

CHALLENGES TO

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

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FOREWORD

On 13 and 14 July 2006 a regional workshop entitled 'Promoting security sector reform in the Horn of Africa' was jointly conducted by the Center for Policy Research and Dialogue (CPRD) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). The workshop took place at the African Union Conference Hall in Addis Ababa, where renowned ambassadors, academics and practitioners deliberated on the important topic of security and security sector reform (SSR). The participants included SSR practitioners, members of parliament, academics and members of the civil societies from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) countries, and West and Southern Africa.

The keynote speech was delivered by Geoffrey Mugumya, Director Peace and Security of the African Union Commission, with the theme of 'Security for whom'. This served as a launching pad for further discussions on SSR in Africa and specifically the Horn of Africa. He defined SSR, with a special emphasis on evaluating risks and threats (both real and perceived), and also listed possible reforms. He noted that because military and security institutions and services constitute the instruments of violence of the state, this necessitates proper governance and regulation; informed and active legislatures; clear governmental policy frameworks and laws; effective civilian executive authorities; and active civil societies to hold the sector accountable. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that security institutions are governed according to the principles of democratic control and accountability. He ended his presentation by identifying the goals of the conference, namely to further the agenda for long-term SSR in the Horn and to further the establishment of a network to enhance such a process.

The workshop recognised that SSR programmes were being implemented in many African countries and that lessons from these reform programmes should be studied with a view to addressing future SSR in the Horn region. For this reason some comparative studies from West and Southern Africa were presented. The real need to change the way that threats are perceived by African politicians and the people they govern was also noted. When addressing SSR, it is important that one should constantly bear in mind

the question, 'Security for whom'. Therefore SSR should not only focus on security issues at national and state level, but also on security of individual persons – the security of the people of Africa. Within this paradigm, the workshop discussed the challenges and constraints that are commonly faced and often experienced in a number of African countries in general and the Horn of Africa in particular. Some recommendations and suggestions were put forward for discussion in tackling the challenges, so that SSR could result in sustainable establishments, processes and programmes delivering security to all the people of Africa.

Most of the experiences were presented in the form of papers, backed up with slide presentations, and discussions were held at the end of every plenary session. The CPRD and ISS have already published a report on the workshop and this is available on their respective websites (see the inside front cover for website details). Hard copies can also be obtained from both organisations. This monograph contains five of the papers that were presented.

The CPRD and ISS are both committed to continuing research in the field of SSR in the Horn of Africa and in supporting national governments and regional organisations in furthering the important and essential work on SSR. It is in this spirit that this monograph is published: to provide insight into some comparative experiences from West and Southern Africa and to highlight some of the challenges facing the Horn of Africa region as regards SSR.

The workshop was made possible by funding from the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom through its office in Addis Ababa.

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PART 1

COMPARATIVE STUDIES

CHAPTER 1

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT OF DEFENCE TRANSFORMATION: THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

Thandi Modise

Introduction

Before the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, South African national security policy was made by a very small cohesive group of leaders, a group increasingly dominated by military officers. Political and military leadership in South Africa was almost exclusively the domain of white Afrikaans-speaking men. Non-whites, except when they went on strike or rioted, did not wield decisive political influence. After winning the national elections of 1980, President P W Botha concentrated more power in the presidency, replacing a government characterised by what has been called 'feudal ministries' to enable him to maximise government resources for dealing with the country's security problems.

The political infighting and realignments resulting from this process increased the influence and presence of military officers in a broad range of government ministries and committees. The South African Defence Force (SADF) continued to be a white-dominated establishment that enjoyed a privileged relationship with the presidency, both in terms of budget and influence on decision-making. The SADF was not really accountable to Parliament, and military operations were not subject to public scrutiny.

Inside the country, the SADF increasingly assumed security functions during the 1970s and 1980s and was deployed to urban areas of South Africa, often referred to as the second front, to combat sabotage. Outside the country borders, the SADF played a major role in destabilising and interfering in neighbouring countries such as Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and Lesotho. In these non-traditional military functions, senior officers relied on specialised military and paramilitary units, some with unpublicised areas of responsibility.

The advent of democracy

The debate on defence transformation in South Africa cannot be pursued without acknowledging that transformation occurred against a background

of political change that swept the country during the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. This political transformation took place under special circumstances. Two of the most significant elements were the end of the Cold War era and the demise of the apartheid system, propelled by the visionary leadership of Nelson Mandela and F W de Klerk.

These circumstances led to a process of negotiation for a political solution to one of the most complex socio-political realities in the modern world. The negotiation processes occurred in an atmosphere of relative peace and stability, which in turn allowed different armed forces, both statutory and non-statutory, to find solutions to their problems around the negotiating table rather than on the battlefield. This climate of negotiations had a strong influence on the open and transparent way in which defence transformation took place in South Africa after April 1994. In this vastly changed environment it was clear that the defence force as constituted and managed during the apartheid era had to change fundamentally to align itself with the new South African reality. The demand for change encompassed four major requirements related to transformation, which were constitutionalism, integration of different armed forces, changed policy, and increasing the efficiency and legitimacy of the armed forces.

The constitutional framework

Neither the South African constitution of 1983 nor its forerunner, the 1961 constitution, were enabling instruments for the armed forces, as were the 1993 and 1996 constitutions. In fact, the 1961 and 1983 constitutions did not supersede any other laws, and therefore did not serve as the touchstone for the determination of the validity or otherwise of other parliamentary laws and policies. Under the old dispensation the armed forces had been established by the Defence Act 1957 (Act 44 of 1957). This was a parliamentary enactment which to all intents and purposes formed the 'constitution' of the SADF and was its founding document.

By contrast, the current constitution (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996)¹ outlines the principles, structure, responsibilities and relationships that are required to secure democratic civil–military relations by means of entrenched provisions. For example, it outlines the hierarchy of authority between the executive branch, Parliament and the armed forces, as well as the powers of the main state organs and the conduct of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The parameters of this conduct are set out in section 2 of the 1996 constitution, which states: 'This Constitution

is the supreme law of the Republic [of South Africa]; law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled.' What is evident in reading the constitution is the clear ascendancy of the authority of the civil powers over the armed forces. One of the main governing principles prescribed in the constitution is that national security is subject to the authority of Parliament and the national executive.

The salient points of the 1996 constitution with regard to the conduct of the defence force are as follows:

- It must act, teach and require its members to act, in accordance with the constitution and the law, including customary international law and international agreements binding on the Republic of South Africa
- No member of the defence force may obey a manifestly illegal order
- The defence force or its members may not further, in a partisan manner, any interest of a political party
- The defence force must perform its functions and exercise its powers under the directions of the Minister of Defence
- The President, as Commander-in-Chief, appoints the military command
- The Minister of Defence is accountable to Parliament for the exercise of his powers and the performance of his functions and must provide Parliament with full and regular reports concerning matters under his control

With regard to executive powers, the constitution has the following provisions:

- The President shall be the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF and may declare a state of national defence with the approval of Parliament (sections 202 & 203)
- Only the President may authorise the use of the defence force in cooperation with the police service, in defence of the RSA and in fulfilment of an international obligation (section 201)

Section 201 also provides that the President shall immediately inform Parliament in appropriate detail of:

- The reasons for the employment of the defence force

- The place where it is employed
- The number of people involved
- The duration of the employment

With regard to internal operations, the functions of the SANDF are also strictly and clearly outlined. The functions first appeared in the 1993 constitution and the provisions continue to be in force by virtue of schedule 6, section 24(1), of the 1996 constitution, which deals with transitional arrangements. These functions are set out in section 227(1) of the 1993 constitution:

- Service in the preservation of life, health and property
- Service in the provision or maintenance of essential services
- Service in upholding of law and order in the RSA in cooperation with the South African Police Service (SAPS)
- Service in support of any department of state for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment

The constitution provides for the following functions of parliamentary authority and control, in addition to ensuring that the President and the Minister fulfil their responsibilities towards the electorate outlined above:

- Approval of the national budget, including the defence budget
- Multi-party parliamentary committees that have oversight over all defence and intelligence matters
- The establishment of a civilian defence secretariat
- Approval of the structure of the new defence force
- Regulation of the objects, powers and functions of the intelligence services, including the intelligence division of the defence force and to that end to provide for coordination of all intelligence services as well as civilian monitoring of the activities of those intelligence services by an inspector

Despite the existence of a constitutional framework for civilian oversight of the military, including military intelligence, decision-making practice within

the Department of Defence (DOD) has shown that the formal mechanisms of civilian oversight may be bypassed in critical areas, either deliberately or by default. These bypasses do not in themselves threaten the new political system, but they illustrate the difficulties inherent in implementing reforms and have the capacity to seriously undermine civil–military relations. In recognition of this, South African civilian authorities have devised additional ways and means of managing the armed forces in the new democratic dispensation.

Other than the establishment of clear constitutional provisions for the defence function in South Africa, the first step in the transformation of the South African defence establishment was to integrate all previous combatant groupings into a new defence force. The new SANDF had to be representative of the demographics of the country, especially with regard to race and gender. Secondly, a fundamental change in the South African defence policy was required. After the isolation of the apartheid era, South Africa was to play a much more significant role in the world and especially in the African continent. It had to develop a new view on security issues, defence roles and postures and civil–military relations. Thirdly, it was clear that governmental and societal priorities for reconstruction and development would require greater efficiency in defence spending through the adoption of a new force design and structure, rightsizing of the SANDF, and the establishment of improved management practices. In the new South Africa defence fragmentation had to make way for integration.

Integration

The Transitional Executive Council was established in December 1993 with a clear mandate of coordinating planning of the integration process in South Africa. One of the sub-councils established by this council was the Joint Military Coordinating Council, with the mandate of managing all pre-integration planning processes.

A consultative process of policy-making

The Parliament of the Republic of South Africa is a product of the constitution, which in turn became an instrument for mass participation and played a significant role in the oversight and transformation of the SANDF. Through constitutional provisions, the Parliament of the RSA designed its own rules of procedure, which in turn gave guidance to the committees, which continue to shape policy directives and hold the executive accountable.

The Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Defence (JSCPD) and the Portfolio Committee on Defence (PCD) were two of the parliamentary committees that were central in re-directing and monitoring the overall transformation of the SANDF in post-apartheid South Africa. The JSCPD and the PCD have the powers to investigate and make recommendations on the budget, functioning, organisation, armament, policy, morale and state of preparedness of the national defence force and to perform such other functions relating to parliamentary supervision of the force as may be prescribed by law (Constitution 1993, section 228(3)(d)). During the process of policy formulation on defence in South Africa the Ministry of Defence worked closely with the JSCPD and PCD as well as civil society organisations in developing a new defence policy. Both the White Paper on Defence (1996) and the Defence Review (1998) were products of this participation and consultation. The white paper was extensively debated in the JSCPD and also made available for public comment before it was passed by Parliament. The Defence Review followed a participative and consultative process consisting of members of parliament and civilians serving on the Defence Review Workgroup and its sub-workgroups, who hosted nine regional consultative workshops and three national consultative conferences.

The outcome of this process was an overhaul of defence arrangements, as set out in the Defence Act 2002 (Act 42 of 2002). Chapter 1 of the Act has philosophical undertones, which accorded the SANDF a new mandate. The role of the SANDF is currently defined within the context of territorial defence of South Africa as a sovereign state and of its citizens. The Act envisages a non-partisan defence force that, among other things, replaced an aggressive, provocative and colonial foreign policy that had been characteristic of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The SANDF is at present committed to the realisation of reconciliation and national unity. Other notable goals contained in the Act are that South Africa shall seek national security through efforts to meet the political, economic, social and cultural rights of South African people; that South Africa shall pursue peaceful relations with other states; and that the SANDF shall operate strictly within the parameters of the constitution and domestic legislation. It shall respect human rights and the democratic political processes. The SANDF shall endeavour to create a non-racial, non-sexist and non-discriminatory institutional culture. Chapter 3 of the Act reinforces the position of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa on defence by reiterating and emphasising civil-military relations in which power and influence are distributed between the armed services and civilian authorities. The President of the Republic of South Africa is the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF and

may, with approval of Parliament, declare a state of national defence. The President must immediately inform Parliament of the reasons for using the SANDF, whether for the defence of the country, compliance with international obligations or for the maintenance of internal law and order. Chapter 3 of the Act gives Parliament the power to terminate or alter employment of the SANDF and to approve the defence budget annually. The Act designates the position of a minister of defence who is directly accountable to Parliament.

From the above it is clear that the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa has significant powers over the control of the SANDF. No individual or individuals acting in unison or otherwise can manipulate the SANDF to advance narrow personal or political interests. Even the President cannot unilaterally, without consulting Parliament, order the employment of the SANDF.

Other provisions for transparent and accountable defence in South Africa include the appointment of a civilian secretary for defence and a chief of the SANDF at the same hierarchical level, with both reporting to the Minister of Defence, but each with clearly defined responsibilities. The Secretary for Defence has been designated as the head of department and the accounting officer as well as the principal adviser to the minister on defence policy (Defence Act 2002, sections 8(a) and 8(b)). The Chief of the SANDF exercises military executive command of the national defence force, subject to the directions of the minister responsible for defence and, in a state of national defence, of the President (Constitution 1993, section 225) and is the principal adviser to the minister on military, operational and administrative matters within the competence of the Chief of the National Defence Force (Defence Act 2002, section 14(a)).

In the words of the late Minister of Defence, the Honourable Joe Modise, this administrative arrangement allows for greater efficiency, by allowing the Secretary for Defence to concentrate on policy matters. It frees the Chief of the SANDF to concentrate on effective command, control and conduct of military operations.

Although South Africa is able to point to some tangible results relating to the role played by Parliament in the transformation of defence structures, the truth is that the process presented an opportunity to learn the shortcomings and challenges that accompany oversight work on defence.

Another notable Act which was passed as a result of Parliament's oversight responsibility on defence is the National Conventional Arms Control Act 2002 (Act 41 of 2002). This piece of legislation commits South Africa to

the encouragement of democracy and good governance by ensuring that when applications for trade in arms with other countries are considered, the following requirements must be taken into account:

The committee should assess each application on a case-by-case basis; safeguard the national security interests of the Republic and those of its allies; avoid transfers of conventional arms to governments that systematically violate or suppress human rights and fundamental freedoms; avoid transfers of conventional arms that are likely to contribute to the escalation of regional military conflicts, endanger peace by introducing destabilising military capabilities into a region or otherwise contribute to regional instability; adhere to international law, norms and practices and the international obligations and commitments of the Republic, including United Nations Security Council embargoes; take account of calls for reduced military expenditure in the interests of development and human security, and avoid actions that contribute towards crime and terrorism (National Conventional Arms Control Act 2002, section 15).

The requirements for effective parliamentary oversight

Capacity-building is essential if parliaments are to exercise effective oversight over the military. There is a great need to understand and reconfigure the relationship between the executive and Parliament to ensure a healthy and expert relationship is built between the military and Parliament. There must be no confusion between the roles played by the Ministry of Defence and parliamentary committees on defence.

Parliament must not be biased; it must treat everyone in the same manner and make the same information available to everyone. When there is public engagement, Parliament is not absolved from its responsibility to represent the will of the electorate and the majority. It is therefore crucial for parliamentarians to develop and maintain the expertise required not only to understand defence policy and general military matters, but also for planning, programming and budgeting procedures for defence. Parliamentarians must develop the knowledge and skills needed to analyse, interrogate and promote defence and security. During the defence transformation process in South Africa and to date, the motto of the defence committees has been that 'defence is not a party-political matter'. All members must receive the same speaking time and be allowed to present options and all are consulted and lobbied in the same manner.

To further encourage debates detached of any fear of appraisal in Parliament, the South African Parliament enacted the Powers, Privileges and Immunities Act in 2004. This legislation prohibits any person from interfering in the parliamentary work of public representatives. In terms of this Act any person who threatens, obstructs or enters in the precincts of Parliament with a firearm is guilty of an offence. In section 8(2) the Act further provides that a member of parliament may not ask for, receive or accept any fee, compensation, gifts, rewards, favour or benefit in respect of the following:

- Voting in a particular manner, or not voting, on any matter before a house or committee
- Promoting or opposing anything pending before or proposed or expected to be submitted to a house or committee
- Making a representation to a house or committee

The Act also recognises the importance of the media, hence all media professionals in South Africa are at liberty to broadcast and publish parliamentary proceedings and business of committees, scrutinise annual reports as presented by the executive arm of government and act as a watchdog to monitor whether government, including Parliament, is fulfilling its constitutional mandate.

Conclusion

Many parts of the African continent, including the Horn of Africa, face many challenges as the region moves from an era of conflict into a new era of democratisation and peace-building. Amongst these challenges is the challenge of transforming the defence establishments of the region to ensure appropriate, adequate, accountable and affordable defence for the people and nations of the region (Le Roux 2006).

