history, and might be the motto of the prudent SSR practitioner as well.

55. The Wider Context. As the above example suggests, the preservation of the stability of a state can involve the security forces in functions for which they were not intended, and which they do not necessarily want. In theory, the military should *not* have to warn the political leadership against what it sees as irresponsible behaviour. In principle, the police should *not* have to be carefully ethnically balanced in different parts of the country. No-one would deliberately design a system with these weaknesses, or retain it if a better one was available. As a rule, examples like the above occur, not because the security forces want them, but because of weaknesses in the political and economic system itself. The problem is that these weaknesses may be so profound that attempts to reform the security sector, laudable as they may be, will not actually change anything of importance. Consider two simple examples.

56. In many countries, the police are paid poorly if at all, because the funds to do so are not available. It is assumed that they will make money by extorting it and by accepting bribes. Obviously, this is unacceptable, not simply for moral reasons, but also because such a police force can never be effective. Yet what can be done? Anti-corruption campaigns are themselves instrumentalised for domestic political purposes (often to get rid of opponents), and, in the end, it is questionable whether it is really fair to expect public officials to work for nothing. Yet if the money is not available, what is the answer? Even in a wealthier political system, where some money is available, the level of corruption may be such that the temptation to dishonesty is always there, and few policemen can be blamed if they occasionally succumb. Likewise, a justice system may be so completely overwhelmed that even routine cases can take years to be processes, and supplicants may have little option but to pay if they want to their case be heard.

57. In many other countries, there is a tradition of the manipulation of the security forces for political advantage. It can be as limited as harassment or eavesdropping; it can be as extreme as assassination. But of course it is a problem of the political culture of the country, not the security sector itself, and stopping it requires a change in that political system. That may not be easy; politicians famously change their opinions when they get into power and discover its advantages, and, of course, the worry remains, if I behave responsibly, how do I know that my opponent, when his or her time comes, will do the same?

58. Elites and the Security Sector. Different social and economic groups in a country will see security problems – and hence the security sector – differently. It is unavoidable that an SSR programme will deal primarily with local elites. These elites may be divided among themselves on various issues, but their common feature will be that they lead a different life from the life of ordinary people. There is nothing strange about this: it happens in every society. The danger is that the perceptions and objectives of such elites will be different from, and even opposed to, those of ordinary people.

59. It is difficult for those in an SSR programme to interact with ordinary people. There will be problems of language and communication in any event, but ordinary people may well not have the education in the sophisticated concepts in which the security sector is often discussed, nor necessarily the experience of articulating them. The temptation to work with elites who speak a foreign language (normally, English, French or Portuguese), who have worked or studied abroad and who understand and can reproduce the specialist vocabulary of SSR, can be irresistible, especially when time is short. Moreover many elite groups (security sector officials and politicians in particular) will by definition be involved in SSR activities. Others, like the media and NGOs, will have the skills and experience, and in some cases the funding, to influence the debate as well.

60. Ordinary people have their own security concerns, and are often capable of expressing them clearly.[19] But they inevitably live in a different world from that of the elites. The latter's view of crime, for example, will be of expensive security precautions, private guards and fear of car-jackings. They will be impatient, perhaps, with an under-trained and corrupt police force, and will press for restraints on police powers and better protection for citizens. Ordinary people are more likely to suffer from the direct effects of crime, such as petty theft and assault, fear of walking the streets, and exploitation by local gangs. They may have no confidence in the police anyway, and put their trust in vigilante groups, or even criminals themselves. Likewise, in many countries the middle classes manage to avoid military service, and would never contemplate a career in the military for their children. Their view of military issues will therefore be very different from that of the economically less fortunate.

61. It does not follow, of course, that the interests of elites, even if different from ordinary people, are necessarily always opposed to them. But experience suggests that SSR programmes risk being elite bargains between teams of foreign practitioners, under pressure to demonstrate results and with money to spend, and local groups and individuals happy to make use of the team for their own purposes and to help them spend their money. One example would be increased transparency and freedom of information – worthy causes, but in most countries an objective restricted to small elites. In an SSR intervention, there will be pressure from such groups – the media, opposition politicians, campaigning organisations – who would benefit professionally from more transparency, even though ordinary people may not find the subject of much interest.

