

A decorative graphic consisting of a grid of grey dots of varying sizes, with several dots highlighted in red. The dots are arranged in a pattern that roughly outlines the shape of a map of Europe and Africa.

# Strategy, Jointness, Capacity

## Institutional Requirements for Supporting Security Sector Reform

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- Promoting security and justice in conflict-affected and fragile contexts is in many ways central to women's and men's lives. In their external engagements Western donors often seek to address the security needs by enhancing the capacities of local security institutions and by promoting reforms in the respective security sectors (police, military, justice authorities, executive and ministries, parliaments, oversight bodies) and the overarching governance system. For the purpose of this study, all these activities are broadly defined as »security sector reform« (SSR).
- Unfortunately, empirical evidence suggests that most of these SSR programs, in particular those aimed at training and equipping security institutions, have not produced the desired results. When it comes to the implementation of SSR programmes, it is striking that the political nature of security provision and governance in fragile and transformative countries is often not matched by an equally political strategy on the part of the Western donors. The ways in which donors plan, organize, operate and implement their SSR programs is often fundamentally at odds with the politically dynamic nature of change processes in recipient states.
- Lacking results are mainly due to the complex and turbulent political environments in which the initiatives are pursued. But it is also owing to the fact that governments and international organizations are weakly positioned to plan, implement, evaluate and adapt their SSR engagements.
- By comparing the SSR policies of the USA, Netherlands, Germany, France and the United Kingdom – and two international organisations – the European Union and the African Union – this study derives recommendations about how implementing bureaucracies can develop and implement an urgently needed »political approach« in their SSR programmes.



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## Foreword

Promoting security and justice is in many ways central to women's and men's lives in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Inclusive political settlements, peaceful transitions, the rule of law and development may all depend on successful reforms of the security institutions, security sector actors and the governance system as a whole.

Efforts to gradually transform the governance system of the security sector – defined as structures, institutions and personnel responsible for security provision, management and oversight – are a highly risky, contested and unpredictable endeavour. Without exaggeration programmes of security sector reform (SSR) and security sector governance (SSG) are among the most sensitive forms of engagement – or intervention – by third parties in a specific country or socio-political space. Even where governments have expressed the desired interest in democratic reforms in their security governance, as seen, for example, in many Eastern and Central Europe countries, fierce resistance from different stakeholders has to be overcome.

The security sector of any state, whether so-called failing, consolidating or developed, is the core element of political order and statehood from where sovereign power and rule is exercised. In conflict prone and highly fragile political contexts this power base is repeatedly contested by different actors with diverse and changing motivations and agendas, which regularly resort to violence to reach their goals.

Such politically contested regions draw the attention of the international community and third parties for reasons of extreme development challenges, human suffering or high levels of insecurity, all of which have the potential to generate negative spillover effects. Where countries or regions are of specific strategic interest for external parties, these commonly apply SSR or SSR labelled policies as instruments of first choice in order to restore or promote security.

Unfortunately, a lot of empirical evidence over the years shows that SSR/G programmes have not produced the desired results. In particular ›train and equip‹ programmes have not effectively contributed to the goal of providing inclusive security for the people and commu-

nities affected by violent conflict. The lack of results is to a large extent due to the complex and turbulent political environments in which the initiatives are pursued. But it is also owing to the fact that governments and international organizations often fail to do *what* they should be doing, which includes *how* they plan, implement, evaluate and adapt their SSR/G policies.

Any external party that engages in security sector reform will need to have the best strategies, instruments, administrative structures, financing funds and people in place to have a chance to succeed. What these requirements should be, what institutional set ups would be well-suited to conducting risky SSR/G programmes, and how strategies should be designed and implemented are questions that this study tries to answer. The title of the study ›Strategy, Jointness, Capacity – The requirements for international SSR engagements‹ already defines the specific dimensions for which the study proposes recommendations.

This comparative study consists of three main parts: First, by mapping financial contributions in the field of SSR/G by OECD countries, the paper shows that the bulk of SSR/G assistance nowadays classifies as train and equip, whereas only a fraction focuses on democratic governance in the security sector of partner countries. More than half of all SSR/G funds go to countries with an exceptionally high likelihood of political instability. This reinforces the need to design SSR/G programs as ›vehicles for change management‹ to better cope with political risks. Second, the volume brings together leading experts in the field of SSR/G who each offer an analysis of the financial, institutional, and political foundations of SSR/G practices and policies of major bi- and multilateral donors. Case studies address the Netherlands (Chapter 2 by Erwin van Veen), Germany (Chapter 3 by Philipp Rotmann), United Kingdom (Chapter 4 by Paul Jackson), United States (Chapter 5 by Julie Werbel), France (Chapter 6 by Aline Leboeuf), the European Union (Chapter 7 by Ursula Schröder and Bianca Süßenbach) and the African Union (Chapter 8 by Eboe Hutchful). The chapters show to what extent or not donors design SSR/G as change management and identify opportunities and obstacles. Thanks to the conceptual framework developed by Steffen Eckhard (Chapter 1) readers are guided through the individual case studies, which can be read either on their own or as part of the whole.

Third, the final chapter outlines three recommendations for states and international organizations which offer external SSR/G assistance and aspire to better align their SSR/G programming with their self-proclaimed transformative SSR/G agenda.

It is no coincidence that this study appears at a time when the Federal Government of Germany is in the process of drafting a whole-of-government SSR strategy that is to be finalized by the beginning of 2019. In addition to the public discussions and expert engagements at various levels and in different formats, we hope that the findings of this study will also be reflected in the strategy formulation. We are grateful to the responsible government officials from the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, the German Federal Foreign Office and the German Federal Ministry of Defence for their willingness to discuss some of the preliminary conclusions in Berlin on various occasions.

The idea to commission this study reflects our own experiences at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in promoting politics of security provision, management and oversight that respect and adhere to principles of democratic governance. In our daily work in a range of country offices in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle and Near East we seek to enhance a more inclusive provision of security for people and communities affected by political violence, repressive security institutions, injustice,

corruption and serious crime. Throughout the years of our engagement we have also learned to better tailor the programmes and types of engagement to the local context and the interests and needs of the people. Some of the study's findings can also be applied to FES as an external actor engaged in security sector and governance reform programming.

Finally, my sincerest thanks go to the authors of the study, who showed remarkable commitment and patience throughout the entire process from the beginning of the conceptual development of the study to the sometimes laborious final steps. They are, in alphabetical order, Eboe Hutchful, Paul Jackson, Aline Leboeuf, Philipp Rotmann, Ursula Schröder, Bianca Süßenbach, Erwin van Veen, Julie Werbel and Dionys Zink. In particular, special thanks are due to Steffen Eckhard, who was instrumental in bringing different ideas together and offering good advice on the conceptual preliminaries.

Last but not least, this study would not have been published without the unceasing motivational support of my colleague Bodo Schulze, who was part and parcel of the development of this study and the most important advisor en route to the final product.

*Konstantin Bärwaldt*  
Berlin, September 2018

## Executive Summary

Control over the security forces touches the heart of political power in any country. This is why external assistance in security sector reform and governance (SSR/G) is one of the most challenging activities within the portfolio of external security policy and development assistance. When it comes to the implementation of SSR/G programmes, it is striking that the political nature of SSR/G in fragile and transformative countries is often not matched by an equally political strategy on the part of Western donors. Western donors current general operationalization, organization and implementation of SSR/G assistance is fundamentally at odds with the politically dynamic nature of change processes in so-called recipient states. There is a dire need for a political approach to SSR/G that is built on a thorough »change management« theory and process.

How can international donors and practitioners follow a »political approach« in their SSR programmes? How can implementing bureaucracies incorporate the principles of political SSR and security sector governance programmes in their practice? Are the messy demands of political analysis and action reconcilable with underlying disbursement incentives and entrenched professional cultures? These are the questions that this study tries to answers.

The conceptual chapter of this study (Chapter 1) builds on the assumption that external SSR/G assistance tends to take a fragmented project approach that emphasizes short-term technical goals such as training classes, delivering equipment, building barracks or providing vehicles which are built around decisive timetables and deliverables. Budget spending is subject to specific time frames, financial rules prevent flexible fund allocation, and above all, publics focus on fast fixes instead of long-term engagement with at best minor progress. These bureaucratic politics self-reinforce the dominant train and equip approach. This ignores that what happens in a host state is essentially a political process. As such, it requires anticipation of power dynamics, economic interests, cultural customs, systems thinking and windows of opportunity.

By studying and comparing the bureaucratic politics related to the SSR policies and implementation of five donor countries – the USA, Netherlands (NL), Germany (GER), France (FRA), the United Kingdom (UK) – and two

international organisations – the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) – this study derives recommendations for the ideal organization of bureaucracies (actors, processes, settings) to cope with and anticipate the political dynamics and demands of the »beneficiary countries«.

### Key findings and recommendations

#### Finding 1: Absence of strategy

Although most donor countries and organisations analysed here possess elements of a SSR/G policy (UK, US, GER, FRA, EU), implementation is always split between different agencies, including departments of foreign affairs, development, and defence and at times also justice and internal affairs. In the US there are 46 different offices with an SSR/G-related mandate. This implies agency competition, haphazard funding decisions and, worse, incoherent epistemic interests and approaches to SSR/G (e.g. development vs. security). Barring individual high-profile recipient countries, such as Afghanistan, donors rarely create a unit where strategic thinking about the transformation of countries can take place.

#### Finding 2:

##### The »counter bureaucracy« as a modest problem

Bureaucratic actors and mechanisms interested in ensuring proper budget spending and compliance, here presented as »counter bureaucracy«, are a modest problem for most executive state agencies. Although inter-agency planning and implementation is very rigid due to specific planning horizons and budget frames (e.g. annual vs. multiyear appropriations), the executive bureaucracy usually manages to cope with formal budgetary requirements, either because project managers or supervisors are creative enough or because there is sufficient political pressure (NL, US, GER). However, none of the case studies found that donors are able to downscale funding once budgets are appropriated, for instance in situations in which local windows of opportunity close. Furthermore, international governmental organizations seem to be more rule driven than states. In these settings, demanding reporting requirements consume significant human resources and direct resources away from the actual on-the-ground challenge (EU, AU).

### Finding 3: Individual-level ties to local change agents

Individual donor experts usually make promising contacts with local change agents in governments or security agencies of host states. The case studies suggest that where such informal ties are present, reforms have been more successful (UK); absence of high-level relations with key local power brokers has been linked to programme failure (NL). Seniority also matters when it comes to advising seasoned host state security officials. Despite its relevance for SSR/G processes, donors rarely find ways to formalize and maintain such informal networks over time. Obstacles to maintaining networks are a lack of capacity at the field level, such as in embassies (GER, US), rotation systems (UK, US) and cultural prejudices about political SSR/G among security liaison officers (FR).

### Key finding 4: Different time horizons of external and local actors

Short-term projects and staff rotation systems are challenging. External donor SSR/G experts, including ambassadors and commissioned project leaders, respond to short-term incentives linked to their project/job duration. When negotiating with local partners on SSR/G objectives, they focus on deliverables within their own timelines rather than what is relevant for their counterparts in the long run (US). This can lead to unrealistic expectations on the part of outside experts, while the local agents simply wait until the next rotation cycle begins (UK). Aligning long-term goals with short-term expectations appears to be crucial.

### Key finding 5: Different professional expectations among SSR/G experts

Several states possess a network of military or police advisors that are deployed to embassies or as liaison officers directly to host state security institutions (US, UK, FR, GER). Although these advisors with their long-term personal relationships are a key asset, they are rarely formally involved in SSR/G programmes, which are planned and implemented by different government branches. Where advisors are involved in »reform«, their focus is usually on closing the gap between the

current situation and a desired state of security capacity in partner countries. Individual and cultural prejudices among police and military experts also exert pressure for governance reforms. Donor security professionals fear alienating local partners, which would undermine their other professional mandate of operational collaboration on security matters such as organized crime or terrorism (FR, GER).

### Key finding 6: Different models of budget earmarking

Public expectations shape SSR/G programming and implementation, but differences exist between donors. In the US, the government and congressional committees (there are between 100 and 200 relevant legal authorities) provide annual guidance and earmark most available SSR/G funding so that little is left for short-term and demand-driven SSR/G funding. Although politically earmarked priority recipients also exist in NL and GER, bureaucracies there (as well as in FRA and UK) are more flexible in allocating available SSR/G budgets according to needs. None of the case studies found that donor-side bureaucratic or political leadership generally provides political support for individual SSR/G processes in partner countries.

### Key finding 7: Managing expectations in evaluation

Evaluation is a critical and desirable element of modern, effective public administration that plays an increasingly important role in the field of SSR/G (NL, GER, UK, US, EU). But unrealistic expectations and the wrong evaluation questions can threaten adaptive, long-term SSR/G programmes that cannot quickly produce results in a way that meets public expectations. In NL this led to the discontinuation of a long-term SSR/G programme. More generally, unrealistic targets and expectations have a strong impact on executive bureaucracies and project managers, who adjust their programming to easy deliverables, potentially at the expense of longer-term but equally relevant SSR/G objectives (US, UK). None of the case studies found a constructive culture of failure in the professional bureaucracies that manage SSR/G.



### Recommendation 1: Bridging professional divides between SSR/G agencies

SSR/G cuts across multiple government branches and links people with different professional backgrounds and interests. Western donors should foster collaboration between professional stakeholder groups to enable exchanges of perspectives. More precisely, joint trainings or exercises that involve stakeholders from all government or organization agencies involved in SSR/G could be conducted on a regular basis. These workshops could include scenario exercises that ask participants to design a joint SSR/G strategy for a specific country, including short- and long-term options. This would enable professional interests to both identify tangible ideas for common ground and build mutual trust over time as more and more government/organization experts working on SSR/G come to know each other and a community of practice materializes. Ideally, the scenario exercises could be set up cross-nationally among several EU countries and/or even by the EU for all interested member states.

### Recommendation 2: Design encompassing political strategies

SSR/G is a long-term process and as such requires a long-term strategy. Donors should develop political strategies for the entire set of relations with each country that include the goals and instruments for security sector governance. The process of devising country strategies should be informed by needs analysis and involve SSR/G stakeholders from other branches of government

and organizations. Functional responsibility for country strategies should be assigned to the country desks of a foreign affairs department or an international organization's geographical department. Some countries increasingly offer pooled SSR/G funding or set up centralized SSR/G units. This is inherently at odds with the concept of political SSR/G, for which expertise about the host country and its political economy are paramount.

### Recommendation 3: Strengthen field-level personnel capacities

Transformative SSR/G is about people and not (primarily) about money. Long-term change is possible when people with reform ambitions in the host state make a career and rise to positions where they can enable systemic change. Where such progressive change agents are in place and the political climate allows for change, donors must be ready to upscale their financial SSR/G commitments. This has two implications. First, donors must devise ways to rapidly upscale financial commitments in SSR/G. Second, beyond such opportunity windows SSR/G assistance for most of the time is about building and managing change networks as well as personal relations. This is relatively inexpensive in monetary terms but requires a significant amount of time and expenditure on expert personnel. Donors should therefore decentralize their SSR/G support systems and increase decision-making leeway and staffing at the field level. It is important to adhere to the seniority principle. The rank or seniority of external advisors should align with the rank or seniority of the local counterparts to avoid cultural frictions.

## 1. Research Question and Conceptual Framework

*Steffen Eckhard*

Control over security forces touches the heart of political power in any country. This is why external assistance to security sector reform and governance (SSR/G) is one of the most challenging activities in the portfolio of Western foreign policy and development assistance. Originally developed to support the transformation and democratization processes in Eastern and Central Europe after the end of the Cold War, Western donors such as the OECD or EU now ambitiously define SSR/G as the »process of transforming a country's security system so that it gradually provides individuals and the state with more effective and accountable security in a manner consistent with respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the principles of good governance« (EU Commission/EU Council 2016).

Despite the tremendous challenges, SSR/G has become a paramount tool of Western governments in their efforts to transform fragile and conflict-wracked countries around the globe. In 2016, Western donors spent 880 million US-Dollar on SSR/G-related projects reported to the OECD as development assistance. And this is only the tip of the iceberg. In Germany and the United States, for instance, there is a discrepancy of 80 (Germany) and 95 (United States) percent between what is domestically classified as foreign security assistance spending and what they report as SSR/G to the OECD. The United States alone spent over 10 billion US-Dollar on foreign security assistance in 2016 (see Chapter 1).

When it comes to the implementation of SSR/G, it is striking to see that the political nature of SSR/G in fragile and transformative countries is not matched by an equally political strategy on the side of Western donors. On the one hand, despite their self-proclaimed ambitious goals, donors such as the United States tend to prioritize security assistance as training and equipment deliveries at the expense of SSR/G processes that foster political transformation and democratic oversight. This is unsurprising given that autocrats welcome technical security assets but refuse political interference. But it is also short-sighted and risks increasing the capabili-

ties of dangerous autocrats. On the other hand, SSR/G programmes are implemented in a very technical way built around individual projects. These projects emphasize timetables and deliverables and are easy to oversee. But the project approach tends to compartmentalize processes. Project managers have only short-term incentives and they are unable to cope with ambiguous local political motives, fraud and corruption.

Theoretically, convincing suggestions for more politically strategic delivery of SSR/G have been made that allow anticipation of local power dynamics, economic interests, cultural customs, and windows of opportunity (for the discussion see Jackson and Albrecht, 2011; Ball 2014; Eckhard and Rotmann 2014; Moderan 2015; Eckhard 2016; Van Veen, 2016; Jackson and Bakrania 2017, Brockmeier and Rotmann 2018). Adopting approaches found in the realm of business administration and strategic management, experts propose that political SSR/G must be thought of as a »vehicle for change management« (Van Veen, 2016, 54). Such change management can be summarized on the basis of three main benchmarks (see Chapter 1 for more details): 1) incremental (trial-and-error) long-term engagement with flexible up-scaling; 2) working through local conveners; and 3) (high-level) host state and donor country political support and momentum.

This study assumes that there is a tension between politically strategic SSR/G as »change management« on the one hand and the reality of Western donors' bureaucracy and governance on the other (Unsworth, 2009; Hout, 2012; Yanguas & Hulme, 2015). Budgets must be spent in specific periods of time, financial rules prevent flexible fund allocation, and, above all, the public looks for fast fixes instead of long-term engagement with minor progress at best. These bureaucratic politics self-reinforce the dominant train and equip approach: The current system punishes failure, prevents local ownership and fails to foster high-level political support. As a result, bureaucrats in western foreign aid and affairs ministries lack meaningful alternatives to spending their budgets within the parameters of train and equip. This results in a vicious circle: SSR/G as train and equip strengthens the autocrat. But, in strengthening the autocrat, it enables him to further abuse his position, exacerbating the conditions that lead people to take up arms.

It is the aim of this study to contribute to breaking this vicious cycle. Acknowledging the politically complex dynamics in fragile/conflict-affected states, donors should devote a significant share of their SSR/G budgets to measures that aim to further democratic oversight in the security sector. They should also make sure that their bureaucracies (and policies) are equipped with the right instruments to prevent empowering the wrong partners. By studying and comparing the bureaucratic politics related to SSR implementation in seven countries and multilateral donors – the USA, Netherlands, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the European Union and the African Union – we can derive recommendations about how bureaucracies (actors, processes, settings) should be ideally organized.

Building on a comprehensive mapping of donors' financial contributions in the field of SSR/G (Chapter 1.1 and 1.2) and seven in depth case studies on individual donors (Chapter 2–8), Chapter 9 outlines three recommendations for states or organizations which offer external SSR/G assistance and aspire to better align their SSR/G programming with their self-proclaimed transformative SSR/G agenda. One recommendation is to launch a regular series of scenario workshops that help identify common ground between professionally divided domestic SSR/G stakeholders, such as security professionals, diplomats and development experts. The second is to develop country-level strategies for all relevant SSR/G countries and link these strategies to bilateral development negotiations. This allows the identification of where domestic and external SSR/G goals match or diverge. Such strategies should be driven by country desks, where donors have most expertise about the local context and political economy. The third recommendation is to upscale field level resources for SSR/G. Eventually, SSR/G is about people in the host state who make reform decisions. Managing relations with progressive local actors is at the core of SSR/G and should be reflected in the selection of individuals sent to the field.

Overall, the common ground of these recommendations is that SSR/G is primarily about people, both in the host and the assisting state. Investing in people and their relations is therefore paramount for more political SSR/G as change management.

## 1.1. Mapping the patterns of SSR/G spending (with Dionys Zink)

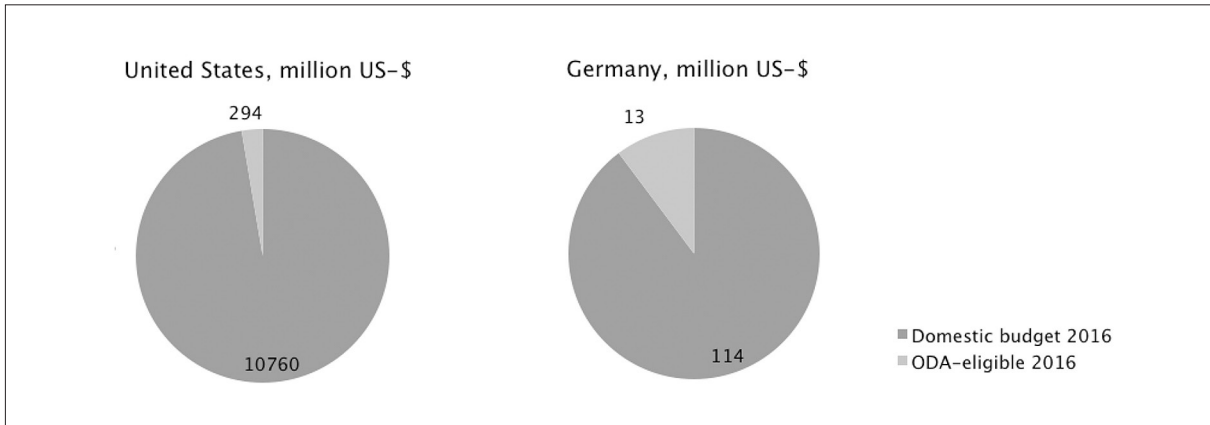
The practice of supporting foreign states' security forces is old. In the later 1990s and early 2000s, when the OECD as one of the first multilateral organizations formulated a normative programme for reforming security institutions to enable democratic transition and economic development, major powers already had a long history of providing military support on a grand scale to their allied regimes and resistance movements in geostrategically relevant states. Military assistance was organized by the armed forces of the two opposing blocs in East and West, which supplied their allies with equipment and military training. It existed alongside western states' development aid agenda, which was however dwarfed by the scale of security support (Wulf 2000; Wulf 2011, p. 341).

Since the end of the Cold War, the boundaries between security and development dissolved, in particular in the light of major state-building operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq. Since the end of the bipolar order intra-state conflicts have seen a large increase, often resulting in massive violence. Despite a general trend towards democratization, a large number of states are still in transition, many of them caught in a conflict trap of entrenched economic interests that gain from limited statehood (Collier et al. 2003). In addition to accumulating human suffering for the people living there, these fragile states offer sanctuaries for terrorist groups and organized criminals and have become a challenge for international peace and stability.

### Donors prioritize short-term train and equip approaches

From a niche topic during the democratization processes in Eastern Europe in the 1990s, activities under the label of SSR/G have become the main instrument for western governments to stabilize fragile or failing states. As a part of development and peacebuilding, SSR/G can be an end in itself. But the war on terror as well as growing African migration movements increasingly subordinated SSR/G activities to western states' own/internal security interests. Still-not-successful statebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq, the destabilization of the Arab Spring countries and the war against

Figure 1: Spending for SSR/G in million US Dollars allocated in US and German budgets (train and equip) and OECD-DAC statistics (Democratic SSR/G)



the IS in Syria and Iraq provide the arguments for those who see western security interests better served with stabilization policies, instead of seeking to promote a long-term democratic transformation, even if stabilization serves illiberal regimes.

Indicative of this is, as Pachon (2012, p. 6f.) highlighted, an »operational separation of the ›train and equip‹ activities intended to improve effectiveness from those intended to improve democratic governance and oversight of the security sector«. The European Union discusses such train and equip measures under the header of Capacity Building in support of Security and Development (CBSD). The German version of this initiative, called *Ertüchtigungsinitiative*, received a separate budget of 114 million US dollars in 2016, which dwarfs the 3.9 million US dollars for German projects with the primary objective of improving or strengthening democratic or civilian control over the security forces (see Rotmann, this volume).

The growing gap between democratic SSR/G and train and equip can also be illustrated by comparing what states report to the OECD as »ODA-eligible SSR« with their entire domestic budget on security sector assistance. This is possible because OECD ODA guidelines explicitly exclude all kinds of training and lethal equipment delivery to the host nation’s police, military and other security agencies. Figure 1 juxtaposes the OECD budget for SSR/G with the security assistance budgets of Germany and the United States, for which we have

data.<sup>1</sup> As illustrated in Figure 1, in 2016 Germany spent only 13 million US dollars on ODA-eligible SSR activities compared to 114 million US dollars on security sector assistance in general.<sup>2</sup> The gap is even larger in the US, which spent 10.76 billion US dollars on general security sector assistance compared to 294 million US dollars that were reported to the OECD and thus focused on civilian aspects of SSR/G and democratic oversight.<sup>3</sup>

#### Donors spending is fragmented and follows crises cycles

From 2006 to 2015 a total of 140 countries received ODA-eligible funding in the area of security system management and reform. However, over those ten years only 16 countries

1. Most donors conceal their train and equip spending in the general budget of the military forces or the police. As one exception, the United States since 2011 publishes its annual bilateral budget for stabilization operations and security sector. Data available at: <https://www.foreignassistance.gov/categories/Peace-and-Security>. For the German data see German Federal Government 2016, p. 31 and Rotmann (this volume). The pie chart was chosen for illustrative purposes only. We cannot trace whether the funds a state reports to the OECD as ODA are part of the domestic SSR/G budget or have other sources, such as a separate development programme.

2. The German spending of 114 million US dollars stems from two budgetary items. First, the equipment assistance programme of the federal government for foreign defence forces (Ausstattungshilfeprogramm der Bundesregierung für ausländische Streitkräfte, AHP), which amounted to 33.46 million US dollars from 2013 to 2016. Since no account for individual years exists, we divided the amount by four to calculate an approximate value for 2016. The Ertüchtigungsinitiative is responsible for the lion’s share, 106 US million dollars. Unlike AHP, it has an annual budget for which is accounted for in the 2016 budget plan (German Federal Government, 2016, p. 31; German budget data converted into US dollars according to the 2016 average exchange rate of 1€ = \$1.06).