Defence transformation is, however, not just about budget cuts and control. It starts with the recognition of the vital role the defence sector plays in support of government's protection functions. Once this role is recognised, defence transformation should ensure that the sector is aligned with the principles of democratic control. This makes the military subservient to the *civis*, the state, as the elected representative of the people and ensures that the national interests and objectives are served and supported. Defence transformation must furthermore ensure that a balance is reached between

the ends, and ways and means, otherwise the defence force will continually be in conflict with government about its budget. In the final instance defence transformation must investigate all possibilities to enhance the efficiency of the military. Where the demand for resources exceeds their availability, all efforts must be made to ensure maximal service delivery for the lowest input.

The challenges of defence transformation will obviously differ from country to country, based on the particular circumstances of each. The reason for transformation and the specific goals will depend on local political, economic, social, security and institutional circumstances. Every country's experience and every country's starting point will be different. Nevertheless, there are common factors in all transformation processes, with the change imperatives generally including changed strategic situations, the requirement for improved democratic control measures, and the need to economise and ensure optimum efficiency.

Note

- 1 In terms of section 24(1) of schedule 6 of the constitution of 1996 with the heading 'Transitional arrangements', sections 224 to 228 of the previous constitution (1993) continue in force as if the previous constitution had not been repealed.

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CHAPTER 2

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN SIERRA LEONE

Osman Gbla

Introduction

Sierra Leone is an appropriate African country for a critical study of security sector reform (SSR) in post-war reconstruction under international tutelage. In the first place, three decades of single party and military rule in the country had undermined professionalism of the security forces, as well as their capacity to ensure state security. This was in part the result of their politicisation and the lack of effective civilian oversight. Secondly, as a country emerging from a horrendous 11-year war, it was not only confronted with serious security challenges, but also had to contend with citizens who mostly lacked confidence in the security forces.

There is also a very serious debate on the nature and type of SSR processes in Sierra Leone. There are those who hold the view that the ongoing SSR process in the country is externally driven with very little local input. If this view is correct, then the viability and sustainability of the process is in great doubt. Finally, the gradual draw-down plan of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in the country requires critical reflections on the ability of the national security forces to assume responsibility for the security of the state and its people.

In this paper Sierra Leone's SSR process is critically examined. The background, initiatives, policies and activities are discussed. The successes and failures of the reform initiatives, especially those programmes under strong international influence and support, are also evaluated.

Background

Sierra Leone is a small West African country with a total landmass of 72 000 square kilometres. It has a population of about 4,5 million people and 18 ethnic groups (Mkannah 1995:4). The country has rich mineral resources including diamonds, gold, iron ore and bauxite. It also boasts the oldest university in West Africa – Fourah Bay College, which opened in 1827.

Sierra Leone is a former British colony and its capital city, Freetown, was at one time the headquarters of British West Africa, then made up of Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

The country gained its independence from Great Britain on 27 April 1961. Sir Milton Margai of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) was its first post-independence prime minister (1961–1964). He was succeeded by his younger brother, Sir Albert Margai, of the same party (1964–1967). The All People's Congress (APC) reigned from 1968 to 1992, first under Siaka Stevens and then under Joseph Saidu Momoh. It was, among other things, APC misrule that precipitated the 1991 rebel war spearheaded by Foday Sankoh of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF/SL). Long years of APC misrule was terminated by the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) military coup of 1992. The multiparty elections of March 1996 ushered in the SLPP-led government of Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. The war in the country came to an end in January 2002.

At independence in 1961 Sierra Leone inherited security forces that were incapable of meeting post-independence security challenges of a democratic, pluralistic and multi-ethnic country (Gbla 2002:4). The security forces, including the armed forces and the police that were established by the colonial authorities, were essentially tasked to protect British interests. They were required to maintain law and order with a view to preventing rebellion against the colonial administration. Unsurprisingly, the colonial authorities used the security forces as instruments to suppress the colonised people. This was manifested in the use of the forces to violently put down the 1890 Protectorate Uprising and the Hut Tax War of 1898 (Draft National Security Policy Paper for Sierra Leone 2000:7). The immediate post-independence regime of Sir Milton Margai of the SLPP did not do much to make a radical break with the colonial past or the colonial security forces. For example, until 1963 the heads of both the armed forces and the police were British. The regime did not, however, politicise the security forces.

The ascendancy to power of the SLPP regime of Sir Albert and the APC witnessed calculated attempts on the part of political leaders to politicise the security forces in Sierra Leone. Recruitment, appointment and promotions in the military and police were based on political and ethnic connections rather than qualification and merit. The Albert regime even attempted to involve members of the police and the military in the contest for political power as well as to fill their rank and file with their own relatives, friends and cohorts (Gbla 2002:6). Sir Albert elevated David Lansana, a fellow Mende tribesman and his brother-in-law, to the rank of brigadier and force commander.

Under the APC regime of Siaka Stevens (1968–1985) the politicisation and ethnic character of Sierra Leone's security forces intensified. In an attempt to bring the forces firmly under his control and to weaken their strength, Stevens introduced a lax recruitment policy that gave tremendous powers to enlist loyal and faithful people into the police and the military through the card system. This recruitment system attracted a goodly number of semi-literate people from obscure backgrounds into the security forces, which undermined the professionalism of the forces. In 1974 Stevens made the heads of the police and the military members of parliament. The security forces became important players in the country's politics, thus introducing a new era in civil–military relations. As a result of the emphasis on regime rather than state protection, the country's security forces, especially the military, were showered with benefits that included a monthly rice quota. Furthermore, neither the financial transactions nor the budget of the military were subject to the public accounting system. This led to massive corruption, which in turn had a serious impact on professionalism. Lack of discipline in the forces was further diminished by the lack of civilian oversight institutions, and corruption became rife. In sum, the period under review was marked by poorly paid, poorly trained, demoralised and highly politicised security forces.

This situation of authoritarian and predatory politics impacted negatively on the country's security forces in several ways. In the first place, it precipitated the de-institutionalisation of the security forces and the formalisation of violence. During the reign of Siaka Stevens, for example, paramilitary forces such as the Internal Security Unit and the State Security Department were used to suppress political opponents. A classical case was the violence unleashed by these forces on students at Fourah Bay College during a peaceful protest against the government in 1977. The undue political interference into the affairs of the security forces through ethnic and loyalty criteria for appointment and promotion not only undermined efficiency, but also precipitated the breakdown of command and control in the forces. It also contributed to a declining economic environment that had a further negative impact on the security forces. In spite of abundant national resources, post-independent Sierra Leone was characterised mainly by gross economic mismanagement and its consequent economic decline. The impressive economic performance experienced during the first decade after independence in 1961, with a growth rate of nearly 4 per cent per year, gave way to a slower growth rate of 1,5 per cent in the 1970s. By the 1980s, the gross domestic product growth rate was virtually nil and by the end of that decade had turned negative. This situation worsened in 1989 with government's adoption and implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), supported

by the international financial institutions. Although the SAP was designed to achieve substantial private sector-led growth and poverty alleviation, it involved measures – especially with regard to requirements for retrenchment, devaluation and subsidies – which had adverse effects on the country's economy. Unsurprisingly, by 1990, 82 per cent of the country's population were living below the poverty line. In addition, it has consistently been ranked at the bottom of the UN Human Development Index (National Human Development Report 1996:8, 9). This deplorable economic situation, among other things, affected government's capacity to provide comfortable salaries and attractive conditions of service for members of the security forces.

The outbreak of a rebel war in the country in March 1991, spearheaded by Corporal Foday Sankoh of the RUF, also impacted negatively on the security forces. The war brought to the fore the inability of the forces to effectively defend the state and its citizens. In addition, the hasty move on the part of the government to raise a force to confront the rebels saw the infiltration of undisciplined individuals from obscure backgrounds into the armed forces in particular. And finally, the regionalisation of the conflict led to the active involvement of various armed groups and forces from countries like Liberia (National Patriotic Front) and Burkina Faso and from the Nigeria-dominated Ecomog (Economic Community of West African States Ceasefire Monitoring Group) in the conflict. These diverse forces were undisciplined and looting was common. Because of regionalisation of the conflict, regional powers exercised complete control over military and political decisions in their areas of the country (Ero 2003:244).

As was to be expected of an ill-equipped, poorly trained and undisciplined security apparatus, the country was not up to the task of defending the state and its citizens from the rebel attack. As one army commander bluntly put it: 'The army was caught with its pants down' (Dixon-Fyle et al 1998:17).

Members of the security forces, especially the military, connived with the rebels to wreak havoc. This situation led to the coining of derogatory terms such as *sobers* to describe the country's military, meaning soldiers by day and rebels by night. This phenomenon was clearly manifested by the alliance between the RUF and the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) that took power in 1997. These and many other excesses of the military bred mistrust between the citizens and the military which had serious implications for civil–military relations in the country.

The loss of confidence and trust in the military led to the formation of civil defence forces including the Tamaboros, Donsos, Gbethis and Kamajohs,¹

which further damaged civil–military relations. The major objective of these groups was to protect their local communities. However, some of these groups, like the Kamajohs, had strong political connections, which exacerbated the problem, as is illustrated by the fact that the head of the Kamajoh militia group, Sam Hinga Norman, was made deputy minister of defence. The soldiers who seized power in May 1997 even cited the privileged position accorded to the Kamajohs as one of their main reasons for the coup.

The involvement of international actors in Sierra Leone’s post-war reconstruction in general – and SSR in particular – was unprecedented. In 1997, soldiers from the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) entered the country in an attempt to enforce peace. Two years later the United Nations took over, and deployed 17 500 peacekeepers drawn from various countries. The British were also very visible, especially in attempts to restructure the security forces, including the police and the military.

The involvement of these external actors in the country’s post-war reconstruction, and especially in SSR, was informed by a number of internal and external developments.

SSR initiatives, policies and activities in Sierra Leone

SSR in Sierra Leone is part of a national reform programme that can be traced to as far back as March 1996, when the democratically elected government of Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP came to power.

Kabbah closely collaborated with the international community to set up a national good governance and public service reform programme. This was launched with strong support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the African Development Bank. It was designed to address the following issues:

- Reactivating local government institutions through decentralisation of authority and responsibility and devolution of power from the centre to local and chiefdom levels
- Increasing the level of awareness of the people about their rights, privileges and obligations as citizens and enhancing their capacity to participate fully in the social, political and economic life of the country

- Strengthening the capacity and efficiency of the public sector to deliver essential services in a manner that discourages corruption and fosters transparency and accountability
- Reinforcing judicial institutions for safeguarding the rule of law and individual human rights (Good Governance and Public Service Reform Programme for Sierra Leone 1997)

In order to realise these objectives, the government, with support from the international community, established the Governance Reform Secretariat as part of the Ministry of Presidential Affairs to coordinate all governance reform activities.

SSR also features prominently in Sierra Leone's peace support reconstruction programme. The building of a strong national security apparatus is believed to be a deterrent against the relapse into conflict as well as a strategy to realise the vision of a peaceful, prosperous and progressive society (*Sierra Leone Vision 2025* 2003:58). In fact, the inability of the government to halt the advance of the rebels during the war was largely attributed to the weaknesses inherent in the country's security sector (Draft National Security Policy Paper for Sierra Leone 2000). A cross-section of Sierra Leoneans therefore believed that any post-war recovery programme must emphasise the need for a strong and effective security system that would be capable of protecting the state and its people and preventing the recurrence of conflict. These SSR concerns of the country square up neatly with the DFID's security sector interventions that put a premium on efforts to support civilian control, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and military training initiatives.²

Various peace agreements, government policies, development plans and international initiatives in Sierra Leone have over the years articulated the need for prioritising SSR. Articles 4 and 6 of the Abidjan Peace Accord of 1996 clearly spells out that there should be disarmament and return to barracks of all those units of the army not required for formal security duties. The implementation of this agreement was largely stymied by the intransigence of the RUF. Its leader, Foday Sankoh, for example refused to allow the deployment of a 720-member UN peacekeeping force as provided for by the agreement. The RUF members also objected to the SSR programme directed at the army.

In his state opening address of Parliament on 22 May 1998, President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah reiterated his commitment to improving the

security of the state: 'I take the security of the country as my number one priority and intend to pursue this objective with all necessary vigour.' This pronouncement coming from the president, who also serves as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and minister of defence, is supposed to be indicative of commitment to SSR at the highest political level. The extent to which this presidential pronouncement has been translated to reality will be assessed in subsequent sections of this paper.

Article XVII of the Lomé Peace Accord, signed between the government of Sierra Leone and RUF/SL on 7 July 1999 in Lomé, Togo, also prioritises SSR:

The restructuring, composition and training of the new Sierra Leone armed forces will be carried out by the Government with a view to creating truly national armed forces, bearing loyalty solely to the State of Sierra Leone, and able and willing to perform their constitutional role (Lomé Peace Accord 1999, article XVII).

The country's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of 2000 (IPRSP) also emphasised the crucial role of a vibrant security sector in efforts to reduce poverty. It clearly states that a secure, peaceful and stable environment can lead to several positive outcomes that could facilitate the implementation of anti-poverty programmes with maximum benefits to the poor. Unsurprisingly, the security sector review for the country's poverty reduction programme has as its major objective the development of a national security environment for Sierra Leone that will ensure national recovery and the reduction of poverty in a safe, secure environment. It envisions a national security environment with well-trained, well-equipped and highly motivated security forces.

Priority setting within SSR in Sierra Leone

The restoration of the democratically elected government in 1998 witnessed strong national and international resolve to promote SSR in Sierra Leone. Internationally, the process is being supported mainly by the UK through the DFID, the UK Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the British-led International Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT). The experiences of other African countries such as South Africa have also been very helpful. Ecomog and the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (Unamsil) are also visible in the SSR process in the country. The main security sectors targeted for the reform process are the armed forces, police, justice, parliament and intelligence. The British were particularly interested in maintaining a stable

democratic government by restoring all its functional machinery and social institutions. The thrust in the various sectors was as follows:

- The Ministry of Defence – to help ensure that the army remains accountable to the democratically elected government
- The police – to help create and sustain a civilian controlled peace countrywide
- The intelligence service – to ensure that it is accountable to the government and that its work is coordinated through the Office of National Security (ONS)
- The judiciary – to underpin increased police effectiveness, provide access to justice for all and to give teeth to the anti-corruption measures³

Reform of the armed forces

By 1998 it was clear that the Armed Forces of the Republic of Sierra Leone (AFRSL) was in need of serious reform and restructuring. There was a lack of discipline and professionalism, low morale, and deplorable living conditions. Added to this there was rampant corruption, a lack of transparency and poor civil-military relations, as well as poorly trained and equipped soldiers (*Engaging Sierra Leone (Report)* 2000). Not surprisingly, the restructuring and reform programme aims at creating truly national armed forces, bearing loyalty solely to the state of Sierra Leone, and able and willing to perform their constitutional role (Lomé Peace Accord 1999:19).

President Kabbah articulated his vision for the country's army against the background of a post-war society, pointing out that 'the Army now needs to be better organised equipped and tuned to discharge its constitutional role effectively' (*The Vision* 1997:5). He went on to say that a responsible government had to assign the highest priority to policies that seek to ensure that its defence forces are adequately trained and equipped to protect its territorial integrity, to repel intruders and – when necessary – to put down civil disturbances. The thrust of the reorganisation programme is the restoration of professionalism with the objective of re-establishing public and institutional confidence in the armed forces. The Draft National Security Policy Paper for Sierra Leone (2000) also envisaged armed forces that were accountable to the people, with transparent and proper financial management procedures and awareness of human rights and democratic

principles. The programmes identified for the realisation of these objectives are: a vigorous, transparent recruitment process; provision of adequate and decent barracks accommodation; increased regimentation; and a realistic salary and attractive retirement and resettlement package.

The Sierra Leone government explored many options in its drive to restructure and reform the country's armed forces. The Costa Rica model was one of the first possibilities it considered, which would have entailed not having an army but rather a well-trained and equipped police force only. This option was not popular in view of the security threat posed by the Liberian conflict and then volatile Guinean security situation in the Mano River region (Ero 2000). So, instead, the government requested the secondment of Nigerian Brigadier-General Maxwell Khobe as the country's new chief of defence staff. Brigadier-General Khobe had led a successful Ecomog operation that brought to an end the AFRC regime in 1998. He was in theory answerable simultaneously to the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean governments (*Africa Report* 2001:7).

The Sierra Leone government also approached Ecomog in Freetown to assist in preparing a position paper on armed forces reform and restructuring. Ecomog recommended the establishment of a 5 000-strong force consisting of a brigade headquarters that included a presidential guard, three infantry battalions, one light tank/reconnaissance battalion, one artillery regiment, and one rapid deployment force that would consist of a paratrooper battalion, a coast guard, and an air wing (Gbla 2002:18). Ecomog also recommended that the navy and air force be upgraded to fully-fledged services. Another laudable recommendation was that a new recruitment code be introduced and implemented that would place a premium on merit, fair and equitable representation of all ethnic groups, and qualifications. The latter aspect is very important as it would provide insurance against the recruitment of unfit individuals into the armed forces and would also be a deterrent against politicians who aspired to political power rather than state security. These recommendations would also have the advantage of ensuring the recruitment of fresh soldiers and the vigorous screening of service members in the armed forces.