62. The Christmas Tree Effect. As has already been noted, SSR programmes always run the risk of degenerating into a collection of initiatives which someone is prepared to fund, irrespective of their inherent importance. At the theoretical level, this problem has been recognised, and some efforts are usually made to coordinate the work of different groups. But

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19 Although the involvement of western elites is necessary if they are to be heard. See for example the famous World Bank study *Voices of the Poor*, available at web.worldbank.org.

this is unlikely ever to be fully effective. Actors now include, not merely different UN agencies (who generally refuse to subordinate themselves to each other) but institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, increasingly the European Union, sometimes NATO, often sub-regional organisations, and various international NGOs working either for the one of the above or for a western nation or nations, themselves often represented directly, either singly or in groups. The difficulties of this kind of situation go beyond mere lack of coordination; there is a risk of different and conflicting agendas, where more and more elements are added to an SSR programme until it resembles an overburdened Christmas tree that collapses finally under its own weight.

63. As has already been noted, different organisations will arrive with different ideas about what SSR is and how it should be implemented, different objectives for their presence in the country and indeed different ideas about the country itself. They will also have different motives. Even if these motives are entirely altruistic, SSR programmes involve spending money, and this has to be justified to national and international audiences. So it is tempting to focus on politically-safe, cheap programmes which can be completed quickly, irrespective of whether the right issues are addressed. It is easier, cheaper and more attractive to fund workshops for parliamentarians than provide investigative skills training for policemen with a reputation for brutality. But not all interventions are altruistic; the potential influence of SSR programmes is such that they are attractive opportunities for political leverage, as well as ways of demonstrating, relatively cheaply, political interest in a country and the will to be involved.

64. The Risk of Neo-colonialism. SSR practitioners are surprised if their efforts are not always welcomed in the countries in which they work. But this is not hard to understand. As well as the risks of upsetting stability and creating large numbers of losers, SSR directly affects the most sensitive functions of a state – what the French call the "regalian" functions. For small, poor countries these functions may be almost all that the state has left, and foreigners, no matter how well-meaning, may be treated with suspicion. At its simplest, SSR interventions arise because foreigners, usually white and wealthy, arrive in a country believing that they can reform its government and security apparatus, because their own ideas and practices are superior . The fact that, fairly often, the government and security apparatus is based on one bequeathed by a colonial power in the first case does not make the situation any easier. It is not surprising, therefore, that some critics of SSR argue that it is essentially a third stage of colonialism – after the direct stage, in which colonial defence forces were often raised, and then arming and training of military forces of new states during the Cold War . However this may be, it is undeniable that the basic rich powerful foreigner/poor weak native dichotomy exists in almost all SSR interventions.

65. From the Romans onward, empires created local elites to help them rule. This was as true of the Ottoman Empire as of western colonial ones, and it leaves its traces in a political system even after nominal independence. SSR interventions today frequently take place in states where foreigners have most of the economic and political power, and where political influence derives from being as close to these centres of power as possible, and serving them well. Learning English (or to a lesser extent French or Portuguese), attending universities and training courses abroad and being careful to have the right opinions on various subjects, are recognised stepping stones to a political career, irrespective of the individual's competence, or even honesty. Prospering in such a political career means being seen as "moderate" "pro-western" "reasonable" or some other circumlocution, and accepting foreign initiatives, such as SSR, when they are offered.

66. In turn, non-governmental elites can also be created in think-tanks, NGOs, university centres and organised civil-society groups. Even in relatively wealthy and stable Third World societies, such institutions are almost always funded by foreign governments, directly or indirectly, and are able to pay their personnel decent wages in hard currency. So the head of the local branch of a human rights NGO based in an African state may quite possibly earn more money, and be as influential, than the Interior Minister of that country, without being elected to anything. It is not surprising that, in some African countries, security-related NGOs are distrusted as agents of foreign powers. In strict logic, it has to be admitted that this is a role some of them sometimes perform.

III. – Practical Solutions

67. Strategy. The first requirement of an SSR programme conducted as part of a Peace Mission should be that it must support the objectives of that mission, not at a general or declaratory level, but in detail. As indicated above, there is a tendency to confuse the *objectives* of SSR – a better and more effective security sector – with the *process* of SSR itself. Not all SSR interventions are successful, of course, and individual initiatives can themselves be destabilising. As a general rule, therefore, SSR programmes should only be conducted where a clear link can be demonstrated to the Mission's primary objectives. In addition, the two questions posed in para 7 above – what specifically is wrong with the security sector, and what specifically could be done to it to improve stability – need clear answers before the programme is undertaken. This requirement needs to be incorporated in peace operations doctrine, both generally and also in specific cases.