3. US SSR/G data reported to OECD-DAC. <http://stats.oecd.org>; CRS indicator no. 15210.

The known unknowns of the OECD’s SSR/G data: Limitations on drawing the bigger picture

The budget data used in this section draws largely on the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS). The CRS’ main objective is to trace Official Development Aid (ODA). In its broadest sense, SSR/G relevant activities are reported under the header »conflict, peace and security« (indicators no. 15210-15250). More narrowly, indicator no. 15210 captures activities classified as »security system management and reform«.

Activities that can be reported under indicator no. 15210 are defined in the OECD-DAC’s Handbook on Security Sector Reform (OECD, 2007). This includes technical cooperation provided to government bodies in order to improve democratic governance and assistance to foster civilian oversight over the security apparatus. Since train and equip activities cannot be classified as ODA, a significant part of western donor’s SSR/G budget is not accounted for in the CRS. Recently however, efforts have been undertaken to widen the scope of ODA eligible assistance. In 2016, the OECD adjusted their framework in order to enable certain military support measures to be included as ODA as long as they were in line with the overall development goals. The European Parliament, in similar vein, converted the Instrument contributing to Peace and Stability (IcSP) from a fund supporting purely civilian measures into a tool which also allows support for military assistance. This development has been criticized by a number of NGOs for allowing a possible misuse of resources initially dedicated to democratic governance in the security sector.

While the most comprehensive tool to track and compare SSR/G flows, the CRS has some flaws (cf. Pachon 2012). But the data allows the outlining of general trends over time and between states (both donors and recipients). The statistical data can be accessed on <http://stats.oecd.org>.

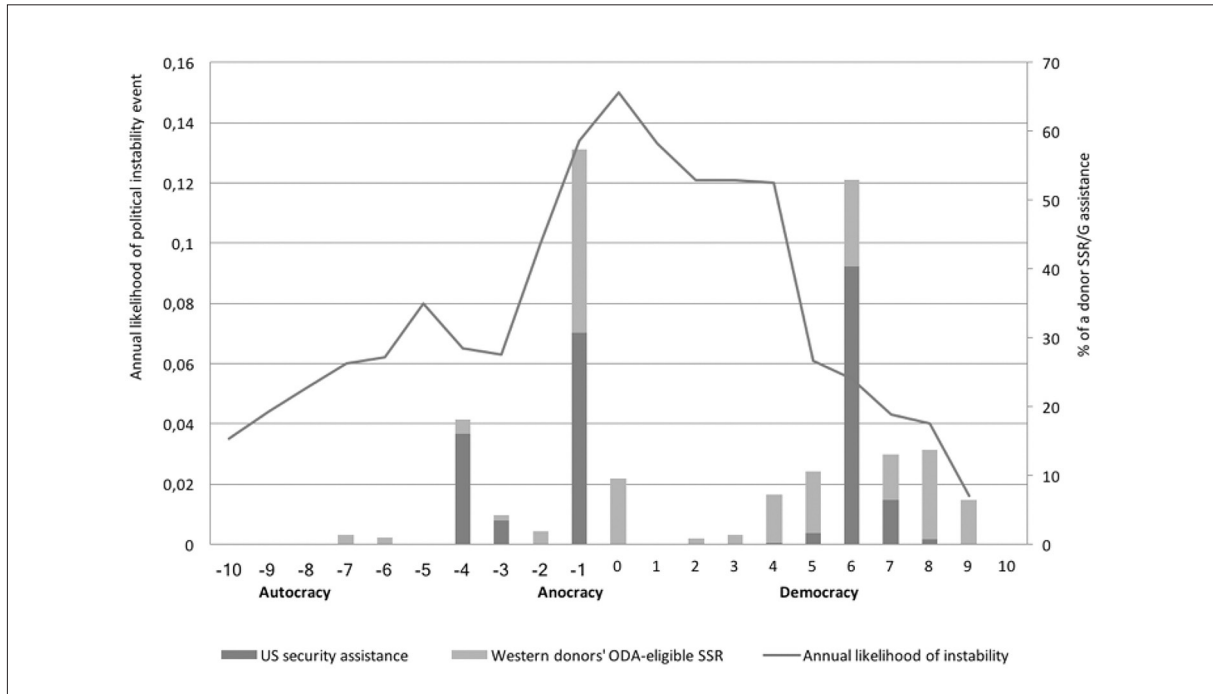
Figure 2: Aggregated Western donor SSR/G budget (2007–2016) as accounted by OECD-DAC



in total were sponsored with a total amount higher than 100 million US dollars. The lion’s share of the entire western SSR/G budget, 47 percent, was divided among only five countries, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Afghanistan alone received 22 percent of the overall budget (see Figure 2).

When comparing spending patterns extracted from OECD-DAC data, two main conclusions can be drawn. First, there is an observable trend of »crisis-conjuncture« meaning that assistance tends to peak in one or two years and then quickly declines to a fraction of the upsurge within a few years. In the observed period, Iraq

Figure 3: Likelihood of political instability vs. western SSR/G budget (OECD-DAC) and US security assistance in 2016 (source: see Figure 1 data)



for example received the lion’s share of its budget, about 82.7 percent, in 2007 and 2008. In the subsequent year, funding amounted to little more than one percent. Support patterns of less extensively sponsored countries similarly show spending concentrated on one specific year.

Second, and more positively, although distribution fluctuates considerably over time and country, there are also individual projects constantly funded over most of the observed period, such as the Portuguese-funded training of police forces in Angola (11.9 million US dollars in total). SSR/G is a long-term process, and at least for some countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan, donors seem to be well aware of this. Overall, data shows that the number of countries receiving SSR/G support steadily increased between 2006 and 2015 from 88 to 138 countries. However, while there may be new recipients, it is worth noting that the majority of the countries responsible for this surge received comparatively small amounts of the overall SSR/G pie.

More than half of all SSR/G funding implemented in high-risk countries

Figure 3 provides an estimate of the political environment that characterizes the recipient countries of western donors’ SSR/G assistance. The figure shows that donors direct the bulk of their SSR/G funding to countries which are neither autocracies nor democracies and have a high likelihood of political instability. Support for these countries is crucial when they enter phases of systemic transformation which significantly increases the risk of violence as shown by a study conducted by the UN Development Programme and the World Bank (United Nations 2017). Successful SSR/G programmes must consequently be able to cope with unexpected political events and instability.

The budget data underlying Figure 3 draw on the same sources used for Figure 1 above. Bar-chart values (right y-axis) capture the share of donors’ SSR-assistance, differentiating between western donors’ aggregate ODA-eligible SSR/G assistance and US-provided train and equip funding. Values on the x-axis classify the political regime of recipient states on the basis of the Pol-

ity IV index. It differentiates autocracies and democracies as two extremes, with regimes classified as anocracies in-between.<sup>4</sup> The black line (left y-axis) is a measure for the likelihood of political instability in a country. Political instability is defined as major political violence such as ethnic or revolutionary wars and deterioration of the regime towards more autocratic rule. The likelihood is calculated on the basis of past events of political instability for each regime type (1955 to 2006). The black line illustrates that the probability for instability is highest in anocracies, whereas the risk of instability decreases towards both ends of the spectrum.<sup>5</sup>

The main observation is that, as mentioned above, about half of the SSR/G assistance in both SSR/G categories goes to anocratic countries with a high risk of political instability. Major recipients in both categories are Afghanistan (-1) and Iraq (3). However, a significant nexus exists when comparing other top ranking countries. The US for example invests heavily in Israel (6), Egypt (-4) and Pakistan (7) while major ODA recipients include Ukraine (4), Democratic Republic of Congo (5), and, to a lesser extent in recent years, Kosovo (8). While ODA-eligible projects with an emphasis on democratic oversight imply that projects aim at transforming the security sector, there is a danger that train and equip funding to these states reinforces the status-quo of the political regime instead of changing it.

A second observation is that ODA-eligible SSR/G seems more risk averse than US-provided train and equip. At the same time, it is hardly surprising that a larger share of democratic SSR/G funding goes to more democratic regimes such as Indonesia (9) or Kosovo (8), where these funds may be used more in the direct interests of local regimes. Anocratic regimes, by contrast, are often more disinclined to accept SSR/G programmes with a focus on democratic oversight.

4. Autocratic rule is usually characterized by either monarchy or dictatorship. Citizens' capabilities to participate in political processes are generally low to non-existent. Institutions within the state lack autonomy and are in thrall to the ruling authority. Anocracies on the other hand, are only partly able to provide functioning democratic institutions and maintain a monopoly of force. They are often in transition from one regime type to another and therefore display traits of both autocratic and democratic regimes. For example, a country might have elections according to democratic standards but at the same time oppress minorities or violate basic human rights such as freedom of speech. The Polity Project maps regime types in their Polity Score indicator. Countries are ranked from -10 to +10. Regimes from -10 to -6 are autocracies, from -5 to +5 anocracies and from +6 upwards democracies. It is worth noting that »the relative stability of democratic authority is only realized in the consolidated democracies [+9 and +10]«. See <http://www.systemicpeace.org> (accessed 01 November 2017).

5. See <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/PTfig03.htm> (accessed 01 November 2017).

Finally, it is positive to note that democratic SSR/G measures cover the full scope of the political regime spectrum, with donors even working in autocratic regimes such as Kazakhstan (-6) and Azerbaijan (-7).

### Summary: The challenge of SSR/G in volatile environments

This mapping of Western SSR/G spending patterns provides two main insights. The good news is that SSR/G spending seems to be pledged to countries where it is needed. This includes both ODA-eligible and US train and equip spending. These are states with an anocratic regime which are often affected by the aftermath of major conflict or still face significant unrest. In these countries, SSR/G processes are needed both to help create effective state security institutions and to further democratic oversight and respect for human rights in the security apparatus. The bad news, however, is that the project approach to SSR/G can hardly be labeled transformative. As shown in Figure 1, there is a major surplus of projects with the aim of training and equipping at the expense of change processes with a focus on democratic governance in the security sector and beyond.

The implementation of SSR/G in volatile, high-risk political environments might be one of the main reasons for the often lamented ineffectiveness of SSR/G assistance programmes. As recently observable in the Ukraine and in the countries of the Arab Spring, among others, donors struggle to anticipate popular political unrest and support ensuing democratization movements from the outside, including by using security assistance in a supportive fashion. The contemporary ways in which western donors predominantly operationalize, organize and implement SSR/G assistance is fundamentally at odds with the politically dynamic nature of change processes in recipient states. There is a dire need for a political approach to SSR/G.

### 1.2.: Institutional determinants of SSR/G: Change management meets bureaucratic politics

What nowadays is discussed as a »political approach« to SSR describes a loose framework of concepts and recommendations concerned with the effectiveness of SSR/G programmes and foreign development assistance more generally. The baseline assessment is that foreign

assistance tends to take a fragmented project approach that emphasizes short-term technical goals such as training classes, delivering equipment, building barracks, or providing vehicles which are built around specific time-tables and deliverables. This ignores that what happens in a host state is essentially a political process. As such, it requires anticipation of power dynamics, economic interests, cultural customs, systems thinking and windows of opportunity (Jackson & Albrecht, 2011; Ball 2014; Moderan 2015; Eckhard and Rotmann 2014; Eckhard 2016; Jackson and Bakrania 2017). The crunch question is how to operationalize SSR/G programmes to live up to their political and processual nature.

The SSR/G community is not alone in pondering this question. In the late 1990s, peace researcher John Lederach (1997, p. 84) was among the first to argue that in external interventions »[t]he goal is not stasis, but rather the generation of continuous, dynamic, self-regenerating processes that maintain form over time and are able to adapt to environmental changes«. Since then, experts and practitioners in peacebuilding and development have come up with numerous ideas (Hout, 2012; Duncan & Williams, 2012; Fisher & Marquette, 2016; Vestergaard & Wade, 2013). Most recently, under the header »thinking and working politically«, a group of development practitioners has promoted political-economy analysis (PEA) as a concrete analytical tool to design more context aware aid programmes.<sup>6</sup> »Doing development differently« is another framework promoted by practitioners and academics at Harvard's Kennedy School.<sup>7</sup>

More explicitly concerned with SSR/G, Erwin van Veen (2016) suggests that a combination of four factors should enable political SSR/G programmes: First, projects should make use of constant political economy analysis and work on building informal stakeholder networks within the local population. Second, recruitment of staff sensitive to the program's agenda and the political environment in which it operates are decisive, as is an operational framework capable of efficient dispute settlement. Third, in order to enable programs to engage politically on a daily basis, high-level political support is necessary. Finally, the overall design of SSR/G programmes needs to be constructed around long-term

results and include flexibility and adjustability. Proper planning capacities for follow-up support is another key component for lasting results.

Political SSR/G thus is essentially a method, not an objective or a definition of SSR/G. Although it can also be applied to technical train and equip programmes, the underlying rationale is to operationalize long-term transformative programmes that emphasize democratic governance in the security sector. Resembling approaches found in the realm of business administration and strategic management (Mintzberg, 1987; Macmillan & Tampoe 2001; CIC, 2011), political SSR/G must be thought of as a »vehicle for change management« (Van Veen, 2016, 54). While there is no general agreement on benchmarks for »success«, they share three characteristics that enable SSR/G programmes to take effect as vehicles for change management. Given that they often are missing in current SSR/G practice, we summarize them as benchmarks of SSR/G programme design.

- *Benchmark 1: Strategic long-term engagement with short-term trial-and-error and flexible up- and down-scaling:* SSR/G is a long-term process that is prone to political risks, such as political instability and violence. SSR/G support is thus a long-term investment that should allow for flexible up-scaling when an opportunity window arises, and down-scaling when an opportunity window closes.
- *Benchmark 2: Working through local conveners:* SSR/G processes must be locally driven and owned. Creating and maintaining a network of formal and informal ties between external supporters and individual local stakeholders is vital. It also provides viable information to appropriately assess the local political situation.
- *Benchmark 3: (High-level) host state and donor country political support and momentum:* SSR/G processes require political support both in recipient states and from abroad. Selective opposition within security institutions must be overcome at crucial junctures, sometimes even with the help of outside political pressure.

Generally speaking, practitioners and analysts are divided on whether and how the political SSR/G methodology can be aligned to the operations of donor countries' development and security agencies (e.g., Hudson and Marquette 2015). Overall, however, and most notably for the field of SSR/G, a systematic analysis of the in-

6. See: <https://twpcommunity.org/what-is-twp/>.

7. See: <http://doingdevelopmentdifferently.com/>.



stitutional determinants that promote or limit political SSR/G remains yet to be conducted.

Despite growing agreement that SSR/G is fundamentally political, there is still a major disconnect between the rhetoric about politics and the mainstream operational agenda, even among progressive actors in the aid community (Unsworth, 2009; Hout 2012; Yanguas & Hulme, 2015). The key challenge remains to find ways how to enable political frontline working in SSR/G in compliance with donors' value of good governance. But can implementing bureaucracies actually incorporate the principles of political SSR/G into their practice? Are the messy demands of political analysis and action reconcilable with underlying disbursement incentives and entrenched professional cultures? Answering such questions is the aim of this study.

The remainder of this chapter juxtaposes the ambition of political SSR/G according to the three benchmarks of a political strategy in SSR/G with the findings produced by the seven case studies informing this study: On the Netherlands (Chapter 2 by Erwin van Veen), Germany (Chapter 3 by Philipp Rotmann), United Kingdom (Chapter 4 by Paul Jackson), United States (Chapter 5 by Julie Werbel), France (Chapter 6 by Aline Leboeuf), the European Union (Chapter 7 by Ursula Schröder and Bianca Süßenbach) and the African Union (Chapter 8 by Eboe Hutchful). Chapter authors assessed the political goals, programming and implementation of each donor's SSR/G agenda. Such an inductive approach was necessary because a universal framework for analyzing bureaucratic designs or policy implementation does not exist.

For the sake of brevity, findings drawn from comparing the seven case studies are summarized in boxes placed beneath each benchmark. This is an assessment of the empirical status quo as reported in the seven chapters below. The findings are neither recommendations, nor do they imply generalizable explanations or statements. In line with the inductive approach, authors set their own priorities and a lack of reference to one factor in a case study does not imply its irrelevance. The boxes should therefore be read as an assembly of relevant political and administrative factors that were found to interact with the expectation of political SSR/G and that inform this study's recommendations (Chapter 9). Inter alia, the boxes also serve to navigate the case studies. Readers interested in more details on one of the findings may refer to the country chapters mentioned in brackets.

Key challenges to benchmark 1:

Strategic long-term engagement with short-term trial-and-error and flexible up- and down-scaling

The Weberian style of traditional Western public administration conflicts with the requirement of unitary strategic analysis, trial-and-error, flexible resource allocation and up-scaling as prescribed to political SSR/G. Two main challenges exist. On the one hand, complex organizations face different institutional demands and incentives, which is why talk, decisions and actions of governments are often incongruent (Brunsson 2003). »Bureaucratic politics« (Alison & Halperin 1972) undermine strategic action, in particular in external development assistance or peacebuilding (Lipson 2007). On the other hand, there is also a gap between the technical experts on programme implementation (executive bureaucracy) and another layer of administration that Andrew Natsios (2010) termed the »counter bureaucracy«. The counter bureaucracy exists to ensure proper budget spending and avoid risks. Rules for planning, procurement, control and compliance facilitate this important task. But there is also a tension between executive work in the field and the internal rules enforced by the counter bureaucracy. How to strategically streamline SSR/G with the political dynamics in a host country and align expectations of the counter bureaucracy and the experimental nature of political SSR/G is a key challenge.

Key finding 1: The absence of strategy

Although most countries possess elements of an SSR/G policy (UK, US, GER, FRA, EU), implementation is always split between different agencies, including foreign affairs, development and defence and at times also justice and internal affairs. In the US there are 46 different offices with an SSR/G-related mandate. This implies agency competition, haphazard funding decisions and, worse, incoherent epistemic interests and approaches to SSR/G (e.g., development vs. security). Barring individual high-profile recipient countries, such as Afghanistan, donors rarely install a unit where strategic thinking about transformation countries can take place.

Key finding 2: The counter bureaucracy as a modest problem

The counter bureaucracy with its professional interest in ensuring proper budget spending and compliance is a modest problem for most executive state agencies. Although inter-agency planning and implementation is very rigid due to specific planning horizons and budget frames (e.g., annual vs. multiyear appropriations), the executive bureaucracy usually manages to cope with formal budgetary requirements, either because project managers or supervisors are creative enough or because there is sufficient political pressure (NL, US, GER). However, none of the case studies found that donors are able to downscale funding once budgets are appropriated, for instance in situations in which local windows of opportunity close. Furthermore, international governmental organizations seem to be more rule driven than states. In these settings, demanding reporting requirements consume significant human resources and direct resources from the actual on-the-ground challenge (EU, AU).

Key finding 3: Individual-level ties to local change agents

Individual donor experts usually make promising contacts to local change agents in governments or security agencies of host states. The case studies suggest that where such informal ties are present, reforms have been more successful (UK); absence of high-level relations with key local power brokers has been linked to programme failure (NL). Seniority also matters when it comes to advising seasoned host state security officials. Despite its relevance for SSR/G processes, donors rarely find ways to formalize and maintain such informal networks over time. Obstacles to maintaining networks are a lack of capacity at the field level, such as in embassies (GER, US), rotation systems (UK, US), and cultural prejudices about political SSR/G among security liaison officers (FR).

Key finding 4: Different time horizons of external and local actors

Short-term projects and staff rotation systems are challenging. External donor SSR/G experts, including ambassadors and commissioned project leaders, respond to short-termed incentives linked to their project/job duration. When negotiating with local partners on SSR/G objectives, they focus on deliverables within their own timelines rather than what is relevant for their counterparts in the long run (US). This can lead to unrealistic expectations on the part of outside experts, with the local side simply waiting until the next rotation cycle begins (UK). Streamlining long-term goals with short term expectations seems crucial.

Key challenges to benchmark 2: Working with local change agents

Organizational action is inevitably carried out by individuals. In SSR/G these are soldiers, police officers, civilian experts and politicians both on the side of donors and recipient states. Internationally, Séverine Autesserre (2014) and a few others pointed out that those working in the peace and development industry »inhabit a separate world with its own time, space, and economics« (Fechter & Hindman 2011, 13). A consequence of this is a perceptible gap between the »international« and the »local« in external interventions that affects SSR/G in at least two ways. First, a deficient understanding of the local context often results in SSR/G programmes employing generic ready-to-use templates that are ill-suited to local conditions. Second, projects are often short-termed or individuals serve on a rotating basis, which hampers long-term relations and trust between donor and host state representatives. How to bridge the international-local gap operationally is a key challenge for political SSR/G.

Key finding 5: Different professional expectations among SSR/G experts

Several states possess a network of military or police advisors that are deployed to embassies or as liaison officers directly to host state security institutions (US, UK, FR, GER). Although these advisors with their long-term personal relationships are a key asset, they are rarely formally involved in SSR/G programmes, which are programmed and implemented by different government branches. Where advisors are involved in »reform« their focus is usually on closing the gap towards a desired state of security capacities of partner countries. There are individual and cultural prejudices among police and military experts that pressure for governance reforms. Donor security professionals fear alienating local partners which would undermine their other professional mandate, namely operational collaboration on security matters such as organized crime or terrorism (FR, GER).

Key finding 6: Different models of budget earmarking

Public expectations shape SSR/G programming and implementation, but differences exist between donors. In the US, the government and parliamentary committees (there are between 100 and 200 relevant legal authorities) provide annual guidance and earmark the majority of available SSR/G funding so that little is left for short-term and demand-driven SSR/G funding. Although politically earmarked priority recipients also exist in NL and GER, the executive administration there (as well as in FRA and UK) is more flexible in allocating available SSR/G budgets according to needs. None of the case studies found that donor-side bureaucratic or political leadership generally provide political support to individual SSR/G processes in partner countries.

Key challenge to benchmark 3:  
Ensuring (high-level) host state and donor country political support and momentum

SSR/G as change management requires high level political support both on the part of the host state and donor countries. On the part of donors, a key challenge is that elected political leaders are sensitive to public opinion. They answer public expectations, follow conflict conjectures and are reluctant to provide visible political support to SSR/G programmes they deem unpopular. How to align the long-term nature of political SSR/G, that often entails limited results while waiting for opportunity windows, with the short-term nature of political expectations and attention is a key challenge (Leboeuf, 2014, p. 45 ff.).

Key finding 7: Managing expectations in evaluation

Evaluation is a critical and desirable element of modern and effective public administration, which plays an increasingly important role in the field of SSR/G (NL, GER, UK, US, EU). But unrealistic expectations and asking the wrong evaluation questions can threaten adaptive, long-term SSR/G programmes which cannot quickly produce results in a way that meets public expectations. In NL, this led to discontinuation of a long-term SSR/G programme. More generally, unrealistic targets and expectations have a strong impact on executive bureaucracies and project managers who adjust their programming to easy deliverables, potentially at the expense of more long-term but equally relevant SSR/G objectives (US, UK). None of the case studies found a constructive »culture of failure« in the professional bureaucracies that manage SSR/G.



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## 2. Double Dutch or going Dutch?

How institutional factors influenced Security Sector Reform policy in the Low Countries

*Erwin van Veen*

### 2.1 Introduction

The Netherlands has engaged in the policy area of Security Sector Reform (SSR) since approximately 2005.<sup>8</sup> This means there is an activity track record of about 12 years on a topic that was popularized in the late 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>9</sup> This short essay examines institutional factors within the Dutch government – its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in particular<sup>10</sup> – that have influenced the development of its SSR policy and practice. It does not offer an evaluation of Dutch SSR efforts since it leaves their impact in the countries where they unfold largely out of account.<sup>11</sup>

In teleological terms, the Netherlands have considered SSR as an important element of its post-conflict reconstruction efforts (2005–2007), its fragility agenda (2007–2011), its statebuilding and rule of law agenda (2011–2015) and its migration-radicalization-security priorities (2016–2017), respectively.<sup>12</sup> Linkages between SSR and such broader policy objectives were, however, only

8. The article is based on three sources: a) a confidential review of about 50 MFA documents on SSR policies and programmes that span the period 2005–2017; b) six key informant interviews (3 at the MFA, 1 at the Ministry of Defence, 1 at the Ministry of Security and Justice and 1 with a former MFA employee); and c) review of central SSR expenditure from The Hague. It should be noted that the author worked for the Dutch MFA on SSR from 2006–2010.

9. By the UNDP's work on human security and the DFID's work on security sector reform, respectively. The OECD followed only in 2005: OECD, *Security system reform and governance*, Paris: OECD DAC, 2005.

10. The ministry is in charge both of Dutch foreign policy and diplomacy as well as Dutch development aid.

11. Although limited impact evaluation is available that is specific to SSR, useful resources include: IOB, *Investeren in stabiliteit: Het Nederlandse fragiele statenbeleid doorgelicht* [Investing in stability: A review of Dutch fragile states policy], The Hague: IOB, 2013; as well as various evaluations of the Burundian-Dutch SSD program by ISSAT, online: <http://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Other-Documents/Evaluation-Dutch-Mandate-in-Burundi> (see especially references to the phase 1 and 2 evaluations in the downloadable pdf).