The direct involvement of the UK in Sierra Leone's armed forces restructuring programme witnessed remarkable changes in the process, especially after 1998. The British government, through the DFID, developed a security sector programme for countries that are prone to instability, with the Sierra Leone programme serving as a pilot project. The DFID, in close collaboration with the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD-UK), has spent an estimated £21 million

on this project, known as the Sierra Leone Security Sector Project (Silsep). Silsep is a medium-term programme aimed at the restructuring and equipping of the security institutions to constitutionally and adequately perform their role in modern state building. Its major goal is the creation of sustainable peace in Sierra Leone to allow its government and people to make progress towards development in a stable environment in the new millennium. Its specific objectives are: the establishment of effective and appropriate civil control structures and efficient army command and management arrangements; an acceptable defence policy and acceptable budgets; and the creation of an office of national security capable of effective support to national security. Silsep established a security sector review committee with the mandate to undertake a comprehensive security review of Sierra Leone. The review appraised the country's security situation and exposed threats to its sustainability.

Through the MOD-UK, the MOD Advisory Team (MODAT) and IMATT, the British introduced a restructuring programme aimed at training, equipping and advising government forces, which is still continuing today (Malan et al 2003:96). A crucial aspect of this programme is the integration of UK military advisers into Sierra Leone forces; close coordination with Unamsil and the SLPP; and the enhancement of the combat effectiveness of the forces through ongoing advice and training.

Since the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord in 1999, these three organisations have been engaged in the training of future trainers of the AFRSL – platoon commanders and sergeants – by means of short-term training teams. The training focuses on key areas such as international humanitarian law, civil-military relations, the rights of children, budget management, and regional and sub-regional security issues. The retraining of non-commissioned officers under the oversight of IMATT also features prominently in the UK-led restructuring programme, which includes a series of training activities aimed at verifying and ascertaining the numerical strength of the force. The training takes place mainly in the areas of personal weapons training and physical fitness, battlefield first aid, laws of armed conflict, health and hygiene. To facilitate the eventual transfer of leadership to Sierra Leoneans, an infantry training advance team from IMATT has been stationed at the armed forces training centre at Benguema. Training of officer cadets takes place at the Horton Academy, located at the IMATT headquarters at Leicester Square in the outskirts of Freetown. The academy was officially opened by the president in 2003. Junior staff courses for lieutenants and second lieutenants of the armed forces will be held here shortly. Its establishment was timely and appropriate, because when IMATT is finally phased out, the

Sierra Leonean officer corps will be responsible for maintaining professional standards of the army.

The training programme is a true reflection of the aims of the Directorate of Defence Manning, Recruiting and Training in Sierra Leone and encompasses the following:

- Recruitment, training and commissioning courses
- Individual training
- Collective training
- External training
- Low-level trade training
- Officer training (at the armed forces training and education centres)

The plan also identified the following training objectives: to draft a policy document for recruiting and commissioning new entrants into the armed forces; to recruit 300 soldier entrants and 100 potential officers into the AFRSL every six months; to integrate training on human and children's rights and child protection issues into general training of the AFRSL; and to convert all 2 500 illiterate soldiers and officers in the AFRSL into military personnel with a basic education (Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence 2002:12).

Advising the government of Sierra Leone on the reorganisation of MOD Sierra Leone forms another important component of the UK's contribution to the restructuring programme. The British government appointed military and civilian advisers tasked with providing military advice to the government whilst the latter was required to help develop a defence policy and a strategy for making the MOD a more efficient department and also to help with a cash budgeting system. The Sierra Leone MOD had been a centrist and bureaucratic organisation controlled by the military, a state of affairs that led to corruption, lack of professionalism and the absence of inventiveness among the military members. The need for reform and restructuring of the country's MOD to enable it operate within the framework of a democratic Sierra Leone was a priority. In 2000 the British advisers, working closely with the government of Sierra Leone, established a new MOD, with a mission to 'formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate a strategic defence policy for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces that is effective and fostered within a framework of democratic governance'.

In the new MOD there is a closer working partnership between civilians and military, with the two sections being regarded as a fully integrated team. In this new partnership arrangement, clear roles are identified for

both the military and civilians. In contrast to the past, civilians now occupy senior positions in the military administration. The director-general, the equivalent of a UK permanent secretary, is for example a civilian. He is the principal adviser on defence matters with primary responsibility for policy, finance, procurement and administration. He is also the principal accounting officer responsible to the minister of defence for the overall organisation, management and staffing of the department. He is personally responsible to Parliament for the expenditure of all public monies voted for defence. The deputy minister of defence is a civilian, too. It is not surprising, therefore, that the new MOD plays a vital role in handling and consolidating democratic civil–military relations (Defence White Paper for Sierra Leone, p 9).

The restructuring of the MOD also led to the introduction of a new budget structure, called the medium-term expenditure framework. The MOD's current budget consists of nine programme managers accountable to the director-general, who has the controlling vote. These programme managers are responsible for the management of their respective resources, with guidance and oversight provided by the finance and budget directorate.

Following the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, there was a need to reabsorb elements of the AFRC, RUF and CDF into the military, provided they could meet the new recruitment criteria. One of the main objectives of this programme, popularly known as the military reintegration programme, was to integrate the various ex-fighters so as to enhance post-war reconciliation. By the end of the DDR 3 500 ex-fighters had been reoriented and formed part of the new army.

In an effort to meet the logistical needs of the AFRSL, IMATT, in close collaboration with the DFID, provided the army with 75 military Land Rovers, 25 military trucks, seven ambulances, two helicopter support units and eight armoured vehicles. Communication equipment was also provided to facilitate intelligence network supervision (IRIN 1999:1).

Recognising the crucial role of mutual accommodation towards enhancing the efficiency of members of the AFRSL, the restructuring programme launched operation PEBU, funded jointly by the government of Sierra Leone and the DFID. The government, on behalf of the British government, provided £1,9 million for this project. Some of the objectives of the project are improving the living and working conditions of members of the AFRSL and enhancing the redeployment units. The project entails refurbishment of existing barracks and building new ones.

Reform of the Sierra Leone police

Like the RSLA, the Sierra Leone police force was long overdue for reform and restructuring. The institution had for a very long time been characterised by politicisation, inefficiency, rampant corruption, poor service conditions, and a lack of basic facilities and equipment. The force was also still operating under its antiquated traditional role of protecting the state, its people and property as narrowly defined in the Police Act of 1964. The Act defines the principal role of the police force as 'the detection of crime and apprehension of offenders; preservation of law and order; protection of property and the enforcement of laws and regulations with which they are charged' (Police Act 1964). The force found it extremely difficult to respond adequately to post-war security challenges and needed some major reforms.

The police force, together with its international partners (the DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office), realised the need to introduce and implement a far-reaching reform and restructuring programme. Key areas were to define the role of the police service, its composition and training, mechanisms for oversight, budget allocation and conditions of service (Ero 2000:49). The government was so determined to realise the restructuring programme that it invited a seven-member Commonwealth police development task force to coordinate the programme in 1998. The task force, was amongst others, required to devise a plan for rebuilding the police force and to advise it on police practice, training and recruitment and human rights (Ero 2000:49). The recommendations and suggestions of this task force culminated in the Sierra Leone police restructuring programme.

In order to promote the restructuring programme, President Kabbah appointed Keith Biddle, an expatriate from Britain, as the inspector-general of the Sierra Leone Police Force. Biddle had a wealth of experience, as he served in the British police for more than 38 years. He made an invaluable contribution to the police restructuring programme.

In 1998 the government also released its Police Charter, which amongst others outlines the role of the police force in relation to the government and people, with emphasis on equal opportunity, professionalism and local needs policing. The charter states that the Sierra Leone police will assist in returning its communities to peace and prosperity by acting in a manner, which will:

- Eventually remove the need for the deployment of military and para-military forces in villages, communities and city streets

- Ensure the safety and security of all people and their property
- Respect the human rights of all individuals
- Prevent and detect crime by using the most effective methods, which can be made available to them
- Take account of local concerns through community consultation
- At all levels be free from corruption (Sierra Leone Policing Charter 1998)

In its quest to actualise the standards set in the charter, the police force released its mission statement that encompasses the following components that make the Sierra Leone police a force for good:

- **Duty** Providing a professional and effective service, which will protect life and property, achieve a peaceful society and take primacy in the maintenance of law and order
- **Values** Respecting human rights and freedom of the individual, honesty, impartiality and care that is free from corruption
- **Priorities** Responding to local needs, valuing the people, involving all in developing policing priorities
- **Aim** To win public confidence by offering reliable, caring and accountable police services

Various activities have been undertaken by the police restructuring programme to realise the aforementioned principles and values, such as the operationalisation of the local needs policing concept. The concept stresses the need for involving the people in a partnership with the police to maintain law and order. A community relations department at police headquarters is tasked to work in concert with all divisional commanders to promote local needs policing, develop and implement various crime prevention strategies with local unit commanders, and provide an efficient link between the police and the community (*Sierra Leone Police News* 2004:4).

There is also a complaint, discipline and investigations department that deals with complaints from the public about issues of police discipline and corruption and takes appropriate corrective action (*Sierra Leone Police News* 2004:5). The establishment of this department has done a great deal to curb police extortion and harassment of civilians.

A change management department was also established, which amongst others aims at improving the efficiency and productivity of police force members, especially with regard to management of its affairs. It also seeks to groom Sierra Leonean police officers for leadership positions that they will occupy after the British handover. The former special security department has been transformed into an operational support group whose functions include quelling internal upheavals and performing all operational duties related to security.

Finally, the restructuring programme has put in place oversight mechanisms to watch over the police force. One such mechanism is the police council, the highest police body, with power to provide civilian oversight of policing in Sierra Leone (Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, section 55(I)). Its members include the vice-president (who serves as chairman), the minister of internal affairs, the inspector-general of police, the deputy inspector-general of police, the chairman of the Public Service Commission, a member of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, and two other members appointed by the president, subject to the approval of Parliament.

The restructuring programme also makes provision for the appointment of women in senior positions in the force.

Parliament

The Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 (Act 6 of 1991) gives considerable powers to Parliament and its select committees with regard to oversight functions over the country's security forces. Some of the parliamentary committees entrusted with this responsibility are the Committee on Presidential Affairs and Defence, which is essentially responsible for oversight over defence and national security; the Committee on Internal Affairs and Local Government, with oversight over the police and prisons; and the Transparency Committee, which deals with issues of impropriety and abuse of public office. In its attempt to enhance Parliament's oversight capacity over the security forces, the DFID is supporting a parliamentary capacity-building project.

The judiciary

Because it recognises the crucial role of an effective justice system in promoting good governance, the country's SSR programme places a premium on building a strong and effective legal system. One example is

the collaboration between the government of Sierra Leone and the DFID to refurbish the physical infrastructure of the courts throughout the country, so as to enhance and improve the delivery of justice. The law development project of the DFID, also with the assistance of the government, trained and deployed 87 justices of the peace, clerks and bailiffs to 18 locations in the country in 2003. The UNDP also agreed to provide a top-up of Le10 000 to the daily sitting allowances for justices of the peace in the provinces, to improve the conditions of service for members of the judiciary.

Intelligence and national security

In close cooperation with international partners, the government is putting in place mechanisms for the effective coordination of national security and effective intelligence gathering. To this end the National Security and Central Intelligence Act was passed in 2002. The Act established the National Security Council as the highest body for the consideration of security issues in the country. Its members include the president as chairman, the vice-president as deputy chairman, the ministers of finance, internal affairs, information and broadcasting, the deputy minister of defence, the minister of state presidential affairs, the inspector-general of police, the chief of defence staff and the national security coordinator, who serves as secretary of the council.

Its functions include appropriate measures to safeguard the internal and external security of the country, gathering of information relating to security, and integrating domestic and foreign security policies (National Security and Central Intelligence Act 2002). The secretariat of the council is the ONS, which is headed by a national security coordinator who is appointed by the President in terms of sections 154(1) and (2) of the 1991 constitution. The ONS has five different divisions, namely the secretariat to the council; a joint intelligence committee; a joint assessment staff; a monitoring and oversight division; and a security coordination division. To ensure decentralisation of the intelligence work in the country, the National Security and Central Intelligence Act makes provision for the establishment of provincial and district security committees in addition to the joint intelligence committee.

Evaluation of security sector reform in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's SSR programme, which was undertaken in tandem with efforts to resolve the conflict, received tremendous international support, especially

from the UK, Unamsil and Ecowas. Its focus on restructuring and equipping the country's various security institutions to enable them to adequately perform their constitutional role in modern state-building is a laudable initiative. Its specific objectives of reducing the threats of coups, enhancing democratic principles and human rights, containing external threats, and ensuring civilian oversight are also very fine on paper. The security sector policies, strategies and programmes in the country have attracted commendations as well as criticisms from various national and international quarters, focusing essentially on the realisation of set goals and objectives.

As is the case with most programmes of this nature, Sierra Leone's SSR programme has its spoilers and losers, as well as winners or supporters. Foremost among its spoilers are those within the security sector that are convinced that the reform programme will interfere with their soft zones. These include senior as well as junior members of the security forces who benefited tremendously from the old order, which was characterised by a lack of transparency and accountability, and archaic and ineffective rules and procedures. Other spoilers include top members of the executive, legislature and judiciary who lack the political will to put the reform programmes into practice. The most active supporters of the SSR programme are those Sierra Leoneans (including most ordinary, poor citizens) who stand to benefit greatly from professional and accountable security forces. Members of the international community that are providing the financial and human resources are indeed staunch supporters, but sometimes their unwillingness to commit funds speedily and to take into consideration the socio-economic, cultural and political realities of Sierra Leone do hamper the process.

Obviously, too, any analysis has to consider the sustainability of the programme, which is affected by a number of crucial areas, such as its acceptability to Sierra Leoneans in general, the state's capacity to generate funds nationally, and the continued support of international donors. On the issue of acceptability, most ordinary Sierra Leoneans accept the government as democratically elected – and therefore legitimate – and are accordingly willing to embrace SSR on the grounds that it will make the country's security forces more accountable and transparent. Furthermore, there is a willingness amongst most Sierra Leoneans to push the peace process forward by forgiving past transgressions. On the issue of economic sustainability, there is no denying the fact that as a post-war society, government finds it difficult to generate funds internally, but as there is also a determination to use the resources of the state judiciously and to curb corruption, the state should be able to sustain the programme. As for ownership, the strong international influence is not surprising, in view of the background of the forces before

the commencement of the reform programme. While the initial insensitivity of the external actors to the socio-economic, cultural and political realities of the country in programme design was problematic, the increasing realisation of the need for greater Sierra Leonean involvement is welcomed and should help to resolve the problems.

Our aim is to assess and evaluate the successes and failures of the SSR programme in Sierra Leone using the yardsticks of resurgence of violence, politicisation of the forces, economic sustainability, the rule of law, corruption, professionalisation, and social integration where applicable.

Resurgence of violence

With regard to the resurgence of violence, the country's SSR programme could be credited with the modest achievement of a completed disarmament and demobilisation, though with limited success in the area of reintegration of ex-combatants. The disarmament and demobilisation of ex-fighters (including the RUF, SLA, AFRC and CDF) were key provisions in both the 1996 Abidjan and 1999 Lomé peace accords. This led to the creation of a favourable environment not only for the official end of the war in January 2002, but also for the May 2002 elections in the country. With regard to the reintegration of ex-combatants, the situation is more worrisome. Former RUF, SLA and AFRC members were incorporated into the country's new armed forces by means of the military reintegration programme. But this facilitated reconciliation also has the potential for destabilisation, especially in the absence of an effective mechanism to reinforce the spirit of peaceful coexistence among former adversaries. This is exacerbated by a failure to absorb ex-fighters into integrated civilian units. If such groupings continue to exist, but do not have gainful employment, they could threaten post-war peace by becoming involved in crime. It is also worrisome that a fair number of ex-fighters who were not disarmed resurfaced as mercenary soldiers in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. The recently announced disarmament of over 200 former Sierra Leonean ex-fighters in Liberia is a case in point. The question is how these returnee ex-ex-combatants are going to be reabsorbed amicably into Sierra Leonean society.

Nepotism and ethnicity

Turning to the issue of addressing the problems of nepotism and ethnic tendencies in the security forces, Sierra Leone could be assessed positively

regarding implementation of a new recruitment code, especially for the armed forces, with the emphasis on education, qualification, professionalism and high sense of discipline. By emphasising the need for local identification and recommendation of potential recruits, the likelihood increases of a more refined and nationally oriented force, which contrasts strongly with the ethnic, regionally based armed forces of the past. In the new arrangement, there is an attempt to ensure an acceptable ethnic balance in the armed forces.

