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African Armed Forces and the Challenges of Security Sector Reform

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INTRODUCTION

A major shift within the thinking of bi-lateral donor organisations, international financial institutions and development agencies is beginning to occur around the issue of what is commonly referred to as "security sector reform". This is a significant development which carries with it both opportunities and nascent risks for the donor community. Traditionally donor bodies have tended to treat security sector issues in one of two ways. Firstly, they have tended to see security sector restructuring and assistance as being the preserve of either their foreign ministries or, more appropriately, their respective defence establishments.

Secondly, they have, when considering issues of a security nature, tended to adopt a zero-sum approach to military expenditure. This rather simplistic line of logic (best exemplified in the Structural Adjustment Programme interventions of the World Bank over the past two decades) maintains that a reduction in military expenditure (miles) is both a "good thing" in-itself and, once effected, releases valuable resources required for the ongoing development of the country concerned.

The reality is, of course, infinitely more nuanced than such mechanistic equations would have us believe. There is no *necessary* correlation between reductions in force levels, their budgets and their respective armouries and the ongoing development of a country. Admittedly such reductions have, on many occasions, been accompanied by an increase in political stability and a redirection of military expenditure towards tangible developmental goals (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia during

their post-election scenarios for instance). Yet here are compelling examples of countries where an ill-considered security sector restructuring programme has actually bedevilled political stability and, in some cases, worsened civil-military relations (see footnote A).

The relation between security sector downsizing on the one hand and the attainment of political stability and development on the other is at best a *contingent* relationship conditioned by a host of political, economic, social and institutional factors which are utterly unique to the country concerned. It is only on the basis of a scientific and empathetic reading of these highly diverse contexts that appropriate interventions in the security sector can be made.

This article seeks to explore the likely impact of “security sector” programmes (as being presently articulated within the donor community) on African security forces in general and their armed forces in particular. It argues that the concept of “security sector reform” in Africa, far from being a novel concept, constitutes part of a long intellectual and strategic history going back to the pan-African movements of the 1950s. Strategies determining the involvement of African and non-African actors in the restructuring of their security establishments have undergone many variations over the past fifty years and presently incline in a direction that increasingly prioritise democracy, development and governance as the key cornerstones of the transformation of the security sector.

This article argues that the unique feature of current “security sector reform” concepts (embryonic as they are) are the attempts to link security sector restructuring to broader developmental objectives (the eradication of poverty for example). It further argues that the formulation of strategies designed to engage African security establishments in security sector reform processes need to be predicated on a series of inter-related concepts, principles and strategies to ensure their optimal efficacy. These include an understanding of and engagement with the following:

- a. An understanding of the origins of the security sector reform debate and its relevance to the developing world in general and Africa in particular.
- b. The key challenges confronting development agencies in entering the terrain of security sector transformation.
- c. The key concepts which should underpin security sector transformation interventions.
- d. The scope of security sector transformation interventions.
- e. The principles, critical assumptions and criteria which should underpin security sector transformation processes.

- f. Strategic options for the engagement of the security sector in Africa.

BACKGROUND : SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND THE ORIGIN OF A CONCEPT

In recent years the term “security sector reform” has begun to feature prominently in the debates of the international development community. The term itself is not new and can be traced back to the 1960s when various attempts were made by the international community to ensure that the establishment of security forces in developing countries were consistent with the developmental and democratic requirements of these countries ⁽¹⁾.

The focus during this period, however, was qualitatively different from the current emphasis being placed on the need to reform the security sectors of diverse developing countries. It tended to stress the positive role which the armed forces could play in the process of nation-building. It was strongly supportive of the role which armed forces could assist in the process of political and economic modernisation of developing countries - particularly in countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Chile where large, well-organised and profoundly modern military organisations existed. In the “new”, post-colonial states of Africa it also championed the “traditional” role which armed forces could play in guaranteeing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these countries ⁽²⁾

In Africa, Latin America and Asia the initial euphoria of independence rapidly dissipated under the collective strain of a number of inter-related factors. The independence acquired by the newly sovereign states was often little more than “flag independence”. Economic relations continued to remain either largely unreconstructed (primarily because of the ongoing dependence of developing countries on the capital and technological capabilities of their former colonisers) or were slightly modified to benefit the interests of an emerging indigenous commercial and bureaucratic elite.

The intensification of the Cold War from the mid-1960s onwards impacted substantially on the nature and scope of military, police and intelligence-related reforms in the developing world. Security assistance from either the superpowers or the former colonial powers to developing countries throughout the late 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s were typified by a number of key features:

- a. It was highly politicised and tended to follow the ideological contours of this period. Military assistance was directly linked to the extension of either the USA or the USSR’s respective spheres of influence within the developing world. Governments that were supported were chosen not on the basis of their proven commitment to democratic practise - many countries were alarmingly authoritarian and possessed appalling

human rights records. Both the superpowers and the former colonisers were more concerned with the support they could garner for their global hegemony, their political influence (particularly in forums such as the United Nations) and the ongoing preservation of their economic interests in their former possessions (the construction of tightly-knit alliances such as the Francophone bloc in Africa for example).

b. The nature of the assistance focussed more on the provision of technical assistance and the development of military-technological capabilities than it did on the normative and organisational restructuring of the security sector in question. Issues relating to the creation of democratic civil-military relations, the enhancement of legislative and executive oversight over the armed forces and the development of a military professional ethos consistent with the dictates of a modern democracy were largely ignored.

The primary objective of security assistance was to create well-equipped, well-trained and well-resourced armed forces that could, if required, maintain the government in question in power and, if so called upon, deploy forces against political groupings deemed as subversive. Indeed, the track record of both the superpowers and the former colonial powers in supporting and even organising diverse coup d'états (Zaire, Chile, Indonesia, Uganda for example) demonstrated a manifest disregard for the very principles of civil supremacy that were enshrined in their own political systems.

c. Given the nature of this assistance, it was somewhat unsurprising that this strategic approach was characterised by an over-arching emphasis on state security as opposed to the security of individuals and the security of communities. Interventions aimed at legislative reform, the restructuring of civil oversight mechanisms and the role of civil society was effectively absent from these interventions. A tradition of the "strong state" prevailed within which the security forces played a prominent and enduring role.

d. No real attempt was made to broaden the field of defence endeavour to include parliamentarians, the public and even important civilian policy sectors (the foreign policy and finance sectors for example). The management of defence became the exclusive preserve of a group of highly skilled practitioners whose interaction with non-military actors was limited and whose preparedness to divulge the arcane workings of their institution was virtually non-existent.

A shift towards a more empathetic appreciation of the role which security agencies could play within African countries most probably emerged from a number of different African and donor quarters. Notwithstanding the growing disillusionment of many African and Western intellectuals with the African nation-building project in general and the spate of coup d'états that traversed Africa's fabric during the 1960s and the 1970s in particular, events in some African countries demonstrated that armed forces did not necessarily have to conform to a praetorian mould.