12. As stated in successive policy documents of the Dutch MFA: ›Reconstruction after violent conflict‹ (2005); ›Our common concern: Investing in development in a changing world‹ (2007); ›Security and development in fragile states: A strategy for Dutch engagement‹ (2008); ›Focus areas for Dutch development cooperation‹ (2010); ›A secure world, a secure Netherlands‹ (2013). Illustratively, SSR and CVE are today part of the same portfolio.

made explicit in 2015, when a more formal ›Theory of Change‹ was introduced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's Directorate for Stability and Humanitarian Affairs.<sup>13</sup>

As one of the driving forces behind the OECD DAC's Handbook on Security System Reform and as a founding member of DCAF's International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), the Netherlands have simply applied the OECD's wide-ranging definition of SSR as an actor-based sectoral area of activity with informal and formal components.<sup>14</sup> The purpose of Dutch SSR support has remained a somewhat vague mix of objectives that promote human and state security, as is arguably also the case in the OECD Handbook.<sup>15</sup>

In institutional terms, the Dutch MFA has always owned the policy area of SSR. Other Dutch ministries, like the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Ministry of Justice and Security (MJ&S) have tended to take their cues from the MFA and focused on implementation. Within the Dutch MFA, SSR has two ›homes‹: one in the Directorate for Security Policy (DVB), which is in charge of Dutch contributions to peacekeeping operations (including SSR elements), the other in successive Directorates that deal with security from a more developmental perspective (respectively DMV, EFV and DSH – Section 3 offers more detail). Both the MFA and the MoD used to have modest SSR-pools of deployable experts in the period 2006–2010, but these were eventually either discontinued or fell into disuse. Finally, central Stability Fund has been the primary financing mechanism for SSR activities.<sup>16</sup>

### 2.2 General characteristics of Dutch SSR policy and practice

The 12 years of Dutch SSR policy and practice under review here can be summarized by examining its coherence, programmatic content, coordination and focus. Together, these four points provide a broad sense of the ambitions and limitations of Dutch SSR contributions.

13. Online at ›Rijksverheid.nl‹, see: <https://www.rijksverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2015/11/05/theory-of-change-veiligheid-en-rechtsorde-zomer-2015> (accessed 15 November 2017).

14. OECD, *OECD DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*, Paris: OECD DAC, 2007; ISSAT: <http://issat.dcaf.ch/> (accessed 30 October 2017).

15. For a critical review of the OECD Handbook: Sedra, M., *The future of security sector reform*, online: CIGI, <https://www.cigionline.org/publications/future-security-sector-reform-0> (accessed 30 October 2017).

16. This is a mixed ODA/non-ODA fund of c. EUR 100 million per year that is administered by the MFA from The Hague.

In terms of coherence, there has never been a standalone Dutch SSR policy document that outlines the higher-level purpose, objectives, principles, resources, actors, activities and risk mitigation strategies of this policy area. Some of the policy documents mentioned include reference to, or even descriptions of, SSR – but not in a way that sets strategic policy directions or orientations. On the one hand, this has been a strength because it allowed the MFA to be flexible in its approaches to SSR as long as it employed adequately knowledgeable staff capable of making judgement calls about the ›SSR focus and content‹ of proposed activities. On the other hand, this has been a weakness because a coherent understanding of SSR across the Dutch government – or even within the MFA – has remained absent. A consequence is that different organizations and people understand different things by the same term, which creates confusion and reduces policy impact. Among other things, this has prevented the emergence of a ›whole of government‹ approach to SSR. On balance, the absence of even minimal policy articulation has been a weakness. While long policy documents typically have short life spans, a short and politically agreed version would likely have provided a better basis for intra- and interdepartmental collaboration, and have helped demonstrate the results of Dutch SSR efforts more convincingly.

In terms of its programmatic content, Dutch SSR practice has tended to consist of contributions to international peacekeeping missions with an SSR component on the one hand, and a set of programmes of variable composition and ambition on the other. Dutch SSR contributions in the peacekeeping mission context have been largely demand-driven by the needs of the UN and EU. It appears that the OECD's SSR principles and objectives of SSR did not really stimulate a Dutch push in changing how peacekeeping missions approach SSR. Rather, the Netherlands has generally acquiesced to SSR in peacekeeping missions as a new bottle for old – and largely ineffective – wines of train, equip and build activities that focus on the formal security sectors of post-conflict countries.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, many Dutch SSR programmes have been supply-driven by political needs and priorities

in The Hague. Most programmes have been executed by international organizations like UNDP or DCAF with the overall composition of the Dutch SSR programme portfolio being dependent on the profile and experience of its staff working on SSR at a particular point in time (discussed below). In part, this is a result of the absence of a documented common understanding of the objectives and nature of SSR as a policy area.

In terms of coordination, the absence of clearly articulated Dutch SSR policy, variable levels of programme activity and resources, as well as internal turf competition have generally increased transaction costs and prevented ›learning conversations‹ within the MFA that could have created greater alignment between SSR in peacekeeping missions and SSR in developmental programming. As a consequence, these areas have remained separate despite, for example, appreciable Dutch support for the UN DPKO's SSR Unit and for the EU's recent Joint Communication on SSR. The same factors have also prevented inter-ministerial SSR collaboration from maturing. A shared purpose, common vocabulary and synergy of the interests of different departments was simply missing. Despite several efforts to develop a cross-governmental SSR policy, inter-departmental coordination has largely remained at the level of individual activities.

In terms of its focus, Dutch SSR practice has consistently prioritized formal state security actors to the exclusion of informal, non-state and justice-oriented actors.<sup>18</sup> This is not to say that such actors have not been programmatically engaged, but rather that this has not typically happened under the banner of SSR – despite growing evidence of the hybrid and informal reality of security provision in conflict-affected and fragile settings.<sup>19</sup> Specifically, Dutch contributions to peacekeeping missions with an SSR component have typically contributed to ›train-build-equip‹ activities characteristic of more traditional security cooperation, while Dutch developmental SSR programmes have focused on formal actors through a state security lens. More generally, the innovative elements of the OECD Handbook's approach to SSR –

17. Denney, L. and C. Valters, *Evidence synthesis: security sector reform and organisational capacity building*, London: ODI, 2016; Van Veen, E., *Improving security and justice programming in fragile situations: Better political engagement, more change management*, Paris: OECD Development Policy Papers No. 3, 2016. For an overview of SSR issues in the US context: Kleinfeld, R., *Fragility and Security Sector Reform*, FSG Policy Brief, No. 3, 2016.

18. This included Dutch flagship SSR programmes in Burundi (bilateral), Lebanon (bilateral), Mali (via DCAF), Tunisia (via DCAF), Libya (via DCAF), Egypt (via DCAF), Morocco (via DCAF), Kosovo (via UNDP) and Iraq (via UNDP).

19. See for example: Price, M. and M. Warren, ›Reimagining SSR in contexts of security pluralism‹, *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 6(1): 8, pp. 1–13.

greater focus on accountability, governance and informal security provision through a human security lens – have not shone brightly in Dutch SSR practice.

### 2.3 Institutional factors shaping Dutch SSR policy and practice

The development of most policy areas is shaped by a mix of internal and external factors as well as path dependencies. SSR in the Netherlands is no exception. The short assessment below focuses on institutional factors internal to the Dutch government (especially the MFA). It leaves external factors out of account, i.e. the political interests, relations and events characteristic of the conflict-affected and fragile countries where Dutch-supported SSR initiatives are implemented.

It should be noted from the outset that the Dutch MFA has always been a minor player in the area of SSR due to its limited focus on the topic and its modest resource allocation.<sup>20</sup> Arguably, the modest heyday of Dutch SSR practice was between 2007 and 2010 when: 1) it co-founded DCAF's ISSAT, 2) initiated the Burundian-Dutch SSD programme and 3) helped catalyze UNDP's global rule of law programme. The bureaucratic entrepreneurship underpinning these initiatives was enabled by a minister who championed the fragile states agenda, ample development funds due to a growing economy and an unusual intense collaboration across the MFA directorates for Peacebuilding and Stability, Africa and the MoD's Department for Operations.<sup>21</sup> These elements disappeared in the course of 2010–2011 with the effect that a policy area without a policy diminished in prominence, scope and knowledge base. At the same time, the need for SSR initiatives has remained appreciable, for example, in the context of Dutch post-conflict recovery, preventing violent extremism and migration agendas. In short, a significant discrepancy has emerged over

the past six years between the global relevance of the SSR policy area and the Dutch ability to engage in it, let alone to shape it. Interviews point to four institutional factors internal to the MFA that help explain this shift more fully. For the sake of brevity, they are summarized in Tables 1–4 below.

In addition to the factors above, it is also possible to highlight three institutional factors that neither interviews nor the document review indicated as important in shaping Dutch SSR policy and practice.

To begin with, legal or administrative constraints do not seem to have helped or hindered Dutch SSR policy or practice. For example, the changing understanding of results within the MFA expressed itself more in working culture and expectations than in the form of regulatory requirements. Formalized log frames, business cases or theories of change did not, for example, become obligatory and/or expanded accompaniments for programme documents. In general terms, if there was either sufficient political pressure or adequate bureaucratic creativity, rules and regulations could be creatively nudged or bent to suit operational needs while continuing to function properly as governance framework. For example, to circumvent tendering and financing obstacles when creating ISSAT, it was designed as a separate entity within DCAF. As an international organization that is ODA-eligible, DCAF is not subject to either tendering or ODA-eligibility challenges.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, it is not customary in Dutch development practice to use private companies as implementing vehicles for aid programmes – in contrast to Anglo-Saxon countries for example – which has also reduced legal or administrative constraints on SSR policy and practice.

In addition, the absence or availability of funds does not seem to have played a major role in shaping Dutch SSR policy or practice. Financial data from the MFA suggest that budget allocations to the Stability Fund – the pre-eminent fund for central HQ financing of SSR activities – have remained broadly constant over time (including during budget cuts). Within these allocations, however, competition for specific chunks of programme funding from the fund has sometimes been fierce. Yet,

20. It is difficult to provide a reliable figure here because central and decentralized funds for SSR are administratively separated in the Dutch MFA's finances and because financial reporting is not done on the basis of themes like SSR. The central Stability Fund and decentralized aid budgets at embassy level are the most relevant resources for SSR work. The author's rough estimate is that the entire Dutch aid portfolio (consisting of both funding streams) has typically not featured more than 5–10 SSR programmes of between EUR 1–10 million each at any one time.

21. This collaboration was largely a function of 'the right people being in the right place at the right time' more or less coincidentally. The 'right people' refers to individuals willing to work together towards a jointly defined goal and that were in possession of prior relevant knowledge, experience and/or networks.

22. As an aside it should be noted that the Netherlands created its Stability Fund as a mixed ODA/non-ODA resource early in the 2000s. This has helped it to avoid the financial challenges to integrated SSR programming that have plagued some other DAC donors.



Tables 1–4: Key institutional factors within the Dutch MFA that shaped SSR policy and practice

<b>Factor 1: Premature political decision-making leads to SSR interventions in unsuitable environments</b>	
<p>On security issues (international missions as well as SSR), political decision-making tends to precede strategic analysis that is then conducted to justify a decision already taken and retrofitted to support its implementation</p>	
What happened	Consequences
<p>Political decision making on Dutch involvement in security aspects of international peace- or statebuilding efforts (including SSR) takes place too early on the basis of very limited analysis of contextual priorities, feasibility, facts on the ground and/or lessons learned.</p> <p><i>Note: This factor played a role across the entire period examined.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ High quality SSR interventions become difficult to realize and sustain because they are not guided by contextually validated possibilities, but by other objectives</li> <li>■ High quality SSR interventions have a chance of success when they are initiated in geopolitical backwaters but such interventions are also swiftly crowded out when political risk appetite, funding or human resources become scarce</li> <li>■ In their design, Dutch support for peacekeeping missions with SSR components and Dutch SSR development programmes are seldom aligned; hence, contributions to missions gravitate to train-build-equip approaches that are familiar and easy to execute</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples:</b> SSR components of bilateral Dutch missions to Uruzgan and Kunduz (Afghanistan); Dutch contributions to SSR by MINUSMA (Mali); Dutch support for UN/EU SSR efforts in the DRC.</p>	
<b>Factor 2: The shifting institutional anchorage of SSR within the MFA negatively impacted its legacy and development</b>	
What happened	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In the Good Governance unit of the Directorate for Human Rights and Peacebuilding, SSR was one of many topics (DMV; 2004/5).</li> <li>■ It was upgraded to a core theme of the Security Cluster of the Unit for Peacebuilding and Stability (EFV; 2006/11).</li> <li>■ It was downgraded to one of many topics in the Security/Rule of Law cluster of the Directorate for Stabilization and Humanitarian Assistance (DSH; 2012/17).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ As EFV was created by ministerial edict but not institutionalized as a fully-fledged directorate, it struggled in intra-bureaucratic competition and remained an organizational anomaly. It was eliminated with the next change of minister</li> <li>■ SSR policy/practice peaked when it had more political focus and greater resources at its disposal, and declined with less of both</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples:</b> There was little to no continuity of SSR savvy staff between EFV and DSH, which caused a loss of tacit knowledge and a rupture in operational practice</p>	
<b>Factor 3: The level of human resources available for shaping SSR policy and innovating SSR practice have gradually been reduced from little to less</b>	
What happened	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Quantitative:</i> At the MFA, full time ›SSR staff‹ at HQ was reduced from c. 3–4 full time employees (FTE) in 2008 to 0.5 FTE in 2017. At the MoD, HQ staff available for SSR work was reduced from several FTE in 2005–2010 to 0.05 FTE in 2017</li> <li>■ <i>Qualitative:</i> The MFA did not have HQ staff with specific SSR knowledge between 2011–2014. Its HQ SSR staff lacked field experience over the entire period of 2005 to 2017</li> <li>■ <i>Resource amplifiers:</i> The MFA's short-term mission pool became the primary mechanism for seconding SSR expertise abroad, but it lacks senior experts that are easily mobilized. The MoD's ›SSR pool‹ was discontinued around 2009–2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The ability to launch international SSR initiatives and innovate bilateral practice disappeared</li> <li>■ The MFA's SSR portfolio shifted from initiating international initiatives and a mix of bilateral and multilateral programming to influencing multilateral policies, organizing training exercises (including in a NATO context) and financing multilateral programmes</li> <li>■ Good quality SSR expertise that can be rapidly seconded is no longer available</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples:</b> In 2008–2009, 4 FTE at the MFA's HQ worked nearly full time on the design of the Burundi-Dutch SSD programme alone with an initial programme budget of EUR 10 million per year (from the Stability Fund); in 2017, the entire Dutch SSR programme portfolio was managed by 0.5 FTE with a programme budget of c. EUR 7 million (also from the Stability Fund).</p>	

**Factor 4: The focus on short-term and quantitative development results in Dutch domestic political debate has crowded out alternative accountings of results that are better suited to SSR**

What happened	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Economic crises and budget cuts created a greater focus on ›value for aid money‹ that took the form of quantitative and tangible short-term results</li> <li>■ The MFA's annual ›aid results report‹ created a relative straightjacket for thinking about programme design and reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Earlier SSR programmes, like the SSD Burundi programme, were unable to account for this ›new‹ type of results quickly enough, which expedited their discontinuation once they ran into trouble</li> <li>■ A focus on short-term, quantitative results decreased incentives to move away from SSR-labelled train-build-equip activities in peacekeeping operations</li> <li>■ It became much more difficult to obtain approval for programmes with an adaptive design. Retro-active adaptation of programmes in light of changes in context remained possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples:</b> Several informal conversations with MFA staff in the course of a 2016 workshop series on adaptive programming suggested that it has become difficult to convince senior civil servants and politicians that ›process‹ and ›relational‹ results are also ›real results‹.</p>	

Source: Six key informant interviews.

while this has led to intense discussions within the MFA on the merits and demerits of particular SSR programmes, no evidence could be found of any such programme being blocked or declined as a result. The most plausible alternative explanation is that the Dutch operational SSR practice has such a light budgetary footprint that it escapes more intense scrutiny.

Finally, although the absence of a well-articulated SSR policy prevented greater alignment of interests and resources across the Dutch government, interdepartmental competition did not act as a constraint on Dutch SSR policy or practice either. Because the MFA was always considered as being ›in the lead‹, and because its modest SSR practice was usually either focused on peacekeeping missions – in which the MoD also has a significant stake – or designed and funded from its aid budget – of which the MFA holds the purse strings –, it has generally been a collaborative affair.

On a closing note, it should be observed that longitudinal analysis in support of particular SSR programmes is extremely rare in Dutch SSR practice – in spite of several series of more general conflict and governance oriented country-level assessments that the MFA has commissioned in the course of time.<sup>23</sup> While this did not have a discernible impact on the development of Dutch SSR policy or practice as an internal institutional factor, it

23. The progress of the Burundian-Dutch SSD programme has been monitored extensively by ISSAT, but this has generally featured very little political economic analysis that could have indicated whether programme progress was actually meaningful in the Burundian political context.

nevertheless points to an important shortcoming of past Dutch operational practice. Research has long established that high quality SSR programmes require regular and deep analysis of the political order of the country in which they are implemented – in addition to other factors such as sustained political donor engagement.<sup>24</sup>

2.4 The atypical case of Dutch SSR in Burundi and what can be learned from it

The Burundi-Dutch Security Sector Development (SSD) programme was atypical in several regards, which makes it an interesting case study. Governed by a broad Memorandum of Understanding, it represented an eight-year long programmatic effort (2009–2017) that featured governance, strategy development, professionalization, as well as train-build-equip activities in support of the Burundian military and police. Its budget ran to several dozen million Euros. It was atypical for the Dutch MFA for a number of reasons:

- It was a large, bilaterally executed programme; most Dutch SSR support is delivered multilaterally via international organizations;
- It was long-term in its duration: eight years as opposed to the usual three to four years;

24. Van Veen, E. and M. Price, *Securing its success, Justifying its relevance: Mapping a way forward for Security Sector Reform*, The Hague: Clingendael, 2014; Sedra (online), *op.cit.*; Van Veen (2016), *op.cit.*; see also CIGI's SSR 2.0 work online.

- It featured a flexible and adaptive design that enabled success to be reinforced and failure to be discontinued; most SSR programmes follow a more rigid programme cycle approach;
- Its approach was one of partnership with the Burundian authorities; quite a few SSR programmes are more supply-driven;
- It was implemented in close strategic collaboration with the MoD; normally the MFA ›commissions‹ and the MoD ›executes‹.

The programme could see the light of the day in 2009 and achieve a modicum of success in terms of discussions about security that it enabled among key Burundian stakeholders because it was based on good context analysis and a genuine partnership.<sup>25</sup> This, in turn, was possible because Burundi was out of the geopolitical limelight, financial resources within the MFA were plentiful and the programme benefited from ›benign neglect‹ by powerful political and bureaucratic actors within and outside of the MFA.

Two shortcomings of the programme ultimately facilitated its premature conclusion in the vortex of the third mandate crisis around President Nkurunziza. The first was that it had failed to build high-level relations with key CNDD-FDD (Burundi's ruling party) power brokers to help it understand and navigate major political developments in the country. The second was that the programme was designed in such an adaptive manner that it struggled to demonstrate results in the tangible, short-term and quantitative manner that came to dominate the Dutch domestic aid discourse. Once the crisis in Burundi started to affect the programme, its value-for-money in terms of results of this nature was swiftly questioned.

Today, the reality is that the MFA is no longer able to design and implement similar programmes due to dwindling political appetite and reduced human resources. Yet, the Burundi-Dutch SSD programme remains a powerful reminder of the fact that with the right bureaucratic partnerships and entrepreneurship it is possible to design and implement innovative and risky

mid-range programmes with limited resources within typical Dutch financial, administrative and regulatory constraints.

## 2.5 Where to go from here?


This brief analysis suggests three conclusions. The first conclusion is that despite being a minor player in SSR, the Netherlands nevertheless made some interesting contributions to international SSR practice on the basis of the OECD's SSR Handbook, such as the creation of ISSAT and the Burundian-Dutch SSD programme. However, over time SSR has become a topic with little purchase within the MFA bureaucracy, drawing little attention from senior officials and few resources. The consequence is that the MFA no longer has much ›initiating ability‹. Mimicking this development, the MoD no longer has capacity to support MFA-guided SSR initiatives, while such capacity on the part of the MJ&S was always more difficult to mobilize due to domestic demands on its staff (e.g. public prosecutors and judges). In short, the Dutch MFA remains able to support a few scattered SSR programmes, track international policy development and make occasional international contributions through advice or training, but that is as far as it goes.

The second conclusion is that there is a significant discrepancy between the Dutch ability to engage in SSR on the one hand, and the unchanged utility and need for SSR initiatives in the context of peacebuilding, statebuilding, migration and combatting violent extremism on the other. For example, it is clear from recent research that abusive or violent behaviour by state security forces is a key accelerator, or even trigger, in radicalization processes.<sup>26</sup> It is precisely the performance of security forces – state and otherwise – that is at the core of SSR from a governance perspective. More generally, the intention behind the formal or informal organization and provision of security matters a great deal for the ability of countries and peoples to develop in a progressive sense.

The third conclusion is that decisive political action is needed to shift the default scenario of SSR slumbering on as a policy field within the Dutch MFA without significant agency and on a shoestring to a more ambi-

25. Ball, N., *Putting governance at the heart of Security Sector Reform: Lessons from the Burundi-Netherlands Security Sector Development Program*, The Hague: Clingendael, 2014.

26. See for example: UNDP, *Journey to extremism in Africa: Drivers, incentives and the tipping point for recruitment*, New York: UNDP Regional bureau for Africa, 2017.



tious undertaking that can make a real contribution to, for example, migration and anti-radicalization agendas. Practically, this requires:

- The development of a short SSR policy document to create a shared interdepartmental sense of purpose and political parameters for SSR programmes;
  - the allocation of 2–3 additional FTE of adequate seniority to SSR as a policy field to re-create the ability to initiate;
  - the allocation of an additional EUR 15–20 million to catalyze programmes and enable longitudinal analysis. This enables good contextualization of engagements;
- and
- the enforcement of a strategic alignment of Dutch contributions to peacekeeping missions with an SSR component and Dutch aid programmes in the area of SSR. This will increase value for money and enhance impact.

### 3. Germany: Lots of Assistance, Little Reform

*Philipp Rotmann*

Post-reunification Germany started out, for reasons analyzed elsewhere, with an international security policy best described as reactive, defensive and unimaginative rather than ambitious, creative and risk-taking. A few exceptional decisions and initiatives with regard to the Balkans, Afghanistan, Ukraine and Iraq stand in stark contrast to other times and places, and illustrate the inability of the German political and bureaucratic infrastructure to support its own expectations for a leadership role beyond one or two crises at a time. To support civilian and democratic control of security institutions in countries where such control is weak is an ambitious endeavor the pursuit of which requires considerable political courage and creativity over a sustained period of time if it is to have a positive impact. On paper, it is an ambition that fits Berlin's recently evolved self-image of growing leadership in matters of international peace and security well. It ties perfectly into the historical narrative that shapes international expectations for Germany as the country that went through two major democratic transformations of its military culture and civil-military relations: rebuilding the West German armed forces ten years after the end of World War II, and integrating/demobilizing the armed forces of Communist East Germany after reunification.

It fits so well, in fact, that the German government – uniquely among its peers – uses the term »security sector reform« as an umbrella concept for everything it does in support of security institutions in fragile contexts. While the government does not have a figure for this portfolio, it routinely mentions as its largest components three train-and-equip programs, which have collectively grown from less than €20 million (2015) to about €155 million (2017), in addition to €150 million annually since 2015 to support the operating costs of Afghanistan's security forces. Further growth is already earmarked for the coming years. Compared to these figures, the few civilian programs that focus on actual reforms in security sector governance are tiny and scattered among multiple budget items and ministries. As such, Germany claims hundreds of millions of euros annually in »SSR programming,« but the great majority of that amount is, in fact, security assistance.

That is despite the government's longstanding normative commitment to an ambitious SSR agenda. Germany has been a member of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces since 2000. In 2006, several ministries issued an »inter-ministerial framework concept« for supporting security sector reform that was written mainly by development experts at the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and based on the 2005 OECD DAC Guidance on Security System Reform and Governance.<sup>27</sup> In those days, train-and-equip budgets were tiny, security spending on Afghanistan was minimal, and there was barely any SSR programming focused on reform undertaken by any part of the German government.

Twelve years later the size of the total security assistance portfolio has exploded and the objectives according to which different departments work with foreign security institutions have diverged. As a result, the German government currently has no official policy on SSR, no guidelines on funding support for SSR, and no conceptual clarity on what SSR is, how policy instruments can help achieve it, where it fits into the larger security policy toolbox and how it relates to instruments such as security assistance.

This is supposed to change by the fall of 2018: the government has committed itself to issuing an »SSR strategy« which is being developed by an »SSR working group« of officials from the Foreign Office (chair), the ministries of defense, development, interior and justice, and the Chancellery. It is an opportunity to inject much-needed strategic focus into a sprawling security assistance portfolio, to build a conceptual foundation for twinning security assistance with support to security sector reform programs and to introduce a culture of evaluation to allow for learning and improvement. If it succeeds, it will make a major contribution to the government's much-flaunted »commitment to enabling our partners to ... ensure their national and regional security« in a sustainable manner.

This chapter maps the starting point of that exercise. In three sections it sketches the political ambitions as expressed in the government's current top-level policy

27. »Interministerielles Rahmenkonzept zur Unterstützung von Reformen des Sicherheitssektors in Entwicklungs- und Transformationsländern«, October 2006, [https://web.archive.org/web/20120717150248/https://www.bmz.de/de/zentrales\\_downloadarchiv/themen\\_und\\_schwerpunkte/frieden/rahmenkonzept\\_SSR\\_deu\\_Final\\_1.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20120717150248/https://www.bmz.de/de/zentrales_downloadarchiv/themen_und_schwerpunkte/frieden/rahmenkonzept_SSR_deu_Final_1.pdf) (accessed February 14, 2018).

documents, the reality of SSR-related programming, and the practice of implementation – to the extent possible given the limited publicly available data and lack of independent, publicly available evaluations of most programs. In conclusion, it attempts a brief analysis of the reasons for the gap between ambitious political commitments to reform and an overwhelming operational focus on train-and-equip programs.

### 3.1 Political ambition: supporting reform by building capacity

The German government's paramount policy statement on international security policy, the 2016 *White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*, talks a big game of security sector reform in theory. It presents security sector reform as the first »tailored instrument« to »eradicate the causes of conflicts,« one of two that are singled out from the vast toolkit for crisis prevention, stabilization and peacebuilding:

*Security sector reform and the promotion of the rule of law and of democratic structures are therefore of particular importance in all phases of conflict. Germany will respond with strategic perseverance to the enormous challenges associated with the long-term stabilisation of fragile, failing and failed states.*<sup>28</sup>

In the following paragraphs, the White Paper introduces a »commitment to enabling our partners not only to manage conflicts independently but also to ensure their national and regional security.« This »enable and enhance approach« (*Ertüchtigung* in the German original) focuses on »training as well as support and advice for the purpose of capacity building« as »the logical extension of our preventive approach to security.«<sup>29</sup> It starts from the recognition – long discovered, forgotten and rediscovered by Germany's closest partners during their respective colonial histories, in Vietnam and elsewhere – that »material support alone cannot guarantee long-term enhancing and enabling effects. For this reason,

28. 2016 White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr, p. 60, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180510110748/http://www.planungsamt.bundeswehr.de/resource/resource/UIRvc-jZYSW1RcEVHaUd4cklzQU4yNWFvejhLbjVyYnR1OCt3ZIU1N09FW-FV1NE9rbFB4YUEzY1ZacnFQVDZxN3N4T0FLemdsVGVZblVwV9wL1Y3ek5y-blNINW9HcXVxTUFYUzZGZVFXVEE9/2016%20White%20Paper.pdf> (accessed May 10, 2018).