Rule of law

In its quest to ensure respect for the rule of law, the Sierra Leone 1991 constitution, as well as a number of other Acts of Parliament, has over the years provided for control of the security forces of the country. For example, the 1991 constitution and the National Security and Intelligence Act of 2002 afford many powers to the President, including the power as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces (Constitution 1991, section 40(1)), chairman of the National Security Council, and chairman of the Defence Council (National Security and Central Intelligence Act 2002, section 2(2)(a)). The 1991 constitution also empowers Parliament as the prime agent for the general enforcement of democratic accountability, as all government actions must be justified by Parliament, while parliamentary support is required for all proposed legislation to be enacted. Oversight over the security forces is ensured by various parliamentary committees, namely the Committee on Presidential Affairs and Defence for defence and national security; the Committee on Internal Affairs and Local Government for the police and prisons; the Legislative Committee; and the Justice and Transparency Committee to look at conflict of interests. Provision is also made for the establishment of a security sector committee in the Defence White Paper to be made up of independent representatives drawn from national stakeholders, who will be responsible for monitoring decisions taken by officials on behalf of government.

It is of concern, however, that in spite of this constitutional and legislative framework, there is a lack of strong civil mechanisms to provide oversight functions over the security forces. This absence could hamper success.

One of the major achievements of the SSR programme in Sierra Leone is the enhancement of the effectiveness of the security forces, especially the AFRSL and Sierra Leone police. Before the restructuring the country's security forces were not only ill-trained but also ill-equipped and poorly paid, and morale and esteem were consequently very low. The programme has over the years gradually changed this unfortunate situation by not only stepping up training

and professional development in the forces, but also by enhancing their capacity to respond to any national security threat. The command structure and bureaucracy of the current 14 500 armed forces has been restored and its combat readiness improved. The air wing of the force has one Mi-24 helicopter gunship while the maritime wing has one medium-sized Chinese-built vessel that is actively involved in maritime patrolling as a coast guard (Malan et al 2003:99). The forces have also received essential training in mortars and medium machine guns, as well as air defence and range management. The restructuring of the AFRSL led to the introduction and implementation of a fair, open and competitive recruitment procedure with opportunities for all sections of the population, without compromising merit. The new recruitment policy provides an insurance against the formation of regional and ethnic forces for regime rather than state protection. A full review of the pay, pensions, allowances, leave and resettlement packages has also helped to improve the living conditions of force members. Developments such as these have improved the confidence level within the AFRSL as members in the past suffered from a serious lack of confidence in their own professional military capability.

The SSR programme also improved the efficiency of members of the Sierra Leone police. In a bid to ensure a safe and secure environment, various strategic departments in the police were strengthened and provided with the necessary infrastructure to improve their efficiency in containing riots, civil unrest, domestic violence and economic crimes. One department that benefits extensively from this support is the Operation Support Department, which has been strengthened with regard to training of members and mobility. The police force also has a new structure and a new approach to policing, known as local needs policing, and coupled with the provision of new uniforms, vehicles and regular wages, this has given a tremendous boost to morale.

In spite of the success in enhancing the effectiveness of the security forces, the training programme is still inadequate, as it places more emphasis on combat readiness than on civil–security relations. Although combat readiness is a very important component, especially for the AFRSL, there is need for more concerted efforts to restore public confidence in the security forces as well as for strengthening the capacities of other sectors that play a role in security, such as the judiciary, Parliament, prisons and the media.

One aspect of the SSR programme in the country that has achieved outstanding success, relates to the promotion of transparency and accountability in the operations of the security sector. This is notable in the different proactive

sensitisation campaigns that have been run by the security institutions. The AFRSL promotes transparency via its newsletter called *Torch* and a live biweekly press briefing. The police have a media and public relations unit and also holds weekly press briefings to inform the public of police programmes and activities. The SSR programme in the country also resulted in the introduction and implementation of a transparent budgeting system for all ministries and agencies, including the security forces. Under the new budgeting system, known as the medium-term expenditure framework, which was introduced in 2001, the MOD-SL prepares detailed plans and estimates for a three-year period. Through a series of screenings, the assumptions, plans and costing are scrutinised to ensure that they are realistic and affordable. The approach provides programme managers with an opportunity to justify their resource requirements to senior managers.

The country's SSR programme has succeeded in not only ensuring physical security, but also in securing the individual from arbitrary actions by the security services. The Police Charter clearly spells out the need for recognising human rights and to this end the Sierra Leone police force is promoting a series of training activities on human rights and the law of armed conflicts. The AFRSL is also placing a premium on such training. In addition, the SSR programme has developed a service level agreement in the country worthy of mention as a success. This agreement amongst others calls for a partnership between the army and the police on the one hand and the navy in collaboration with the Marine Resources Ministry on the other. The programme promotes cooperation between the security forces to safeguard the country against external aggression.

Despite the achievements enumerated above, the ongoing SSR programme in the country has suffered many failures. Prominent among these is the hurried training given especially to members of the AFRSL through the military reintegration programme. As a large number of soldiers trained through this programme were drawn from formerly warring factions with limited training and orientation, it has the potential for friction and destabilisation.

The dominant role of external actors in the implementation of the programme could be problematic and has led to its viability and sustainability being questioned. In the first place, the initial focus did not take the country's socio-cultural values into consideration, resulting in too complex a security sector structure to be understood by the average Sierra Leonean citizen. Secondly, the predominance of foreigners in senior positions, in particular the appointment of a British inspector-general of police, had a negative impact on the credibility of the process.

Finally, unless drastic measures are taken to address the shortage of efficient civil institutions to oversee the security forces, there can be very little assurance of long-term success of the SSR measures.

Conclusion

In this paper Sierra Leone's SSR programme has been examined in the context of a post-war recovery programme with strong international support. The background and priorities as well as the successes and failures of the programme were discussed. Foremost among the conclusions of the paper is the view that the ongoing SSR programme in the country should be owned and driven by Sierra Leoneans if it is to be sustainable. It is also strongly argued that there is need for effective coordination of the activities of the various international actors involved in the programme. Another major argument is that that SSR programme in the country should go beyond the limited objective of retraining and restructuring formal security institutions and should focus on strengthening the oversight capacities of Parliament, the judiciary and civil societies. Some of the constraints of the country's SSR programme are lack of national capacity, especially with regard to finance and logistics; mistrust of the security forces by the ordinary citizens; and the sensitivity of the programme itself.

The following recommendations were made for promoting a sustainable SSR programme in the country:

- Serious efforts by the government and donors to actualise the four broad categories of the reform programme, namely strengthening democratic control of the security institutions, professionalisation of the security forces, strengthening the rule of law, and enhancing the capacity of civil institutions for effective oversight
- Strengthening of the security forces to ensure their ability to maintain peace in sub-regions, particularly the Mano River Basin
- Improvement in the conditions of service of members of the security forces
- Serious efforts to promote good governance

Notes

- 1 The CDFs were local groups that emerged during the war in Sierra Leone to protect their local hunters. In the north were the Donsos, Tamaboros and Gbethis and in the south-east were the Kamajohs and Donsos.

- 2 The major concerns of the DFID with regard to SSR.
- 3 These constitute part of the major strategy employed by the UK government in Sierra Leone's SSR programme.

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CHAPTER 3

THE CHALLENGES OF SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN WEST AFRICA

Ishola Williams

The nation that will insist on drawing a broad line of demarcation between the fighting man and the thinking man is liable to find its fighting done by cowards and its thinking done by fools

– Sir Williams Francis Butler

Introduction

Security sector reform (SSR) or transformation or reconstruction or restructuring or reorganisation will forever be an ongoing process. This is because, as Abraham Lincoln said during the American Civil War: ‘As our cause is new, we must think anew and act anew’ (Lincoln 1862). However, the observations of the author of this paper regarding these reforms so far show that even though the threats are new and asymmetrical, the thinking and action of African SSR scholars and practitioners are fixated on the Eurocentric mode. Dr Naison Ngoma, in a stimulating and well-thought-out paper, did try to break that dependency when he wrote about (Ngoma 2006:5):

- The difficulty of adhering to the democratic civil-military principles of accountability by every civilian, including civil society
- Adherence to international and domestic laws, including the constitution (which is the case even under authoritarian regimes)
- Transparent planning and budgeting (which does not happen in any country)
- Respect for human rights and a culture of civility (even when those civilians do not display a sense of responsibility)
- Being subject to political control over operations and expenditure (as there is no alternative – no well-trained soldier will burgle the central bank and go to war)

- Regular consultation with civil society (instead of the communities) they swore to protect
- Professionalism and being supportive of collaborative peace (which is abstract since peace continues to be defined in wider and confused terminologies)

However, most of our scholars and security experts were warned by R D McLaurin as far back as 1988 when he wrote in a seminal article entitled 'Managing national security: the American experience and the lessons for the Third World': 'Just as most of the institutions and ideologies of government have been imported into the developing countries from the West [and the East], grafted as it were, onto societies, rather than emerging from their own dynamics and processes, so too has the management of national security' (1988:265). He wrote further that 'those schooled or trained in the West have applied [and continue to apply] the fruits of that exposure to Western concepts and techniques of national security planning but have not cared, or have not taken the time to query the relationship between the nature and environment of their own society and state, on the one hand, and the nature and environment of national security on the other' (McLaurin 1988:265).

McLaurin and Dr Ngoma agreed, independently of each other, that even though there are differences between the developed world and Africa and Asia, it is not surprising that individuals and institutions in Africa and Asia have identical responsibilities in areas virtually identical to those of their counterparts in the developed countries. This is not surprising, because the security agencies in West Africa (with the exception of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, who had liberation wars) were created and constructed by Europeans and later influenced by the US through various training programmes, from tactical to politico-strategic level.

Soldier-scholars like the late Dr Rocky Williams did try to Afrocentricise SST. He would have liked to try out his ideas on the African Standby Force (ASF), but was not allowed to do so by those who are providing the guidance and the funding. Followers of the Williams school of thought are ready to carry on his work, however.

Therefore, to this author the challenges facing SSR range from the concept of security (whether from the national to the community or vice versa) to the freedom from dependency on the West in terms of strategic thinking and funding.

Afrocentricising the concept of security

It appears that the concept of human security has gained ground but that the concept had remained at academic level because it means different things to different persons. The reality, as this author sees it, is that internal stability must receive attention, otherwise development cannot come about. However, community safety cannot be neglected in the process, for that is the way to personal safety. Currently, we give greater attention, and wrongly so, to elite safety. (This statement should not be regarded as denying that national leadership should be protected, however.)

‘National security’, according to President Harry Truman of the US, ‘does not consist only of an Army, a Navy and an Air Force ... [I]t depends on sound economy ... on civil liberties and human freedoms’ (Truman 1947). Walter Lippmann wrote ‘a nation is secure to extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war and is able if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war’ (McLaurin 1988:260). When West African armed forces are viewed against these definitions, their reforms have failed. This is because in most of the conflicts in West Africa non-state armed groups have defeated the state armed forces. This happened in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire, and to a limited extent in the Casamance in Senegal, the Niger Delta in Nigeria and with the Tuaregs in the Sahellian states of Mali and Niger. Therefore, SSR should be evaluated by seeking answers to questions such as security against what (what threats), for whom (state, communities, lives and properties), with what resources, and where will these resources come from. It is important not only that these questions are asked, but also that they are answered with a view to integrating the answers and outcome into the West African component of the ASF.

At present the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), with AU backing, is initiating and supporting activities at regional level in order to harmonise with whatever SSR is taking place at national level. However, the defence and security directorate of Ecowas is not fully informed about the security sector reforms that are taking place in most member countries.

In addition, the Ecowas secretariat has military advisers from France, the UK and the US. Very soon Germany, too, will provide a regional SSR programme adviser. Unfortunately Ecowas has not drawn up its own conceptual framework for this new programme, but will only provide inputs to the Germans. The result is likely to be a misfit between the national SSR and regional SSR.

At the national level, most Western analysts and their African followers have looked upon SSR as a guns or butter choice. Examples include the experiences of Liberia, where the US government was authorised by the comprehensive peace agreement to provide assistance for building a completely new armed force because all forces had been disbanded; of Sierra Leone, where selected officers now form the nucleus of the new defence force; and of Mali, where with assistance from France they did try to shape their own forces. Côte d'Ivoire, which is still struggling with disarmament and rebuilding the Ivorian armed forces, will involve tough negotiations. McLaurin wrote in 1988 – and it still rings true today – that these analyses entirely miss the point: 'It is not a choice between resource allocation for social needs and resource allocation for uncontrolled illegal or illegitimate violence.' He emphasised that those 'who so couch the dilemma of security in developing countries fail to understand even the most basic reality of these realities' (McLaurin 1988:263).

Before writing this, McLaurin had visited two African countries where the total monthly wage was US\$15 and armed bandits were better organised, better armed and sometimes more mobile than the police. Similar situations prevail in many countries in West Africa. In some, like Ghana and Sierra Leone, there are many improvements, yet the public are still concerned about security. Ngoma agreed with Williams's description of the guns or butter choice as a mechanistic equation that is not supported by firm evidence. However, in many instances scholars and analysts have convinced Western donors that African countries need to downsize their military forces in order to release money for development. In their study *Funding defence challenges: buying military, capabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa* Henk and Rupiya state that 'since the late 1980s, external donors increasingly have pressured African governments to reduce funding for the security sector – particularly for the Armed Forces' (Henk & Rupiya 2001:8). According to these authors, the lack of resources touches a key problem related to defence spending in Africa. In their present form, some military establishments are far too large or far too small to play a viable role in their current security environment. However, one would have to determine what criteria were used for such assessments, which were made nearly five years ago. One could go further and also question the need for research into defence spending in Africa except for academic interest, if Henk and Rupiya are taken seriously.

Today, the armies of West African countries are stretched to their limits in meeting both the external obligations for peacekeeping, which is a good source of funding, and internal obligations relating to the provision of security for national stability and development.

Needless to say, many African heads of state have succeeded in creating security units that are well trained, well equipped and well paid, while others use Western private security companies and thereby obviate the legal security sector. The difference between African and Western countries is that Western heads of state cannot create a force or an institution without going through some legal procedures and processes, which generally including approval from parliament. On the other hand, there are no outsiders who impose conditions or assist them with expertise and funding. Above all, their strategic thinking is theirs.

At this stage of the analysis, it is still not possible to answer the three questions posed at the outset, except to state that African security sector agencies labour under both external and internal obligations, especially as far as the roles of the army and police/gendarmerie are concerned. Fulfilment of the diverse obligations presents difficulties in terms of resources for training and equipment while adhering to the restrictive laws which are increasingly being passed without consultation with the security agencies. In most cases such laws reduce the possibilities for proactive and preventative action that is needed to minimise crime or insurgencies internally. On the external side, military intervention has become a risk for soldiers because their actions are subject to constant scrutiny. While soldiers should indeed fight 'clean battles', their opponents are often criminals and insurgents who have the 'advantage' of rarely being brought to trail for killing soldiers or to justify 'dirty tactics'.

To end this part of the concept of security, some Afrocentric answers to the challenging questions, against the background of the discussions above, starting with security as an equation as shown below:

$$\text{Public safety} + \text{internal stability} + \text{defence} = \text{national security}$$

In this equation, *public safety* means the capacity of the state or community to prevent crime or activities that will disturb public peace. *Internal stability* is ensured when the state rather than the community has the coercive means, and if possible the monopoly of those means, to suppress any breach of public safety or destabilisation of the state at all levels. *Defence* means the state's capacity to defeat any external aggression against its territory, sovereign interests and people of that state.

With the Ecowas protocol on free movement of goods and persons, the countries of West Africa have created a link between public safety and internal stability, while it also diminishes threats which are outlined below.

Therefore, these countries must work towards integrated security systems for mutual security. There is a greater need than ever for such a system, as the EU is now negotiating with regional economic communities for the new economic partnership agreement, which will possibly come into effect in January 2008.

If one accepts the above equation for national security as being composed of public safety, internal stability and defence instead of public security, internal security and national security, by adapting McLaurin's suggestion that 'threats to the safety, stability and defence of a community, a nation or state are any activities, phenomena or course of events that pose a danger to either the existence of a legal and legitimate government and the welfare of the people of the community, state or nation within the limits of its territory and sovereignty' (McLaurin 1988:261), then the threat is encompassing in its political, social, cultural and economic dimensions as it concerns the welfare of the people.

A response to these threats would have provided answers to two of the questions, namely 'security against what' and 'security for whom'. Furthermore, this definition allows for people whose welfare are of concern to define their safety needs at community level and to assist the legitimate government in ensuring internal stability and supporting defence of the state at all times.

However, two imponderables remain. First, how do we get Africans to accept the fact that basic liberties and human freedoms also come with heavy responsibilities for making good choices of leadership to ensure good political and economic governance and encourage a strong and alternate government in waiting as opposition. The second imponderable is that most African governments are losing control over their policy formulation and decision-making processes (not even mentioning its implementation!), to international financial institutions, the EU, and a number of Western government institutions whose consultants and advisers are supported by Eurocentric Africans. Those who think alternatively or outside the box must look for the few rare partners in Europe and the US who share their thinking, but usually have limited or no resources. It is only by thinking outside the box, as demonstrated by Dr Ngoma, that it will be possible to arrive at a definition that would operationalise the obligations inherent in the concept of security discussed so far.