The successful conclusion of liberation struggles in Mozambique (1974), Angola and Guinea-Bissau (1975), Zimbabwe (1980), Uganda (1986), Namibia (1989) and South Africa (1994) saw the emergence of national armies that were based on strong political traditions. All armies were constituted, to a greater or lesser extent, out of mass-based guerrilla armies steeped in deep and enduring political and moral belief-systems. The political and practical utility of such armies had been proved throughout the long struggles of the different countries concerned. They had fought the oppressors and attained victory, they had protected the people against the excesses of unpopular security forces, they had fought alongside fraternal liberation movements in their respective liberation struggles and they had symbolised the spirit and determination of subjugated peoples across Africa ⁽³⁾.

The high levels of legitimacy which accrued to these armies and the democratic traditions from which they emerged witnessed the emergence of a qualitatively different type of post-colonial army to those of the artificially created post-colonial institutions of many African countries. These armies unquestioningly accepted the civil supremacy of the parties under whose direction they had fought and were strongly imbued with those democratic principles which subsequently formed the basis of their new democracies. South Africa provides an example of how former guerrilla commanders were to play a critical role in fashioning the legal, constitutional and strategic principles upon which the future subordination of the armed forces was to be based.

Within the international arena, the initial tentative steps towards the inclusion of the security sector within a broader developmental orbit emanated from the donor initiatives of the Nordic countries and of the Netherlands. Increasingly the restructuring of the security sector was viewed in a less parochial and ghettoised manner than had hitherto been the case. Police reform, for instance, was not seen as an end-in-itself but was linked into the wider terrain of criminal justice reform. Military restructuring was linked to the more holistic question of national defence management - a process that included, some self-evidently, the oversight role of both the legislature and the executive. The roles and tasks of the armed forces were seen in less traditional manner than had hitherto been the case (the preparedness of donor agencies to countenance the utilisation of the armed forces in developmental and regional security roles for example) ⁽⁴⁾.

A conceptual and normative shift was evident in the content of many of the courses being presented to African countries by foreign governments. The BMATT courses and the USA's International Military Education Team (IMET) programmes increasingly began emphasising the role of stable civil-military relations in the successful management of a country's national defence function. The IMET programmes were expanded to include hitherto marginalised actors within its training schedule - most notably civilian defence officials, parliamentarians and, on occasions, even

civil society representatives (this programme has become known as the Expanded - IMET). The USA began offering an impressive array of civil-military relations programmes at its defence colleges and universities.

The British government's Department of Foreign and International Development (DFID) has most probably been the most vocal and public champion of SSR in the international aid arena. DFID's decision to include security sector reform within its developmental focus was, as outlined above, the product of an incremental development in donor thinking on the relevance of security sector reform to the broader developmental agenda:

The rationale for focusing on security sector issues - as specified in DFID's policy statement - is sound, uncontroversial and widely appreciated. Recognition is growing that unprofessional or poorly regulated security forces often compound rather than mitigate security problems. Excessive security spending may also absorb scarce public resources that would be better used in other sectors contributing to poverty alleviation. Because security-sector problems tend to be a symptom of broader social, political and economic challenges facing poorer societies, there is a strong argument for adopting a more holistic approach to development that incorporates security-sector concerns⁽⁵⁾.

What differentiates SSR from previous donor security sector initiatives is the following:

- a. Its clear normative and practical commitment to a developmental agenda. The most lucid exposition of this commitment has come from DFID in the form of its emphasis on linking security sector reform to poverty alleviation.
- b. Its normative content as exemplified by its commitment to contextualising security sector reform within the ambit of consolidation of democracy, promotion of human rights, good governance and the creation of a culture of accountability and transparency in the management of security sector processes. In this sense it is manifestly different from the ideologically inclined and technocratic approaches of those military aid programmes that characterised most of the Cold War interventions and which still continue to dominate much of the security sector assistance provided to Africa by non-African actors.
- c. The preparedness of SSR strategies to countenance a much higher degree of local ownership of the process than has hitherto been the case. Previous military aid programmes mostly saw the literal and derivative application of Western models, strategies, and doctrines to the restructuring of the security forces of the developing world.

The introduction of SSR onto the international agenda, whilst commendable, is not without its challenges however. These challenges are various and are discussed below. The aim of this article is to outline some

of the key challenges facing both the conceptualisation and the implementation of SSR strategies within an African context.

OPERATIONALISING SECURITY SECTOR REFORM : CONCEPTUAL AND TERMINOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Indigenising the concept of Security Sector Reform: From Security Sector Reform to Security Sector Transformation

The concept of Security Sector Reform, despite its laudable intentions and notwithstanding the fact that it is predicated on noble normative principles, is, currently, largely Eurocentric in origin. This should not, at a philosophical level, disqualify it from being introduced into the political discourses of the developing world. Indeed its normative content, emanating largely from the centre-left discourses of the Nordic countries, the European social democracies, the Democratic Administration in the USA, the Canadian government and the new Labour government in Britain, is remarkably similar to the vision of an African Renaissance being articulated by Presidents Mbeki, Obasanjo and others on the African continent.

A rigorous and strategic indigenisation of the concept is going to be required on the African continent if any semblance of local ownership is going to be effected and if any potential discrediting of the concept, most notably from certain opportunistic and predictable political quarters, is going to be avoided. Practically this will require a series of strategies to determine how SSR will be internalised within the political and institutional discourses of the developing world in such a manner that it is both consistent with the indigenous traditions of the African continent and is supportive of the ongoing attempts by Africans to take control over the political processes of which they are, inseparably, a part. This begs both a series of partnerships with legitimate actors within the recipient countries to ensure that SSR succeeds.

An initial step towards such an indigenisation process is to refer to the restructuring of the security sector as a Security Sector Transformation process. The term “reform” has many pejorative connotations within the African environment. Politically it is often associated with the implementation of policy decisions from “above” without an attempt to secure the broader participation and consultation of non-state or legislative actors. Many of the “reform” strategies adopted by diverse African countries have had, as their objective, the legitimisation of unpopular regimes and have failed to meaningfully alter the existing balance of power within both the state and society.

Transformation, for its part, is a wide-ranging concept that encompasses a variety of inter-related fields. Transformation processes, if thoroughly pursued, impact upon virtually all aspects of an organisation's existence and, as such, require astute management if the success of such processes are to be ensured. For Transformation processes to be successful it is essential that three mission success factors are acknowledged during the management of the process itself:

- a. The importance of providing decisive and strategic leadership over the process itself.
- b. The importance of ensuring that high levels of legitimacy ("buy-in") accrue to the process.
- c. The importance of determining the scope of the transformation process itself - organisational culture, traditions, leadership style, racial and gender composition etc.