29. 2016 White Paper, *ibid.*

material support is complemented by advisory and training measures. If possible, it is embedded in a comprehensive approach that includes initiatives to strengthen good governance and reform the security sector.«<sup>30</sup> As such, the ambition expressed by the German government in 2016 is to professionalize partner security forces via train-and-equip while treating SSR as an optional add-on to be deployed only »wherever possible.«<sup>31</sup>

A year later, in June 2017, the German government adopted another policy statement of equal formal status, equal intended reach (about a decade) and with an overlapping thematic scope: the *Guidelines on Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace*. In it, the government spells out the goals of its peace and security engagement across different »fields of action.« This section includes the following »goal:«

*to develop a politically legitimised and accountable security sector which meets professional standards (armed forces, police, judiciary, intelligence services, civil protection and disaster response) and which enjoys public trust. It is the Federal Government's firm conviction that a functioning security sector bound by human-rights and rule-of-law principles will be instrumental in protecting the population and establishing peace and security.*<sup>32</sup>

This is to be achieved by a range of »approaches and instruments« including an ambitious vision of SSR on the one hand and the train-and-equip program on the other:

*Developing, strengthening and reforming the security sector (SSR) is often a key element of peace negotiations and national reconciliation processes. The object of the security sector reform (SSR) is to improve the security of the population, with adequate participation of women and men. It is to be achieved by (re)building effective and responsible security forces embedded in functioning and legitimate political structures accepted by the population. ... The key to success is that SSR measures apply to all levels of hierarchy as part of a comprehensive approach from the political executive to the security authorities and all the way to the local offices in charge*

30. 2016 White Paper, p. 52.

31. 2016 White Paper, p. 60.

32. 2017 Guidelines on Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace, p. 84, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180214151902/https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/1214246/057f794cd3593763ea556897972574fd/preventing-crises-data.pdf> (accessed February 14, 2018).

of security tasks. This also requires the establishment of a civic and public supervision of the security sector. It should also be considered that security forces in (post) conflict situations were often conflict actors themselves or are perceived as such. In order to gain the trust of all population groups, it is paramount to conduct internal reforms and establish processes of dealing with the past.<sup>33</sup>

The train-and-equip program (the »enable and enhance approach«) follows afterwards:

*Enhancing and enabling as well as training and equipment assistance in matters relating to police, military, civil protection and disaster response: ... This instrument combines equipment, consulting services and training measures with a view to increasing the capabilities and professionalism of the security forces.<sup>34</sup>*

The »instruments« of »Ertüchtigung« and SSR are thus explicitly subordinated to the joint political »goal,« the supremacy of which is explicitly reinforced for the train-and-equip program: »This instrument [Ertüchtigung] therefore contributes to the development, strengthening and reform [my emphasis] of the security sector, to enabling our partners to better fend for their own stability and hence regional stability, and to strengthening their resilience.«

How is the train-and-equip program supposed to realize this contribution to political reform? In further defining the train-and-equip instrument, the most important political issues such as who controls the security services, what purpose they serve and how that plays out in their organizational cultures are not addressed at all. All the weight of contributing to »resilience« and »reform« is put on training: »the rule of law and the protection of human rights, and more generally, the protection of civilians in violent conflicts are part of the police and military training syllabi.«<sup>35</sup> As training alone has never been able to magically produce a political dynamic in favor of difficult reforms, the actual contribution of German train-and-equip programs to SSR is far from automatic, as described by the Guidelines. It depends, in fact, on other drivers for political reform that remain unaddressed. Those factors must be primarily local, but they

can be supported by international diplomatic and political means as well as SSR programs. Neither the 2016 White Paper nor the 2017 Guidelines resolved the question of whether or not such support will be available for the same countries that receive German train-and-equip assistance. It will be for the planned 2018 SSR Strategy to provide an answer.

This muddled state of affairs at the top level of doctrine reflects a double split among the missions of different governments departments and resulting organizational cultures within them. The first split is between diplomats and development experts on the one hand and the defense and interior bureaucracy on the other. Diplomats and development experts stressed the need for an ambitious understanding of SSR in line with international standards and the scientific evidence. At the same time, officials in the traditional security ministries focused on security assistance to help partners »do what they are doing already, just more effectively,« such as fighting terrorists or insurgents, or to facilitate transactional cooperation, such as intelligence sharing. The other split is between diplomats, defense and domestic security experts on the one hand, who favored quick-impact approaches, and development experts on the other hand, who pushed for long-term, sustainable approaches.

In the end, the politically ambitious side won the day on paper and the resulting compromise language looks as if Germany could have it both ways (with short-term train-and-equip projects surreptitiously producing political reform). Not only does the latter mirage not stand up to closer scrutiny. Even more problematically for strategy development and implementation, many officials tasked with security assistance/reform in defense and interior security openly deny the validity of these policy statements in favor of what they consider to be the only sober and realistic approach: the technical delivery of training and equipment without any ambitions for reform.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.2 Programming: focus on training and equipment

By now, the German government has established three specific budget lines to support foreign security institutions. Additional SSR-related programs are being fund-

33. 2017 Guidelines, p. 84.

34. 2017 Guidelines, p. 88.

35. 2017 Guidelines, p. 88.

36. Author's conversations with defense and interior ministry officials at workshops and conferences, 2015–2017.

ed from the Development Ministry's general budget for »technical cooperation« and the Foreign Office's budget for »crisis prevention.« There is no overall budget for security sector assistance, and the government does not publish comprehensive information about funding, projects or partner countries.

From piecing together the available data, by far the biggest piece of the overall security sector assistance pie is in the three inter-agency train-and-equip programs with their own official budget lines. All three programs are presented by the government as part of its efforts to support security sector reform, which is defined as »to strengthen, to professionalize, to equip security forces and to improve their control by democratic institutions and the rule of law.«<sup>37</sup> The three train-and-equip programs are administered by the Foreign Office, in two cases jointly with the Defense Ministry and in the third case with the Interior Ministry providing implementation support: the above-mentioned »enable and enhance initiative« (*Ertüchtigungsinitiative*, created 2016), the Equipment Aid Programme for Foreign Armed Forces (*AH-P*, created in the 1960s) and the new Police Training and Equipment Aid Programme (*AAH-P*, created 2017).

They differ in their legal constraints, geographic scope and financial volume. The program that has existed longest, AH-P, has its roots in donating strictly non-lethal military surplus equipment to western allies in Africa during the Cold War. According to its concept note, the program is »to support the development of the security architecture in a selection of African countries,« or, more specifically, »to enable selected partners to help build peace and security in Africa. This particularly means establishing or improving the capabilities needed to take part in peacekeeping missions run in Africa.« In so doing, the program makes »a contribution from the Federal Government to the enhancement and reform of the security sector in fragile and transition countries.«<sup>38</sup>

For the four-year planning period of 2017–2020, a total volume of almost €63 million has been earmarked for projects with eight African countries: Nigeria (€12 million), Senegal (€12 million), Tanzania (€9 million), Ghana (€8.4 million), Cameroon (€8 million), Namibia (€7 million), and Mali (€6.6 million). In keeping with the program's historical profile and its legal restrictions, the focus of these projects is on improving logistical and medical capabilities of partner militaries. In the current period, however, two new projects with Ghana are getting closer to the front line: one seeks to establish a mobile command post (enabling larger, more complex expeditionary operations) and the other to improve military intelligence capabilities.<sup>39</sup>

The new police equipment and training program, AAH-P, is the result of an effort to translate the non-lethal military train-and-equip program (AH-P) into the realm of police cooperation. The basic idea is to combine equipment delivery with training and advisory services. In 2017, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Interior developed a first set of projects with a focus on forensics (with criminal investigation units) and document verification (with border security units) for Tunisia, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, and the Palestinian Territories.<sup>40</sup> For the 2017 fiscal year, the government reports a volume of €4.35 million for this program.<sup>41</sup>

Unlike the two strictly non-lethal aid programs, the newly established, bigger and more flexible train-and-equip program (*Ertüchtigungsinitiative*) is restricted to an annual planning cycle. Most of its projects currently (2017) focus on Iraq, Jordan, Mali, Nigeria, and Tunisia, with some additional »individual projects« in Lebanon, Niger and Chad, mostly to improve capabilities for deployment with UN, ECOWAS, AU, NATO, and »soon« OSCE operations. Following an appropriation of €100 million for 2016 (mostly for projects in Jordan/€30 million, Iraq/€25 million and Tunisia/€20 million<sup>42</sup>), the appropriated funds for 2017

37. Deutscher Bundestag, Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Doris Wagner, Omid Nouripour, Agnieszka Brugger, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN (Drucksache 18/11015), »Deutsches Engagement im Bereich der Sicherheitssektorreform,« Drucksache 18/11458 vom 07.03.2017, p. 2, translation: Philipp Rotmann, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180214152117/http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/114/1811458.pdf> (accessed February 14, 2018).

38. Federal Foreign Office / Federal Ministry of Defence, Principles of the Federal Government Equipment Aid Programme for Foreign Armed Forces, June 2015, official translation, on file with author.

39. Based on a list of planned projects, dated August 2016, on file with author. Details may have changed since.

40. Deutscher Bundestag, »Deutsches Engagement im Bereich der Sicherheitssektorreform,« p. 2; interview with Foreign Office official, November 2017.

41. Deutscher Bundestag, Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Kathrin Vogler, Annette Groth, Andrej Hunko, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion DIE LINKE (Drucksache 18/13272), »Zivile Krisenprävention und Konfliktbearbeitung,« Drucksache 18/13598, September 15, 2017, own translation, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180510121419/http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/18/135/1813598.pdf> (accessed May 10, 2018).

42. Majjid Sattar, Kosten der Ertüchtigung, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, May 19, 2016.



amount to €130million, only some of which funds lethal equipment.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, a note appended to the budgetary appropriation tasks the program managers with a particularly preventative implementation of military assistance: »Security institutions should be strengthened in such a way so as to either prevent crises or enable partners to react more effectively to crises and solve them on their own.«<sup>44</sup> In a written response to a parliamentary question, the government wrote in April 2017: »Through the *Ertüchtigungsinitiative*, security institutions should be developed and strengthened, wherever possible as part of a security sector reform.«<sup>45</sup>

The three train-and-equip programs are being administered jointly, although the details differ. The biggest program is jointly administered in full by the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defense. Its annual planning cycle culminates in a joint letter of the two deputy ministers of foreign affairs and defense (*Staatssekretäre*) to parliament in which they summarize the year's projects. Their joint signatures are required to unlock the funds for this program. The two non-lethal train-and-equip programs, in contrast, are funded from the Foreign Office budget alone, while the Ministries of Defense and Interior, respectively, provide the technical expertise for project design and guidance, as well as the personnel for the »military advisory groups« and police advisory teams that are being deployed abroad.

Despite the language about security sector reform in these program documents, none of these three programs and budget items provides for efforts to help partner security institutions address the political and cultural obstacles to »ensuring the security of the population« rather than doing the opposite, and to becoming »responsible security forces embedded in functioning and legitimate political structures accepted by the population,« e. g. by »the establishment of a civic and public supervision of the security sector« and »dealing with the past.«<sup>46</sup> In practice, the crucial link established in cur-

rent policy documents – for train-and-equip programs to serve not just as a means toward »professionalizing« partner institutions but also toward the end of political reform – is missing. Such deeply political work has not been funded from the security sector programs so far, nor have the diplomatic service or the military attaché corps been set up to provide the necessary political engagement alongside projects run by technical experts. While some of it appears to be funded from technical cooperation funds (development) and crisis prevention funds (foreign office), doing so remains completely at the discretion of the respective ministries. That separation has helped the Defense and Interior Ministries to maintain their distance from politics and diplomacy and focus instead on the nuts and bolts of equipment, logistics and standardized training projects.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to the clear mandates written into the budget for the train-and-equip programs, the Bundestag has not issued any statutory rules about the level of ambition and spending for the political side of SSR.<sup>48</sup>

Compared to the massive growth of the equipment and training programs, the quantity and scope of work on the politics of the security sector is minimal. Asked about projects »with the primary objective to improve or to strengthen the democratic or civilian control over the respective security forces,« the government recently provided a list of five (5) current projects in four (4) countries with a total volume of €3.7million (for 2016 and 2017) in Tunisia (€2million), the Palestinian Territories (€678,000), Nigeria (€650,000), and Niger (€400,000). Perhaps to underline how little had been done previously, the government response to the parliamentary question also listed two previous projects undertaken from 2006–2007 and 2009–2010 in Indonesia (€1.1million). All of these projects are described as supporting training and dialogue between security forces, civil society and parliaments. In addition, the government describes several larger programs run by the Development Ministry in support of African regional organizations (AU, SADC, EAFSCOM), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center and in South Africa as including components supporting the democratic control of security

43. Bundeshaushalt 2017, Einzelplan 60, p. 32.

44. Ibid.

45. Deutscher Bundestag, Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Jan van Aken, Christine Buchholz, Annette Groth, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion DIE LINKE (Drucksache 18/11358), »Ertüchtigung von Partnerstaaten,« Drucksache 18/11889, April 7, 2017, own translation, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180214152340/http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/118/1811889.pdf> (accessed February 14, 2018).

46. All quotes from the previously cited section of the 2017 Guidelines, p. 84.

47. Interviews, various Foreign Office and Defense Ministry officials, 2015, 2016 and 2017.

48. There is, however, no earmarking on the part of parliament in favor of particular amounts or specific projects for specific countries; political priorities are rather expressed in general terms and left to the bureaucracy to translate into programming.

services, without clearly delimiting their financial size and scope. These programs probably invest much more, in financial terms, in supporting good security governance, particularly in the police and justice sectors, than the Foreign Office programs have done so far. Based on anecdotal indications, there are probably additional multilateral programs that either the Foreign Office or the Development Ministry support and that include elements contributing to SSR. Without more specific data, however, it is impossible to disentangle the political components (citizen dialogues, training efforts targeted at political change) from the more expensive technical components of these development projects (construction of police stations and courthouses, delivery of equipment, technical training).<sup>49</sup>

Finally, with regard to the EU strategic framework on support for security sector reform adopted by the Council on 14 November 2016, the German government has been unable to do more than »welcome EU engagement« and »review to what extent its [existing] efforts may fit the EU framework« – a commitment made in March 2017<sup>50</sup> and not followed up by the end of the year. With regard to an EU role in security sector assistance, whether train-and-equip or reform, the view from Berlin is that larger countries are stretched to the limit trying to implement and improve their own programs, while there is little added value to be expected from EU-wide processes. Berlin’s main priority, emphasized in the draft coalition agreement between CDU/CSU and SPD in February 2018, is to allow the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace to fund non-lethal military assistance (»capacity building for security and development«, CBSD, see Schröder/Süßenbach in this volume).<sup>51</sup>

### 3.3 Implementation

In recent years, the decisions about what to do in support of security institutions or security sector reform abroad resulted from project ideas, budgetary allocations re-

flecting political priorities (mostly at the country or regional level), and the planning requirements imposed by the budgetary process as such. Analyzing country-level political change, identifying possible windows of opportunity, and strategically designing interventions to support such change does not appear to have played a role in these decisions so far. Project ideas were usually generated »bottom-up« in one of several ways: for the train-and-equip programs, as direct requests from partner governments and/or from the assessment trips of German military or police experts to the country and for politically-focused SSR projects, most often from the fundraising activities of implementing organizations such as DCAF.

The most salient political priorities driving security sector programming were threefold. The first is to support stabilization in countries with either reasonably capable security forces and significant risks of sliding into violent conflict (Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon) or countries in violent conflict whose security forces urgently need to become more effective and more professional (Iraq, Nigeria, and Mali as well as Afghanistan, which does not show up in the above breakdowns because assistance to the Afghani security forces is a separate budget item). In places such as Tunisia or Nigeria counter-terrorism is part of this priority. In countries where the German military is deployed (as in Afghanistan, Iraq or Mali), these train-and-equip-heavy programs are also a part of the exit strategy. Covering about three quarters of the allocated funds in 2016, this priority – stabilizing the recipient country itself – is by far the most salient political priority driving German security sector support. Of course, sustainable stabilization will not be possible without pragmatic steps of reform, some of which are being taken (such as attempts at integrating irregular militias into the official security institutions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and strengthening civilian oversight capacity in several countries) and some of which are supported by Germany. Elements of security sector reform are thus part of these efforts to professionalize security forces – almost the opposite of the relationship claimed by high-level political doctrine.

A second political priority is to help African countries improve their military crisis management capabilities and to support peace operations in Africa. This is the stated primary focus of the non-lethal military aid program, and some of the AH-P country programs have begun

49. Deutscher Bundestag, »Deutsches Engagement im Bereich der Sicherheitssektorreform,« p. 3–4.

50. Deutscher Bundestag, »Deutsches Engagement im Bereich der Sicherheitssektorreform,« p. 2.

51. CDU, CSU, SPD, »Ein neuer Aufbruch für Europa. Eine neue Dynamik für Deutschland. Ein neuer Zusammenhalt für unser Land: Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD,« February 7, 2018, p. 148, [https://web.archive.org/web/20180214002545/https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Koalitionsvertrag/Koalitionsvertrag\\_2018.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20180214002545/https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Koalitionsvertrag/Koalitionsvertrag_2018.pdf) (accessed February 14, 2018).

to have a plausible impact in that field, e.g. in Ghana, Senegal or Tunisia and with some of the African regional organizations. In Tunisia, for example, the program supports the establishment of a mobile »role-2« field hospital and a camp management unit, both capabilities that are usually in short supply in peace operations, regardless of whether the UN or a regional organization is running the mission. While not meeting any known definition of »security sector reform« as such, and despite only a very indirect relationship to the promotion of internal change in the identity and culture of these security forces, these projects make some of the most promising German contributions to conflict prevention and conflict management.

A third, more recent political expectation is to support transit countries in managing migration to Europe, which includes among other things reducing onward migration as well as facilitating returns. The most visible link is in Tunisia, where the biggest projects funded under the *Ertüchtigungsinitiative* in 2016 were the establishment of a mobile electronic surveillance system at the Libyan border and advisory work of the German federal police for the Tunisian border police, which focused on document verification at the border to Algeria. In a fair assessment, however, the most plausible contribution of both projects lies not in limiting migration to Europe but in the counter-terrorism effort against spillover of fighters and weapons from Libya to Tunisia, the country's most significant security threat ever since the fall of Gaddafi.

Finally, there are a number of country portfolios in the non-lethal military aid program whose effective contribution to either the internal stabilization of the recipient country or to projecting peace and stability elsewhere is less obvious. Without regular independent evaluations (the first of which have been announced for 2018), it is unclear which of these smaller country portfolios achieve the goals of the program. Interviews with program managers over the past several years, however, suggest that not all of these programs correspond to clear political priorities; some rather appear to survive as a result of bureaucratic inertia at the working level.

At the level of an individual recipient country such as Tunisia, a good example for a partner with a relatively large portfolio across all the components of German security sector assistance, the individual projects are

not necessarily connected or deployed in support of an overarching political strategy – whether national (German), European or multilateral. Officials argue that international donor coordination vis-à-vis Tunisia has not worked since the »Arab Spring« sparked a new wave of interest in the country. Donors are so keen to provide security assistance that Tunisian politicians and officials have no incentive to comply with donor expectations about the strategic implementation of joint projects, let alone ambitious reforms in how security services are run or overseen. It is not entirely clear how large Germany's role in that donor group actually is, however. The United States alone allocated about \$140million to Tunisia in 2017. Details on France's security assistance are not as readily available but amount to tens of millions of euros per year, at least.<sup>52</sup> The entirety of German security sector assistance to Tunisia, in comparison, was just under €30million annually in 2016 and 2017. Germany is thus likely to be in third or (if the UK figures are higher) fourth place, but clearly one of the top security partners of the Tunisian government itself – and its biggest development donor to boot, with more than €1 billion per year.

Compared to the normative expectations of the international SSR literature, Germany's programs in support of security institutions in Tunisia clearly fall short. There is no apparent overall strategy in the sense of a clear political objective combined with a theory of change how the different training, advisory and equipment projects with state security forces or the project promoting civilian and democratic control are meant to work together towards that objective. Conversations with embassy officials conducted in the context of another project in 2016 also shed doubt on the capacity of the embassy to orchestrate the different projects in support of such a larger political strategy. Both the political section and the military attaché have far too few staff for such a strategic role.

The main reason why the kind of strategic and political approach demanded by government policy is missing in practice is probably quite simply the lack of sufficient staff for the relevant units (embassies and the relevant

52. Center for International Policy, »Security Assistance Monitor: Tunisia,« <https://securityassistance.org/data/program/military/Tunisia/2012/2018/all/Global/> (accessed May 10, 2018); John Irish, Marine Pennetier, »Fearing Islamic State spillover, France to push Tunisia aid,« Reuters, March 17, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-france/fearing-islamic-state-spillover-france-to-push-tunisia-aid-idUSKCN0WJ01D> (accessed May 10, 2018).

desks in the ministries in Berlin and Bonn) to develop and guide such political strategies on the one hand and to implement the political engagement parts of these strategies outside the outsourced programs on the other.

### 3.4 A new opportunity to build a real strategy that links assistance and reform

While the government has committed itself to a strategic and political approach to security sector assistance and reform, it is very much an open question among the officials managing these programs for Germany whether so much ambition is actually necessary or even realistic. The government's commitment to develop a »strategy on security sector reform« (currently scheduled for adoption by the fall of 2018) creates a new opportunity for discussing this question. For now, it appears that diplomats and development officials are seeking to develop the capacity to be more strategic and therefore more political in their approach to security sector assistance, in part because they realize the political risks associated with train-and-equip projects in volatile environments. The challenge will be to square the circle between the necessary ambition for political reform, codified in the international state of the art that Germany has repeatedly signed up to, and the practical challenges of implementing these principles effectively and still pursuing valid short-term goals.

In fact, having seen what they understand as a huge shortfall in professional competence and organizational efficiency among security services in Africa and the Middle East, many »operators« (mainly military and police officers, but also diplomats) simply cannot envision a realistic path toward political reform. For them, the only realistic policy is not to expect any positive change, and to limit expectations accordingly by talking as little as possible about »reform.« Some of these officials privately consider their train-and-equip programs to be wasteful and pointless exercises in political symbolism, forced on them by politicians who do not understand the complexity of organizational capacity-building but have yielded to the pressure to »do something.« Others appear to believe in a simplistic, acultural model of capacity-building in which professionally delivered training and good German equipment will not only improve skills among individuals but also increase capacity among recipient

institutions and ultimately increase political stability or reduce the push factors driving migration to Europe. A special case in this regard is the role of operational liaison officers sent abroad to work closely with a partner military or police organization. If expected to contribute to political reforms within the partner institution, a conflict of interest emerges in which the pressing need for operational collaboration (obtaining information and support in cases of terrorism, organized crime or illegal migration) always wins over any demands to support change whenever the latter risks causing displeasure among their counterparts on account of »lecturing« or engaging in the internal politics of their institutions.

While these concerns are common among security officials from many Western countries, there is a specifically German element to it as well. Compared to senior officials from countries and organizations (such as the United Nations, including its senior officials from African countries) with a stronger tradition of advising foreign leaders in sensitive political matters, German officials have a significantly more passive understanding of their own role as military, police or civilian security leaders. From a handful of informal interviews with mid-level German officials serving in advisory roles in fragile contexts, the self-image that emerges is quite contradictory. On the one hand, their view of their own strengths – what their German institutions can offer to their Tunisian, Jordanian etc. counterparts – is quite modest, limited to the apolitical nuts and bolts of their respective professions: professional police work, professional military behavior, strictly limited to the working level. On the other hand, there is often an unshakeable belief in the superiority of the particular German interpretation of how to safeguard basic and human rights as part of this professionalism – a belief that often makes it hard to deal with the inevitable shortcomings and dilemmas faced by their local counterparts. Thus, the laudable commitment to taking »local ownership« seriously runs the risk that programs will be exploited by skillful »local owners,« or will be designed to be of secondary or tertiary importance to local owners to avoid any conflict between the interests of local partners and the principles of the German donor representatives.

What's missing from the common self-image among German security officials is any sense of the unique role of *senior* security leaders in a liberal democracy like Germany (in and out of uniform) in managing the delicate boundaries between security professionals and civilian,

democratic governance.<sup>53</sup> As we might observe from other countries such as France, the UK, the US, and many African countries, the contribution of such individuals can be decisive for building effective working relationships at levels that impact institutional trajectories. In the case of Germany, it is a potential that remains untapped. The most likely reason for this is simply the fact that Germany has almost never deployed senior officials in advisory roles, citing a lack of sufficient numbers to deploy any abroad.

The German government's design and implementation of security sector assistance and reform programs definitely face bureaucratic challenges – as every policy objective does, particularly those shared across different bureaucracies that are partly in competition with one another. At the same time, the German case does not support the assumption that those bureaucratic challenges suffice to explain the gap between policy practice and the normative expectations set out in the international literature. Searching for alternative or additional explanations would go beyond the scope of this short chapter. Future research in this direction, however, might focus on political and professional cultures, both among classical »uniformed« security institutions (the military and the police) and among civilian institutions with roles in security policy (security ministries, diplomatic services). They might find that post-war Germany

was so successful in depoliticizing its security experts that its security institutions at large have developed a deep-set aversion to political exposure, even when the mission is to analyze and promote particular political developments abroad. As a result, German society not only lacks crucial voices in debating its own strategic challenges but also a crucial skillset for achieving its ambitions to support security sector reform abroad. After all, to get the uniforms out of politics and into the barracks is itself a political challenge – and as such requires that the change agent (and his external supporters) be willing and able to engage in politics.