68; Prioritisation; Not everything can be done at once and it is often dangerous to try. There needs to be a sophisticated analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the security sector, and identification of which, if any, initiatives will have the practical effect of improving stability and assisting overall Mission objectives. Other initiatives, whatever their attractions, will have to wait. It is also important that the set of initiatives chosen should have an internal consistency. For example, improving capacity in an MoD and strengthening local security think-tanks may be initiatives at cross-purposes with each other unless the pool of local experts is sufficiently large to avoid competition between the two. SSR interventions should not begin without an established order of priority, subscribed to by all.

69. Local Understanding. In theory, SSR practitioners increasingly understand the need to pay attention to local conditions and specifics of local cultures. There are two problems, however. The first is that many SSR programmes are driven by external factors – availability of funding, political interest, self-image of institutions, involvement in the country for other reasons etc. There is often no time, and sometimes no interest, in a detailed country analysis, especially if the conclusions are equivocal or negative. But secondly, there are limits to depth of analysis which can be carried out, not only for reasons of time, but also because beyond a certain point added complexity becomes self-defeating. What is needed, rather, is a clear and relatively straightforward analysis which sets out the main elements of the situation in terms of a typology which is sophisticated enough to be useful, without being too complex. (It is not the same as an evaluation mission); Examples might include:

- *Context*. Post-conflict, political transition, fragile state?
- *Political System*. Electoral, one-party, authoritarian, ethnic/religious?

- *Security Sector*. Fragmented, politically-divided, controlled by political party, disputed between political parties, involved in politics, politicised, degree of competence?
- *Strategic Context*. Domestic security problems, organised crime, insurrection, regional security problems, involvement of neighbouring states?
- *Parliament*. Influential, weak, corrupt?
- *Government System*. Presidential with appointees, parliamentary with prime minister, hybrid, involvement of President/Prime Minister in security sector?

and obviously many others. These are not entirely separate issues, and they are not mutually exclusive either. Few situations will merit a "yes/no" answer. The idea is to construct a political topography of the security sector, such that sensible decisions can be taken about what, if any, SSR initiatives to pursue. In principle, SSR interventions should not take place without this kind of prior analysis. A template illustrating how it might be conducted should be developed and circulated for comment.

70. Choice of Personnel. This is perhaps the main determinant of success for an SSR mission, and involves a range of factors, not only at the individual level but in terms of the construction of the team as a whole. It goes without saying that, however chosen, the team must work collectively in the strategic fashion described above, and according to a list of priorities reflecting the overall aims of the Mission.

71. Experience and expertise. The baseline qualification for membership of an SSR team should be experience in the security sector itself. Although in some cases *significant* experience of working together with the security sector may be an acceptable substitute, the team as a whole should have a level of experience allowing them to talk on equal professional terms with their local equivalents. This is not just a matter of expertise; it is also a matter of credibility. A suspicious senior military officer confronted with the possibility, for the first time, of a civilian politician as Minister, will pay much more attention to the opinions of a fellow officer on the subject that to an expert in political science. Similarly, human rights training for the police is better given by policemen with the appropriate training than by human rights experts as such; the point is not the technical content (which can be learned from a book) but rather how police forces apply such concepts in doing their job.

72. On the other hand, security sector professionals may lack the intellectual training to analyse problems and give convincing advice. Outside experts may well have a wider comparative knowledge of how problems are addressed in different countries, as well as a better understanding of wider political contexts. It is important to understand that experience in the security sector does not, of itself, qualify someone to be an SSR practitioner. At a minimum, that experience has to be broad and general enough to be useful, and deep experts may not always be the right people. For example, someone whose entire career has been with people trafficking in their own country may be less useful that an alternative expert with a great deal of experience of dealing with organised crime in different countries. Deep experts can always be brought in to make targeted interventions. Practitioners should also have the right intellectual and personal skills. In particular it is very easy to fall into the trap of arrogantly suggesting "this is how we do things, you should copy us." With a multinational team proposing different solutions, chaos can easily result. Ideally, the team should have a wide experience between them not only of their own countries but of others. Language can be an insoluble problem: at least some of the team should speak the local language, but it is very hard, outside a few major languages (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese) to demand that all team members have linguistic skills *in addition to* all the other qualifications.