In essence four major transformation "clusters" can be determined within the management of any transformation process:

- a. **Cultural transformation.** This entails the transformation of the culture of the institution in question, the leadership, management and administrative ethos of the institution and the traditions upon which the institution is predicated. It also entails the transformation of the value system upon which the institution is based.
- b. **Human transformation.** This entails the transformation of the composition of the institution with regard to its racial, ethnic, regional and gender composition and its human resource practises.
- c. **Political transformation.** This process strives to ensure that the conduct and character of the institution in question conforms to the political features of the democracy within which it is located - acknowledgement of the principle of civil supremacy, institution of appropriate mechanisms of oversight and control, adherence to the principles and practises of accountability and transparency etc.
- d. **Organisational transformation.** This constitutes a more technocratic process within which the organisation in question is right-sized, its management practises and its diverse organisational processes made more cost-effective, and its ability to provide services render more efficient.

Wide-ranging transformation processes of the type referred to above are immensely difficult to accomplish in their entirety as the transformation of the Lesotho, Sierra Leone and, partially, the South African security sectors

have demonstrated. Shifting priorities, resource limitations, skills deficits, weak leadership and the sheer novelty of the transformational terrain may bedevil such initiatives. The restructuring of the security sector of many African countries, particularly those that have emerged from either an authoritarian or violent past, demands, however, a visionary and integrated transformational strategy capable of ensuring that the country's security institutions do not regress into previous behavioural patterns.

During the process of managing transformation processes it is critical to ensure that the terminology utilised is both conceptually and practically accurate. The four concepts that often tend to confuse African defence transformation processes are the terms "civilian control" as a multiple concept, the term "control" as a singular concept, the concept of the "apolitical soldier" and the tendency to erect models of civil control that over-emphasise the role of mechanisms rather than the role of partnerships in creating robust civil-military relations. Unless adequately explained and conceptualised, and unless freed from their potential misapplication, both terms tend to create necessary divisions and antagonisms between the civil and the security sectors. These terms are outlined below.

Civil versus Civilian Control

Much of the debate regarding the subordination of the armed forces to democratic control has focussed on the centrality of ensuring appropriate "civilian control" over these institutions. This is a problematic, flawed and potentially divisive concept and needs to be critiqued from two angles -conceptual and historical - if any justice to the civil-military relations debate in Africa is to be done.

The term "civilian control", popular if somewhat misapplied, confuses the civilian content of many democratic institutions (legislatures and governments for example) with the political principle of civil oversight over the armed forces. Civilian institutions and personnel do not inherently make for more effective and accountable management and oversight over the activities of the armed forces. Africa provides a compelling example of how civilian leaders and civilian institutions can, in various forms, mismanage the armed forces towards their own partisan and often brutal political ends. Innumerable examples substantiate this assertion (as the experiences of Mobutu Sese Seko, Idi Amin, Sani Abacha, Charles Taylor and other demonstrate).

Virtually no successful military coup d'etats in Africa, for instance, has been effected without the support of significant sectors of political society, government, business and, on occasions, elements within civil society. The rise in prominence of the armed forces in South Africa during the P.W Botha period (1978 - 1989) for example was the result of Botha (himself a civilian leader) and his civilian administration "inviting" the armed forces into the executive reaches of state power. The success of the repeated military interventions in Nigeria were due, to no small extent, to the

support it received from a complex web or primarily Northern business interests, sectors of political society and certain civil society groupings (religious groupings and rural chiefs for example).

The following quote by Brigadier General S.O. Ogbemudia on the origins of the first Nigerian coup in 1965 provides a chilling example of how civilians often create the environment within which intervention can succeed:

In 1965, I was an instructor at the Nigerian Military Training College, Kaduna. The late Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu was also there. We were majors on a salary of 125 pounds per month. One of the subjects I taught was current affairs. Civilians were regular visitors to our college. Some of these civilians asked us leading questions as to what we were doing under a corrupt civilian government. We consistently replied that our duty was to support civil power. One such concerned visitor was a prominent chief from the East who was a parliamentary secretary and who felt very disturbed about the state of affairs in the country at that time. He asked Major Nzeogwu whether he and his colleagues were going to allow the trend to continue. The chief gave us six books on Nasser's coup in Egypt. With hindsight, I can recall that Major Nzeogwu started caving in when he complained that with a paltry salary of 125 pounds, there was now way he and his colleagues could do what the chief was suggesting. The rest is now history⁽⁶⁾.

The principle of "civil control" (derived from the Latin word "civis" meaning "the state") refers to those process whereby the people ensure that their representatives govern on their behalf within a democracy. This process and the principles that underpin it is not particularly unique and is generic to the study of any democratic political system. The electorate elect their representatives who serve in the legislature. The powers conferred on this body are those of legislation, approval of resources and oversight over the activities of the mandated government who governs on their behalf. In fulfilling this mandate it is the state that controls the activities of the all government departments including the armed forces on behalf of the elected representatives of the people (in theory).

This is a relatively uncontentious concept in a democracy but its conceptual origins are sometimes blurred by the tendency of many analysts and practitioners to artificially juxtapose the civilian and the military sectors in the management of a country's defence sector. Although the legislative and executive reaches of government in most stable democracies are overwhelmingly civilian in composition, this is more the product of historical circumstance and cultural peculiarity than it is generic norm. The legislatures of such countries as Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia and Uganda, to name but a few, consist of parliamentarians who mostly have a military background of one form or the other. This does not detract from their ability to perform their duties as overseers of the armed forces but rather refers to their ability to differentiate their current roles from their previous military identities.

It is a somewhat self-evident observation that civil control over the armed forces can also be achieved in situations where no semblance of democratic tradition exists. The ability of authoritarian systems (one party administrations and autocratic systems) to control their armed forces - whether via party political penetration of the institutions or the creation of parallel mechanisms of command and control - is well chronicled. The key aspect of civil control that needs to be stressed is its ability to manage and oversee the activities of the armed forces in a democratic content.

Control in the Positive sense versus Control in the Pejorative Sense

Control in the positive sense refers to two potential terrains - the terrain of political oversight and the terrain of effective management. Political control over the armed forces is necessary and desirable not simply for reactive reasons (attempts to remedy the aberrant behaviour of subordinate institutions for example) but for pro-active reasons - attempts to provide the security sector with clear and unambiguous political leadership and a coherent and intelligible policy framework for instance.

In managerial terms “control” refers to the ability of the management echelons, in this case the appropriate political and executive authorities, to manage an institution so as to ensure its optimal utilisation in support of defined objectives and its cost-effective management with regard to its resource allocation and expenditure. The management and control of the armed forces by non-military actors also provides for insights and alternative perspectives which otherwise would not have been considered by the armed forces in the course of their strategic and planning processes.