It would thus be at least a starting point if a new German strategy document on security sector assistance and reform ensured a single overarching priority that reflected its recognition of the sensitive political nature of its subject matter, namely to ensure that all programming decisions reflect an explicit and continuously updated political economy analysis of actors, interests and conflicts *within* partner security institutions (something embassies could be equipped to provide), and to actively manage the risks involved in supporting these particular actors and institutions as identified by such analysis. There will not be any easy or perfectly safe choices, but facing up to and consciously developing second-best options will by itself be an improvement over the practices of the past.

53. The critical role of senior advisers with relevant experience is emphasized by, among others, Louis-Alexandre Berg, »The EU's Experience with Security Sector Governance,« United States Institute for Peace, 2011, [https://web.archive.org/web/20180310145726/https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR265-EU's\\_Experience\\_with\\_SSG.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20180310145726/https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR265-EU's_Experience_with_SSG.pdf) (accessed May 10, 2018); Michelle Hughes, »The Afghan National Police in 2015 and Beyond,« US Institute for Peace, 2014, [https://web.archive.org/web/20180310134248/https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR346\\_The\\_Afghan\\_National\\_Police\\_in\\_2015\\_and\\_Beyond.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20180310134248/https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR346_The_Afghan_National_Police_in_2015_and_Beyond.pdf) (accessed May 10, 2018); and Andrew Rathmell, »Fixing Iraq's Internal Security Forces. Why is Reform of the Ministry of Interior so Hard?,« Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007, [https://web.archive.org/web/20180510124904/https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy\\_files/files/media/csis/pubs/071113\\_fixingiraq.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20180510124904/https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/071113_fixingiraq.pdf) (accessed May 10, 2018).

## 4. SSR World Leader UK – Institutional and political structures yet missing

Paul Jackson

### 4.1 Introduction

In the UK democratic security governance falls under a number of separate, but connected approaches, including security sector reform (SSR), security and justice and defence engagement as well as broader concerns encompassing human rights and strategic interests. This paper will use SSR as the umbrella label for this activity, while acknowledging that in some circumstances within the UK government itself and also internationally this label may be problematic, as I will clarify below. The overall research approach assumes that the challenges that continue to restrain donors are mainly institutional and bureaucratic, but the experience of the UK implies that there is far more involved. In particular, this paper will draw on the long experience of SSR approaches in Sierra Leone, the UK's longest SSR involvement, to show that even with relatively strong institutional factors both domestically in the UK and also in-country developing democratic security through SSR has been extremely difficult. This begs the question if SSR is difficult in a small, West African state, what does this tell us about the more ambitious programmes of democratic security in Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya, where the UK is also currently engaged?

### 4.2 The general characteristics of UK SSR

The UK has played a central role in the development of SSR as an international policy approach since the 1990s, not least through its leadership of the OECD-DAC during a period of intense policy development and the development of the influential *Handbook for Security System Reform* (2007). In line with broader SSR developments, the UK approach initially concentrated on a narrow set of security actors, usually the military and the police, then later started to address issues of citizen and state security by establishing effective civil control over professional security services, while at the same time incorporating an increasingly complex set of state and non-state actors into the security assemblage. Financially, support for SSR-related activities has never been

higher in the UK and the increases in funding over the last ten years have reinforced the UK's position as a major donor that is willing and able to support significant SSR programmes. It is difficult to put an exact figure on this support, but solely because of the wide range of agencies and activities that the UK engages in. While the legal environment for SSR has not been problematic since the 0.7 spend was established in law, the UK has also been able to take a flexible approach based on combining ODA and non-ODA funding sources.

The UK has been involved in SSR for a considerable length of time. One of the critical interventions was in Sierra Leone, where the roots of ongoing security and justice support can be traced back to 1997 (Jackson and Albrecht, 2011). The comprehensive approach that was then adopted became the core of the approach that the UK developed and then fed back through the OECD, incorporating approaches from other donors involved with similar programmes. This longevity and continual engagement has resulted in a complex web of documentation and guidance within which security activity takes place, but the UK does not have an overarching strategy specifically for security and justice. The key policy documents that the UK Government itself identifies include DFID's (Department for International Development) *Explanatory Note on Security and Access to Justice* (2007); DFID's *Rule of Law Policy Approach* (2013); the *Handbook for Security System Reform* (OECD-DAC, 2007); and others incorporating UN and World Bank approaches (Bakrania and Haider, 2016).

These overarching policy documents are underlain with departmental and cross-cutting guidance documents and approaches relating to the UK's *Building Stability Overseas Strategy* (2011). This document was jointly published by DFID, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Written partly in response to the Arab Spring, it seeks to reconfigure British security support to facilitate joint working across UK agencies, but also to build stability by developing long-term links with overseas partners. It also heralded a huge increase in the core funding for conflict and post-conflict interventions in both absolute and relative terms. A recent comprehensive review of DFID support for security and justice showed that the portfolio has grown from around £10 million in 2000–01 to around £53 million in 2015, rising to around £60 million today. But DFID is only part of the story. Within this portfo-

lio, expenditure on security sector management and reform, including policing, has risen sharply and currently accounts for around seven percent of DFID’s total spend.

This approach incorporates early warning of potential conflicts, rapid crisis prevention through an ability to take action on the ground, and, importantly for this paper, an emphasis on ›upstream prevention‹, specifically building strong, legitimate institutions and less fragile societies that can withstand shocks (UK Government, 2011). This approach clearly recognises the dualism involved in both providing security at the local level for people on the ground and serving the interests of the international community in both providing international stability in general and in avoiding humanitarian emergencies.<sup>54</sup>

It is surprisingly difficult to calculate total expenditure on SSR within the UK. DFID is the leader in terms of SSR, but there is no overarching SSR strategy and in practice a number of agencies are engaged in SSR-related activities. DFID itself tends to use the title ›security and justice‹, which covers a wider set of objectives. In addition to DFID expenditure on these activities, there is a ›pool system that evolved from a Conflict Pool in 2015 to a Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). The CSSF is governed by the National Security Council, chaired by the prime minister and itself guided by the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review and the UK Aid Strategy. The pool system is designed to bring defence, diplomacy and development together to provide flexible funding for relatively quick action rather than running routine programmes. In 2013–14 the Conflict Pool spent £42 million on security and justice programming; most projects were relatively small with an average budget of £365,000 (compared to an average DFID S&J programme [Security and Justice] of £20million).<sup>55</sup> Most Conflict Pool projects are also undertaken directly by UK government staff or related experts via organisations like the Stabilisation Unit, which maintains a roster of around 100 experts with extensive experience.

However, the CSSF was designed with a much broader remit, directly responsible to the National Security Council with priorities decided by inter-departmental boards and incorporating a huge range of activities de-

signed to improve the coordination of UK approaches towards strategically important countries. As such this has become a critical element of the strategic backdrop to security in general, including approaches to SSR. The CSSF comprises ring-fences (e.g. assessed UN peace-keeping contributions) and certain operational funds for the MOD and discretionary programme spending. In 2016/17, the CSSF was allocated £1,111.3million split between £517.8million ODA and £586.4million non-ODA. In 2016/17 the CSSF was the biggest spender of ODA in government outside the DFID and the 21<sup>st</sup> largest ODA fund in the world.<sup>56</sup> This should also be seen in the context of a total UK ODA spend of around £13.4million, of which 64 percent in 2016 was bilateral. In terms of DFID, there are no specific figures for total SSR-related spending, but there are some figures for the categories of humanitarian intervention and governance, which are two of the top three areas of spending by the UK.

Table 1 breaks down this expenditure by its main spender:

Table 1: CSSF Spend by Department 2016–17

FCO	MOD	DFID	Others
£696.5 million	£205.8 million	£123.5 million	£78.4 million
63 %	19 %	11 %	7 %

Source: CSSF Annual Report 2017

The CSSF brings together a number of traditional funders of this type of activity within the UK, with others undertaking related activities. The FCO, for example has a long history of related programming in human rights (a small £6million programme in 2015) and combating torture and a £20million counter-terrorism programme. In addition, other UK departments are active on a smaller scale in SSR-related activities including the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office (EU ›twinning projects‹ in accession countries); the Crown Prosecution Service (around 20 officers overseas supporting capacity of criminal justice to fight organised crime); and the National Crime Agency, which has a large network of partnerships. The CSSF has brought many of these under the umbrella of the pool system and increased funding to those activities at the same time under the direction of ministers.<sup>57</sup>

54. The UK’s largest aid expenditure is on humanitarian aid after conflict.

55. *Review of UK Development Assistance for Security and Justice*, Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI), Report 42, March 2015.

56. *Conflict, Stability and Security Fund: Annual Report 2016/17*, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/630077/conflict-stability-security-fund-annual-report-2016-2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630077/conflict-stability-security-fund-annual-report-2016-2017.pdf).

57. CSSF Annual Report, 2017.

UK support for SSR should be seen in the context of the UK's legal obligation to reach 0.7 GNI spending. At the same time it struggles to impose strategy and coordination across a very wide range of actors within the UK who directly engage with SSR-related activities. Indeed, the 2015 ICAI (Independent Commission for Aid Impact) Report was something of a watershed moment as DFID were heavily criticised publicly for its security and justice programming. As the report stated:

»DFID has no overarching strategy for its S&J assistance and its approach to the portfolio has changed little in recent years. This has led to the repetition of a standard set of interventions across very different country contexts. The use of empirical evidence and contextual analysis is often weak and poorly linked to programme designs.«

This is partly in line with the underlying assumption of this study that to a large extent bureaucratic factors prevent governments from implementing ›good/sound SSR programs‹. However, in mitigation, most of the environments where SSR is attempted suffer from very poor bureaucratic infrastructure and lack baseline data. They are also usually difficult environments within which to gather empirical evidence accurately or quickly.<sup>58</sup>

#### 4.3 Institutional factors affecting UK SSR

The UK government has made efforts to overcome its main institutional problem, namely an inability of departments to work together coherently over time. One key element of this has been to establish a Stabilisation Unit (SU) that incorporates representatives from across the UK government and from agencies like the police and military. The SU works under the umbrella guidance of the national security council, but is also informed by the very broad priorities that are explicit in both MoD and DFID strategies, for example. It also encompasses a pool of civilian experts that it can call on for specific issues who are vetted, trained and experienced and can therefore be deployed relatively quickly. The SU has produced some important guidance, including recently developing a *Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability Guidance Note* (2017), which

58. For example, when I first arrived in Sierra Leone in 2002, there were virtually no government records, so we lacked even basic data like how many people were in the country and where they were.

is an attempt to develop a joint approach to analysis of overseas instability and to develop context specific interventions.<sup>59</sup>

The UK Government Conflict Pool/CSSF system is also designed to enhance collaboration between departments whereby ministries pool budgets. Projects can then either bid for funding that is jointly decided on or funding for specific projects.<sup>60</sup> The advent and development of the CSSF under UK National Security architecture with direct involvement of ministers has also refocused part of the budget for SSR and security-related activity on countries that are regarded as strategically important to the UK. Although the overwhelming majority of this funding remains focussed on specific countries in urgent need, mainly those experiencing or emerging from conflict, the fund also leverages ODA and non-ODA money, which makes it politically valuable in terms of, for example, military intervention and the provision of non-ODA support to specific security groups. It should also be noted that while the CSSF receives a large and growing amount of money, it is still small compared to the total spend of DFID, FCO or the MOD.<sup>61</sup>

While the development of documentation and institutional frameworks has facilitated better cross-departmental working, this should not be seen as a smoothly operating system. The fact that the SU published a guidance note on how to work together as late as 2017 is illustrative of the ICAI Review's conclusion that ›the UK is yet to achieve a joined-up approach to shared international S&J challenges‹ (ICAI, 2015). This is the result of a number of elements coming together, not least: a relatively stale portfolio that tends to apply set approaches to different contexts and lacks analytical coherence; constantly changing staffing both in the field and in the pools, so over time institutional memory and coherence degrades; considerable challenges and competing agendas for DFID budgets, for example police demands regarding anti-money laundering that may not

59. A list of relevant UK Government Publications is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/stabilisation-unit>.

60. The *Conflict Pool Strategic Guidance* document is available here: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/200169/Conflict\\_Pool\\_Strategic\\_Guidance\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200169/Conflict_Pool_Strategic_Guidance_FINAL.pdf).

61. I do not really discuss the MoD here in any detail, but the army and marines in particular have a work stream defined as ›defence engagement‹ that essentially involves training, including running British Military Advisory Training Teams, overseas military advisors and some defence attaches. All of this is now carried out within the UK Armed Forces and is ›hidden‹ expenditure in the context of this document.



be part of ODA; and a very wide, vaguely defined portfolio. Projects are determined both centrally and locally in country offices, and the 'security cadre' within DFID is not as well defined as, say, the social development or engineering cadres.<sup>62</sup> This means that drivers of the decision-making process are not always clear and may be individuals with particular interests as much as central strategic approaches.

Despite these issues, the UK has been consolidating its knowledge of security and justice with the aim of developing a fresher approach to democratic security overseas. Key to this has been the use of the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) to enhance knowledge management within the field that produces topic guides, including *Safety, Security and Justice*, that incorporate state of the art analysis based on published materials.<sup>63</sup> This paper is partly based on the most comprehensive mapping of SSR literature to date, carried out for the UK government by the GSDRC with the aim of establishing what we know and don't know about SSR. The paper takes this as its starting point and then develops an approach, derived in part from what is missing or undeveloped in the literature, that points to potential future directions (Bakrania, 2015).<sup>64</sup> Following a recommendation from the 2015 ICAI Review, this 'evidence mapping' exercise was designed to survey the existing knowledge we have about SSR and security and justice and to identify where that evidence is strongest and where there are gaps. In practice, the database combines studies generated through two distinct, but related, evidence mapping processes, one related to SSR and another that expanded upon this to broaden the scope to S&J.

Politically, the establishment of the CSSF shows a willingness of senior UK government ministers to engage in security and SSR activities. The CSSF is not just about military intervention but about long-term stability overseas. Interestingly, political involvement has broadened the portfolio to include a very wide range of activities

incorporating some counter-terrorism, but primarily criminal activity, in particular organised crime. This has increased the imperative to develop reliable partner institutions overseas. There is also the political realisation that the UK agencies need to work together and this has been translated into a more formalised arrangement under the CSSF.

The biggest institutional factors affecting UK SSR are threefold:

- *The lack of dedicated personnel that see the whole picture:* Although hundreds of staff across the UK government engage in SSR-related activities, very few identify themselves as such, preferring to stick to their smaller areas of specialisation. This contributes to a lack of coordination, staff turnover, disruption and a lack of institutional memory.
- *The lack of a detailed empirical knowledge base:* Lack of institutional memory is exacerbated by the lack of a detailed knowledge base to draw on. Given the magnitude of the task involved, there is actually very little strong evidence about significant aspects.
- *The difficulty of co-ordination:* the UK does not suffer from a lack of will or money to carry out SSR activities. However, owing to the number of agencies involved there is frequently conflict between them. Although the pool system has brought improvement, this tends to last just as long as specific people are present; when they move on coordination decays.

#### 4.4 The Foundational Case: The UK in Sierra Leone 1997–2017

In the UK experience, while Afghanistan and Iraq have loomed large with respect to overall efforts, and Syria dominates the current humanitarian aid budget, in terms of the democratic development of security Sierra Leone remains a critical element, alongside other African and Asian countries, including South Sudan and Nepal. However, the intervention in Sierra Leone is of a long-term nature and as recently as 2015, even after the Ebola epidemic, Sierra Leone still received more UK aid per capita than any other country at £33.74. It is also one of the best documented interventions in this area partly

62. The author is currently an adviser to the Head of Profession within DFID for the security cadre and one of the discussions has been around clearly defining what that means and how to support its development.

63. See [www.gsdr.org](http://www.gsdr.org) The GSDRC site also incorporated a previous hub, the Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (GFN-SSR) and contains a document database and summaries, topic guides and specific policy-related research.

64. The author was an adviser to the research process and worked with the lead researcher for the study.

because of the length of time involved and the nature of the intervention both academically and in the policy field (Jackson and Albrecht, 2009, 2011 and 2016). I would add that as an example of democratic security development it is disproportionately influential because of the staff that have been involved at various times, both personnel who became influential within the UK infrastructure of DFID, the FCO and the army and people who worked on projects in Sierra Leone and have since moved on to places like South Sudan. The real questions with regard to Sierra Leone are how to measure success, and what lessons should be drawn from Sierra Leone for other interventions. In this section I will outline some reflections on these questions based on both the DFID evidence mapping and on two long-term studies on the UK intervention (Jackson and Albrecht, 2016)<sup>65</sup>.

The overall narrative arc of the intervention in Sierra Leone began with war-fighting in 2000–2002 in support of the Sierra Leonean armed forces and the UN, followed by a period of immediate stabilisation aimed at re-establishing state institutions. This was followed by a period of state building, and an at times inharmonious shift from stabilisation to more development-oriented approaches. While the value of looking at Sierra Leone lies partly in highlighting the implications of decision-making in the long term, it is also clear that this cannot be seen in isolation from the shifting international environment. Specifically, whereas pre-9/11 programmes were a relatively equal balance of defence, diplomacy and development approaches, post-9/11 this balance has become very difficult as security has been the over-riding principle. At the same time, Sierra Leone was stabilised in a relatively short time between Operation Palliser in May 2000 and Operation Silkman in November 2000, which is a luxury that not many other conflict-affected countries enjoy. Thirdly, Sierra Leone was very close to a ‘clean slate’ when the UK intervened and the particular UK-Sierra Leone relationship also allowed a situation where one donor became a clear leader.

Notwithstanding the above caveats, several broad lessons may be drawn that have some relevance to this study. Firstly, it is clear that one of the achievements of UK-led SSR throughout this period was that, at any given time, it kept enough people on the ground who

were committed to the process and also knew the local actors and the local context, at least until 2007. Within the security interventions the UK also managed to create a core programme known as SILSEP (Sierra Leone Security Sector Project) that was able to both act as a co-ordination mechanism for the sector projects and be flexible in terms of its activities over a period of years, enabling the decisions on the ground to have some teeth.

Secondly, while several advisers were aware of the need to tackle neo-patrimonial structures, they rarely did, choosing instead to ‘work with the grain’ since they knew that they could be isolated by their Sierra Leonean partners. This could, of course, be interpreted as positive local ownership and the exercise of power by the local partner. This can also be seen in the military reforms: whereas the Sierra Leonean team remained relatively constant, the UK team changed frequently over time. This illustrates some of the ambiguity surrounding ownership. On one hand the UK exercised power over resources, and in some senses the institutional arrangements around the state, but Sierra Leoneans were able to exercise influence by waiting for external staff to leave and be replaced by someone who they could work with; by circumventing formal state structures; and by maintaining informal political links.

A key lesson here was that the interventions in a relatively small number of powerful state institutions created their own power structures and powerful figures within them. This was a point that was very well understood in Sierra Leone, but the question of how to condition and reorient the political dynamics as an integral part of programming was never adequately addressed by the UK. This was evident in the weakness of the civilian oversight features of the security system and in the fact that the government was able to politicise the post-2007 election developments, in particular in the police. An additional aspect of this was the issue of transition. In relation to power structures, the creation of domestic power actors created a situation where the transitions between different approaches and programmes became problematic. This became clear in 2011–12 when the transition between the Justice Sector Development Programme and the Access to Security and Justice Programme failed to go smoothly and in fact produced considerable conflict on the ground between DFID and local owners about the change. The new programme was also in virtual hi-

65. The author also worked extensively in Sierra Leone between 2002–2005 and then in 2007 and 2011.

atus for almost a year due to both a lack of preparedness and local resistance to it as well as issues with changes in DFID personnel who had been involved in the decision.

The justice programme case further exposed the reality that local programmes create their own sources of power that may clash with local power structures. This raises questions about whether programming is targeted at local or international structures and people. A core issue here is non-state actors, including militias, youth groups and – not least in Sierra Leone – customary authorities such as local paramount chiefs with the power to run their own courts and with local security responsibility, particularly those beyond the normal reach of security services. Working with these organisations necessitates working with people for whom international standards of human rights may not be paramount, but where there may be some degree of influence in the long term.

Thirdly, the clarity of leadership provided by the UK was very high given that they were in an almost unique position. Initially, the UK benefited from a set of executive powers vested in the inspector-general of police, because between 1999 and 2003 the position was filled by a former UK police officer, while the commander of the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IM-ATT) for many years served as the primary military adviser to the president. On this basis the two governments re-established a defence system, internal security and justice providers, a security governance system and an intelligence agency. This is certainly not the case in most security interventions. The fact that there were significant difficulties here raises a number of questions about the lessons to be learnt from Sierra Leone, not least whether state-building is possible in complex post-conflict situations. How long might it take and what are the early decisions that need to be taken? And, what might a sustainable democratic security system actually look like? After two decades of intervention in Sierra Leone, the UK experience shows some positive results, but many more ambiguous ones.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

This has been a very brief analysis of what remains a very large and growing portfolio of activity in the UK. The UK has been one of the world leaders in developing and popularising SSR and SSR-related activities as a way to develop stable states that can provide secure environments for poor people. UK-led SSR has been affected by Iraq and Afghanistan; however, this had not had the effect of reducing the commitment to SSR, but rather the opposite. Spending on SSR within the large DFID core funding has increased rapidly, as it has across other agencies including the MoD and FCO. The development and rapid growth of the CSSF, and the direct role played by ministers, also points to longer-term commitment.

Institutionally, the UK has increased its financial support, but it still suffers from a number of key institutional issues, particularly the lack of overall co-ordination across such a wide range of activities and organisations. This is exacerbated by the lack of a knowledge base that allows strong analytical approaches to SSR, or meaningful evaluation. Within the UK system this makes it far more difficult to argue for funding for some of the less measurable aspects of SSR, as opposed to measurable elements like ›how many people will we train?‹ An evidence mapping exercise in 2015–16 revealed that this measurable/non-measurable split exists within the current literature on SSR as a whole. Lastly, these factors are further exacerbated by the rapid turnover of staff and lack of an internal cadre of staff who take responsibility for SSR as a core element of activity.

Finally, the UK remains committed to SSR, but is currently engaging in a series of discussions about how to run aid programming in general. The ›thinking and working politically‹ approach, for example, has profound implications for SSR programming and the institutional factors that control it from within the UK government. Public administration approaches to development programming incorporating incrementalism, problem-driven foci and collaboration amongst stakeholders bring pressures to bear that emphasise process over institution-building and an acceptance of local owners who may not live up to international standards of behaviour (Andrews, 2013). Whereas the UK is currently open to considering these approaches, the institutional and political structures necessary to walk down this road are still lacking.



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## 5. Straddling Bureaucratic Hurdles: Making Sense of U.S Security Sector Assistance

*Julie Werbel*

Over the last decade, the United States Government (USG) has undertaken security sector reform (SSR) with dozens of partner governments globally. These interventions ranged from limited technical advice to major stabilization efforts. In most cases, some improvement in security and justice sector performance is observable; however, the often-envisioned transformation to democratic security sector management has only rarely materialized. In others, such as Afghanistan, the failure to produce sustainable and legitimate reform has enabled ongoing conflict and violence. Some of these setbacks are due to the political nature of the overall enterprise, the unforgiving and complex contexts in which SSR is expected to produce results, and the tremendous capability gaps resident in partner systems, both inside and outside of government. Yet, the United States, chief among donors in pure financial terms, is hamstrung in its own ability to deliver effective assistance by a range of bureaucratic, operational, and budgetary constraints.

### 5.1 National Context

In 2009, the Departments of State and Defense and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) articulated a policy framework for Security Sector Reform that reflected global norms.<sup>66</sup> This 3D (diplomacy, defense, development) agenda influenced State Department and USAID planning processes<sup>67</sup> and military doctrine for the next several years. Yet, implementation remained strongly biased in favor of operational capability, thanks to ongoing counterinsurgency and counterterrorism missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Competing concepts such as the Department of Defense's Security

Force Assistance (SFA)<sup>68</sup> incorporated elements of the earlier SSR definition, but refocused attention from partner government ownership to the US government's own contributions and directed assistance to governance and institutions only to ensure the sustainment of train and equip efforts. By the time the Obama Administration issued its Presidential Policy Directive on Security Sector Assistance (SSA PPD) in 2013, the US government had embraced a hybrid assistance mission that combined elements of both SSR and SFA.

SSA has three stated goals: 1) engage with foreign partners and help shape their policies and actions in the security sector; 2) help foreign partners build and sustain the capacity and effectiveness of legitimate institutions to provide security, safety, and justice for their people; and 3) enable foreign partners to contribute to efforts that address common security challenges.<sup>69</sup> SSA, rather than SSR, is now widely embraced within the USG, in Congress, and by US-based civil society as the organizing framework for support to partner security and justice sectors.<sup>70</sup> While SSA gives deference to the normative underpinnings of SSR, program execution continues to privilege military and law enforcement capacity building and foreign policy priorities. The top four recipients of planned 2018 Foreign Military Financing (FMF), for example, will be Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Pakistan. The remaining discretionary funding from the FMF account will be spread among dozens of other countries, many of which have poor governance records.

The current USG SSA landscape is framed by two key characteristics: the increasing role of the Department of Defense and the whole-of-government hangover from the Iraq and Afghanistan interventions. In the post 9/11 period, the Department of Defense's influence on security sector policy and practice grew, first in response to Afghanistan and Iraq and later in support of counterterrorism missions in Syria and across the globe. The

66. The policy defines SSR as »(SSR) is the set of policies, plans, programs, and activities that a government undertakes to improve the way it provides safety, security, and justice.« <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/115810.pdf>.

67. See, for example, the Updated Foreign Assistance Standardized Program Structure and Definitions which allows activities to support »the development of effective, legitimate, and democratically accountable civilian security institutions.« <https://www.state.gov/r/releases/other/255986.htm#DR25>.

68. According to Joint Doctrine Note 1–13, »Security force assistance (SFA) is the set of Department of Defense (DOD) activities that contribute to unified action by the United States Government (USG) to support the development of capability and capacity of foreign security forces (FSF) and supporting institutions.« (April 2013), vii, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/notes/jdn1\\_13.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/notes/jdn1_13.pdf).

69. The White House, Fact Sheet: US Security Sector Assistance Policy, (April 2013), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/05/fact-sheet-us-security-sector-assistance-policy>.