The next section deals with the operationalisation challenges of this concept, starting with public safety for urban security.

Public safety for urban security

In the past two decades, it has been recognised that the most common effect of urbanisation is a shocking increase in crime and violence – for so many well-known reasons. One of great concern is the unemployed youths who form the greater part of the population and continually drift from the rural areas to the towns and cities. This is exacerbated by the reduced social controls that traditional ethnic groups are able to exercise by means of ethnic loyalties. Thus the traditional cultural foundation for minimising violent crime is increasingly weakened.

The alternative to this traditional system of control is that the urban communities themselves work with police at local government level towards crime prevention and at the same time set about creating enabling environments for the employment of youth.

The increased crime level has created a need to blend military doctrine with law enforcement strategies. It is now being accepted in security circles that street gangs and ethnic militias are in a position to challenge city and state authorities. These street gangs sometimes have links with insurgents or ethnic militia groups, as in the case with the Movement for the Restoration of Biafra (Massob) in Nigeria. Efforts to ensure safety in urban areas have led to gated suburbs on the one hand, while the urban slums have become no-go areas for elites and visitors on the other. Most of the inhabitants of these slums, which are on the increase, are young and unemployed, and city governments are unable to deal with these problems.

The French, in cooperation with African research centres, have been undertaking much work on safety in urban areas like Lagos and Ibadan in Nigeria and Nairobi in Kenya. Their research findings should form part of the SSR agenda. Designing an urban security arrangement that works will enhance community policing. Most West African governments in Anglophone countries have introduced community policing in name but not in practice, and the authority and command mostly still reside with the police headquarters in the capital cities. Community policing requires some form of local autonomy and residual authority with the city government. This is also important for the border areas, where the same ethnic groups live on both sides. The Francophone countries have perfected a community policing system, with the ‘gendarme’ serving rural areas and the police serving in cities, and generally have a better record with regard to the provision of safety than their Anglophone counterparts.

Communities must be prepared to – and assisted to – accept responsibility for preventing or minimising serious crimes in their communities, whether in rural and urban areas, because while the elite classes have the resources to build gated areas, controlled by a neighbourhood watch run by private security companies with links to the police, the poor do not have that luxury.

In Anglophone countries where there are no gendarmeries, most constitutions make provision for the armed forces to provide back-up for the police to deal with highway robberies, street gangs, and so forth, especially when the police are unable to control the situation. Regardless of the details, however, the security arrangements to deal with public safety in urban areas present a major challenge in many West African cities.

Internal stability

Internal stability has its roots in public safety and urban security. However, many West African countries suffer from infrastructure problems as deliveries of services are being stretched to their limits. On the one hand more resources are required to meet the growing demand for health and education of an increasingly younger population, but on the other resources are needed for fighting crime. In spite of all the reforms, the police are unfortunately not becoming more effective and/or efficient. There are many reasons for this, but the situation is worsened by negative police actions, for example that policemen and -women themselves ‘shake down hapless citizens’ (Henk & Rupiya 2001:9) on the street and therefore cannot command the respect of the public. On rare occasions, the police have gone on or threatened to go on strike. There are also cases of intra-service clashes, especially in Nigeria.

Violent conflict continues in Nigeria, Senegal (for political and economic reasons) and recently in Mali. This violence cannot be attributed to bad governance alone, because in no country is it possible to meet the needs of all interest groups, especially where there is a lack of national consensus on how to meet these needs when political dialogues fail, and the military and the police bear the brunt of the conflict. They cannot refuse to obey, even when it is clear that political decisions are being delayed not to buy time but to satisfy selected powerful interests or in the name of national unity. While the security agencies in developed countries rarely face this problem, it did in fact happen in Spain recently. Even when the military is introduced to quell such a situation, peacemaking efforts should be continued to provide dissident groups with alternative options. Unfortunately, African dissidents have seen that if they get hold of money, they buy weapons with it and start

controlling some areas, they are able to weaken the government and so by force obtain participation in peace talks that will lead to an agreement to share power in a transition government and later to contest elections. Fortunately the rebel leaders in Liberia were successfully prevented from contesting elections in that country.

The lesson to be learnt is that it is essential that national institutional mechanisms for political dialogue and resolution of political crises and conflict be developed and/or strengthened as part of the SSR agenda. The alternative is coercive intervention or to back up such coercive interventions. In fact, the God-like posturing of African presidents seems to satisfy the whims and caprices of the donor community, which seems to want strong leaders leading increasingly weak states that are unable to deliver goods and services for the welfare of the people. Obviously such inability can be a threat to the internal stability of the country. This was the situation in Senegal, where the president has extended the term of Parliament from July to February the next year and there are fears that he may extend his own term too. Furthermore, not many serving and retired officers agree with the new Senegalese laws that allow all persons in the armed forces to vote. The last issue need not be totally negative, however, for in all West African countries where soldiers do vote there have been few negative consequences, provided that the soldiers are not members of political parties and political campaign rallies are not allowed in military establishments.

In creating an environment of stability or minimising rural and urban violence and serious crimes, the general observation is that a military presence may be required to back up the police in Anglophone countries, while this is not necessary in Francophone countries, where the gendarmeries command greater respect than the police. This leads to the conclusion that to ensure internal stability, the army/police or army/gendarmerie must share responsibility. However, in most cases the communities have a role to play, and their role forges another link, which should be included in the SSR agenda.

There is a need to educate political and social interest groups regarding their responsibility in sustaining internal stability and it is essential that this takes place in cooperation with the security agencies. They must also ensure that the government leaders who do not satisfy the welfare needs of the population can be removed or forced to resign by peaceful means, which are supported by legitimate police and armed forces action.

Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the men and women in the security agencies of many countries have no collective training and that

few individuals are sent on free courses within and outside Africa. They are under-equipped, poorly paid and rarely motivated. Circumstances unknown in Europe and the US made them corrupt, and on occasion West African governments have refused to deal with the problems simply because they do not have the resources to replace those garnered from corrupt practices. The programme for the Sierra Leone police force will be followed with interest and will hopefully serve as a role model for other West African countries.

There are too many ‘myths and realities of civil–military relations’ and Naison Ngoma’s paper quoted above makes interesting reading on this subject. However, this author does disagree to some extent with his statement that civil–military relations in developed countries do not differ much from those in Africa. There are in fact numerous differences: most of the constitutions of West African countries do not clearly set out the responsibilities of the commander-in-chief/president, the chief of defence staff (CDS), the service chiefs, or the parliaments. In some countries the president single-handedly appoints the CDS and the service chiefs and does not need parliamentary approval. Hence loyalty is to the person rather than the office or the constitution.

If there are no constitutional or legal guidelines, the president also determines the succession system – this is the case in Nigeria, Senegal and most countries in West Africa. It is also very rare for service chiefs to resign when they disagree with the head of state. The intervention of Military Professional Retired Incorporated (MPRI) and the US-initiated African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) had the Nigerian president’s approval, but not that of the Nigerian military hierarchy. They did not see the need for the two, as the principles underlying US peacekeeping or operations – other than outright use of force – cannot ensure enforcement of the peace enforcement in West Africa, where rebels only respect intervention by superior military forces who are able to defeat them in combat.

The next issue is that of defence.

Sub-regional integrated defence systems for mutual security

Ecowas is slowly and surely making changes in the areas of regional defence and security by means of the Ecowas mechanism on conflict prevention, management, peacekeeping and security. This serves as the foundation, backed by the protocol on good governance and the new convention on small arms and light weapons which replaces the moratorium and its code

of conduct. All these sub-regional legal instruments under the AU umbrella, even though all have not been ratified, are respected by member states. Cape Verde has not demonstrated any interest in being part of the mechanism but is very much involved in the convention on small arms and light weapons.

The mechanism is based on similar instruments that have created the legal and moral environment of the modern-day European Union, the main thrust being that no member state will attack another member state for any reason. The successful resolution of the Nigeria/Cameroon border dispute without resorting to war – and between Botswana and Namibia over their borders – is an outcome of these instruments.

External aggression between West or Central African states seems unlikely. This is not to say that neighbours will not harbour dissidents and armed or unarmed opposition members. In the case of the dispute between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau over Casamance, Senegal used President João Bernardo Viera's return to the presidential palace in Bissau to get the Bissau army to flush the Casamance rebels from the country into Gambia. Just before the AU summit in late June, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal met with President Yahya Jammeh of Gambia (who is of the same ethnic group as the Casamance rebels) in Banjul. According to analysts, the improvement in Senego–Gambian relations may lead to peace in Casamance. In the case of Mali, its enemies come from outside the West African region but with Algeria's mediation, an agreement has been reached between the two parties. In Nigeria, conflict is mostly internal and no neighbours are involved in assisting the militants in the Niger Delta.

In view of the above arguments that external aggression in the West African region is unlikely, SSR should include building national institutions for sustained dialogue to arrive at internal consensus on areas that create crises in the polity. It is impossible to satisfy all interest groups, but those who are not satisfied should be prevented from regarding armed support from neighbours as a solution to their problems. Furthermore, action towards settling a crisis should not occur only once the crisis turns into armed conflict, but earlier.

Once armed conflict occurs, the security forces may find themselves in the difficult position of trying to suppress a justifiable insurgency. Will the service chiefs refuse to fight and resign, with its indirect and direct consequences? It is left to readers to answer this, as well as other related questions: Will a coup d'état save the situation (as happened in Guinea-Bissau or Mauritania, although for different reasons)? Is a coup d'état preferable to a civil war? How and when should neighbours or regional bodies intervene when a head

of state refuses to listen or accept mediation (as in Côte d'Ivoire)? In many cases, the political behaviour of military forces has led to civil war, often for making the same mistakes as their predecessors. Therefore the ultimate question is: Is there any way that a regional force can intervene to remove a head of state (as in the case of Guinea-Conakry) before the political situation degenerates into armed confrontation?

In all this, the role of the military (and to some extent the police and gendarmerie) is important, especially with regard to the type of relationship they have with the opposition parties. From the above discussion it is clear that SSR in Africa must take into consideration the role of the military and the police/gendarmerie and that it should form part of the regional SSR agenda. Such a regional association, perhaps of retired senior military and police officers, could play an important role in integrating the national SSR systems at a regional level.

The standby force project

The standby force project is an adaptation of Nkrumah's Africa high command and also in line with the proposal by President Muammar Gaddafi of Libya for the establishment of an African standing army. The European countries do not want an African high command, for reasons best known to them. Therefore the standby force has become an extension of the Eurocorps and Nato. The doctrine of the standby force is African oriented but the standard operating procedures are modelled on the European system and that of the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations.

The whole rationale and action are left in the hands of Nato and Shirbrig (the Multi-National Stand-By High Readiness Brigade for United Nations Operations) backed by EU funds. The African officers who are involved, whether Western or Eastern or African trained, have left most decision-making to the funders. The result is that the funders make decisions on how and where the standby force should be deployed. An example is Darfur, and the same situation occurred in Chad under the OAU. West African (especially Nigerian) troops are used for peace enforcement and it is therefore not surprising that they were asked to go to Darfur and cooperate with the Rwandese army, which was made up of guerrilla forces. Most African armies will never get involved in this type of operations, as happened in Liberia. Therefore, constructing and equipping a standby force along classical peacekeeping lines is unrealistic. The problem with situations such as Darfur is that the AU force is not strong enough to be effective. As has

happened in the past in such situations, the AU force has to be backed up by European Union troops. Because the European countries and the US have always refused to provide sufficient equipment and train African forces, this has created the impression that peace support operations cannot succeed with an African standby force alone.

Most West African armies do not have the equipment, but there are stockpiles of equipment for peacekeeping in Freetown (UK and US) and Dakar (France) which are used only once in two years when exercises are carried out with willing countries. A second problem is that most of the equipment required for African armies can be obtained from or made in Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria, but the donor countries use equipment from their own countries. In pretending to help African countries, the donors also help their defence industries thrive while providing jobs for both their returning and retired officers who come as consultants and rarely work with local retired officers.

Conclusion

The SSR agenda is so broad and costly in terms of manpower and funds that it cannot be covered fully in a paper such as this. It is a long-term endeavour and therefore better dealt with by dividing the agenda on the basis of:

- Public safety – reform of the police and gendarmeries and access to justice
- Internal stability – reform of the armed forces, the gendarmeries (their role in immigration or as border units and customs) and the intelligence services
- Defence – reform with a view to promoting internal stability as the foundation for a regional SSR agenda

Just as people worldwide are concerned with safety in their countries, so are West Africans, and therefore the SSR agenda, which is people oriented, must concentrate on public safety, especially in urban areas. It should engage with urban community stakeholders and give them responsibility while working with private security companies. This will form a solid foundation for the internal stability that is needed for political, social and economic development.

If the academic exercise on SSR continues at the present pace, then the criticism of Gordon Peake and Otwin Marenin, namely that the ‘pressing task

is to collate, organize, distil and find a way of disseminating the knowledge, targeted to specifics and attitudes of the police who will do the work' will continue to be just (Peake & Marenin 2006:10). The present author agrees with their conclusion that the global police studies community has to organise itself more efficiently so as take advantage of what exists already. One almost feels like calling for a moratorium on new writings to enable the overwhelmed reader and policy-makers to catch up. The same can be said of SSR and its customers in Africa, who are overwhelmed but not willing to call a halt.

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PART 2

**CHALLENGES TO SECURITY
SECTOR REFORM IN THE
HORN OF AFRICA**

CHAPTER 4

THE SECURITY SITUATION IN ERITREA: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REGION AND ITS CHALLENGES FOR SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Herui T Bairu

Introduction

For almost five decades the states of the Horn of Africa have been in the throes of a continuous internal, regional and international crisis. One of the main causes of political instability, the protracted Eritrean revolution and the response of two successive Ethiopian governments, was rounded off with the independence of Eritrea. The Eritrean armed struggle (that broke out with the dissolution of the Eritrean/Ethiopian federation set up by the UN in 1952) lasted from 1961 to 1991. The full extent of the human and material waste of this fratricidal war defies statistics.

The first Ethiopian revolution, conducted against Emperor Haile Selassie, was another source of internal instability. The ideas that propelled the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 were class based; in this enterprise, the Ethiopian student movement (in the early 'sixties) played a pivotal role in formulating the political and ideological language. The first Ethiopian revolution was directed against the ancient monarchical system and the feudal structure that supported it. Its ambition was also to accommodate the demands of the different ethnic groups of Ethiopia by creating a socialist commonwealth. This revolution was hijacked by a military/communist junta known as the Derg (Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army).

The second Ethiopian revolution was conducted by the Tigray People's Liberation Army (TPLF) against the Derg and was propelled by the vision of equality for the ethnic groups of Ethiopia. The Derg responded by proclaiming that the conflict was a struggle between the Amharas and the Tigrinya speakers, with the former fighting for unity and the latter for separation. At an ideological level the struggle was represented as a struggle between the narrow nationalism of the Tigrinya speakers and the socialism of the Ethiopian state. The Derg's war against its opposition in the two revolutions, perceived as a final confrontation between the Amharas and Tigrayans, was characterised by an all-out war involving the whole country.

In addition to the above internal factors that caused instability, there were intermittent wars between Ethiopia and Somalia during the Emperor's rule as well as the Derg's dictatorship. The Ethiopia–Somalia wars were caused by claims and counterclaims on the Ogaden territory. The scope and scale of these conflicts were devastating and decimated the scarce human and natural sources. It is no exaggeration to state that the states that compose the Horn of Africa have not known peace since the outset of the period of decolonisation.

Security sector reform (SSR) envisions constitutional, democratic and public control of the security services as such, and given the historic involvement of the security services in instability in the Horn, SSR is certain to go a good distance towards improving the dismal human conditions existing in the Horn of Africa.

In this paper it is argued that that the totalitarian dictatorship that prevails in Eritrea does not permit an entry point for the implementation of SSR. It is also argued that best method of laying the groundwork for SSR in Eritrea is to advance democratic change internally, accompanied by international pressure for democratic elections.

The paper provides a framework for SSR in Eritrea, describes the security issues in Eritrea as they stand as well as the security issues in the region, identifies lessons learned and relates them to the challenges for SSR, and finally examines the so-called Eritrean opposition from the perspective of SSR.

The historical context

An American journalist, Peter Ritner, wrote a book bearing the ear-scorching title *The death of Africa*. The dramatic title was matched by an equally harsh salvo right at the beginning of the book:

What the world with insufficient apprehension is now witnessing in Africa is the birth of a monstrosity whose whole future is mortgaged to its deformities. The putrefaction is close at hand. Africa society has lost its coherence and its ability to defend itself from itself or from the impinging forces of the outside world (Ritner 1960:258).