Control in the pejorative sense refers to either the misuse of the armed forces for partisan purposes or the inability or incompetence of either the political or civil authorities to manage the security forces in a professional and responsible manner. Explicit political mismanagement of the armed forces was referred to above and has occurred in innumerable African countries - often with devastating consequences. Unintended mismanagement of the armed forces through a lack of requisite policy or management expertise tends to be a more common phenomenon in the African civil-military relations discourse. Attaining a situation within which the security sectors and the armed forces of African countries can be controlled in a positive sense requires a series of interventions which are referred to in more detail below.

From “Apolitical” Armed Forces to Non-Partisan Armed Forces

The concept of the “apolitical” soldier (popular, if somewhat misapplied, in the discourses of many Third World armed forces) needs to be critically

re-examined in the course of defence transformation processes. Even in democracies and countries with little experience of the intrusion of the armed forces into the political realm, the armed forces are invariably involved in politics in varying degrees. This involvement (be it of a benign or more assertive nature) inevitably results in the penetration of political themes and concepts into the discourse and, ultimately, the very construction of the corporate identity of the armed forces (identities as diverse as those of the revolutionary soldier; the Western professional soldier of the USA and the UK, or the “Citizen-in-uniform” of the Bundeswehr).

The influence of the “political” may be manifest in an asymmetrical and differentiated manner within the practices of different armed forces depending on the peculiarities of the country concerned, but is always present at the heart of their activities. This may be reflected in the constitutional obligations to which the armed forces are expected to adhere, the involvement of the armed forces in the parliamentary, policy and state budgeting process, the access which the armed forces enjoy to the President as Commander-in-Chief or, simply, the different political persuasions of the different members of the armed forces.

It is not only inevitable the armed forces will be “political” but it is also perhaps desirable that they are so inclined. It is imperative that the armed forces of developing countries, and particularly those that are involved in the delicate task of consolidating democracy, are fully conversant with the democratic features of the system which they serve (hence the need for a robust civic education programme amongst its members), understand and are integrated into the government’s key policy initiatives (especially when these relate to the encouragement of domestic development and stability) and are able, on a discursive and interactive basis, to interact with the elected civil authorities around a range of issues critical to their national mandate.

What is critical about this “political” role, however, is the fact that it does not include the terrain of the party-political (and armed forces as such must always be non-partisan in orientation), that their partnership with the civil authorities is not an equal partnership, and that their involvement in the terrain of national policy (politics with a small “p” as opposed to politics with a big “P”) is clearly circumscribed and mutually acknowledged. It will be on this basis that a more fruitful debate on civil-military relations in developing countries, a debate less ascriptive than many of the present largely Western theoretical assumptions, will be generated.

Civil-Military Relations as Process and Civil-Military Relations as Mechanisms

The influence of Western civil-military relations concepts over the discourses of armed forces in Africa is extensive. The establishment of

robust and enduring civil-military relations systems in Africa, however, will require a judicious combination of traditional forms of civil control as they have operated on the continent with the more recent, and primarily Northern, civil-military relations “models”.

In a number of recent critiques some civil-military relations theorists have referred to the pervasive influence of the USA experience of civil-military relations over Western military sociology and have illustrated how this tradition has become universal and absolute within both the theory of civil-military relations and in its practise. Much of this tradition can be traced back to the earlier writings of Samuel Huntington who emphasised the subordination of the armed forces to a diversity of more “traditional” western-styled checks and balances emanating from regulations, military procedures, military command and control patterns, and legislative oversight for instance ⁽²⁾. However, recent critics, amongst the most eloquent being Rebecca Schiff, have challenged this tradition:

A major conclusion of current civil-military relations theory is that militaries should remain physically and ideologically separated from the political institutions. By contrast, the alternative theory ...argues that three partners - the military, the political elites and the citizenry - should aim for a co-operative relationship that may or may not involve separation but does not require it ⁽⁷⁾.

Schiff’s Theory of Concordance possess a direct relevance for both the study of civil-military relations and its practical application in the developing world. In her own words she further elaborates:

Concordance theory considers the importance of context in studying the military and society. Some of the indicators, such as military style and the inclusion of the citizenry as a partner, deal with the norms, customs, and values of particular nations. Concordance theory explains which major aspects of a nation should be in agreement in order to prevent domestic military intervention. How a particular society achieves such an agreement is largely dependent upon the nature of that society, its institutions, and its culture. That is what makes concordance theory unique : it causally predicts conditions for domestic military intervention without superimposing a particular historical or cultural context upon a nation ⁽⁸⁾

Schiff has argued, quite cogently, that the effective subordination of the armed forces to civil control is not a necessary outcome of the institutional separation of the armed forces from the civil authorities. Effective civil-military relations are achieved, in her opinion, via the extent to which political, military and civil actors find agreement, and accommodate one another, in the definition of the values and objectives of the armed forces. Within this equation disruptions to stable civil-military relations are, more often than not, caused not by the failure of formal institutional mechanisms but by a breakdown in trust and its attendant consequences.

In light of Schiff's critique and from an appraisal of the current Western literature on civil-military relations three key characteristics of the institutional separation model can be discerned:

- a. The key feature of this tradition is its emphasis on the institutional dimension of civil-military relations - the assertion that militaries should remain physically and ideologically separated from political institutions. This approach is referred to as the institutional-separation model in this article.
- b. This approach emphasises, in accordance with the institutional-separation model referred to above, the importance of formal institutional mechanisms in ensuring the subordination of the armed forces to civil control. This approach downplays the role which non-institutional forms of civil control and the role which civil society and culture can play in determining the parameters of a country's civil-military relations (what is referred to in this article as the collaborative-partnership model of civil-military relations).
- c. The corporate identity of the armed forces in this tradition is defined as being that of the professional, apolitical soldier, loyal to the government of the day and possessing its own value framework. The armed forces eschew politics and concentrate their energies on developing and applying their functional military expertise.

Not all writing on civil-military relations by Western scholars has confirmed to the current dominant institutional-separation paradigm. A number of influential Western civil-military relations scholars such as Finer and Janowitz have written extensively on the role which societal factors and non-institutional factors play in ensuring the armed forces' adherence to the principle of civil supremacy. Notwithstanding these arguments, however, Western civil-military relations theory has been dominated in the second half of the 20th century by a focus on the institutional (and hence formal, legal and constitutional) dimension underpinning civil-military relations and the importance of securing the ideological and political separation of the armed forces from the body-politic.

Whilst it is important not to dismiss elements of the Western tradition, it is equally important to avoid reifying one aspect of this tradition to the detriment of other traditions and to reclaim and reintroduce into the contemporary African debate on civil-military relations those elements of the collaborative-partnership approach that argues for the introduction of a creative range of additional measures whereby the subordination of the military to civil control can be ensured. For this reason it is important to differentiate between objective and subjective forms of control over the armed forces. Some suggested strategies as to how this could be accomplished are outlined in more detail below.

RESTRUCTURING AFRICAN ARMED FORCES : CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS, CRITERIA AND PRINCIPLES.