73. Training. Training can make up for some of these deficiencies. An SSR team should not deploy, even briefly, without a good understanding of the environment of its host country. But in addition, there is a set of more technical issues – structure and development of the security sector, history, culture and political system of the country – with which the team needs to be familiar before it deploys. More generally, some of the more conceptual issues addressed earlier in this paper, to do with the place of the security sector in the political system of the country, and the roles of different actors, probably need to be formally taught at some point. Training courses for SSR practitioners exist already in some cases. As a priority, a standardised syllabus should be developed, to be complemented by a series of modules aimed at specific regions or cultures. An outline of such a standardised course should be developed urgently.

74. Modesty of Objectives. For rather more than a decade now, western and international organisations have set themselves extremely ambitious objectives in post-crisis and post-conflict states. They have frequently aimed at nothing less than state reconstruction, or even state building *ab initio.* SSR interventions have been an integral part of these objectives, and have themselves often been very ambitious in scope. After the evident over-enthusiasm of the 1990s for wide-spectrum nation-building, there has recently been something of a reaction, as the results of interventions start to be evaluated. A number of studies have looked at the equivocal effect of UN operations on the local population,[20] and on the difficulties actually encountered in nation-building on the ground[21] In a closely related area, the World Bank has recently commissioned a report on factors behind economic growth which takes a similarly cool view of the success of neo-liberal policies recommended to developing states, and proposes a more modest policy based on historical evidence and sensitive to local circumstances.[22]

75. There is nothing in any of this literature to suggest that, in itself, intervention in states after crisis and conflict is unwise or necessarily ineffective. But it is clear that ambitions for the future will have to be scaled back to more reasonable proportions, and more attention will have to be paid to practical difficulties and local conditions. This is as true of SSR as of other elements of intervention. But such is the centrality of the security sector to the health and even the survival of a nation in crisis, that security sector interventions in particular must be approached in a spirit of modesty and pragmatism, recognising that improving the operation of security sectors is not an easy task, but that, by contrast, undermining them is simple to do. This reinforces the need to think carefully, prioritise, and conduct interventions only when it is clear that they will enhance the objective of increased stability.

IV. Summary of Recommendations.

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[20] Notably Béatrice Pouligny, *Ils nous avaient promis la paix : Opérations de l'ONU et populations locales,* Paris, Sciences Po, 2004.

[21] E.g. Simon Chesterman, *You, The People: The United Nations, Transitional Administration and State-Building,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004. and Kate Jenkins and William Plowden, *Governance and Nationbuilding: The Failure of International Intervention*¸ London, Edward Elgar, 2007.

[22] *The Growth Report: Strategies for Sustained Growth and Inclusive Development*, available at http://www.growthcommission.org/index.php

1. So central is a well-functioning security sector to the stability and prosperity of a country, especially after a crisis, that great caution is needed in making changes to it.

2. It needs to be clearly understood that whereas a well-functioning security sector is an aid to stabilisation, the *process* of the reform of the security sector itself can be destabilising and dangerous, and so needs to be carefully managed.

3. The content of SSR programs should faithfully reflect the strategic objectives of the mission as a whole, and peace operations doctrine should reflect this.

4. A system of priorities needs to be established before each operation,, based on an evaluation of which measures are most likely to assist with the stability of the country in the short term., in turn reflecting overall mission objectives. Guidance on how to establish these priorities should be developed quickly.

5. A major effort is required to better understand and define concepts and objectives of SSR interventions, using agreed terminology, as well as to develop a common understanding of different types of security sectors and their problems. . This is especially important given that multiple actors (such as the EU and the UN) are often involved in the same operation. An early start should be made on developing such a document, to be used by major international organisations, institutions and states, with the aim of producing a finished version within twelve months.

6. It is critical to construct a coherent SSR programme which is more than just a collection of initiatives which donors are willing to fund.

7. The particular circumstances of each country are so important that there should be a careful analysis of them before the programme is approved, let alone undertaken. Guidance on how to do this is lacking at the moment, and a suitable document should be developed immediately.

8. SSR programmes should be carefully distinguished from other initiatives, like DDR or military retraining, which may be taking place at the same time. This needs to be reflected in documents defining the mission and its objectives.

9. It should be recognised that SSR programmes are always open to instrumentalisation by governments, and manipulation by local elites, whose interests may not be identical with those of the population as a whole. By contrast, "ownership" may not mean much in a context where the receiving state is weak and poor. Much more thought needs to be given to the concept of “ownership”. It is recommended that a paper be produced for the next Challenges forum.

10. Experience of the security sector is a necessary criterion for membership of an SSR mission, but not a sufficient one. Wide experience and good personal qualities are more important than deep technical knowledge. Guidelines for the selection of personnel should be developed urgently.