70. In 2018, for example, the Department of State budget request included a \$7.1 million topline specifically for security sector assistance. See the President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request for the US Department of State and USAID at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/05/271058.htm>.

volume of defense investment and the scale of the US military compared to its civilian counterparts have led to a net shift in authorities, appropriations, and programming from the Department of State to the Department of Defense.<sup>71</sup> The 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) consolidates the Pentagon's control over more than 10 billion dollars' worth of related defense spending and, even with the required State Department concurrence, instills the Defense Department with greater leverage to make determinations about SSA priorities. While the NDAA imposes new requirements related to human rights and defense institution building, these small-scale activities will have limited influence on the significantly larger train and equip programs.

At the same time, other departments with domestic mandates, such as the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and Justice (DOJ), argued for an increased role in SSA by suggesting that US-based threats had overseas origins that could only be addressed through forward engagement. Their involvement further crowded an actor-heavy arena and led to conflicts over primacy in the justice sector with the Department of State and USAID. However, neither DHS nor DOJ is budgeted to carry out its own SSA activities beyond the sustainment of a limited core staff. Instead, they rely on interagency funding transfers from the Departments of State and Defense or USAID.

The growing playing field created a host of bureaucratic challenges. The sheer number of actors now involved in international security and justice sector assistance – one study identifies 46 different offices with an SSA policy or program mandate<sup>72</sup> – has increased the need for interagency coordination and planning at the expense of agile implementation. While Washington-based bureaucrats vie for market share, field-based managers await distribution of incremental funding to keep programs afloat. Security and justice sector planning is further complicated by variations in planning centers of gravity: The Department of State manages its planning – and much of its programming – from Washington; the Department of Defense conducts planning via its regional combatant commands; and USAID delegates its

planning to field missions. Joint planning is further complicated by differences in planning horizons and budget practices (e. g., annual vs. multiyear appropriations).

Program-level implementation is complicated by different business models. Each agency utilizes unique procurement mechanisms and operates according to its own regulations and timelines. Some provide direct technical assistance; others operate through companies or non-governmental organizations. Personnel have different levels of competence in their own areas, let alone across the security and justice spectrum, so planning and executing complex politically charged sector-wide endeavors remains the exception rather than the rule. Policymakers and senior officials, including ambassadors, generally are not well-versed in technical aspects of security sector reform, and focus instead on »deliverables« within their own timelines rather than what is realistically appropriate for their counterparts.

The US legal framework is equally complex. Eight legislative committees and numerous subcommittees share oversight responsibility for State, USAID and Defense. The inclusion of the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security raises that number exponentially.<sup>73</sup> In addition to the three specific codes<sup>74</sup> that guide security sector engagement, there may be more than 100 relevant legal authorities that provide annual guidance. As a result, the conduct of a single SSA mission might require the implementer to draw on multiple authorities. Because most laws convey specific notification and reporting requirements, the implementing agency is subsequently required to produce numerous reports over the course of the activity. While the 2017 NDAA has helped to streamline this process, no similar effort is under way for authorities granted under the Foreign Assistance Act covering the Department of State and USAID.

## 5.2 Whither Development?

USAID, once the primary proponent of both SSR and rule of law, has taken a back seat to its interagency counterparts, often ceding space to actors with a much more

71. See, for example, Tina S. Kaidanow, Opening Statement Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, (Washington, DC, September 2017). <https://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rm/2017/274436.htm>.

72. Rose Jackson, *Untangling the Web: A Blueprint for Reforming American Security Sector Assistance* (Washington, DC: Open Society Foundations, January 2017), p. 2.

73. See To secure homeland, clean up Congressional oversight: 9/11 Commission chairmen, USA Today, (December 1, 2016), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2016/12/01/congress-bureaucracy-committees-911-commission-chairmen-column/94624248/>.

74. Title 10 (foreign policy), Title 22 (the armed forces) and Title 50 (war and national defense).

limited view of security sector development and little to no understanding of political economy. The reticence to lead stems, not only from interagency turf battles, but also from an imperfect understanding of the role that USAID can legally play, competition for limited resources, risk aversion within the senior management group, and a divide between field-driven demand and Washington-based prioritization.

Historically, USAID has been hampered by a complex, often misunderstood, legal framework governing assistance to foreign military and police. Generally speaking, assistance to the military, including ministries of defense, is prohibited.<sup>75</sup> A sordid early history of police assistance and subsequent legal prohibitions<sup>76</sup> created a generation of risk-averse mission directors wary of engagement, even as more and more legal avenues opened up. Resourceful project managers eventually succeeded in incorporating police into projects designed to achieve broader development goals such as gender-based violence (SGBV) reduction. Over time, with the socialization of new legal authorities,<sup>77</sup> USAID Missions expanded their SSR efforts with police and related justice and security actors, especially in places where rampant conflict and criminality impeded traditional development goals.

As USAID moved to include more police assistance in its justice sector programming, the Department of State began including more justice sector programming in its police assistance programs. The result at many embassies where both State and USAID were subsequently operating in the same space was a clash of cultures and budget battles that often favored the Department of State – and through it, the Department of Justice – over USAID. USAID field missions seeking to conduct comprehensive SSR projects often found themselves pitted against the DOJ's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) which advocated, often successfully, for a narrower focus on prosecutorial capability to help partner governments deal more effectively with transnational crime or terrorism.

75. USAID has generally prohibited assistance to partner militaries based on a principle of appropriations law, referred to as the »specific/general rule,« which holds that appropriations shall be applied only to the objects for which the appropriations were made, except as otherwise provided by law.

76. Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-669, sec. 30(a), 88 stat. 1796, 1804, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/93/s3394/text>.

77. USAID, Assistance for Civilian Policing, Policy Guidance, (Washington, January 2011), [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/Pnadu808.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadu808.pdf).

Ambassadors, fulfilling the new »Chief Executive Officer (CEO)« role afforded them through the first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR)<sup>78</sup> exerted significant influence over USAID mission directors. Since many ambassadors are political appointees or generalists, they lacked the background needed to make informed decisions about security and justice sector assistance. Still, the heightened role of ambassadors reflected a pendulum swing in foreign assistance share towards the State Department overall. For a time, these conflicts reinforced USAID's senior leader risk-aversion to SSR even as demand from partners on the ground grew. The Trump Administration is in the process of restructuring both State and USAID in part to streamline foreign assistance. Although much is in flux, outside proposals from former Agency administrators and other experts call for a strengthened USAID that is able to operate more independently.

In addition to budget battles with State and other interagency counterparts, internal zero-sum-game tussles for USAID's own limited discretionary funding further impede interested staff from pursuing SSR programs. Even in countries with seemingly large development budgets, little is left for programming outside of Congressional earmarks or Administration priorities. USAID's SSR projects are generally funded through allocations under the joint State-USAID *Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DR)* strategic goal.<sup>79</sup> As a result, potential projects are evaluated in terms of their trade-offs with more mainstream governance activities, such as elections support, public administration, or local governance, which often have greater support.

Despite these challenges, many program managers see the need to engage in SSR. An internal 2010 survey of USAID Missions found that nearly 70 percent of respondents thought that »security and justice issues are a higher priority than their current program portfolio reflects.«<sup>80</sup> Two countervailing trends gave staff members the means to advocate for more sustained engagement in SSR. The first was a growing awareness among all do-

78. Department of State and USAID, Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), (Washington, 2010), <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153108.pdf>, p. 5.

79. Department of State, Updated Foreign Assistance Standardized Program Structure and Definitions, (April 2016), <https://www.state.gov/f/releases/other/255986.htm#DR25>.

80. Julie Werbel, USAID'S Work in Foreign Police Assistance: Lessons from the Field, (July 2011), <https://blog.usaid.gov/2011/07/usaid-works-in-foreign-police-assistance-lessons-from-the-field/>.



nors that conflict, violence and fragility have profound impacts on development and can best be addressed through direct engagement with the actors and institutions responsible for the delivery of security and justice. The changing global context made their rationale more tangible for senior leadership.

The second was the emergence of new US government policy priorities, such as countering transnational crime or violent extremism. USAID missions and technical offices realized they needed to shore up their security and justice sector support. In some cases, the assistance remained instrumental, in pursuit of a specific objective. In others, a deeper understanding of political drivers and local contexts informed broader and longer-term engagement. Ideas, for example about communities and police co-creating public safety to prevent wildlife trafficking<sup>81</sup> or about youth defining their own security requirements,<sup>82</sup> are now more commonplace and observable in planning and programming documents.

### 5.3 Innovative SSR Interventions: USAID's Crime and Violence Prevention in Central America

Among the most notable innovations in USAID SSR activities is the evolution in citizen security and violence prevention in Central America. In 2014, tens of thousands of unaccompanied children, largely from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, began making their way north into the United States to escape endemic violence and the lack of opportunities.<sup>83</sup> The influx created a shared political imperative across the USG and with partners in the region to prevent future migration and respond to the unfolding crisis. The unaccompanied-minor issue galvanized policymakers to improve security, governance, and prosperity. The resulting Alliance for

Prosperity in the Northern Triangle<sup>84</sup> and the supporting US Strategy for Engagement in Central America<sup>85</sup> created a strategic framework for USAID and regional partners to advance violence prevention alongside more traditional security and justice sector assistance.

Despite decades of SSR, Central American governments remain unable to provide security and justice. Partner country challenges are daunting: murder rates rank highest in the world; corruption and impunity, even among senior leadership and within the police, are constant counterweights against progress; and criminal organizations are far stronger than the government forces and institutions designed to stop them. Many regional governments apply a *mano dura*, or tough-on-crime, approach that has increased incarceration rates exponentially, but done little to reduce crime and violence, especially since criminal organizations often run their operations from prison. The violence prevention model provides a counterweight to that policy and to the limitations of past interventions.

Using a multidisciplinary approach, violence prevention projects engage an array of actors and institutions at multiple levels both inside and outside of government. Crime victimization data and perceptions of insecurity inform program design, prioritization, and partnerships. USAID's country strategies for El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras all promote citizen security by including *both* SSR and violence prevention. The development hypothesis for citizen security in Guatemala, for example, posits that

*»increasing the demand for police and justice reform, strengthening national level government capacities..., institutionalizing crime prevention strategies, targeting pilot projects in key areas with high homicide rates, strengthening local governments, and improving transparency and accountability of key institutions will lead to a reduction in crime and an increase in the number of prosecutions with final verdicts, thus breaking the vicious cycle of impunity.«<sup>86</sup>*

81. See, for example, USAID's Rewards and Risks Associated with Community Engagement in Anti-Poaching and Anti-Trafficking, [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pa00m3r4.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00m3r4.pdf).

82. For a description of youth-driven, Community-based Policing in Morocco, see <https://www.usaid.gov/morocco/fact-sheets/community-oriented-policing-activity>.

83. The White House, FACT SHEET: Unaccompanied Children from Central America, (June 2014), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/20/fact-sheet-unaccompanied-children-central-america>. The overall intent of this initiative was to deter travel to the United States, largely through heightened enforcement mechanisms. Part of the USG response included increased funding for citizen security projects in Mexico and the Northern Triangle to reduce the violence that spurred migration in the first place.

84. Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle: A Road Map Regional Plan Prepared by El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. (September 2014), [https://cuellar.house.gov/uploadedfiles/plan\\_of\\_the\\_alliance\\_for\\_prosperity\\_in\\_the\\_northern\\_triangle\\_-\\_a\\_road\\_ma....pdf](https://cuellar.house.gov/uploadedfiles/plan_of_the_alliance_for_prosperity_in_the_northern_triangle_-_a_road_ma....pdf).

85. Congressional Research Service, US Strategy for Engagement in Central America: Policy Issues for Congress, (Washington, June 2017), p. 14, (<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R44812.pdf>).

86. USAID, Guatemala Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2012-2016, March 2012, p. 1 [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/GuatemalaCDCS\\_0.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/GuatemalaCDCS_0.pdf).

USAID and the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) are implementing the citizen security portfolio through a place-based strategy (PBS) in epicenters of crime and violence with a shared high-level goal of reducing homicide rates.<sup>87</sup> These hotspots coincide with areas of high unaccompanied minor migration. The PBS is founded on research findings that violence clusters in specific places: in Latin American cities, for example, 50 percent of the homicides occur in less than two percent of neighborhoods.<sup>88</sup> The PBS applies a range of interventions targeting places, people, and behaviors in the most violent locales. Based on experience in the United States, USAID is now marrying a public health crime prevention model with the PBS.<sup>89</sup> Engagement occurs along a continuum from primary prevention designed to reduce risk in the general population to secondary and tertiary prevention designed to reduce violent behavior in a specific population at risk of engaging in violence or those already engaged in violence, such as gang members. At the far end of the spectrum, suppression, which usually includes incarceration or deterrence and rehabilitation for those able to reenter society, is reserved for the most serious offenders.

While the current projects are regularly monitored, none have been evaluated yet. A 2014 randomized evaluation of the first generation of citizen security activities in Central America found statistically significant reductions in the perception of crime and violence.<sup>90</sup> The current PBS strategies and activities have been designed with these findings in mind. Ultimately, evaluations will track improvements to citizen security as measured by an overall reduction in homicide rates; citizen confidence in

security and justice sector institutions; actual policy, legal and/or institutional changes implemented; and perceptions of safety and security. To date, citizen pressure coupled with the strategic commitments that partner governments promised through the Alliance for Prosperity has helped to create small pockets of political will.

A number of factors make this work instructive for future USG SSR engagement. Operationally, adopting a place-based strategy allows USAID to overcome many of the barriers to its engagement in security and justice sector reform. It fosters cooperation rather than competition with the Departments of State and Justice by encouraging layered engagement in the same physical locations. It also allows each institution to program to its strength and within its legal authorities, with the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security working on operational capability and USAID working with national and local government and community-based organizations. Finally, it reflects an evolution in how the USG interagency incorporates the development lens into traditional justice and security sector capacity building programs. Senior State Department officials now routinely speak about the importance of citizen security and prevention – a relatively recent phenomenon despite decades of experience with whole-of-government programming in conflict.

Substantively, the model advances a bottom up approach to SSR that serves as an important complement to traditional models. Determinations about where and with whom to engage are citizen-driven and informed by an understanding of the local political economy. With a strong focus on local ownership and partnership between government and civil society, violence prevention approaches identify and build upon incentives that resonate locally rather than through the imposition of external values, a marked departure from decades of transplanted SSR models and legal frameworks.

## 5.4 Conclusion

US security sector assistance represents a multibillion dollar investment executed by multiple Departments and agencies with different objectives, mandates, and priorities. For the foreseeable future, US Government SSR practitioners are more likely to find openings for programming where partner needs intersect directly with

87. Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives, One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, Second Session, United States Engagement in Central America, Washington, DC, February 2016), p. 7, (<https://appropriations.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=394358>).

88. USAID, What Works in Reducing Community Violence: A Meta-Review and Field Study for the Northern Triangle, (Washington, DC, February 2016), p. 23, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/USAID-2016-What-Works-in-Reducing-Community-Violence-Final-Report.pdf>.

89. US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems: OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model, 2d edition, (Washington, DC, October 2010), p. 4.

90. Susan Berg-Seligson et. al., Impact Evaluation of USAID's Community Based Crime and Violence Prevention Approach in Central America, (Washington, DC, October 2014), <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/USAID-LAPOP%20Crime%20Prevention%20Impact%20Evaluation%20-%20Regional%20Report%20-%20Final%20-%202014-10-29.pdf>.



US national interests as in the case of Central America. Initial findings from USAID's violence prevention pilots suggest that comprehensive citizen security interven-

tions can stabilize the most at-risk communities while generating citizen pressure for improved service delivery and reduced corruption.

## 6. SSR in France – In search of a more transformative approach

Aline Leboeuf

### 6.1 Introduction

SSR in France remains largely focused on traditional military and security cooperation with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of security agents in partner countries. However, as this chapter will show, some policies have been recently introduced by the French agencies in charge of SSR that could be well suited to establish a more sustained and political approach to SSR in the mid-term.<sup>91</sup>

The paper will first present the French national and institutional context and its complexity that partly explains why programs aiming to improve security sector governance, in contrast to pure train and equip measures, remain so marginal in the French system. The second part will then analyze the institutional factors that explain why the French government has not yet established SSR as a mainstream policy and thus would not meet the demands for a »change management vehicle« (refer to Chapter 1). The third section will focus on one ongoing SSR effort that could be utilized to promote a political approach to SSR and present its potential limitations, while offering options to improve this type for future SSR/G programming. The final section will conclude by providing an outlook on future SSR policies by France.

### 6.2 National/institutional context and its complexity

A whole-of-government strategic note for SSR was agreed upon in 2008 in France that respected the OECD standards and vision for SSR,<sup>92</sup> and therefore focused also on the governance dimension of SSR. But the strategy was never really implemented, mainly because it was

not owned by the institutions that had neither the personnel nor the financial and bureaucratic capabilities to implement it.

The key institution that should have adopted the SSR strategy in the first place, the *Direction de la Coopération de Sécurité et de Défense* (Defense and security cooperation department, DCSD), as it became known in 2009, which is part of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was at first reluctant to abide by a concept that could potentially reduce its autonomy. From 2011/2012 to 2017 it began to acknowledge that what it does in terms of military and security cooperation could be understood as being part of security sector reform, or even *is* security sector reform according to some of its members, but this was a very slow and incremental process. The reason for this recognition is that since 2009 the *Direction de la Coopération de Sécurité et de Défense* has been in charge not only of defense cooperation but also of security cooperation (police, gendarmerie, and civil protection) and has therefore a strong incentive to encapsulate its action in a more global concept than »military cooperation«. DCSD hopes that it will play a leading role in the French SSR policy because of the breadth of its cooperation activities and its large budget (101.6 million euros in 2017<sup>93</sup>).

However, DCSD only focuses on the »effectiveness« side of SSR. The unit is not in charge of promoting governance reform and its partner spectrum is limited to security actors. Security sector governance programs are implemented by two other institutions. The first is the governance office of the *Direction générale de la mondialisation* (Globalisation general department, DGM), which belongs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs like DCSD. Unlike DCSD, however, it has very limited means to finance security sector governance programs (200,000 euros a year). DGM was the key player in having the 2008 doctrine adopted, eventually institutionalizing its specific role in the French SSR administration.<sup>94</sup> DGM programs were used to allocate funds to DCAF with the task of designing and promoting a vision of SSR for francophone African states and to offer trainings for French officials in SSR as well as contributing to the SSR

91. The findings build on research done for the French government in the spring of 2017 that allowed the author to interview most of the actors in the SSR field, and more widely on research in the SSR field that started in 2003. Except where specified, the sources are interviews with French SSR actors undertaken in Paris in 2017. To preserve the anonymity of those few players the exact institution they belong to cannot be specified.

92. French government, »Réforme des systèmes de sécurité: approche française«, 2008.

93. Aline Leboeuf, »Coopérer avec les armées africaines,« *Etudes de l'Ifrri, Focus stratégique*, n° 76, October 2017, p. 15.

94. The author followed closely the adoption process of the French SSR doctrine in 2008, as it was part of the second-track process at CERI, where some of the ideas of this doctrine were discussed.

strategic and conceptual debates in the diplomatic arena (including in the EU). DGM has only recently started to finance an SSR program that targets the governance of the security sector in Madagascar, but this program is not very ambitious and is also limited in financial terms (100,000 euros).

The third institution is the *Agence Française de Développement* (French Development Agency, AFD) that recently assumed the governance mandate (justice, civil societies) from DGM, but is very slow in adopting it fully. AFD wants to build a strategy for its justice sector reform program first and depends on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to adopt AFD's strategy. Furthermore, AFD is still assessing whether its justice program should be part of SSR or not. For the moment, it continues the justice sector program inherited from DGM, but has yet to develop its own programs.

In addition to the three outlined SSR players, smaller agencies exist whose interest in SSR and security sector governance is less central. These tend to focus on increasing the operational capacity of one of the institutions constituting the security sector (i. e. justice, police, customs, civil protection, etc.) and do not have a macro-perspective beyond their respective counter-agencies or an interest in governance issues per se. Labeling their activities as »SSR« would reduce them to a strict coordination mechanism with other players risking their autonomy to conduct individual projects. For instance, DCI (Direction de la coopération internationale, International cooperation department) of the Interior Ministry is in charge of French cooperation in the field of police, gendarmerie, and customs. They coordinate the pool of 250 police and gendarmerie attaches in 93 French embassies.<sup>95</sup> They work with CIVIPOL, a consulting and service company of the French Ministry of the Interior, which provides services in the areas of homeland security, civil protection, and governance. CIVIPOL neither has the ambition nor does it consider itself to be an SSR actor.

*Justice coopération internationale*<sup>96</sup> and *Expertise France*<sup>97</sup> are two private operators like CIVIPOL that promote justice sector reforms and the civilian security sec-

tor and are involved in some SSR projects in DRC (Justice coopération internationale) and in Ukraine (Expertise France) as well as in governance programming. However, their influence on French SSR policy formulation is rather limited as they focus only on project implementation.

Finally, the *Etat-major des armées* (Joint military staff) is directly involved in operational military cooperation, but its focus is limited to security cooperation and assistance. The *Direction générale des relations internationales et stratégiques* (DGRIS) of the Ministry of Defense also plays a role in the conception of the French SSR programs, but it is involved mainly in military cooperation.

Among the nine actors mentioned here, the DCSD (due to its resources), the DGM (due to its SSR governance mandate) and the AFD (because of its justice mandate) are the key strategic players in designing and implementing French SSR policies at a global level.

### 6.3 The weakness of key strategic actors (DCSD, DGM, AFD)

There are two broad reasons why the French government is relatively weak in designing and implementing political, whole-of-government SSR programs: one bureaucratic, the other cultural.

On the bureaucratic side, one can observe a traditional competition between the said organizations. DCSD wants to be considered as a leader in the field on French SSR. Among the French SSR players, it has the biggest budget, most human resources, the broadest mandate (spanning military and civilian sectors) and a strategic as well as operational mandate. However, it focuses only on »effectiveness« or, in reference to this study, the »stabilization dimension«. Contributions to reforming or even transforming the security governance system of partner countries is not part of the mandate. DCSD is therefore reluctant to change its practice towards more political SSR projects; even though it recognizes that there might be a need for more political SSR, it considers that this should be done by other French players and not the DCSD.

The governance bureau of DGM resists DCSD's drive for dominance, but is too weak to impose a governance agenda on DCSD. It struggles to avoid being integrated

95. <https://www.police-nationale.interieur.gouv.fr/Organisation/Direction-de-la-Cooperation-Internationale>.

96. <http://www.gip-jci-justice.fr/>.

97. <https://www.expertisefrance.fr/actualite?id=404175>.

into DCSD. It is, however, the bureau that understands best what SSR as a political process is all about and how it could implement it. However, it lacks the financial and human means to do so, with only one full-time staff devoted to SSR and a tiny budget.

AFD is afraid of being forced to review all its justice programs with DCSD if it adopts a SSR agenda and would rather remain autonomous in its programming, but recognizes the importance of cooperating with DCSD, with whom it signed a memorandum of understanding in 2017. More widely, AFD has engaged in a wide internal effort to take over the security and development agenda. At the risk of blurring the lines between development and security there is an internal debate within AFD about how far they should move. Recognizing that it contributes to SSR may be a step too far for the agency because it has no mandate to do so yet, but they could eventually be charged to take over. If it did so, then a new bureaucratic balance could develop, potentially contributing to an evolution of a more political approach toward SSR by the French. AFD as a development agency is more likely to favor OECD's approach to SSR and because AFD's mandate already includes governance issues such an approach is not as foreign to it as to DCSD.

On the cultural side, DCSD is mainly staffed by military officers whose understanding of governance issues is sometimes rather limited. They do not tend to believe in the usefulness of civil society actors, the media or parliaments. Strengthening the civilian control of the security sector is neither seen as necessary nor as something to be supported by French military officers. There is also a fear that trying to have an impact on security governance will endanger the position of DCSD's advisors dispatched to military and policing institutions of the partner countries. Furthermore, DCSD staff does not give too much credit to the added value of potential governance reforms, especially in the face of potential risks these programs may entail. However, DCSD is not unaware of changes thanks to regular staff rotation and interactions with other actors in the French government. Although its specific military culture tends to clash with the development mindset of DGM and AFD, the situation seems to have already evolved towards a better understanding of SSR with the arrival of a new group of officers in the summer of 2017.

#### 6.4 Options to improve future SSR/G programming: the case of advisors

There is no all embracing French SSR strategy focusing on governance that could be studied in itself. This paper will focus on one ongoing SSR program that could potentially be developed to promote a more political approach, namely by the deployment of advisors. DCSD dispatches more than 300 advisors to 140 countries,<sup>98</sup> mainly military advisors who are mandated to advise chiefs of staff, ministries of defense or heads of military schools, but also police and gendarmerie advisors. This is an old practice, that was put in place when former French colonies gained their independence. Its range is however not limited to these. These advisors are a potential asset to support SSR, but to date they have focused mainly on issues of efficiency rather than promoting governance reforms in the countries they are deployed to.

It is however an approach that is not mainstreamed in the usual vision of SSR/G, since it would involve influencing the governance of the security sector from within the security sector rather than through the stream of external actors, like the media, civil society or parliament. This is for example the role played by National Security Councils as civilian bodies of control over the security sector, as put in place in Sierra Leone or Côte d'Ivoire. The advisors deployed to consult defense ministers can have a strong influence in promoting SSR. This could open the doors for more political SSR missions. The system of advisors is long-term and builds on an interpersonal relationship of trust; the advisors are usually close to political decision-makers in recipient countries' security institutions and flexible enough to upgrade once a window of opportunity emerges. They can strengthen the capacity of the civilian minister to exercise control over the armed forces. They can support reforms that counteract impunity, such as the reinforcement of military justice and military police. They can try to develop knowledge of the armed forces, thereby helping to diminish the risk of coups.

These missions would not be considered as risky and dangerous for the partner government or for the DCSD, but would require a change in mindsets regarding the way the advisors are used. To implement such changes

98. <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/defense-et-securite/cooperation-de-securite-et-de-defense/la-direction-de-la-cooperation-de-securite-et-de-defense/>.

a strong political will at the top of the DCSD is essential. Such a change in mindset would imply that French advisors start to consider their work not only as technical but also as political.