The restructuring of African armed forces will be inextricably determined by the specific context within which such initiatives occur. It is therefore difficult to advocate a general strategy which can be adopted by different African governments in the restructuring of their civil-military relations. It is possible, however, to provide a generic set of principles, criteria and methodological assumptions which will be applicable to all transformation processes regardless of historical, political and cultural peculiarities.

Principles underpinning the process of Security Sector Transformation

Notwithstanding the diversity of political systems which one encounters in Africa and the changing parameters of civil-military relations in all the sub-regions of the continent, any attempt to engage in a process of security sector transformation should explicitly outline those principles upon which security sector transformation will be based. The following broad principles are proposed as foundations in this regard and should, ideally, find reflection in the appropriate constitutional provisions, legislative frameworks, standard operating procedures and institutional culture of the armed forces themselves:

a. The Principle of Civil Supremacy entails four key principles which should be respected by those involved in the SSR process:

i. **Separation of Powers.** There is a fundamental division between the civilian and military spheres of government. The security forces should refrain from involvement in politics other than through the constitutionally approved channels and the civil and political elite should refrain from interfering in operational matters and the military chain of command. These respective powers and responsibilities are defined in law and are predicated on the inviolability of the Principle of Civil Supremacy in all walks of democratic life. The separation of powers between the civilian and military hierarchies does not imply that the armed forces are a passive and neutral instrument in the hands of the elected civil elite. The challenge is to ensure that the armed forces participate in the formulation of defence policy without undermining or usurping the authority of civilian decision-makers.

ii. **Legality** The principle of legality flows directly from the first principle. The powers and functions of the armed forces are determined by law, chiefly the Constitution and the Defence Act (or relevant act). The military is obliged to operate within these

parameters. One of the implications is that officers are only authorised to issue orders, and soldiers are only obliged to obey them, within the framework of the law.

iii. **Accountability.** In a democracy all state institutions, be they military or civilian state departments, are accountable to the elected civil authority. The question of accountability assumes a more prominent role with regard to the activities of the security forces given their mandate as the managers of the instruments of coercion on behalf of the state. The public and parliament require some guarantee that the security forces, and the armed forces in particular, are performing their duties according to democratically agreed policy decisions, and are not pursuing their own agenda contrary to the national interest.

This assurance is best provided through the provision of oversight mechanisms located within, primarily, the executive - such as the role of the Ministries and an Ombuds system for example - and the legislature as reflected in the powers of parliament and the oversight responsibilities of the parliamentary committees for instance. Indirect oversight can also be maintained by various organs of civil society, however, as testified to by the role played by the media and policy advocacy groups in the formulation of security policy for example.

iv. **Transparency.** Accountability at every level requires a sufficient degree of transparency and the adequate provision of information on security and defence. Formal mechanisms of control and oversight may be rendered ineffectual if critical information required by political and civilian decision-makers is absent. The major challenge is that of boundary management - where does one draw the line between the public's right to know and the need for confidentiality one in the interests of national security. There is no simple solution to this dilemma and, in practise, parliament will have to determine these limits through the passing of relevant legislation.

b. The determination of the roles, responsibilities, tasks, organisational features, and personnel requirements of the security forces should be done in a manner that is appropriate to a developing country engaged in a difficult and complex transition.

c. The determination of the roles, responsibilities, tasks, organisational features, resource requirements and personnel requirements of the security forces should be done in a manner that is affordable to the country concerned particularly in light of limited resource base and the pressing demands on her budget from all sectors of society.

d. The roles and responsibilities of the security sector should be enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution should ensure that the

security sector will respect human rights as reflected in the Constitution, domestic and international law, and will understand and operative within the framework of the democratic process within the country concerned.

e. The security forces will be non-partisan in their political behaviour and will not further the interests of and/or involve themselves in party-political activities.

f. The conduct of security policy and the management of security matters shall be managed in a consultative and transparent manner and shall encourage as high a level of parliamentary and public participation without endangering the lives of its personnel and without prejudicing the ability of the security forces to conduct legal and legitimate operations.

g. National Security shall be sought primarily through efforts to meet the political, economic, social and cultural rights of a country's people and the activities of the security sector shall be subordinate to and supportive of these efforts.

h. Both the political authorities and the leadership of the armed forces shall strive to build and maintain high levels of dialogue and partnership in all their dealings with one another. Such a dialogue should be predicated on regular and continuous interaction between the two arenas and will occur within the hierarchy of authority and oversight as established in the country concerned ⁽⁹⁾.

Whilst the afore-mentioned principles should be reflected in appropriate constitutional and legal provisions it is important to stress that they should become, over time, inscribed into the very culture and practise of civil-military relations themselves. Africa is littered with well-intentioned constitutions and capable legislatures whose efforts to ensure robust civil oversight over the security forces were rendered ineffective in the face of praetorian armed forces.

Criteria governing the Transformation of the Security Sector.

Security Sector Transformation is never mounted for its own sake but is always inseparably part of broader political and developmental objectives. This requires that a broad set of criteria govern the process of security sector transformation to ensure the optimal development of the institution in question. Some suggestions for the transformation of African armed forces could include the following:

a. Both civilian and military personnel should be involved in the process of defence management. Apart from the political benefits of such a strategy (increased legitimacy and more extensive civil-military dialogue for example) it also provides for a richer defence product harnessing, as it

does, the competencies of a range of non-military and non-technocratic actors.

b. Transformation should, somewhat self-evidently, provide for the cost-effective management of the security sector. This is often difficult to accomplish given the tension between budgetary constraints on the one hand and an increased demand for services from the security sector on the other. No instant formulae exists whereby this tension can be remedied but creative approaches can be adopted. These may include the adoption of cheaper, and often militarily more effective, defence strategies such as civilian-based defence, doctrines of irregular warfare, and an emphasis on lighter and more mobile, rather than heavier and more technologically sophisticated, armed forces.

It can also include a greater degree of centralisation of the country's military and paramilitary forces and the elimination of both organisational duplication and overlap of roles and responsibilities. Transformation will also benefit from the adoption of a flexible systems-based approach to organisational restructuring. This will ensure that organisations are created not on the basis of an ad-hoc response to security crises or on the basis of vested institutional and bureaucratic interests. Rather it will ensure that the structures of the armed forces logically reflect the ability of the armed forces to provide the services for which they are constitutionally entrusted.

c. Transformation should not adversely affect the operational readiness and the institutional capabilities of the armed forces be restructured. Whilst some initial dissonance will ripple out into the organisation (an inevitable consequence of the uncertainty inherent in any transformation process and that shift in the balance of power that will occur within the institution in question), the success of the transformation process will be measured by the extent to which it maximises the ability of the institution to deliver its services.

d. Restructuring should provide for the optimal development of human resources during the transformation process. The successful management of the long-term consequences of a security sector transformation process is critically dependant on the policy coherence, competencies, management abilities and transformational leadership qualities within the institution. These are qualities that remain under-developed in African governments in general and, to a lesser extent, within the armed forces in particular and require prioritisation if transformation is prove successful.