The message of the book was dismissed by foe and sympathiser alike; nonetheless, in the end Ritner's prediction has proven to be true. He summarised his views thus:

To sum up, there will be more and more people in Africa growing hungrier and hungrier as they grow increasingly less satisfied with their lot. They look around them, observing a progressively more senseless disarticulation of society, with abandoned industries and worked-out mines, cheek by jowl and with mud-acre patches of wind and water erosion square mile after square mile (Ritner 1960:258).

Ritner's forthright language was addressed to the emerging African elites – a reminder of the pitfalls of nation-building, as much as it was addressed to the American voter, businessman and government, to direct their attention towards Africa. He rejected 'foreign aid' as a lame remedy and advocated instead the cure of massive capital transference into Africa as a form of a long-term American investment that should be envisaged as a profitable enterprise for all concerned. He advocated an institute of African affairs, which would form an organisational centre for the proposed involvement, with a budget of US\$6–8 billion.

Amongst others, this capital was to be funnelled into research for reclaiming soils, stimulating the growth of protein-forming micro-organisms, improving the nutritional content of food crops, reforestation and watershed repair programmes, agricultural research foundations, stock-breeding experiments, fellowship programmes, a college for training educators and health officers, and much more (Ritner 1960, chapter 13).

A discussion of the merits or demerits – or, for that matter, the intentions or possible consequences of Ritner's cure – is not the issue here: the point is, more than 40 years ago the contours of the things to come were already visible.

What went wrong? Why is Africa afflicted by mass starvation and systemic collapse of its political, economic and social institutions? To a certain extent, the answer to this question may be found in the role of the internal and external security institutions of the post-colonial, nation-building African state. In this approach, nation-building shall be treated as a case in point for the security sector.

Nation-building

In Africa the post-colonial world started out with ex-colonial territories and the ex-gubernatorial states as building blocks of the nations-to-be. The exclusive political/military control over a given territory or the monopoly of political legitimacy and the legitimate use of violence was one of the

three main pillars of the nation-building project. The second pillar was the defence of a given post-colonial territory against possible claims from the external world. The third pillar, the dimension of development and welfare, became hostage of the first two pillars. The preservation of the territory and sovereignty of the post-colonial state required a sizeable part of the nation-building budget – at the expense of the development dimension. This situation explains, to a considerable extent, why nations that are victims of internal and external instability enter into a vicious cycle of starvation and epidemic diseases from which there seems to be no escape (Giddens 1985).

The second major problem faced by post-colonial Africa was the question of what to do with the gubernatorial state. The multicultural setting of nation-building assumed that a ‘nation’ could be fashioned out of the multiplicity of tribes or ethnic groups. These constellations of ethnic groups or tribes tended to fight for monopoly of political legitimacy and became instrumental in state violence. After the short lifespan of hastily drafted constitutions, military intervention became the vehicle for attaining, and maintaining, state power and political legitimacy. Very often political legitimacy entailed unfurling the obligatory socialist nation-building programme that promised a shortcut to modernisation and development. In the absence of consensus to regulate the relations of ethnic groups with the state and society, the armed forces were ensnared into a vicious cycle of coups and countercoups (Decalo 1976).

In pre-colonial society there was a kind of laissez-faire relationship between various ethnic groups – in so far as they came into contact with each other. During the colonial period, the relationship of these ethnic constellations to each other changed in proportion to the relation of the state to each of them. As a result, new ethnic positions emerged during the colonial period: some ethnic groups emerged with advantageous positions measured in terms of access to educational, market and civil service opportunities. This phenomenon gave rise to a new form of political struggle in which ethnic groups competed to capture the state structure. In the early stages a single ethnic party was the vehicle for capturing state power; later on, however, the coup became the main instrument of political change in Africa (Enclose 1980).

The strategy of the people’s war and the militarisation of Eritrean society

In 1961, Eritrean nationalists resorted to armed struggle in order to achieve national independence. The strategy of a people’s war as applied in Eritrea (a small country with scant resources and without external support) led to an extreme form of self-reliance that, in its turn, led to the militarisation

of Eritrean society. The burden of the armed struggle was borne by the peasantry in the countryside. Despite their extreme poverty the peasants provided food to the guerrilla fighters, without respite, for 30 years. The peasantry was organised into cells to provide information and was organised into militias for control of the unarmed peasants and to serve as an auxiliary arm of the main guerrilla forces.

The twofold aims of the original guerrilla army, namely to function as a propaganda vehicle among the people and to recruit fighters from the peasantry, were intended to challenge the security system of the Ethiopian state. Their small-scale military actions challenged the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ethiopian state in such a way that a substantial amount of the national development and welfare funds were deflected to the needs of modernising its internal and external security sectors. With regard to Eritrea, the process of the militarisation of society was completed when the guerrilla forces were transformed into standing army forces.

In the context of the militarisation of Eritrean society, the *yekealo* (the guerrilla fighter) and the *warsay* (the soldier of the Eritrean–Ethiopian war) are, today, presented as bearers of the highest national values in President Issayas’s Eritrea. (*Yekealo* is a Tigrinya word for ‘he who is capable of performing the impossible’.) There is no doubt that the courage and the resilience of the Eritrean liberation armies were admirable; be that as it may, the purpose of raising the image of the guerrilla fighter to that of a national hero was to use the high esteem in which these fighters are held to buttress a sense of military nationalism.

Warsay is a Tigrinya word for ‘the inheritor’. This name was selected in order to present the Eritrean–Ethiopian war as a continuation of the struggle for national independence. This conceptual trick was successfully used to mobilise successive waves of Eritrean youth for Issayas’s war. The ruler’s sizeable army is an unpaid army with a shoestring budget; it has never been demobilised and it has access to an endless supply of youths who reach the age of 18. Members of this army have been inculcated with hatred: hatred of the opposition forces! Hatred of the Ethiopian people! Gigantic efforts shall be needed to restore the spirit of reconciliation with co-nationals and neighbours.

Personality cult

Intoxicated by the achievement of national independence, the Eritrean people issued a blank cheque to President Issayas to do with Eritrea as he

wished. Having secured the unquestioning adulation of the masses, Issayas set about, unhindered, building a one-man, one-party state.

In this paper the elements of President Issayas's militarised nationalism has already been identified. First and foremost, civilian values were deliberately erased. The central values surrounding the institutions of family were attacked at their roots. The vision of the nation-building programme of the new regime was to erase the diverse tribal, religious and cultural identities of the country, and fashion them in the ruler's image. The Eritrean–Ethiopian war facilitated the implementation of this project. The programme of total mobilisation for the war effort provided the ruler with a further opportunity to militarise all sectors of the Eritrean society; sadly, even candidates to the university prepare for their entrance examinations at military camps. The enhancement of the cult of personality was taken a further step when Issayas launched a campaign to garner for himself the achievements of the Eritrean revolution. This militaristic ideological form, combined with the cult of personality that accompanied it, paved the way for one of the most violent dictatorships in the history of the region.

The guerrilla state

From guerrilla army to guerrilla state

The Eritrean People's Liberation Army (EPLA) became the manpower resource of the newly created state. The transitional parliament was drawn from the ranks of the EPLA, because the transitional government was formed from the high ranks of the same source. The middle echelons took over the internal and external security institutions, whereas the political cadres occupied the civil service. In short, the Eritrean state was taken over by the EPLA.

In 1994, at the third congress of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), President Issayas succeeded in removing the old guard from his government and replacing them by groups who were absolutely dependent on him. To make matters clear, he substituted the EPLF with an organisation of his making, called the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). He legitimised the new power structure by putting up a brand new parliament (composed of his military and civilian supporters) and forming a provisional government composed of second rank yes-men. As a final step towards legitimising his new power base, he set up a constitution-drafting committee that drew its inspiration from the constitution of the People's Republic of

China (the country where he acquired his basic military training). The draft Eritrean constitution is still gathering dust. It can be safely asserted that from 1997 onwards Eritrea was transformed into a guerrilla state, run by a guerrilla army. From that time the Eritrean people has referred to Issayas as the 'dictator'.

President Issayas evolved a nation-building strategy known as the New Eritrea. The pre-independence society was depicted as corrupt and the pre-independence civil servants were, likewise, branded as decadents. The next step was to replace the administrators by fighters, who were oblivious to the Mandarin art of administration. The fighters were attached to the administrators for an intensive in-service learning process; once this do-it-yourself programme was completed, the administrators were dismissed without compensation.

The defacement of inherited culture was central to the strategy of building the New Eritrea. In Maoist 'cultural revolution' style, Issayas singled out language for focused attack. The official languages of Eritrea (Tigrinya and Arabic) were demoted in the name of equality for all the languages of Eritrea.

Religion was treated as an obstacle to the creation of the New Eritrea. President Issayas put religious affairs under the control of the Ministry of Interior; gradually, he built up a vicious campaign against religious leaders and institutions, both Christian and Muslim. The inhumanity of this offensive has reached such a level of intensity that it has, finally, attracted world attention (Department of State 2006).

The campaign against national groups and regions represented another important aspect of the policy of creating a culturally uniform New Eritrea. The New Eritrea strategy was a copy of the Maoist cultural revolution – the main ingredients of which were the idealisation of the liberation army, the promotion of aggressive military nationalism, and the worship of the personality of the dictator.

The education policy of the New Eritrea was based on the anti-intellectual model of Mao's cultural revolution, too. Modern Eritrean history and the facts of the struggle for independence were deliberately distorted in order to provide some kind of legitimacy to the rule of Issayas.

The New Eritrea economic policy was also based on the Maoist notions of collective ownership and 'self-reliance'. Land was declared government

property, giving the dictatorship a free hand to sell land for housing and commercial and industrial projects; in this policy of open dictatorial plunder the losers are the village communities, while the winners are the dollar-flashing Eritreans in the diaspora. The decision to introduce an Eritrean currency without bilateral consultations with Ethiopia was also a grievous mistake committed by the strategists of the New Eritrea.

Identifying the dictator's strategy

President Issayas implemented a strategy of the people's war against his own people – a strategy that is outright incongruous in an already independent country. His aim was to turn Eritrea into his private fiefdom and transform it into a military base in an era of national liberation wars. In order to achieve this aim Issayas replaced the military, vertical command structure of the Ministry of Defence with a horizontal command structure of military governorships of the provinces.

This strategy, in addition to camouflaging the fact that the Eritrean state had collapsed, was intended to impose a total dictatorship and initiate an undeclared state of war against its immediate neighbours. From the point of view of the neighbouring countries, Issayas intends to maintain a permanent state of tension, thus impeding their development aims and programmes.

In the economic sphere the president introduced a party command economic policy organised around party/military farms, party banks and party commercial establishments. The free labour market was replaced by military indentured labour. It is no exaggeration to state that in Eritrea the laws of an organised national economy have been replaced by a party command economy. The population at large is in a state of semi-starvation and the youth flee from their country in large numbers, never to return to the hell that Eritrea has become.

The transformation of the military command structure of the Eritrean army into the institutions of a people's war made it possible for Issayas to maintain a vast army on a war footing, at low cost. Out of the 15 years of nominal independent statehood, eight have been wasted on wars of aggression against Yemen, Ethiopia and Sudan.

From an ideological point of view, the New Eritrean nationalism has become the justification for internal tyranny and external aggression. From the human rights point of view, the people have become hostages of the system; half

of the Eritrean government has been thrown into jail for advocating political pluralism; there is no democratically elected parliament; and the independent newspapers have been closed while their editors have either escaped or been imprisoned. The human rights issue in Eritrea is often compared to that of Pol Pot's Cambodia (The world's most repressive societies 2006).

These excesses testify that Eritrea is a failed state. The sooner the international community is aware of this situation, the greater the possibility of denying the Eritrean dictatorship international legitimacy.

The regional security complex

The internationalisation and the regionalisation of conflict need to be examined as important aspects that should be addressed as part of SSR. At the level of conflict between states, the consequences are that the genie, once out of the bottle, has no wish to return to the constraints of its previous status quo. The wars of the Eritrean dictator against Yemen, Sudan and Ethiopia brought these countries closer to each other. Recently, he came out in favour of the Islamic fundamentalist movement in Somalia, and in so doing interfered in the internal affairs of both Somalia and Ethiopia.

The war in Yemen

The Eritrean–Yemeni war came without warning; everybody assumed that the question of territorial integrity between these two states had been settled amicably. The Eritrean people came to know about the conflict only after war had already broken out. President Issayas could have preserved Eritrean/Yemeni lives, scarce resources, and regional amity with his Arab neighbours. But as experience has shown, his first response to any crisis situation is hard and violent. A peaceful and bilateral resolution to the Eritrean–Yemeni conflict was possible.

The conflict with Sudan

The emergence of the Eritrean Jihadist movement gave Issayas the excuse to accuse Sudan of promoting international Islamic fundamentalism. He severed diplomatic relations with the Sudanese government and gave the Sudanese forces the freedom to operate from Eritrea politically and militarily. Until recently, Eritrea was in a state of war with Sudan.

The war with Ethiopia

As with Yemen and Sudan, the Eritrean people assumed that Ethiopian–Eritrean relations were amicable. Political observers of the region were perplexed by the fact that two forces that had fought side by side, appeared to have enviable state relations, and were perceived to belong to the same ethnic pool, were not able to resolve their differences amicably. The Badume conflict and its spread along the entire Eritrean–Ethiopian border were the last straw in the economic, political and diplomatic provocations on the part of President Issayas. The US/Rwanda proposal (whose aim was to bring the Eritrean and Ethiopian sides to the negotiation table) was rejected by Issayas in his televised ‘the sun shall never set in Badume’ speech, months before the outbreak of war.

The Ethiopian parliament responded by announcing a war of self-defence and thus laid the national and international legal basis for an all-out war. The Eritrean dictator’s failure to grasp the seriousness of Ethiopia’s announcement of war and the preparedness of its armed forces led him to a disastrous conflict against a sisterly nation and a brotherly people. The visible and accountable losses sustained by the two countries in human lives and material resources are staggering; worse still are the incalculable losses of the future, in ecological, developmental and political terms. Until the border has been demarcated, the two countries may still be regarded as being in a state of war.

The guerrilla state and terrorism

The guerrilla state is by definition a failed one; sadly, transforming the country into a military base – with military, financial and propaganda support systems – also lays it open to the forces of terrorism. The madness of President Issayas’s intervention in the affairs of Somalia has not only enraged the governments of the region, but also invites international terrorist/anti-terrorist confrontation.

Challenges to security sector reform

In 2001, prominent members of the ruling party and government wrote a letter of dissent to Issayas. These dissidents, later known as G-15, emerged on the political scene about a year after the democratic demands that forced the president to declare an election for 2001. Their objective was to pave

the way for a constitutional and democratic transition. The dissidents listed a number of failings and infractions in their letter (a copy of which is in the author's possession):

- Preparations for constitutional government had been deliberately delayed
- The law governing political parties and elections had not been declared
- The mandate entrusted to the committee to draft the laws governing political parties and elections had been usurped by the dictator
- The president had created a special court that reported directly to him
- People were being jailed without the knowledge and agreement of the judiciary
- In the absence of institutions for national security, innocent people were becoming victims of unexpected threats to their security

The G-15 dissenters were thrown into jail, as were the journalists that took up the torch of democracy; tragically, a number of the dissidents have died in prison. What went wrong? Why were they picked up so easily? These questions have plagued the democratic movement for years; be that as it may, the task of the day is to agitate for their release (The obscure and tragic end of the G-15 2006).

The reality of the Eritrean situation

The reality of the Eritrean experience is dismal:

- The horizontally organised, semi-guerrilla army is under the control of a dictator
- The horizontal structure of the army does not permit a hierarchical chain of command – let alone civil–military relations based on civilian guidance of the security sector
- Security matters are hidden from the public
- There are no civilian authorities that exercise actual political control

- Civil society organisations exist only in the diaspora
- If there is peace at the local and regional levels, it is because the totalitarian dictatorship has muffled the voice of the people
- Constitutional and international laws, and respect for human rights, exist only in theory

The Eritrean opposition

The background

It should be emphasised that the totalitarian dictatorship that prevails in Eritrea does not provide any entry point for SSR. The only possible entry point for the implementation of SSR may be through some sectors of the Eritrean opposition forces that are dedicated to the removal of the dictatorial system. The propagation of the principles of SSR, today, is certain to prepare the ground for entry points in the post-dictatorship period. It is for this purpose that this paper is examining the Eritrean opposition.

After independence, the non-EPLF organisations were ridiculed as failures by the Eritrean public and the leaders of the region, with the result that neighbouring countries denied these organisations permission to operate from their territories. The disoriented and apathetic non-EPLF organisations were reduced to operating clandestinely from Sudan. The emergence of the Eritrean Jihad, capable of standing its ground in military confrontations with Issayas's troops, lifted the spirits of the non-EPLF organisations and increased their support among some Eritrean Muslims. Sudanese support and access to massive funds from Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf countries enabled the Eritrean Jihad to promote an Islamic revolution that mobilised Eritrean refugees in Sudan.

Another impetus to the growth of an organised opposition was the outbreak of the Eritrean–Ethiopian war. The non-EPLF organisations were able to establish an umbrella organisation called the Eritrean National Alliance (ENA). Ethiopian support gave the alliance a new lease on life that made it possible for them to intensify their military activities against the regime of President Issayas. However, Ethiopia was disappointed with the performance of the alliance.