Furthermore, for such a change to be implemented advisors will need to be trained in a different way. Today, they are not trained sufficiently to prepare for their missions as their past experience is viewed as an adequate source of expertise. They are expected to be interviewed by the key military cooperation players before they are deployed but they do not receive any specific training. Their personal skills and qualities (like patience, capacity to influence, capacity to adapt, etc.) are not evaluated in a way that accords with the specific demands of the host country. This issue is not specific to DCSD, as several papers from different sources on how to prepare SSR advisors demonstrate.<sup>99</sup> However, if the role of the advisor were focused more on governance issues rather than on training, the need for better preparation would become more than obvious.

## 6.5 Prospects for SSR/G in France

Given the bureaucratic context in France, the adoption and implementation of an encompassing, whole-of-government SSR strategy is not likely in the upcoming months. However, if the development agency AFD was to adopt SSR as one of the contexts in which to integrate its justice sector strategy (scenario 1), it would certainly develop greater cooperation with DCSD. Those exchanges would pave the way for a new French SSR approach by attaching a lot of importance to justice and civil society components of SSR. This scenario is currently not very likely. Therefore, it is important to try to get the DCSD to slowly transform its system of advisors to-

wards a stronger focus on governance (scenario 2). This would go against traditional DCSD culture, but could take place if this culture slowly evolves a stronger development mindset as DCSD expands its partnership with AFD and a new team joins DCSD that is convinced of the need to promote a concept of SSR that can be owned by all its French partners. An effort is currently underway to review French SSR strategy and the coordination of French SSR actors that could also contribute to promoting this change. Another possible scenario (3) is a better relationship between DGM and DCSD, with the result that DCSD shows greater acceptance of the DGM's understanding of SSR and DCSD agrees to help DGM put in place SSR/G projects with DCSD funding as a condition for recognizing DCSD leadership in SSR. Scenarios 2 and 3 appear possible but not highly likely at the time of writing and they might need time to prove themselves. Scenarios 1 and 3 would change the balance of power between key French SSR/G players, which could result in a stronger focus on the political dimension of SSR, while scenario 2 would change the culture of the central DCSD player, with the result that this organization takes the political dimension into account. Such developments raise the question of how these changes in perception influence the implementation of SSR, i.e. will the French administrations be better at transformation than other countries that have had difficulties implementing the transformation side of SSR.

There is currently no political will on the French side to support and help achieve any of those scenarios, nor is there strong international or European pressure to deliver on that side of SSR: it is really up to the bureaucracies themselves to reach agreement on whether they need to put in place SSR/G programs. This explains why the three scenarios that could lead to more SSR/G programming in France are unlikely to be realized.

99. See for example Emma Skeppström, with Frida Gabrielsson Kjäll, *The SSR Adviser's Handbook*, Folke Bernadotte Academy, Swedish agency for peace, security and development, 2016. Or Nicholas Wilson, «Aide Memoire – Advising And Mentoring Foreign Militaries», blog *Grounded curiosity*, 10 August 2017, <https://groundedcuriosity.com/aide-memoire-advising-and-mentoring-foreign-militaries/>.

## 7. The EU as SSR actor – Strategy on track, operational challenges remain

*Ursula Schröder & Bianca Süßenbach*

### 7.1 Introduction

The European Union has a long track record of implementing security capacity building and security sector reform missions and projects. At the same time, its activities have frequently remained fragmented and dispersed across regions and sectors, rather than integrated and comprehensively oriented towards specific political goals. As different EU instruments with varying mandates and limitations contribute to programming in the field, the development and implementation of an organization-wide strategy and policy approach to SSR is crucial for the success of security-relevant activities of the European Union. The EU's recent efforts to create and implement a comprehensive, sector-wide strategic framework for SSR are a step in the right direction. In terms of spending and budgets, the EU is also well-equipped to have a tangible impact on the ground. During the period 2001-2009 alone, the EU has spent more than EUR 1 billion on supporting justice and security sector reform programmes (European Commission 2015). A recent mapping study of European Commission external security actions found 616 projects with a combined value of more than EUR 2.3 billion, of which 75 percent were found to be directly SSR relevant (European Commission 2017). In the area of EU development cooperation, a number of comprehensive programs in the broader areas of governance and justice include SSR components. In short, activities to reform the security sector in fragile or post-war states can be seen as ›one of the EU's flagship foreign policy endeavours‹ (European Parliament 2016: 4). However, whether or not the EU is able to fully implement this ambitious agenda is still an open question.

### 7.2 Strategy development for SSR

Strategy development in the field of SSR has been characterized by a proliferation of documents with relatively limited effects so far on how the EU implements its security assistance and SSR activities in the field. A first wave of activities in the early 2000s led to the estab-

lishment of EU policy frameworks for SSR. The Commission's ›Concept for EC support to SSR‹ (May 2006) and the Council's ›EU Concept for ESDP support to SSR‹ (Dec 2005) were merged into a single ›EU Policy Framework for SSR‹ (June 2006). However, the development of two different concepts replicated the EU's well-known problem of integrating its activities in the fields of development, foreign and security policy (see Schroeder 2013 on earlier developments in EU SSR). A more recent push by EU Member States (Council Conclusions in 2015) and the subsequent inclusion in the Commission Working Plan 2016 resulted in an EU-wide strategic framework to support SSR (European Commission 2016). This document promotes a broad understanding of SSR as a ›process of transforming a country's security system so that it gradually provides individuals and the state with more effective and accountable security in a manner consistent with respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the principles of good governance‹ (ibid.: 2). Reflecting recent international policy debates about the political nature of SSR; about the relevance of both formal and informal rules and actors in the security sector; and about the need for long-term engagement in SSR processes (see e. g. van Veen and Price 2014), the framework establishes a comprehensive and politically driven understanding of SSR. Its core goal is to ›help to make states more stable and individuals more secure‹. In that sense, the new strategy is a clear step forward from the EU's previous strategic frameworks. The sector-wide strategy also fits in well with the EU's 2016 ›Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy‹ (EUGS) that called for a comprehensive approach to SSR and identified building states and societal resilience as strategic priorities for the EU's external action.

In terms of implementing its ambitious framework, the EU's activities have been impeded by entrenched institutional divides at the interface of its security and development policies, which are implemented by the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission, respectively (see further Furness and Gänzle 2017). A contentious issue in this context is the question of whether and under what conditions the EU can undertake defence and military security sector capacity building in the context of its SSR activities. Discussions about military capacity building began with a German initiative in 2013 – the ›enable and enhance or E2I initiative – geared at providing funding not only for military training, but also for military equipment. This



initiative culminated in the EU's 2015 communication on 'capacity building in support of security and development' (CBSD, European Commission 2015). The current EU treaties do not allow the EU budget to be spent on operations with military or defence implications (Art. 41, 2 TEU). The CBSD initiative on which new legislation was adopted in December 2017, however, allows the EU – in exceptional circumstances – to deliver non-lethal equipment to military services in partner countries via an amendment to its (financial) Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).<sup>100</sup> Initial pilot CBSD projects are foreseen in the Central African Republic. On the one hand, this appears to be a primarily technical and legislative debate about funding mechanisms and has been largely perceived as complementary to or even part of SSR activities by EU officials. It provides additional legislation that gives security assistance more legal certainty and guidance and contributes to a more 'responsive' and 'joined up' approach to security assistance, as called for in the EU Global Strategy. On the ground, however, it is often 'not possible to distinguish between military and civil means' and that 'local perceptions that the EU provides assistance to one actor but not the other doing the same work might lead to confusion and not be sustainable' (EU official EEAS, 20/09/17, Brussels).

On the other hand, the CBSD-debate has larger political implications. Flagged as part and parcel of the EU's larger SSR agenda in its sector-wide strategy, the recent history of military (and police) train and equip initiatives shows that these often remain decoupled from larger governance-oriented and transformative SSR agendas. Critics such as the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) have therefore questioned the effectiveness of military capacity building and stress that support for 'train and equip' initiatives should not divert funding away from measures aimed at building peace and preventing violent conflicts (see European Parliament 2017: 14). On a similar note, other actors involved are concerned about the ways in which this would contribute to an increased 'securitisation of development' and affect financing possibilities with regard to working with and equipping the military, questioning whether there is enough clarity on the conditions and criteria in terms of due diligence and whether it might change the EU's

external perception of being a soft power. The debate also mirrors the 2016 changes in the OECD's Development Assistance Committee's definition of official development aid (ODA) that now includes more peace and security-related costs and costs related to 'countering violent extremism'.

At the moment, it is still too early to tell in which direction the EU's approach to security assistance and SSR is headed and whether the EU will be able to overcome its previous lack of a long-term, political approach. While the EU's strategy now in principle incorporates a strong commitment to 'political' and long-term SSR, it has also moved towards implementing shorter term train and equip initiatives.

### 7.3 Organizing for SSR: the EU's remodelled approach

Judged against a comprehensive and political understanding of SSR, EU engagement in the SSR field has previously had only mixed results. In its own analysis, the EU has stated that 'the effectiveness and efficiency of EU support for SSR was hampered by several weaknesses such as the lack of institutional capacity, the lack of a long-term political and strategic approach grounded in the wider state-building context, insufficient basing in analysis of local contexts and risks, lack of ownership as well as weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation' (European Commission 2016b: 2). The lack of an overarching political strategy, differences between short-term needs and long-term objectives, institutional 'silos' and a sometimes unclear division of labour between different involved agencies, as well as inflexible financial instruments that lack adaptability in volatile situations have all contributed to difficulties in implementing a 'political approach' to SSR.

To change this state of affairs, in 2016 the EU decided to revise its organizational procedures for SSR. As envisioned in the SSR framework of 2016, and following calls for a comprehensive and integrated approach as laid out in the EU Global Strategy, the EU has started to enhance its inter-service cooperation in the field of SSR. At its core lies a 'permanent informal inter-service SSR task force' that was established at headquarters in Brussels as an institutional anchor for EU SSR support and to advise EU Delegations and EU services. The task force

100. On 14 September 2017, the European Parliament voted in plenary to open negotiations on the legislative proposal. See <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-europe-as-a-stronger-global-actor/file-revised-eu-approach-to-security-and-development-funding>.

brings together the EU institutions active in this field and includes the EEAS's recently established PRISM unit (Prevention, Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform, Integrated Approach, Stabilisation and Mediation), the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSDP) structures, the EU Military Staff (EUMS), relevant staff of Directorate General (DG) International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) as well as DG Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement (NEAR) to facilitate better information-sharing, to build up political visibility and to develop common objectives. The task force is formally tasked with the implementation of the EU SSR framework, thereby providing a forum for inter-service exchange on horizontal issues such as tools development and training rather than deciding on specific SSR projects.

Secondly, to improve coordination of SSR activities in the field, to identify and to build on links between political dialogue, cooperation activities and existing CSDP operations/missions, a 'EU coordination matrix' mechanism was developed and is currently applied in a number of countries (Mali and Somalia) and planned for Georgia and Lebanon. These new initiatives show that the EU is willing to improve its capacity in the field of SSR and to do so in a more coherent and complementary way, taking up lessons learnt and aiming to better avoid fragmentation, duplication or parallel processes. However, it is still too early for an assessment of whether and how these recent institutional developments will affect and determine the actual impact on EU SSR activities on the ground.

#### Focus on local context and human security

The Joint Staff Working Document (European Commission 2016b) accompanying the 2016 SSR framework finds that both a lack of institutional capacity and of coherence has hampered the EU's effectiveness and efficiency and that 'the EU has not always paid enough attention to the needs of the local population and service-delivery' (p. 11). The new state-of-the-art SSR framework addresses this issue and lays out a set of principles to guide EU engagement in SSR: to start from the political objectives and to apply a people-centred and needs-based approach that contributes to the security of the people and individuals within a human security framework.

This is not a new development per se, as consultations with national authorities, local stakeholders and civil society partners have long been an integral part of project identification and formulation in the EU. However, stakeholder involvement was previously often not carried further to the actual programme design phases, where the 'EU has taken a technical approach to SSR, a subject which is deeply political' (European Commission 2016b:12). Programme planning and design has instead regularly taken place outside the country, in consultation with Member States and negotiated within EU institutions to achieve an alignment of objectives and resources and ensure continued political support. As a result of this process, a lack of local knowledge and possible constraints to change have sometimes hindered national buy-in to projects.

In recent years, the EU's approach to local ownership has improved, as the EU increasingly acknowledges the need to 'look beyond formal institutions' and to give more attention to local actors' security perceptions. This is for instance mirrored by the fact that working with civil society organisations is increasingly part and parcel of EU engagement in the security field. The importance to complement top-down with bottom-up approaches is reflected in the fact that NGO contractors are required to subcontract local organisations in the field, who are known to usually have better access as well as more contextual knowledge.

#### Towards a realistic and responsive approach?

In the EU, the SSR concept has frequently been seen as being initially too ambitious in terms of realistic impact and relevant support. This applies particularly in conflict-affected and crisis countries where comprehensive reform has sometimes been interpreted as externally imposed or where insufficient previous risk and context analysis later led to the scaling down of activities (e.g. in the DRC relating to several initiatives in the justice sector). To address this issue and to align it with the need for a more strategic and political approach, EU engagement in challenging environments aims to initially facilitate entry into a politically often very sensitive security sector. By establishing constructive relationships with national stakeholders with smaller and better targeted projects and through political dialogue, engagement is directed at responding to immediate security needs with

a view to preventing further destabilisation and recurring violence. At the same time, the goal is to begin to lay the groundwork for a longer-term political process that gains political traction over time.

The EU has also recognized the need to become more responsive and better positioned to address immediate security needs in a more flexible, rapid and adequately funded manner. In order to enable programming to be more responsive to changing circumstances and short-term objectives, the more flexible *Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace* (IcSP) was established in 2014 to bridge and complement longer-term engagement. Particularly in crisis contexts, political level decisions can trigger security assistance funded through this instrument in a variety of areas (EU official FPI, 27/09/17, Brussels). The decision-making process is here simplified, as contracting is done directly through the Foreign Policy Instruments Division of the European Commission (FPI) (for projects of up to 18 months). IcSP overall allocation under the current MFF (2014–20) is EUR 2.4 billion, of which 70 percent is allocated to the area of crisis response, nine percent to the area of crisis preparedness and peacebuilding and 21 percent to global and trans-regional and emerging threats. In Mali or Somalia, where the focus lies on justice and security sector reform e.g. the training of police officers, support is also channelled through Trust Funds which enables a more flexible allocation and continuous adjustments, thereby addressing constraints such as the previous lack of budget transparency and corruption.

#### EU programme design and implementation

The decision where to conduct SSR is both headquarters and delegations-driven. It does not (yet) follow an overarching geopolitical strategy or political agenda per se. So far EU engagement is mostly focused on African countries' security sectors, e.g. in areas of pre-electoral violence, police reform, broader governance or support for the judicial sector. Longer-term programming decisions to engage in SSR are initially driven by Multiannual Financial Framework negotiations (MFF, currently 2014–20, ongoing for post-2020). At the beginning of a new funding period, ›sectors of concentration‹ (e.g. security, health, education) where the EU wants to engage are identified, and funds per country or region are allocated accordingly. Longer-term engagement in countries in the

EU neighbourhood is carried out through ›programmable instruments‹ e.g. under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI, MFF 15 billion), or the Instrument for Pre-Accession Countries (IPA, MFF 12 billion).

Decision-making on specific projects (within the previously identified sectors) as well as implementation is then carried out by EU delegations: they engage in dialogue with the partner country authorities, review project proposals, and oversee and manage the implementation through contracts with a variety of implementing partners on the ground, either feeding into existing processes or trying to initiate and ›open space‹ for a political process.

#### Political analysis, insight and understanding

Regarding political analysis and assessments, the EU relies on the political sections of their delegations and partners on a case-by-case basis, often with only small adjustments at HQ level. There are no specific analytical instruments in place that focus solely on the specifics of the security sector. Additionally, in crisis contexts political urgency often requires rapid implementation and corresponding disbursement of the allocated budget. Due to short timeframes, in-depth analysis may be inadequate. However, regarding longer-term programming, initiatives such as Joint Planning and Programming exist and are being further developed. The PRISM division at the EEAS, a merger of former CSDP.1 (Coordination and Support) and SEC POL.2 (Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding, Mediation), conducts comprehensive and inclusive conflict analysis workshops at HQ level and in the field (recently Burundi, Mali and the Philippines). It has a dedicated team for SSR, RoL and DDR that acts as a focal point for EU activities in this field.

In terms of expertise in the field, while EU delegations could in principle do a lot, they often lack the capacity, sufficient staffing and the specific expertise that would be required to efficiently manage programmes in the security field. Furthermore, and especially in volatile and fragile contexts, it has often been difficult to attract and retain skilled staff in the field of SSR. However, as the EU has itself made a commitment within the SSR framework, an ›SSR facility‹ was recently set up, a pool of international experts with specific SSR expertise that can be deployed on demand and support partner coun-

tries through consultations. The facility is being funded by FPI, potentially lending additional political attention to EU SSR engagement, but first and foremost ensuring that EU ambition in the field of SSR is matched by sufficient capacity and expertise.

#### 7.4 EU SSR Support in Mali

The EU is one of Mali's main partners in security and development, aiming to support Mali's transitional authorities in the reconstruction of the Malian security services to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and to allow the Malian state to exercise full sovereignty over the entire Malian territory. Although EU engagement in Mali is not an ideal case of ›comprehensive political SSR‹, the EU has engaged in different aspects of security and justice reform (see DCAF ISSAT and Folke Bernadotte Academy 2016: 21). In 2001 the EU engaged in the north of the country through an early IfS (Instrument for Stability) programme on peace, security and development, followed by engagement in justice reforms, reconciliation and conflict resolution, accompanied by a stabilization support package. More recently, and directly relevant to SSR, two EDF-funded (European Development Fund) state-building contracts, one in 2013 (EUR 225 million) and one in 2015 (EUR 230 million) included justice and security components. The EU's CSDP missions EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali as well as the coordination role of the EU Special Representative also contributed to SSR support, making the EU both a strong and a broad player on the ground.

##### EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali

EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUTM Mali assist the reform of the Malian security sector at strategic and operational levels. They are mandated to reinforce the capacities of the internal security forces in Mali with a focus on restructuring and reinforcing their human resources management and training capacities. Given the urgent need for the implementation of an appropriate training mechanism, the EU mission for the training of Malian military, the Military Training Mission in Mali is one of the most important leverages that the EU has in Mali in the area of SSR. Twenty-three European nations are participating in the mission. EUTM Mali is now in its third mandate. This extends the scope of the mission to increasingly de-

centralized activities in the regions beyond the capital and the provision of training and educational support to the Malian Armed Forces. Moreover, it focuses on training and advice on command and control, logistical chain and human resources as well as on training in international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians and human rights. It contributes, at Mali's request and in coordination with MINUSMA, to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process as part of the peace agreement by providing training sessions to facilitate the reconstruction of inclusive Malian Armed Forces. In addition to EUTM, on 15 April 2014 the European Council approved EUCAP Sahel Mali, a civilian support mission for the internal security forces in Mali. This mission, currently in its second mandate, advises and trains the three internal security forces in Mali, i.e. the police, Gendarmerie and National Guard in coordination with international partners. A new objective of supporting the Malian authorities in addressing irregular migration and border management challenges was added to the operational plan of the Mission in December 2015.

##### Assessment: Challenges ahead

Several key principles guide EU engagement on SSR in Mali: SSR is acknowledged as a highly political issue, thus a proper analysis of actors, legal frameworks, political and economic parameters are seen as essential, as well as the principle of national ownership. Given the particularly volatile context, specific emphasis is being put on the need to balance long term efforts and the imperative of stabilization (flexibility through the planning and implementation of different actions), while maintaining a focus on human security. Coordination among actors is deemed essential as there are many actors on the ground. To establish better coordination, the ›coordination matrix‹ called for in the EU's sector-wide SSR Strategy is currently being tested.

At the same time, however, several challenges to EU engagement in Mali have become obvious. Gaps and obstacles to EU SSR engagement in Mali were perceived for instance at the political level, as the SSR process has stalled since the Malian authorities signed the Peace Agreement in 2015. As a result, EU SSR efforts in Mali are at risk from a lack of local ownership, and they lack long-term political engagement by local authorities throughout the country (see DCAF ISSAT and Folke

Bernadotte Academy 2016: 21-22). Despite the blocked political reform process, two of the main objectives for the Malian Government, namely the re-deployment and re-construction of the security forces, are still being pursued by the EU. At the programming level, long-term programming has frequently proved to be an obstacle to more effective actions within a very volatile environment. More generally, the volatile security environment in Mali has made ›SSR a tall order for the EU‹ in this case (European Parliament 2016: 8). Additionally, limited staff capacity and a lack of expertise has hindered further support for human security principles, criminal justice and the development of transparency with the goal of better governance and economic governance of the security sector and donor coordination. All those issues were increased by limited buy-in by the Malian state;<sup>101</sup> by the deteriorating security situation in the northern and central areas; internal rivalry among the security actors; ethnic and religious issues; and the weak involvement of civil society in SSR.

On the whole, an external evaluation in 2016 showed that EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali as well as some IcSP programmes in Mali have so far focused on the delivery of training and equipment to Mali. As a result, ›strengthening the effectiveness of the security forces has been prioritised over bolstering their accountability‹ (DCAF ISSAT and Folke Bernadotte Academy 2016: 24). Despite the EU's intentions, human security concepts have not been fully applied in Mali, with EU support focused primarily at reinforcing state institutions and their link with the security forces, while benefits for the population were not given much attention during implementation (ibid.).

## 7.5 Conclusions

In 2016, the EU made a great leap forward in publishing a state of the art sector-wide strategy to support security sector reform. In the supporting documents to the strategy, it also became clear that EU actors were very aware of the challenges they faced in coming to a more political and joined-up approach to SSR, as internal evaluations showed project and mission implementation to be fragmented and, at times, haphazard. A characterization often heard of the EU's role in this context is that it could potentially be a very effective supporter of security sector reforms. The EU can mobilise a critical mass of funding to make a tangible impact. It could also harmonise the vast array of expertise and tools it and its member states have at their disposal and implement an approach to SSR that is both comprehensive and political. It is also uniquely positioned to bring substantial political weight to bear by engaging in dialogue. Moreover, it can provide ›political cover‹ in difficult situations as it is often perceived as a neutral partner. However, the EU has yet to exploit its potential more effectively, building on its comparative advantages, its positive reputation and long experience and presence in countries around the world. To make good on the ambitious goals of the sector-wide strategy for security sector reform, the EU will have to devise mechanisms to streamline SSR's core principles in the planning and implementation phases of current security assistance projects. A second crucial issue that remains unsolved is how the EU will in practice balance its short-term crisis response and stabilization efforts with a necessary commitment to longer-term institution building and development goals. To invest in sustainable security in its partner states the EU needs to remodel its current practice of supporting short-term ›train and equip‹-schemes into truly sector-wide reform projects that deal with issues of security governance and politics head on.

<sup>101</sup>. See also: <https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/mali-und-g5-er-tuechtigung-des-sicherheitssektors/>.



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## 8. The African Union and SSR: High aspirations, modest performance

*Eboe Hutchful*

### 8.1 Introduction

The ›African Union Security Sector Reform Policy Framework‹ (AU SSR-PF), which was formally endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of State in January 2013, still constitutes the conceptual framework for the African Union (AU) SSR policies. While the AU does not implement SSR on its own it is meant to support the activities and mechanisms of the regional groupings of African states, the so-called Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RM) as well as national SSR activities of Members States in response to their specific invitations.

In this chapter it is argued that

- first, the AU is quite unlike the organisations and bureaucracies represented in this study. To begin with, it is not a donor organization or ›development partner‹, or external funder of SSR.
- As a regional organization, juggling the often-times contending interests of member states, the AU is much more akin to the EU (on which it is modelled) than the national organisations primarily represented in this collection, some of which are influential actors in SSR both bilaterally and at the level of the EU. The introduction of SSR did not initially enjoy universal support within the AU (either because of a perceived threat to national sovereignty and existing regime security interests, or because of limited comprehension of the SSR concept itself) and continues to attract only lukewarm support (?) from a number of important factions within the AU. Funding constraints apart, bureaucratic politics within the AU have sometime meant that the organization has moved cautiously on SSR outside of post-conflict contexts.

But the AU also radically departs from both the EU and the UN in key respects:

- The AU governs a continent which is the site of the majority of ongoing SSR programmes and interventions – a continent where, more than just coincidentally, SSR has

proved controversial among key member states (such as those from the Maghreb and certain SADC states); and which, too, is perceived to be in danger of being literally overrun by a surge of external military actors and security assistance programmes, over which the AU and RECs (and sometimes national governments) have little oversight; and where SSR is also perceived by some to be increasingly aligned less with local security concerns than the national security and geopolitical interests of donor states.

- While the AU seeks to represent the political and strategic interests of member

states, it is deeply dependent at the same time on funding support by external partners, not least in the area of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), in this respect echoing – rather than mitigating – the extreme dependency of many of its RECs and member states on external support to sustain their security institutions and operations. This casts the AU – in addition to being both a recipient and supplier of SSR assistance – in the odd and contradictory position of being an emblem at the same time of African sovereignty and African dependency.<sup>102</sup>

- Still, the AU and the EU, along with the UN, have been close (if lopsided) partners in developing and implementing an African SSR agenda; at the same time, however, the EU and UN have implemented their own diffuse programmes across Africa, with or without reference to the AU, thus making them both partners and (at least potentially) competitors to the AU.

- Hence the AU has struggled to set and sustain its own policy tone and direction in SSR, orchestrating a common position that reflects the fundamental (if sometimes contradictory) perceptions, demands and aspirations of its member states and citizens, but at the same time aligned with the policy stance of its major multilateral and international partners (especially the UN and EU) and the global SSR policy discourse.

The overall conclusion is that the role of the AU in SSR has been (and continues to be) severely hobbled by resource constraints and circumscribed by the explosion

102. Symbolized above all by the magnificent Chinese-built HQ of the African Union, complemented by a new and almost equally imposing German-funded office for the Peace and Security Department, which is responsible for SSR support.

of external military and security actors (often with their own agendas) in the continent's many trouble spots. As well, the growing focus on CT, CVE and ›stabilization‹ accompanying this trend – in addition to potentially eroding AU and African ownership of the security agenda – is further diverting and refocusing the limited funding available to enhance security governance and accountability structures toward ›train-and-equip‹ exercises. This is not insignificant, given that these external expectations – not African interests – are often the real movers and shakers of SSR on the continent.