e. Most developing countries continue to face threats and challenges to its national interests, sovereignty and internal stability that will continue to require the maintenance, preparation and deployment of security forces in a variety of roles in the medium to long-term. Typically these tasks, based on a preliminary assessment of the country's strategic environment, will require the maintenance of the following capabilities:

- i. Routine crime prevention and criminal investigations by the Police.
- ii. Public Order policing in the maintenance of law and order by the Police and, if so ordered into service, sectors of the armed forces.
- iii. Restoration of Law and Order in those circumstances where law and order have collapsed.
- iv. Combating Internal Threats to the Constitutional Order in the form of secessionist groupings, internal insurgencies and/or political groupings using or prepared to use unconstitutional military means to accomplish their political objectives.
- v. Cross-border threats (raids, infiltrations which, in violation of international law, regional security agreements and the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty) which require the repulsion of such incursions by the Armed Forces.
- vi. If deemed appropriate by the country the armed forces can be used in a peace-keeping role

Critical Assumptions underpinning the Restructuring of the Security Sector

The management of the African security sector in general and the armed forces in particular has remained a policy arena that has largely been closed to broader public and parliamentary scrutiny since independence. It is imperative that strategies designed to transform African armed forces take stock of the very real obstacles which they may encounter in the initiation and management of security sector transformation processes. Three critical assumptions, all present in most African countries in varying degrees, are outlined below.

Firstly, the establishment of effective processes and mechanisms of civil oversight over the security sector will take time to accomplish in all those countries where such a tradition is absent. The establishment of such mechanisms cannot occur in isolation and is critically dependent on the broader relationship between the executive and the legislature. An emasculated legislature and timid parliamentary committees will serve no more than to “rubber stamp” key policy and budgetary initiatives emerging from the executive.

The oversight role played by most legislatures over the security sector on the African continent is generally weak. This is partially the product of the Anglophone and Francophone tradition from which these states have been crafted (strong executives versus relatively weak legislatures) and the central role which the state has played in directing the post-independence

development of most African countries. In those countries where this tradition is more robust this (South Africa, Mozambique and Mali) is, more often than not, the result of the mass-based tradition from which new governments were created and the prominence afforded to civil society in the national governance equation.

Building capacity within the legislative nodes of oversight will require the reconfiguration of the relationship between the legislature and the executive, the building of capacity amongst parliamentarians responsible for security sector oversight, and the deliberate facilitation of an ongoing dialogue between the executive echelons of the armed forces, parliamentarians and civilian members of the executive.

The prospects for building capacity amongst the executive nodes of oversight remains somewhat more favourable within most African governments given the fact that both de jure and de facto political power tends to reside in the executive branch of most functioning African governments. Most African armed forces resort under the political authority of a Ministry of Defence or in the case of countries such as the Swaziland, Seychelles, Botswana, and Lesotho, an institutional equivalent (normally the President's Office or the office of the Monarch).

In most of these Ministries there exists the legal and administrative framework for activating a more robust Ministry of Defence than presently exists. The involvement of non-military personnel in the management of defence matters is not a new phenomenon in post-colonial Africa. Virtually all Ministries of Defence possess the position of Permanent Secretary for Defence (also known variously as the Secretary for Defence, the General Secretary and the Principal Secretary) who is invariably the Department of Defence's Chief Accounting Officer and the administrative head of the department itself. Indeed even in countries such as Nigeroi which have endured successive military administrations, the tradition of strong civilian Ministries has persisted throughout these abnormal periods.

The oversight role played by Ministries of Defence can be greatly strengthened by the addition of new roles and responsibilities to the present Ministry of Defence. In addition to retaining the responsibility for oversight of budgetary expenditure within the armed forces, Ministries of Defence can also assume responsibility for the management of national defence policy processes and the management of the defence procurement cycle - both of these being inherently political processes that would benefit from the involvement of civilians therein.

Secondly, the "opening up" of the civil-military relations discourse will see civil society increasingly demanding a higher level of involvement in and consultation on national defence issues than has hitherto been the case. The involvement of civil society in the management of national security sector processes is complex for a variety of reasons. On the one hand civil society can play an immensely constructive role in both the legitimisation of security sector discourses and the enriching of the final product

emerging from national security sector policy processes. This is particularly the case in those countries where the institutional capacity of the state is either discredited and/or weakened.

Yet on the other hand, the involvement of civil society in security sector transformation processes can remain problematic. Civil society in Africa, as with civil societies elsewhere in the world, reflect a contradictory amalgam of interests - some progressive, some benign, some manifestly partisan. In involving civil society in security sector transformation initiatives one should be cognisant of the motives, capabilities and representativeness of these diverse groupings. Urban-based groupings often tend to be more urbane, sophisticated and familiar with broader governance issues. Many NGOs (both rural and urban) which often tend to have a more direct interest in defence and defence-related decisions (trades unions, women's organisations, veterans organisations etc) are often marginalised from defence and security discourses through lack of capacity and unavailability of resources.

The pro-active involvement of civil society groupings in security and defence discourses requires a realistic assessment of the capacity of civil society to influence the national defence debate (mostly limited in the African context), the willingness of civil society to engage with the defence sector (mostly lacking with a few exceptions such as South Africa, Mali, Lesotho and Sierra Leone), and the extent to which the fragmented articulation of interests within civil society can be either beneficial or destructive to the consolidation of democratic civil-military relations.

The incorporation of civil society into national defence planning and the national defence debate should not occur at the expense of the legislative institutions operative within the country in question. It is parliament that has the mandate to represent the electorate and it is parliament that should, ideally, be the guarantor of the will of the majority. Whilst civil society's capacity needs to be strengthened, it is the legislature that needs to benefit from capacity-building programmes - particularly via the development of analytical and policy-interrogative skills and defence parliamentarians' understanding of the defence policy, planning, budgeting and programming cycle.

The third critical assumption, linked to the critical assumptions outlined above, is that the building of a culture of consultation and openness on defence issues will take time to accomplish. The mere institution of mechanisms and processes will, in-themselves, be insufficient in creating the necessary climate of trust and tolerance within which an open-ended debate can survive. Creating this culture will require considerable maturity from the major institutional actors involved in the civil-military relations equation (executive, legislature, armed forces and civil society), the astute management of the civil-military relations interface (both formal and informal) over the medium to long-term, and the development of skills that are commensurate with the task at hand (empathy, situationally cogent judgement and facilitation skills for example).

THE CONTENT OF SECURITY SECTOR TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES

The conceptual and strategic content of SST initiatives will need to be determined in each country depending on the transformational challenges being faced by the country concerned. There is a tendency for much of the “traditional” donor assistance to focus on those issues that have traditionally occupied the Defence Ministries of donor countries - tactical training, doctrinal development, officer and non-commissioned officer development, equipment and weapons systems familiarisation, and organisational restructuring for example. Security Sector Transformation, however, has as much to do with broader strategic and normative issues as it does the “nuts and bolts” of organisational transformation.