There were two important developments in the growth of the opposition movement. The first was the creation of the Eritrean Co-operative Party at the Stockholm conference for democracy in Eritrea (funded by the Palme

International Centre), which was held in December 2000. The second was a democratic movement, the Eritrean Alliance Involvement Movement (EAIM), in the US. These two movements played a great role in the fight for democracy, and the equally important fight to stop the war. In 2005, these organisations joined five other organisations to establish the Eritrean Congress Party in Khartoum.

The fifth conference of the Eritrean National Alliance

There were qualitative differences between the fifth conference of the ENA and the previous four conferences. The first difference was that the fifth conference was held when the war came to an end and the warring nations decided to submit the conflict to negotiations and international arbitration. This removed the stigma of ‘collaboration with the enemy’ that had plagued the alliance previously. The second difference was that the Co-operative Party and the EAIM joined forces with the alliance. The third difference was that Ethiopia, Sudan and Yemen had decided to establish a forum of cooperation and friendship at the same time that the fifth conference was convoked in Addis Ababa. These countries resolved to support the reorganised alliance and the resultant recognition of the ENA was to elevate its status.

Unfortunately, one of the organisations withdrew from the alliance over the issue of who should fill the posts. The ENA, together with a breakaway organisation from the PFDJ, conducted a combined campaign that in the end cooled the enthusiasm of the Sana’a Forum for the ENA.

The Eritrean Democratic Alliance

In 2005 the secretary-general of the ENA, under the auspices of the Sudanese government, brought together the four main Eritrean opposition organisations. They agreed to hold a conference in Khartoum, where a new alliance named the Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA) was established. Although the EDA was in many respects a continuation of the ENA, there was a central shift in its aims. The objective of removing the totalitarian regime by all means available was replaced by one of negotiation with Issayas on the basis of the comprehensive peace agreement regarding South Sudan. The ENA demand for a national congress that included the civil societies, the diaspora communities, and the refugee camps in the neighbouring countries was also cancelled. This shift of strategy was promoted by the two anti-ENA organisations mentioned above.

The failure of the alliance

The fifth conference and the support from the Sana'a Forum was not to the liking of Issayas and he reacted by hiring professional propagandists to conduct an intensive anti-ENA campaign, in combination with the two aforementioned anti-alliance organisations. The result was that the alliance failed and that the Eritrean opposition is now divided into those who wish to reconcile with Issayas and those who want to implement a constitutional and democratic Eritrea at peace with itself and its neighbours. Clearly, the EDA is not a suitable vehicle for the propagation of the principles of SSR.

Promoting security sector reform in Eritrea

It should be clear from the above that any meaningful SSR in Eritrea will only be possible once the current dictatorial political system has come to an end. Political change may be achieved by the selective support of opposition parties who promote conditions for change inside the country, and by the mobilisation of regional and international pressure for the implementation of democratic elections in Eritrea and organisation of a caretaker government in exile. Such a government is most likely to be successful if it is established around political personalities who have the support of the Eritrean people and enjoys the confidence of the region.

Conclusion

The essence of the concept of SSR aims at the democratisation of the security establishment in the developing world. The normative language of this complex programme reflects the need to subordinate the military and other security establishments to the imperatives of constitutional and democratic governance.

In Eritrea, the current dictatorial system uses the concept of 'nation-building' as an instrument to legitimise its actions. The stated aim of Issayas is to strengthen the material base of Eritrea by rapid industrialisation and modernisation; his immediate goal, however, is to maintain exclusive political/military control over the Eritrean people and territory.

In reality, Eritrea is a guerrilla state that exercises totalitarian tyranny at home and aggression abroad. The humanitarian issue is fast assuming the character of genocide. In the name of securing the future, Issayas has dissipated the

present; in the name of national unity, he launched civil wars; and in the name of territorial correctives, he warred against his neighbours.

The unbearably expensive security and military apparatus of Eritrea has isolated it from the other states in the Horn of Africa. There is no entry point for SSRs in Eritrea under the current dispensation. It is hoped that Africa takes up the cause of the Eritrean condition for democratic correction.

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CHAPTER 5

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES FOR SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Medhane Tadesse

Introduction

In the past decade, security has emerged as a vital component of national and international policy in conflict-affected societies. The end of the Cold War had a tremendous impact on the concepts of governance, democracy and security. This is partly because the threat of a world war, conventional or nuclear, was greatly reduced and broad issues of human security, particularly democracy, became the new focus. As the limitations of military-based security arrangements become more evident, it underscored the need for new approaches to security that avoid the conflicts of the past between the security interests of states and the security interests of their populations. These developments have resulted in growing recognition of the need for the international community to address the twin imperatives of security and development through more integrated policies and programmes (A survey of security sector system reform and donor policy 2003). This has also given rise to a range of new normative developments, policy initiatives and operational programmes which are aimed at preventing and resolving violent conflicts, consolidating peace following war, and facilitating reconstruction so as to avoid renewed violence. The security sector reform (SSR) agenda is largely rooted in the search for solutions to the challenges faced by multilateral and bilateral donors concerned with development and peace consolidation in the aftermath of the cold war.

SSR has its origins within these peace-building initiatives and is designed to link the development and security agenda at the policy and programming levels. European regional institutions emerged as key players in the re-conceptualisation of the security-development trade-off, partly as a consequence of their involvement in peace processes, but also as a direct result of the fact that changing regional relationships affected their own security concerns. Discussions about the enlargement of the EU and Nato were instrumental in raising the profile of SSR, mainly because the reform of candidate members' security establishments was a condition for eventual membership (Caparini 2003; Chanaa 2002). The new thinking resulted in a change in global governance approaches, especially on the polarised African

continent. Governments were faced with the challenges of establishing democratic accountability and the control of the security apparatus (Ball & Fayemi 2004).

Recently the place of the security sector has come under intense, but legitimate scrutiny in Africa. SSR as an emerging field of theory and practice is increasingly serving as a powerful organising force among African academics and international actors dedicated to conflict prevention and poverty reduction. There is a growing appreciation for the links between SSR and broader issues of development, good governance and conflict resolution. National governments, intergovernmental bodies and international actors have taken on board the view that addressing conflicts on the continent requires a security sector that has a more nuanced understanding of security issues (Ferguson & Isima 2004). The Horn of Africa region is one of the most unstable and conflict-prone areas in the world and SSR is critical to alleviating this instability. Indeed, an abiding theme in this paper is that most of the problems of peace and governance in the region are in many ways linked to the nature, history, culture and conduct of the security systems.

The Horn of Africa region has rarely known peace, prosperity or democracy. This could be explained largely by its history and geography. The challenge of identifying obstacles for SSR in the Horn of Africa is thus the challenge of undoing the legacies of recent conflicts and wars. The main contextual variables are the constitutional and legislative provisions that deal with governance in general and security in particular, and the historical development of the state and the security services. In this regard some fundamental questions about the nature of states and society in the region must be raised and answered, which will be the main focus of this paper.

The paper begins with the premise that any strategy for SSR in the Horn must be based on a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the overall regional and national contexts. Crude, simplistic and incomplete analyses are unproductive and have the potential to undermine the whole process of reform.

The first section highlights the most obvious obstacles to SSR in developing countries, which are also relevant to many African countries. The second section deals with the unique problems of the situation in the Horn of Africa and a diagnostic framework for analysing and overcoming the obstacles is presented. By so doing it informs not only the debate on how to design a workable strategy for SSR but also indicates the general approaches and specific directions that need to be adopted to resolve the conflicts in the region. The purpose of the final section is to facilitate a comprehensive view

of the most obvious obstacles to SSR in the Horn of Africa region. It is a framework for analysis, not a checklist.

Obstacles to security sector reform in developing countries

Many developing countries are characterised by some or all of the following phenomena:

- Weak governance (lacking authority, power, capacity and resources)
- Absence of a democratic culture and weak institutions of democracy
- Internal security threats (insurgency, militia forces, a culture of warlords and gangs, violent crime, etc)
- Lack of staff (weak or no civilian departments, etc)
- Lack of knowledge (the operational dimensions of civil–military relations, etc)
- Lack of functional skills (planning, budgeting, or financial control, etc)
- Lack of advanced skills (threat analysis, formulation of policy, doctrine and legislation, etc)
- Lack of resources (communications, salaries, computers, etc)

In developing countries where SSR is on the agenda, there is a tendency to attribute the slow pace or lack of reform to incompetence and/or political resistance on the part of governments (A survey of security sector system reform and donor policy 2003). Outsiders frequently underestimate the complexity and long-term nature of SSR processes for the development and transition of states. They then attribute the lack of reform to a failure of political will. This may be a contributing factor, but other considerations may play a role too. In such an incomplete and narrow perspective the difficulties and complexities of SSR are ignored and there is a failure to distinguish between ideological, personal, organisational and structural obstacles to change. Such distinctions are important because different types of obstacles require different types of responses. The dangers of incomplete and crude analyses are that donors may apply inappropriate pressure on the government, for example pushing governments to move more quickly than is sound.

Understandably, the obstacles in most new democracies are immensely complex and multi-layered. A large number of policies have to be transformed; the required changes are likely to be substantial and radical given the undemocratic and militarist nature of security policy under authoritarian rule; and the reforms require significant changes in the organisational structure and the expertise, skills, disposition and behaviour of staff (Nathan 2006).

The complexity is increased by the general lack of skills and expertise on managerial, planning, financial and policy levels in the new governments. Even though their intentions may be good, members of the executives and parliaments might be unfamiliar with contemporary debates on security and with the range of policy options that are open to them. A tendency towards conservatism and a reliance on traditional security perspectives are natural in these circumstances. After all, good governance in the security and other sectors is not limited to adherence to the fundamental principles of democracy. It also entails efficiency and effectiveness in performing the functions of the state. Most developing countries lack the skills, expertise, infrastructure and resources to meet the welfare and security needs of citizens. Without the requisite institutional capacity, the values and principles of democracy cannot be 'operationalised' and insecurity remains the pervasive sentiment. Thus, the main question is to what extent have poverty, under-development, poor infrastructure and fragile social groupings become an obstacle to reform and good governance. What can be done to advance SSR alongside efforts to mitigate poverty in the Horn of Africa region?

The nature of the state in the Horn of Africa

Most of the states in the region do not represent the interests and character of their populations (Tadesse 2003). Transforming the nature and identity of the state will greatly advance the cause of peace and democracy, hence facilitating SSR. Therefore, what is required is democratic transformation of the state. To this effect SSR must be understood and pursued as a democratising process, which is to say that it must form part of the struggle to construct and entrench democracy, a project largely denied or delayed in the Horn of Africa region. The problem largely centres on a failure to abide by the general principles of democratic governance. In fact, the very nature of the state is at the heart of the conflicts in the region. Governments run by small elite groups with partisan agendas and a militarised conception of security are sources of turmoil and difficult to reform (Tadesse 2003). Such regimes do not know (or do not care to know) where their true national interests lie. They are incapable of designing a broad-based and long-term national security strategy.

Indeed, an enduring factor that contributes to conflict is the unpredictability in the determination of the national interests of the state. Most African governments are unpredictable, in part because security policy is centralised within a small group of political and military leaders with short-term perspectives. Unless African governments are encouraged and supported to acquire the capacity to design long-term and broad-based national security strategies (a major pre-requisite for successful SSR), they will continue to be unpredictable and prone to conflict and instability. Security systems are at the heart of the political process in the region, but efforts to reform them have proved to be extremely difficult.

Resistance to and lack of political will and leadership for reform is often encountered in various actors that should be driving the process and is characterised by the following:

- Opposition to democratisation and change by national political leaders
- Opposition to change by faction and local level leaders
- Personal considerations (maintaining positions of power, influence and patronage)
- Organisational considerations (for example fear of change, institutional inertia, conflicting views, misunderstanding and confusion)

The problems mentioned above are common to most developing and African countries. Experience has shown that substantial policy and organisational transformation is regarded as an inherently threatening process and as such generally gives rise to resistance and conflict. Resistance, inertia and confusion are inevitable where security services officials are expected to implement (and often design) new policies that are completely at odds with their training, experience and world view.¹ This is particularly true if new policies represent wholly new paradigms. The inertia mainly stems from the capacity problems mentioned above.

External obstacles to security sector reform in the Horn of Africa

External actors seeking to encourage or support a holistic, people-centred approach to security can maximise their impact in various ways. There must be a willingness to countenance a significant degree of local control in determining how security is provided and in determining the priorities

for reform. Support strategies should also be based on a comprehensive assessment of the political, institutional and economic factors that influence the security environment and the functioning of the security system. The lack of experience on the part of the donors could be an obstacle in itself. There are very few examples of integrated international assistance programmes in which development and security participants cooperate to inform policy and programme components.

Development and security assistance should be integrated so as to facilitate national strategic reform efforts. SSR is relatively new, particularly in the Horn of Africa, and has not yet been fully integrated into donor country policies and programming. Because of the parochial security interests of the major donor countries, assistance strategies remain overwhelmingly focused on the reform, often operational, of traditional security agencies (the military, police and intelligence services) while its governance dimension is downplayed (A survey of security sector system reform and donor policy 2003). The war on terror, which has significantly contributed to this problem, will be discussed separately below.

General difficulties experienced in SSR processes driven by donors include the following:

- Failure to link conflict resolution with SSR programmes
- Conflicting donor policies in the security domain
- Donors who pursue partisan political agendas
- Donor effort which is not coordinated
- Donors who impose solutions and undermine local ownership
- External actors who promote counter-terrorist measures that prevent or weaken democratic reform

In almost all developing countries undergoing SSR, the problems listed above are likely to exist to some extent. But the countries of the Horn of Africa region do face some unique challenges.

One of the particular challenges in all the countries that form the Horn of Africa, except Kenya and Somaliland, concerns how to initiate and sustain an SSR programme where former liberation movements and military regimes are

in power and simultaneously assist with the transformation to democratically controlled national institutions. Therefore each of the problems listed below should be considered in terms of the extent to which they exist in each country in the Horn of Africa, what form they take and how severe they are, rather than in terms of a simple 'yes' or 'no'. If they have a thorough understanding of blockages and constraints, it will enable agents of SSR to deal with every problem. A major theme of this paper is that if it is possible for SSR strategists to deal with the political culture of militarisation on a case by case (or country by country) basis, conflicts will be pre-empted and over time peace will prevail in the Horn of Africa region. Ultimately, the solution is to dismantle the prevailing armed consciousness in the region.

Heavy militarisation

North East Africa is a heavily militarised area. The countries of the region maintain substantial armed forces and security organisations, and many of their leaders have emerged from a background in the army or a liberation front. The most obvious legacy of former regional conflicts is weaponry, the availability of which is a given. Arguably, demilitarisation depends on the resolution of these structural problems and the consolidation of democratic and stable governance. In mainstream disarmament circles, a positive causal relationship is advocated between disarmament and security, by means of development. In reality, the relationship starts with democratic and effective governance, which leads to disarmament by means of security.² The higher the level of instability and violence in the national and regional arenas, the less likely it is that disarmament and other anti-militarist reforms will be accepted. The impact of militarisation on peace and reform in the Horn, however, goes beyond its structural dimensions, military spending and the availability of arms, for it is a reflection of the political cultures of the leaders and society.

Political culture of militarism

With the exception of Kenya, the governments of the IGAD region all have their roots in militarism. Militarisation in the Horn, as in many developing countries, is partly a product of structural conditions that constitute a crisis for human security and the state. These conditions include a history of civil wars, authoritarian rule, the exclusion of minorities from government, socio-economic inequity and deprivation, and weak governments that are unable to manage normal societal conflict in a stable and consensual

fashion. These conditions create a security vacuum that the state, groups and individuals seek to fill through the use of violence, sometimes in an organised and sustained fashion and at other times in a spontaneous and sporadic manner. Many of the ruling parties in the region, for example in Eritrea, Uganda and Ethiopia, came to power in the 1980s and 1990s after years of protracted armed struggle. These countries have thus never known democracy.

Even in earlier times most of these countries evolved a culture which gave precedence to martial values and short shrift to compromises, trade and civic values. Although they engaged in a popular struggle, supported social transformation of their peoples, sought justice for their marginalised communities, and called for democratic transformation, the ruling parties have proved to be true heirs to the militarised history of their respective countries. Moreover, notwithstanding their years in power, they still retain the perspective of a liberation movement with a security orientation. As a result most of them have failed to evolve into parties with democratic ideologies and have been equally unsuccessful in bringing about a democratic transformation of their countries (Tadesse & Young 2005).

In any challenge to their power or push for pluralism, these ruling parties resort to force with their leaders vowing to crush their opponents, removing parliamentary immunity even from members of their party who voice dissent, and sending the army on to the streets to deal with protesters. In the event of any political crisis, these parties all proved to be unable to make a political response and instead drew on their traditions as a liberation movement and defined the problem as a security issue that could be dealt by security measures.³ Most importantly, they consider use of force a legitimate option at any time for any problem, rather than a last resort. The use of force, which is regarded as a characteristic of swift and decisive decision-making, to deal with political demands has been a defining element in their *modus operandi*, spiralling manageable tensions to violent conflicts.