## 8.2 SSR as Politics: Generating the Policy Framework

From the very beginning of the AU policy-drafting process, the ›political nature‹ of SSR was never in doubt. First, given the overtly political (or politicized) nature of security institutions across much of the continent – often taking over political power directly or acting as the cornerstone of autocratic and authoritarian regimes and primary source of insecurity – the political (even ›subversive‹) implications of SSR could hardly be missed. SSR constitutes a potentially radical break with existing security practices – and thereby techniques of power maintenance – which have been characterized by considerable secrecy and lack of transparency, with regimes extremely protective in most cases of their security arrangements. On the other hand, depoliticizing security establishments and subjecting them to some degree of democratic control was almost always a core objective of the democratic transitions that erupted across Africa in the 1990s.

Second, there was the perception (or allegation) in many quarters that SSR was ›foreign-inspired‹ – that SSR was even an instrument of ›regime change‹ – and hence a threat to national security and sovereignty. While these concerns reflected to some degree the sometimes anxious debates in the UN General Assembly around UNSCR 2151,<sup>103</sup> they were given particular resonance by the fact that Africa was the site of the majority of SSR initiatives. The notion of ›SSR (only) on demand‹ and assurances of ›national ownership‹ were designed at least in part to assuage these political sensitivities.

103. SC/11369 of 28 April 2014: Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2151 (2014), Security Council Underscore Need for National Ownership of Security-Sector Reform.

Hence the typical entry point for SSR has occurred where existing security arrangements have collapsed or are (like the state itself) in deep contention and up for negotiation, such as in most post-conflict situations and contested political transitions. On the other hand, it has been more difficult to advocate SSR as an instrument of conflict-prevention where regime security arrangements are relatively intact (again, this distinction is reflected in the debates in the UNGA). Ruling regimes have been much more comfortable with SSR in its narrow sense as a tool of operational capacity-building. In the case of the AU, the entry point for the SSR policy framework was significantly the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Strategy (PCRD), where SSR was part of broader package of post-conflict recovery initiatives and where consensus was more easily reached among member states.

Despite the apparent consensus expressed in the January 2008 mandate to the African Union Commission (AUC) to develop a comprehensive SSR policy framework, the political cleavages around SSR were on display at various points during the AU policy drafting and development process. In the series of consultations around the initial draft, it became obvious that African states were far from unified around the very concept of SSR, with opposition from a number of key member states (primarily from the Maghreb and Southern Africa) and support from other states that included South Africa and others from West Africa (such as Sierra Leone and Liberia).<sup>104</sup> Reflecting a wider tension between whether the AU was ›people-centred‹ (as it claimed to aspire to be) or ›state-centred‹ (as it had been in its earlier incarnation as the OAU), there was considerable initial ambivalence in certain sectors of the AU toward involving civil society in SSR, even though this was a core mandate of the AU.<sup>105</sup>

104. This observation is based on an eyewitness account of the consultation with the Member States' Experts in Addis in May 2011. By contrast, a similar consultation with CSOs (in Abuja in December 2010) elicited critical but unambiguous support for the draft policy framework and for SSR as such (an area in which African CSOs were already in many cases exercising leadership).

105. Thus, subsequently signing up a ›civil society organisation‹ (the African Security Sector Network/ASSN) to shepherd the drafting process was a singular act of independence (even courage) by the AUC, and would lead to some grumbling by state parties which already had reservations (whether founded on principle or opportunism) about the entire process.



### 8.3 Challenges of Implementation of the AU SSR-PF

After a cumbersome five-year process the AU SSR-PF was finally endorsed by the heads of state in January 2013. Following this event, a three-year programme titled »Building African Union Capacities in Security Sector Reform« was launched in May 2013 on the basis of a partnership between the AU, UN, and EU with the technical support of the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) and the SSR Unit within the DPKO. This provided for: (a) recruitment of three SSR experts to be embedded in the SSR Unit in the AUC; (b) development of seven Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs)<sup>106</sup> to support the implementation of the AU SSR-PF; (c) conduct of SSR Joint Assessment Missions (JAMs) to a number of African countries;<sup>107</sup> and (d) deployment of AU SSR experts and consultants to support national SSR programmes in Guinea Bissau, Madagascar and the Comoros, as well as the AU Peace Support Operations in Mali (AFISMA) and the CAR (MISCA).

While there was good progress while it was in force, the end of this joint capacity-building programme has presented challenges of implementation<sup>108</sup> as well as sustainability of the gains already made under that programme, including staff retention in the AU SSR Unit. This is because the AU has operated under severe resource and capacity constraints, financial as well as technical. The core budget of the AUC has minimal allocations for SSR, which means that support has to be leveraged from external partners to fund the technical and other forms of assistance to the RECs/RMs and AU Member States, which are themselves dependent in turn on bilateral and multilateral support for the SSR activities. There is particular dependence upon the EU, which provided over 80 percent of the funding for the capacity-building programme and, under the Joint Africa-EU

Strategic Partnership adopted in Lisbon in December 2007, is also a major funder of the APSA, already supporting 24 AU peace and security activities under this partnership agreement.

Capacity at the AU SSR Unit remains limited, and consists currently of two regular and one contract officer (the original SSR Focal Point) whose retirement is imminent. This capacity is in the process of being further reduced by the departure of one of the three staffers to join the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on assignment at the end of March 2018. REC SSR focal points are typically even more thinly resourced, in most cases by a single officer. This capacity at the AU SSR Unit was further stretched by deployments of AU SSR staff to support national SSR programmes and AU peace support missions. While some increase in demand for technical support had been anticipated as a result of the launching of the AU-SSRPF and the assessment missions, no allocation for these had actually been made in the budget of the AU SSR capacity building programme. Some provision had, however, been made earlier to tap into the UN and EU Expert Rosters to respond to such requests from AU member states, but this was extremely modest and did not take the SSR Joint Assessment Missions into account, being predicated on two deployments of no more than two weeks each; consequently the budget was exhausted on first use by a single extended deployment of a lone expert to the Comoros. In addition, there were problems with adequate recruitment of consultants given the very limited existing pool of SSR experts. Furthermore, the use of consultants deployed from the rosters of AU partners (such as the UNDP Expert Roster) did not always turn out well for a variety of reasons.

Even the publication and dissemination of the policy document (the AU-SSRPF) and knowledge products (i. e. Operational Guidance Notes, or OGNs) to support its implementation, not to mention the information strategy designed to underpin both, have been slow to materialize, pending funding for the various preparatory activities such as proofreading and translation into the remaining three AU languages (other than English). It is clear that both public and practitioner knowledge of these policy documents and guidelines remains very limited, particularly outside English-speaking circles. This also means in practice that the AU has failed to nurture relationships with key SSR constituencies and

106. The OGNs were on the following themes: Development of National Codes of Conduct for African Security Institutions; Conducting SSR Needs Assessments Mission; Gender and SSR; Training Manual on SSR; SSR Monitoring and Evaluation Template; Harmonisation of National Security Legislation; and Handbook on African Security Sector Reform (SSR) Good Practices.

107. These were to the CAR and Madagascar in 2014, Guinea Bissau in May 2015, and Mali in November 2015. The AU also conducted its own SSR assessment missions to Somalia and preliminary technical missions (TAMs) to Libya, South Sudan and the Comoros.

108. Considerations of space prevent discussion of the detailed implementation plans of the AU SSR Unit, but see African Union, AU Programme to Support REC/RMs and Members States on Security Sector Reform (SSR) 2017–2019.

civil society in particular, arguably the source of inspiration for the AU SSR-PF and a perceived underpinning of a more people-centred approach to SSR. While the consultations to prepare the Operational Guidance Notes presented an opportunity to continue to engage civil society, a major disappointment was the fact that the capacity-building agreed at a consultation meeting with civil society organisations in Abuja in December 2010 as essential to ensure meaningful CSO engagement never materialized because plans by the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and the AU SSR Unit failed to attract the necessary funding.

The prevailing resource stringency<sup>109</sup> has also meant challenges in delivering on the AU's own commitments and activities. In particular, even though the assessment missions often resulted in extensive policy and programme recommendations, the AU itself had not mobilized any resources and did not have a budget to support those recommendations; in effect, mobilizing such resources appears to have been an after-thought. Hence the JAMs and other assessment missions posed a danger of raising expectations that the AU itself could not fulfil. Nevertheless, the case of Madagascar suggests that, given the right context (e.g. local political will) and properly targeted and supported, these assessment missions could yield highly positive results.<sup>110</sup>

There may be some irony in the fact that this failure of the AU and Member States to provide the needed financial support to drive and sustain the AU SSR agenda flies in the face of a core principle in the AU-SSRPF which links ›national ownership‹ with ›national responsibility and commitment‹ and goes on to state:

›National ownership cannot be viable or realistic if the financial burden for reform is borne exclusively by external actors and partners. In advancing national ownership,

109. The SSR unit's modest budget request for 2018 of about \$1 million was cut to \$400,000. On the other hand, the good news (relatively speaking) is that Member States contributed \$300,000 to the SSR budget, thus making up for some of the shortfall.

110. However, the first engagement of the AU SSR Focal Point with a national SSR Programme – and first attempt to pilot the AU SSR-PF – was actually in South Sudan, where the AU signed an MOU in 2011 with the Government of South Sudan to support the development of a National Security Policy/Strategy, in collaboration with the ASSN, which had a separate MOU with the Ministry of National Security. While process-driven and highly consultative – in several respects a text-book case of national security strategy formulation – this effort did not end well, as it was interrupted by the outbreak of civil war.

therefore, the AU encourages Member States to implementing SSR to commit some national resources to the process.<sup>111</sup>

This principle applies equally to the AU. But whether the AU can be self-sustaining at some future date will depend on its ability to implement the decision passed at the 27th summit of the AU heads of state and government in Kigali in July 2016 to institute a 0.2 percent levy on eligible imports as part of the reform of its financing mechanism, intended to reduce dependency on external donors in the financing of the activities of the Union, including those related to peace and security, and generate predictable and sustainable financing.<sup>112</sup> This issue is, by all indications, one that preoccupies President Kagame, the current Chair of the African Union, who has been vocally critical about the dependency of the AU and African states on external funding to deal with the continent's security challenges.<sup>113</sup>

#### 8.4 Coping (or not) in a Competitive SSR Market Place

While high-profile AU-led assessment missions (such as the JAMs) helped to consolidate the AU's SSR partnerships and to stamp the authority of the organisation as the political lead, in practice the AU has tended to be ›crowded-out‹ in the field by better resourced multilaterals and bilaterals. Owing as much to resource limitations as to inherent bureaucracy, the AU has tended to move relatively slowly and has been limited in both the scope and complexity of the tasks that it is able to handle, while the greater resources available to bilateral actors and UN agencies such as the UNDP have

111. African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform, Section B: Core African Principles for Security Sector Reform, 16 (c) Chapter D7.1 ›Financing Security Sector Reform Processes‹, paragraph 50, which stresses that ›the responsibility for financing national SSR processes lies with Member States. National authorities may therefore coordinate with bilateral partners, the African Union, the United Nations and other stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of funding for security sector reform activities.‹

112. Mpako Foaleng and Niagalé Bagayoko, African Union Reforms to Promote Better Governance of the Security Sector across Africa, Tana High-Level Forum on Security, 17 March 2018. Accessed at: Op-ed: AU reforms to promote better governance of the security sector across Africa.

113. Comments by President Kagame at the 4th Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security, 14 November 2017. President Kagame will be speaking again on this issue when he delivers the keynote address at the 7th Tana Forum, the theme of which, significantly, is ›Ownership of Africa's Peace and Security Provision: Financing and Reforming the African Union‹, in April 2018 in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.

allowed them to move more quickly, and sometimes independently of both the AU and national authorities. While this appears to be the case in places such as Madagascar (where AU lead is strongly established in theory), it is all the more so in complex environments such as Mali, where a multitude of bilateral interventions/programmes led by the French and other EU member states have tended to marginalize both the UN mission MINUSMA and the High Representative of the African Union (AU) for Mali and the Sahel and Head of the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), effectively dominating the security agenda.<sup>114</sup> This is not helped by the limitations of the AU in the area of coordination, which is one of the functions to be expected of a political lead, or the growing tendency of the AU to dabble in ›quick impact projects‹, which distract from the presumed focus on strategic leadership.

The resulting tension (or gap) between political lead/legitimacy, on the one hand and financial and technical capacity on the other has implications for local ownership as well as notions of subsidiarity. While the concept of subsidiarity suggests that the AU framework (highly aligned with the UN global framework but customized to local conditions) would take precedence – with REC frameworks in turn taking leadership in their specific sub-regions – this has not always (or necessarily) worked in that order. That such lop-sided ›partnerships‹ would prompt the feeling that Africa – and specifically the AU – has been marginalized and disrespected by the big players in the international community should not come as a surprise.<sup>115</sup>

### 8.5 Internal Politics of SSR

Several questions remain of the profile of SSR within the AU itself, beginning with the issue of SSR ownership within the AUCs as a whole (which has been difficult to discern). Even though SSR has been ›mainstreamed‹ within the AU, there are hints that it continues to be a sensitive subject and that AU ›ownership‹ remains an issue, particularly in relation to external partners. This is suggested (in part) by hints of tensions (or at least sen-

sivities) over hosting of high-profile events such as the SSR High Level Panel in Nairobi in 2012 (which was driven primarily by collaboration between the Government of Slovakia and DCAF-ISSAT, with the AU being invited to participate), and the first (and so far only) ›Africa SSR Forum‹ in November 2014. While the latter (unlike the earlier HLP) was held at the AUC in Addis Ababa, the funding and much of the planning and logistics were carried out once again by the same partnership of the Slovaks and DCAF-ISSAT; the AU itself appeared to have made a late and somewhat reluctant entrance, and there was a perceptible absence of senior AU officials at the event. In spite of the success of that forum and efforts to address any perceived ›ownership deficits‹, a follow-up event has not materialised.

Given the political sensitivity of SSR and a history of antagonism from important quarters of the AU membership toward the very concept, it would be naive not to assume that bureaucratic politics within the AU itself, as it delicately balances diverse and sometimes competing national, regional, linguistic, and geopolitical interests, may not have something to do with the occasional caution in moving on SSR. The tendency of the AU to make high-level political appointments based on a similar balancing act also means that AU personnel sometimes became spokespersons for – or at least motivated by the interests of – these sectional interests rather of a common AU position.

A related issue is the slowness in developing inter-departmental mechanisms to mainstream SSR within the AUC architecture (along the lines, for instance, of the UN Interdepartmental SSR Task Force). Many of the events surrounding the SSR policy formulation process as well as the consultations around the OGN tools occurred with little participation or input from other AUC departments (with the exception of the Gender Division). Eventually formation of such an SSR taskforce was pre-empted by the establishment by the Peace and Security Department (PSD) of an ›Inter-departmental Task Force on Conflict Prevention‹, of which SSR is a component, enhancing co-ordination and multidisciplinary SSR missions in the context of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD).

Also notable are the different levels of priority which the RECs appear to have devoted to SSR. With the exception of ECOWAS (which in some respects preceded the AU in

114. International Alert, ›They treat us all like jihadis. Looking beyond violent extremism to building peace in Mali‹, Policy Brief: December 2016.

115. Speech by Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa, ›Africa's Position in the Global Peace and Security Architecture‹, African Leadership Forum, Johannesburg, 25 August 2017.

this endeavour), the other RECS have been slow to follow the lead of the AU and develop a fully-fledged SSR/G framework. This is all the more notable among precisely the most conflict-affected and hard-pressed RECs: the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) from the Horn of Africa. Nevertheless, the AU has instituted an annual AU/REC/RM SSR Coordination to try to bring together all the RECs on the same page with the AU (this has met twice: in December 2016 in Addis and November 2017 in Entebbe).

### 8.6 Governance vs Operationality

In almost all cases (including the particularly complex case of Guinea-Bissau), the AU JAM reports have routinely underscored the need for democratic controls and to prioritize capacity-building for accountability and oversight mechanisms (parliamentary defence and security committees in particular) as well as justice and rule of law institutions and the creation of space for CSOs and the media. On the other hand, while echoing similar sentiments, donor-funded SSR programmes have not tended (except in a very few cases) to prioritize capacity-building for the governance and accountability mechanisms that are supposed to define ›SSR‹, preferring rather to focus on enhancing operational capacity of security institutions. The following finding in the Public Expenditure Review (PER) for Liberia can be generalised across Africa:

›While the national security strategy emphasizes the need for accountable and democratic security architecture, reform of the sector has so far focused on developing the operational effectiveness of the security institutions. Mechanisms for accountability and coordination remain weak, and civilian oversight of the security sector is ineffective.‹<sup>116</sup>

This neglect of security governance mechanisms – the elevated rhetoric of the international community notwithstanding – is all too typical. On the other hand, it would be surprising if this bias in favour of building operational capacity of the security services at the expense of mechanisms of accountability does not enjoy implicit


support from some African heads of state, who – in a continent where ›democratic governance of security‹ is still far from the norm – are probably much less motivated by the prospect of strengthening national institutions and actors which might potentially dilute or contest their monopoly of control over the security establishment, if not actually constitute sources of opposition on sensitive security matters.

This ›train and equip‹ focus may actually be intensifying, particularly as aid allocations become more and more focused on stabilization, thematically on counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE) and illegal migration and human smuggling (emphasizing border controls, corrections, etc), and geographically on the Sahel and Maghreb, as donors increasingly align ›SSR‹ with their own geopolitical and geostrategic concerns. While SSR in such contexts is supposed to be closely articulated with ›state-building‹ and ›development‹ objectives, in reality operational capacity-building of special military units (such as the G5 Sahel) predominates. In any case, as the AU is not a major funder or actor at the level of implementation, its relative lack of resources gives it correspondingly little voice in what actually gets implemented (or not). On the other hand, it is also important to keep in mind that AU Peacekeeping mandates closely replicate the language of UN mandates, prioritizing ›stabilization‹ and ›restoring the authority of the states‹, and it is not entirely clear in that context that the AU perspective differs significantly from those of its multilateral partners.

### 8.7 Conclusion

Optics aside, the AU has played an aspirational but in the final analysis relatively modest role thus far in SSR. It is no exaggeration to say that possibly the greatest danger to the AU SSR-PF is that it may simply become irrelevant. That said, SSR itself has had relatively limited traction, success and sustainability on the continent. Experiences of SSR in Africa either preceded or were launched prior to the AU SSR-PF (Sierra Leone, Liberia, the DRC), and/or have been driven primarily by external bilateral and/or multilateral partners rather than the AU (as in the instances above), and/or have subsequently imploded (South Sudan, Burundi), or failed to launch (Mali, the CAR), having been overwhelmed by the dynamics of the conflict.

116. Liberia Public Expenditure Review Note: Meeting the Challenges of the UNMIL Security Transition Report No. 71009-LR, July 2012 Africa Region.



As a regional organization representing 51 states, the AU has sometimes struggled to balance the divergent (if shifting) interests of member states on the issue of SSR, as well as the sovereignty aspirations of those states against the sometimes intrusive role of external partners in the sensitive area of reforming African national security architectures in ways that may not always reflect sensitivity to AU leadership or policy preferences. The AU finds

external actors to be both partners and competitors in the SSR marketplace, and is more often than not elbowed aside in the field by the much better resourced and more agile bilateral actors who fund most of the national (and even sub-regional) programmes on the ground. Arguably, while rhetorically subscribing to ›national ownership‹ or ›AU leadership‹, in many respects, on the ground, these partners have tended to go their own merry way.

## 9. Conclusion

*Steffen Eckhard*

Three recommendations for aligning Western donors' institutional SSR/G design with their transformative SSR/G agenda

Control over security forces touches the heart of political power in any country. But despite its inherently political nature, it is striking to see that security sector reform assistance in fragile and transformative countries is not matched by an equally political strategy on the side of Western donors. Instead, this study found that professional interests of government SSR/G stakeholders collide, individual project assignment is fragmented and lacks analysis and strategic direction for single countries, long-term financial commitments prevent flexible fund allocation, and a constructive »culture of failure« in the professional bureaucracies does not exist, making it more difficult to learn from experiences. As a result, Western foreign aid and affairs ministries spend their budgets within the straightforward parameters of train and equip. These programmes risk reinforcing a vicious cycle. Security assistance strengthens the autocrat. But, in strengthening the autocrat, it enables him to further abuse his position, exacerbating the conditions that lead people to take up arms.

Such train and equip falls far behind Western donors' self-proclaimed transformative SSR/G agenda that aims to provide »individuals and the state with more effective and accountable security in a manner consistent with respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the principles of good governance« (EU Commission/EU Council 2016). It is therefore important to develop alternative options for SSR/G programmes that enable long-term democratic transformation and civilian control of the security sector. Such political SSR/G is characterized by strategic long-term engagement with short-term trial-and-error and flexible up- and down-scaling (benchmark 1); the imperative to work through local conveners (benchmark 2); and the need for (high-level) host state and donor country political support and momentum (benchmark 3).

To recon the ground for transformative SSR/G measures in accordance with the three benchmarks, this study brought together seven chapters, each analyzing SSR/G

programming and implementation in one donor context: the European Union (by Ursula Schröder and Bianca Süßenbach), the African Union (by Eboe Hutchful), the United States (by Julie Werbel), the United Kingdom (by Paul Jackson), France (by Aline Lebeouf), the Netherlands (by Erwin van Veen), and Germany (by Philipp Rotmann). Findings from the comparison of these chapters demonstrate variation in donors' institutional SSR/G design. There are many common problems, but also ideas how to overcome some of the inherent challenges of political SSR/G. Building on these findings, as well as an author workshop conducted in Berlin in April 2018, this chapter outlines three recommendations as ideas to enable donors to better align SSR/G programming with Western donors' self-proclaimed transformative SSR/G agenda.

Recommendation 1: Scenario workshops to bridge professional divides of SSR/G stakeholders

SSR/G cuts across multiple government branches and links people with different professional backgrounds and interests. Initially, when SSR/G was developed in the context of transformation and democratization processes in Eastern and Central Europe after the end of the Cold War, the professional aims of these communities broadly coincided. Nowadays, representatives from domestic security branches, diplomats, and development experts feel that conflicting goals impede inter-agency collaboration. On the one hand, domestic security professionals such as military attachés or liaison police officers fear that a democratic SSR/G agenda could undermine work relations with security peers in partner countries. These relations are paramount for information exchange on organized crime and terrorism. On the other hand, development experts fear that short-term security goals undermine long-term development goals when security assistance benefits authoritarian regimes.

Common ground between these perspectives exists, but usually goes unnoticed. Western donors should therefore foster collaboration between professional stakeholder groups to enable exchanges of perspectives. More precisely, joint trainings or exercises could be conducted on a regular basis (two to three times per year) that involve stakeholders from all government or organization divisions involved in SSR/G. These workshops could include scenario exercises that ask participants to design a joint SSR/G strategy for a concrete country, including short-

and long-term options. This would enable professional interests to both identify tangible ideas for common ground and build mutual trust over time as more and more government/organization experts working on SSR/G come to know each other and a community of practice materializes. Ideally, the scenario exercises could be set up cross-nationally among several EU countries and/or even by the EU for all interested member states.

#### Recommendation 2: Design encompassing political strategies including security sector governance

SSR/G is a long term process and as such requires a long term strategy. Donors should develop political strategies for the entire set of relations with each country that include the goals and instruments for security sector governance. The process of devising country strategies should be informed by needs analysis (no significant funding decision should be made without an ex-ante needs assessment that brings in recipient voices) and involve SSR/G stakeholders from other government or organization branches. This could also be linked to scenario workshops as previously discussed. Functional responsibility for country strategies should be assigned to the country desks of a foreign affairs department or an international organization's geographical department. Some countries increasingly offer pooled SSR/G funding or set up centralized SSR/G units. This is inherently at odds with the idea of political SSR/G for which expertise about the host country and its political economy are paramount.

While country strategies would provide donors with a better understanding of the change processes they are willing to support from the outside, SSR/G should also be made part of the regular bilateral negotiations between donor and recipient states. Matching donor and recipient interests allows identifying different strategies for different SSR/G objectives. Delivery of security assets (train and equip) could then be linked to other elements of SSR/G processes that are more contested on the side of the host state. Democratic oversight in the security sector is often internally contested and external conditionality can help government officials to overcome resistance on the side of security personnel. Anchoring concrete short-term SSR/G goals in bilateral development negotiations would also mitigate the risk of conflicting goals between security sector *reform* and security *collaboration* between host and donor state security personnel, such as military attachés or liaison police officers.

#### Recommendation 3: Strengthen field-level personnel capacities instead of SSR/G funding

Transformative SSR/G is about people and not (primarily) about money. Long-term change is possible when people with reform ambitions in the host state make a career and rise to positions where they can enable systemic change. Where such progressive change agents are in place and the political climate allows for change, donors must be ready to upscale their financial SSR/G commitments. This has two implications.

First, donors must devise ways how they can rapidly upscale financial commitments in SSR/G. This is at odds with the inflexible way in which security and foreign affairs budgets are drawn up, namely often in accordance with long-term plans and multi-year financial frameworks. While high-level political pressure can usually overcome these hurdles, it would be helpful for SSR/G processes below the radar of high-level political attention if they had access to more flexible financial resources to bridge short-term bottlenecks – which would also allow financial contributions to be downscaled in times of rapidly changing political developments.

Second, beyond such opportunity windows SSR/G assistance for most of the time is about building and managing change networks as well as personal relations, which is relatively inexpensive in monetary terms but requires a significant amount of time and expenditure on expert personnel. Donors should therefore decentralize their SSR/G support systems and increase decision-making leeway and staffing at the field level (in embassies and delegation offices). It is thereby important to adhere to the seniority principle. Age and seniority are culturally important traits in many countries. In particular, in security sector reform the rank or seniority of external advisors should align with the rank or seniority of the local counterpart to avoid cultural frictions.

Overall, these three broad ideas reflect many of the findings of the case studies outlined in this collection. Their common ground is the emphasis on the role of people in SSR/G in a dual sense: In the host state, reform decisions are made by people, which means that the right people must be in place when SSR/G aspires to democratic change and civilian oversight. In the assisting state, institutions never fully restrain people. If they want, any hurdle can be overcome. Investing in people and their relations is therefore paramount in the pursuit of more political SSR/G as change management.



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