As such SST initiatives need to focus on meta-level processes such as the national decision-making process, the role of the government, parliament and the armed forces within this process, and the inculcation of the normative principles of civil-military relations within the officer corps of African armed forces. Indeed, failure to determine the depth and the breadth of this conceptual content could lead to the under-utilisation of opportunities that are redolent with strategic potential (it could also lead, more practically, to considerable inter-agency in-fighting within the donor community and inter-departmental friction within the national governments of the donor country itself over what it is that SST denotes).

As stated on repeated occasions above, SST should, ideally, be a holistic process which integrates not only diverse actors into the national and even sub-regional defence process, but also attempts to integrate and synthesise the different levels of the SST process itself. Most African armed forces do not have the luxury, more the latitude, of dealing with their various transformational processes in a sequential manner. African armed forces are compelled, therefore, to deal with a range of transformational issues simultaneously, to the best of their ability and with often limited strategic and financial resources. To ensure the creation of healthy of civil-military relations it is essential that the following arenas are addressed during the process of security sector transformation:

- a. The clear and unambiguous elucidation of the key constitutional principles upon which the management of the armed forces will be predicated. Such principles should outline the chain of political command, the chain of military command, the roles and tasks envisaged for the armed forces and the broad democratic principles to which the armed forces should, in their conduct as professionals, adhere.
- b. The clear and unambiguous elucidation of the key responsibilities which the government has towards the armed forces of the country. These

principles should be outlined in the constitution but can also be further clarified in subordinate legislation. Such principles should include the provision of adequate resources for the armed forces to accomplish their constitutional designated missions, the provision of clear political leadership to the armed forces, and the prevention of political interference in the chain of command by the political leadership of the country concerned.

c. The provision of a clear policy framework within which the transformation of the armed forces will be managed. This generally tends to assume the form of White Papers, Strategic Defence Reviews, Concept document and Transformational strategies. The advantage of the provision of such a policy framework for both the armed forces and government is threefold. Firstly, it provides both the armed forces and government with a clear understanding of those activities upon which the resource allocation to the armed forces should be based.

Secondly, the management of such processes can provide the opportunity for government to ensure that as wide a range of non-military actors are included in the policy formulation process as possible - thereby removing defence decision-making from the hands of a small group of technocratically-inclined individuals. Thirdly, if correctly managed such processes can bestow considerable levels of legitimacy on both the armed forces and government in the management of the nation's civil-military relations and can significantly defuse the often adversarial relationship that exists between the civil and the military sectors.

d. The identification of the key strategic areas that require immediate attention during the process of managing the national defence transformation process. Given the immensity of many major transformational initiatives, the issues which transformation is called upon to address, and the limited institutional capacity to deal with these issues, it is imperative that realistic, and sustainable, interventions are made. From a consideration of defence transformation initiatives that have been completed (Namibia, Zimbabwe, Uganda), that are currently nearing completion (South Africa and Mozambique) and those that are in the process of being initiated (Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, possibly, Burundi) it is apparent that a generic set of issues present themselves for immediate consideration in the management of such processes.

These include the building of capacity amongst parliamentary oversight committees, the requirement for a clear policy framework within which the country's civil-military relations can be both articulated and managed, the successful management of the human resource issues confronting the armed forces (demobilisation, institution of equity programmes in the recruitment and promotional policies of the armed forces and transformation of the leadership, command and management culture of the armed forces), reprofessionalisation of the armed forces, and preparation of the armed forces for new roles and tasks (peace missions and Military

Aid to the Civil Community for example). Prioritisation of these issues should not be at the expense of other pertinent transformational issues (involvement of the armed forces in truth and reconciliation processes, transformation of the education and training institutions etc) but should rather strive to create an enabling environment within which the longer-term transformation of the institution can proceed.

Any transformation process that ignores the balance of power within the armed forces, regardless of the intentions, policy products and consultative nature of this process, will fail to transform the armed forces of a democratising country in any depth. It is imperative that the political leadership of the country, once it has initiated a security sector transformation process, understand both the de facto and the de jure balance of power within the armed forces.

Many African armed forces have been notoriously factionalised during the period of their post-colonial existence - a phenomenon attested to by the innumerable coups and counter-coups that pervade praetorian societies (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Zaire and Lesotho for example). Many of these factions are, however, not necessarily anti-democratic and even those countries which have emerged from decades of praetorian rule possess officers within the command echelons that are constitutionally inclined and supportive of the non-partisan and professional role of the modern military (Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa and Lesotho for example).

The transformation of the armed forces needs to ensure that progressive and constitutionally-inclined officers are deployed in those key nodal points within the command and staff hierarchy of the armed forces that are essential for long-term transformation of the institution. Typically these positions will include, particularly in the short-term, such posts as the Chief of the Defence Force, the Chief of the most influential Arm of Service within the country concerned (in most African countries this tends to be the Army), the Chief of the Military Intelligence Function, the key operational commanders (particularly at divisional and brigade level) and the defence strategy and planning staff.

In the medium to long-term it is important to ensure that the key socialising institutions within the armed forces are placed in the hands of the constitutional and professional officers referred to above. Such institutions will include the planning, personnel, education and training components of the armed forces. The transformation of the armed forces should also ensure that the institutional capacity of the civilian component of the defence head office is strengthened and that supportive military personnel are seconded to the Ministry of Defence to assist civilian managers with the formulation of realistic policy, planning and budgetary forecasts.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFRICAN SECURITY SECTOR

It is impossible to predict exactly what type of interventions should be made in the transformation of the diverse security sectors in contemporary Africa. These interventions will be conditioned by a continually changing range of political, economic and security factors. It is possible to suggest certain generic approaches to the restructuring of the security sector - approaches sufficiently broad enough to be applicable to most security sector transformation scenarios. These process considerations are outlined below and include the design of appropriate civil-military partnerships, the design of appropriate methodological principles whereby the restructuring of the defence sector can be effected, and the consideration of alternative doctrinal approaches to the design of African armed forces.

Creating Civil-Military Partnerships : Co-operation is better than Conflict

As stated above, current Western civil-military relations theory places great store on the importance of external guarantees - a range of institutional checks and balances - to ensure healthy civil-military relations. It maintains that it is via formal mechanisms of control (parliamentary oversight, civilian control over the defence budgeting process etc) that military activities can be constrained and their involvement in the political process pre-empted.