At the heart of all these states are small elite groups consisting of security officers and military commanders who hold the reins of power and make the most important decisions without reference to legislatures or civilian colleagues in government. It is fair to say that most of these individuals make no distinction between politics and security, and the use of force is not a last resort but rather an intrinsic part of the political calculus. True, most of the ruling parties have in this regard only proved to be true heirs to their respective countries' militarised history, but they gave it new life by adopting extreme political agendas.

The political culture of militarism is encountered at state or national level as well as at local level, as is reflected by militarised ethnic, tribal and youth groups.

Whether in its extreme nationalist form in Eritrea, in the form of a radical Islamist security state in Sudan, or with a leftist tinge in Ethiopia, or with both leftist and populist trends in Uganda, post-liberation militarisation is being used to construct an impressive security apparatus to protect those in power and block the transition to democracy (Tadesse 2005). This represents a huge and unique challenge to SSR in the Horn of Africa region, and is a complicated and under-researched phenomenon.

It is in the nature of liberation movements to operate covertly, maintain high levels of secrecy, be pre-occupied with internal and external security, place great emphasis on organisation, advocate dogmatic military and political philosophies, and give respect to authority and hierarchy. Equally intrinsic to liberation movements is a concern with force, both outwardly directed at the enemy (which is all too frequently defined as any organised group which does not give it support) and as the ultimate means for maintaining the discipline of its members. Martial values, in particular strength, fighting ability and bravery, are highly esteemed.

Moreover, in the highly ethnically conscious Horn of Africa, tribes invariably serve as the most useful elements for purposes of mobilisation. Useful though these values are during times of war, they may well become obstacles when the liberation movement assumes state power. Moreover, none of these values are conducive to democratic ideals. Thus the complexity of this problem is compounded by the militarisation of whole communities mainly along national borders of the IGAD countries. Throughout the Horn, from Darfur to Somalia, certain ethnic groups have literally become tribes in arms, their social structure and even sense of identity closely bound with their military organisation and the AK-47 (De Waal 2005).

Can progress towards peace and democracy be achieved in governments controlled by former liberation fronts? If so, how might this impact on the prospects of initiating an SSR programme? The challenge of identifying the obstacles which stand in the way of SSR in the Horn is one of undoing the legacies of the wars of liberation, and this study represents an attempt to point the way for such a strategy.

Militarism is blended with a strong commitment to political agendas to create ideologies in arms. Here ideology refers to the distinctively Marxist

(and in the case of the Sudan, Islamist) intellectual frame of reference of the leading members of most of these governments (with the exception of Kenya), and to its influence on many of their attitudes and policies. In fact, this is not unique to the current leaders of the Horn countries and it is certainly the case that almost all educated Africans of their generation held the same views.

For many of those who remained in the towns, Marxism lost its allure as a result of the brutality and appalling acts committed in its name. But for the leaders with a background of liberation wars, who adapted it as an ideology of a successful insurgent warfare, their deeply held Marxist precepts were reinforced by their eventual triumph.⁴ While some hold Marxism to be essentially a methodology or a means to understand social reality, Marxism increasingly became a dogma to some leaders. Instead of creative leadership, these leaders referred to Marxism for 'correct' answers to problems. And once these answers had been found, the debate was over. What started out as an ideological approach to problem-solving became something close to a religious undertaking, with all the certainty that implies.

The post-liberation militarisation legacy of liberation wars led to an over-emphasis on secrecy, the right to rule (one-party rule or dominant-party democracy), regimentation and the right to monopoly of power. It contributed to weaknesses in civil administration and dispute resolution because it weakened civilian society, led to a decline in intercommunity dispute resolution mechanisms, resulted in poor civil administration at all levels, and excluded traditional leadership, amongst others.

It is no accident that almost all these ruling parties, particularly their leaders, are only nominally committed to liberal democracy, which they may plausibly be assumed to have adopted largely to appease outside donors. Their own preference is for a very different form of 'democracy'; one founded on essentially Leninist concepts of representation, in which a democratic government is one which authentically represents the interests of the broad masses of the population, and rival parties – which can not by definition represent those interests – are judged to be illegitimate. With this mindset there is little prospect of these governments demonstrating the necessary political will for reform and permitting themselves to be challenged by strong and independent civil/political institutions.

Despite their evident success in adapting to the changed global situation since the end of the Cold War, these precepts, in the view of the author,

continue to inform their behaviour – from their views of their right to rule to their attitude to political dissent; from the claim that they are the sole proponents of the correct line to the intrinsic suspicion towards civilian society and the ‘democratic centralist’ organisation of their party structures.

The war on terror and security sector reform

The dramatic changes in the international environment which followed the events of 11 September 2001 have also led to a reordering of priorities and a redefinition of interests and national security agendas in the region. Reports on similar studies in other regions underscore the need for careful analysis of the way in which the ‘war on terror’ is affecting international efforts to respond in a more integrated manner to security and development problems (Tadesse 2004).⁵ The US’s ‘global war on terror’ has the potential both to reinforce the search for stability and undermine it. It does also have to compete with other stated policy objectives, such as democratisation, conflict resolution, peace and security, and human rights, particularly when it comes to funding.

The above should draw the attention of scholars and policy-makers to what can be called the collateral damage of the ‘war on terror’ on SSR and the way that ‘security’ is being conceptualised and understood both among donor countries and their partner states. There are already signs that issues of governance is receiving less attention; the emphasis is shifting from ‘soft’ or ‘human’ security to traditional or ‘hard’ security; Cold War partnerships with dictatorial regimes are being revived; and local opposition is being suppressed and local struggles for group rights being undermined by labelling them terror. Unfortunately, the Horn of Africa has become one of the major centres for the war on terror.

Until the war on terror, the major challenges to peace and security in the Horn stemmed from problems of governance, resources and ethnicity. However, since 9/11 many of these problems have been set aside in the interests of the counter-terrorism agenda. Clearly, the global war on terror has led to the intelligence and internal security capacities of partner states being increased, which raises the issue of operational effectiveness versus transparency, accountability and democratic control. Thus strategies for SSR will have to be re-evaluated in the light of the influence of the war on terror on democracy, civil society and demilitarisation in the Horn of Africa as a region.

Conclusion: Overcoming the challenges

The discussion so far has shown that the basic preconditions for implementing SSR in the region have not been met. The necessary political will and space for reform with regard to the security sector is lacking. However, it may be possible to develop a different route for SSR that reflects the unique problems, challenges and opportunities in the IGAD region. It would be possible to initiate a process to influence the SSR agenda in the region that would create a constituency for SSR at national and regional levels during the next couple of years. The context dictates that the best way to approach the SSR agenda is to start by increasing the understanding of the security sector and stimulating open debate on national security strategies. The peace processes in Somalia and Sudan also provide unique opportunities for an SSR agenda. Regardless of difficulties that there may be, there is no other alternative than to engage the current governments.

In particular, these regimes cannot be induced to change their fundamental beliefs by threats of withholding aid, nor could they be maintained in power indefinitely by maintaining or increasing aid. The aims of SSR should rather be to engage them for as long as they remain in power, unless they block reform altogether and commit further extreme acts of repression. This is not to suggest that the SSR ideals of peace, development and democracy should be set aside, but it is vital that these governments remain within the international community. As long as they are not ostracised, they may be dissuaded from actively pursuing anti-SSR policies (partly for fear of losing international support) and there is then the potential that they might be persuaded to open up and/or step down peacefully once their weaknesses had been sufficiently exposed. The individual reform activities currently being undertaken in some of the countries could also form essential entry points and building blocks for more ambitious SSR programmes.

An essential element of SSR in the context of the Horn of Africa is that SSR programmes should be developed that are based on an empirical understanding of the political, institutional, structural and cultural context in which reforms are being conceived and promoted. There is a need for *realism*, *flexibility* and *sustainability*. To achieve this:

- Programmes should be realistic in scope and recognise the risks inherent in them
- Reforms should be sustainable financially and in terms of local capacity

- Programmes must be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances
- Reforms should be based on a long-term commitment and a flexible plan of action

Creating and nurturing popular pressure for SSR is a vital aspect of developing political will. This will require the engagement of civil society and the international community acting in concert. The following are some recommendations to achieve this:⁶

- Take a long-term view
- Build a critical mass and a popular constituency for reform
- Support the development of national security strategies
- Encourage local ownership
- Ensure that the process of reform is consultative
- Use vocabulary that is politically less sensitive than 'reform', for example 'governance', 'modernisation' or 'improvement'
- Link capacity support to governance reform
- Ensure donor coordination
- Identify soft sources of leverage: legal frameworks, constitutional obligations and international standards
- Distinguish between 'sceptics' and 'spoilers'
- Target opponents of change and the 'indifferent majority'

As was stated in the introduction, the Horn of Africa region is one of the most unstable and conflict-prone areas in the world and most of the problems of peace and governance in the region are linked to the nature, history, culture and conduct of the regional security systems. The achievement of sustainable peace and stability thus requires a fundamental re-look at the security establishments of the region. SSR is central to peace and stability in the Horn. While SSR is a critical issue, it needs to be grounded in an understanding of regional realities, both past and present. Any strategy for

SSR in the Horn must be based on a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the overall regional and national contexts. This will require a concerted effort by all stakeholders working in a participative and collaborative manner.

Notes

- 1 Key ideas were taken from my discussion on issues of SSR at Bradford University in the UK, in January-April 2005. Laurie Nathan and many others have made similar observations.
- 2 This section also benefited much from the discussions I had with experts on SSR at various international conferences.
- 3 How the three ruling parties treated opposition leaders and splinters from their ranks in the years 2000, 2001 and 2005 proves this point.
- 4 Some Ethiopianists, particularly Christopher Clapham and John Young, attribute the difficulties of democratic transition in the countries in question partly to the legacy of Marxist armed insurgency.
- 5 Presentations by the same author on human security and SSR in Maputo (2003), Benin (2004), Nairobi and Kampala (2005) also highlighted the potential impact of the 'war on terror' on human security in the region. Other documents, such as 'A survey on security sector reform and donor policy: views from non-OECD countries 2003, have raised the concern of the potential impact of the 'war on terror' on global security agendas.
- 6 The ideas outlining the strategy greatly benefited from the presentations at Bradford University in the UK, and particularly those by Christopher Cushing (28 March 2006) and Dr Ann Fitzgerald (29 March 2006) on designing and evaluating SSR.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The point of departure of this monograph is two studies of SSR, namely in South Africa and Sierra Leone, that offer a chance to compare SSR issues in two different African countries.

In the South African case study the focus is on parliamentary oversight of defence transformation in South Africa. The author demonstrates the importance of political will and ownership in such a process, as well as the imperative of developing a constitutional, legislative and policy framework for reform. The processes that led to the formulation of the South African Defence White Paper (1996) and Defence Review (1998) were exceptionally participative and transparent and contributed to a large degree to the achievement of a broad-based consensus on defence. Other identifying features of defence transformation in South Africa is that it occurred after an internal political solution had been reached and that it was nearly totally internally driven, without donor involvement. This is rather unique for Africa. It is submitted that the processes used by South Africa in defence transformation can serve as an example to other countries facing the imperative of reform after transition to democracy. The South African process was conducted in sub-projects focusing on integration of all ex-combatants into the new South African National Defence Force (SANDF), the establishment of the civil oversight and control mechanisms to manage defence transformation in a democratic society, the establishment of a policy framework for defence in the new South Africa, the development of the force structure to support policy, and the rationalisation (rightsizing) of the SANDF to fit to policy. The way in which this process was conducted can certainly serve as a template for future SSR processes.

By contrast, the Sierra Leonean case study is an appropriate example of SSR in post-war reconstruction under international tutelage. In it the argument is made that, despite the need for external support, SSR programmes should be locally owned and driven to be sustainable. The author also strongly advises that there is a need for effective coordination of the activities of the various international actors involved in support of SSR programmes. As in the South African case study, the argument is that SSR programmes should go beyond

the limited objective of retraining and restructuring formal security institutions and should focus on strengthening the oversight capacities of parliament, the judiciary and civil society. Regardless of the constitutional and legislative framework, in the absence of strong civil mechanisms to provide oversight functions over the security forces there are very few prospects of long-term success. The Sierra Leonean case study is especially valuable as reform is discussed of not only the armed forces, but also of the police, judiciary and intelligence services, as well as parliamentary oversight bodies. General lessons to be taken from this case study include the need for serious efforts by the government and donors to actualise the four broad categories of a reform programme, namely strengthening democratic control of the security institutions, amongst others, by professionalisation of the security services, strengthening the rule of law, and enhancing the capacity of civil institutions for effective oversight; adequately equipping the security forces for their tasks; improving the conditions of service of members of the security forces; and promoting good governance.

In his paper Ishola Williams argues that SSR programmes in Africa pay scant attention to the African realities. He submits that even though the threats to African security are new and asymmetrical, the thinking and actions of African SSR scholars and practitioners are fixated on the Eurocentric model. He strongly argues that human security should be placed at the centre of the SSR paradigm. As people worldwide are concerned with their safety in their respective countries, one issue of the SSR agenda should be public safety, with a people-oriented focus. National security, according to Williams, consists of public safety, internal stability and defence. In this equation public safety means the capacity of the state or community to prevent crime or activities that will disturb public peace. Internal stability is ensured when the state rather than the community has the coercive means and – if possible – the monopoly of those means to suppress any breach of public safety or destabilisation of the state at all levels, while defence refers to the capacity of the state to defeat any external aggression against the territory and its people. Williams goes on to argue that defence can best be assured by regional and sub-regional cooperation within the AU and regional economic community mechanisms. Therefore SSR must take note of African realities and not simply use Eurocentric models to design African security apparatus. The fundamental questions of ‘security against what’ and ‘security for whom’ must be addressed as the starting point in any SSR programme.

In the next two papers the focus is more particularly on the Horn of Africa and the challenges to SSR in this region.

In the Eritrean case study the argument is made that SSR envisions constitutional, democratic and public control of security services. Given the historical involvement of the security services in causing and perpetuating instability in the Horn, SSR is certain to go a good distance towards improving the dismal human condition in the Horn. The essence of the concept of SSR is that it aims at the democratisation of the security establishment in the developing world. The normative language of this complex programme reflects the need to subordinate the military and other security establishments to the imperatives of constitutional and democratic governance. The argument is, however, that the totalitarian dictatorship that prevails in Eritrea does not permit an entry point for the implementation of SSR and the conclusion is that democratic change in Eritrea is a fundamental prerequisite for future successful SSR.

In his paper on overcoming challenges for SSR in the Horn of Africa region, Medhane Tadesse submits that the challenge of identifying obstacles to SSR in the Horn is tied to the challenge of undoing the legacies of recent conflicts and wars. The region is one of the most unstable and conflict-prone areas in the world and most of the problems of peace and governance in the region are linked to the nature, history, culture and conduct of the regional security systems. The achievement of sustainable peace and stability thus requires a fundamental re-look at the security establishments of the region as a whole. While SSR is critical, it needs to be grounded in the understanding of the regional realities, both past and present, if it is to have any chance of success. Therefore any strategy for SSR in the Horn must be based on a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the overall regional and individual national contexts. This will require a concerted effort by all stakeholders working in a participative and collaborative way. Tadesse argues that there is a need for realism, flexibility and sustainability, which will require SSR programmes that are realistic in scope and recognise the inherent risks; reforms that are sustainable financially and in terms of local capacity; programmes that are flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances; and a long-term commitment and flexible plan of action. Creating and nurturing popular pressure for SSR is a vital aspect of developing political will for change. This will require the engagement of civil society and the international community acting in concert.

The Horn of Africa faces many challenges as the region moves from an era of conflict into a new era of democratisation and peace-building. SSR is one of the key ingredients to ensure the sustainability of such democratisation and peace-building processes. As Thandi Modise states in her paper, SSR should aim at the establishment of security services that are appropriate

to the real needs of the people and have adequate means to exercise their responsibilities effectively and efficiently. At the same time, however, they should be accountable to civil authority and affordable within the resource restrictions of African states. Inappropriately designed and structured security services, incapable of providing adequate service delivery, that place an undue strain on the economic resources of developing nations and that are accountable to no-one and a cause unto themselves, will harm rather than further the processes of democratisation and peace-building.

The challenges of SSR in the Horn of Africa will obviously differ from country to country, in line with their particular circumstances. The reason for reform and the specific goals, too, will depend on local political, economic, social, security and institutional circumstances. Every country's experience and every country's starting point will be different. Nevertheless, there are factors that are common to all SSR processes.

In this monograph some of experiences of SSR on the continent have been highlighted and some lessons have been drawn from them. It is hoped that these experiences and lessons will be of assistance as countries in the Horn of Africa face up to the challenges of SSR that lie ahead.