This system works to great effect in the industrialised democracies of Western Europe and is a model that is “exported” from Western countries to African countries via the military academies and defence colleges of the West as well as via the various mobile training teams on civil-military relations that work regularly throughout Africa (the International Military Education and Training Programme of the USA and the British Military Assistance Training Teams of the UK for instance). Yet the arguments privileging the role of formal institutional mechanisms of control are problematic for a variety of inter-related reasons:

- a. The first is the limited utility that this concept possesses in explaining the diverse forms of civil control that can be instituted over the armed forces which are not formal-legalistic in nature and which involve other social actors, processes and interfaces beyond those located in both the legislature and the executive.
- b. The second is the inherent limitations of formal mechanisms of control “in-themselves”. The institutional -separation model presumes the efficacy of formal mechanisms standing separate from and “above” the armed forces they seek to control, yet the efficacy of the mechanisms

depends on three critical variables (variables often absent in specific situations):

- i. Formal-legalistic measures tend to operate retroactively and only address a small area of organisational behaviour. They are designed more to prevent an abuse of power than containing the security forces within a legitimate and mutually agreed sphere of activity.
- ii. Formal-legalistic measures are largely externally focused and do not address the behavioural patterns of military officers themselves, the way they view their mission and responsibilities, and the way their seniors view their role-orientation towards the political leaders of the day.
- iii. To be effective, political control mechanisms require the political will to make them work. Given the lack of familiarity displayed by many political leaders with the world of the military, and the fact that political leaders often depend on the support of sectors of the armed forces for their political ambitions (particularly with regard to their organisational and intelligence capabilities) there is often a reluctance to fully utilise these formal mechanisms of control. This also explains the ability of the armed forces to intervene in African countries where such mechanisms have already existed - Zambia (1997), Nigeria (throughout the 1970s and 1980s) and Lesotho (1985).

Given Africa's history it is not surprising that the contours of civil-military relations practise has tended to mirror that of its former colonial masters. The influence of Western intellectual and political traditions over both the political and intellectual traditions of the developing countries of the periphery has been well chronicled by a range of scholars and political analysts alike. The economic dependence of African countries on their former colonial masters was replicated in the introduction of various political, educational and intellectual systems that were markedly similar in both form and content to those of the departing Western colonisers, for instance.

Both the armed forces of African countries and the patterns of civil-military relations which began to emerge during the post-colonial period mirrored this close ascriptive relationship between coloniser and colonised. Although the ethnic and racial composition of the armed forces of the newly independent countries changed significantly in the first decade following independence, their culture, their traditions and their corporate identity remained strongly influenced by the discourses and ideological themes of those of the Western armed forces.

The emerging patterns of post-independence civil-military relations were also marked, at the level of institutions and mechanisms, by a strong similarity between the formal mechanisms and institutions of civil control

found in the metropole and those introduced in the newly independent countries. Virtually all African countries possess, on paper at least, the battery of formal mechanisms via which, it is claimed, civil control over the armed forces is ensured - although the form of these mechanisms may vary depending on the country concerned and the politico-juridical system which they have inherited and subsequently adapted. Countries possessing of a stronger legislative tradition tend to emphasise the role of those legislative mechanisms entrusted with the task of civil oversight - parliamentary committees, ombudsman systems and approval of the budget for example. Other countries with a stronger executive culture may rely more extensively on the regulatory role of civil servants, Finance Ministries and Presidential control to ensure the subordination of the armed forces to civil control.

Virtually all African security institutions in general, and armed forces in particular, are near mirror-reflections of their former colonial security institutions. The rank structure is the same with very few exceptions (one of them having been the, largely unsuccessful, attempts by the National Party in South Africa in the 1950s to create a rank structure based on those of the original Boer Commandos), the doctrine has admitted to few indigenous revisions (notwithstanding the fact that many of the new Defence Forces were constituted out of indigenous African guerrilla armies with their own, non-Western, traditions and doctrines), their institutional culture apes that of either the British, the French or the American value system and, alas, the ideological themes that pervade their discourse are manifestly European in origin.

An analysis of the political institutions of most African countries also reveals a range of formal mechanisms designed to ensure the maintenance of stable civil-military relations that are unchangingly Eurocentric in origin. Typically these include constitutional provisions regulating the functions of the armed forces, parliamentary defence committees, public accounts committees, audit and exchequer acts, internal audits and service regulations. In some countries, fully-fledged Ministries of Defence and Military Ombuds systems exist, whilst in others creative and varied forms of both civil and civilian oversight over the armed forces have been instituted.

Yet, notwithstanding this range of formal mechanisms, the salient reality underpinning African civil-military relations (and indeed the civil-military relations of most developing countries) is the fact that in most countries the subordination of the armed forces to civil control, when this has occurred, has been achieved by a complex system of processes and interfaces of a non-institutional nature. In virtually all these countries where the armed forces remain subordinate to the civil authorities (regardless of whether the latter are democratically elected or not) real control over the armed forces is wielded via a range of subjective interfaces and partnerships of which the formal mechanisms are either a component thereof or are, alternatively, merely the formal expression of these power relations.

If African countries are to indigenise their civil-military relations tradition, and avoid this “doctrinal mannerism” referred to here, then it is imperative that some of the key assumptions underpinning current Western civil-military relations theory are revisited. A conceptual geography of civil-military relations needs to be developed that is more consistent with the realities of civil-military relations in general. The reification of one tradition and theoretical system to the detriment of other discourses can stifle and impede constructive intellectual debate as well as producing unintended political consequences if literally applied. A number of suggestions can be made regarding the proposed re-examination of the theoretical assumptions underpinning the study of civil-military relations in African countries are outlined below.

Firstly, the adoption of a more flexible and less absolute approach to the current Western civil-military relations tradition should not be construed as constituting a negative attack on the positive principles of traditional civil-military theory. The limited utility or inapplicability of certain formal mechanisms to developing countries does not detract from the principles upon which these mechanisms are predicated (the principle of civil supremacy and the importance of precisely defining the roles and tasks of the armed forces for instance). The limitation of current civil-military relations discourse lies with its ontological pretensions and not the formal, epistemological status of its central concepts. The latter can be redeemed and key categories of civil-military relations can be reconstructed via a critique of their ontological status - the manner in which they are constructed in relation to a plurality of contexts and realities. A key area of research in the future will be investigating how these mechanisms can be made more effective and, significantly, how objective mechanisms can interface with subjective mechanisms to improve the overall levels of oversight over the armed forces.

Secondly, the exploration of the hitherto neglected realm of partnerships (the subjective component) in civil-military relations does not imply an abrogation of the utility of objective mechanisms in “traditional” civil-military relations theory. The primacy of the political and the importance of ensuring the subordination of the armed forces to elected civilian government continues within this expanded scope of civil-military relations. It is via a combination of both objective and subjective mechanisms, each developed in relation to the political and cultural peculiarities of the country concerned, that effective and context-specific civil-military relations can be developed.

At a practical level, a range of practical measures can be instituted to build capacity and mutual trust between the political and civilian elite and the command echelons of the armed forces. Active involvement of the parliamentary representatives and non-military civilian experts in the defence policy process can contribute immensely to their understanding of both the nuances of the defence decision-making process and the peculiarities of military culture. Similarly, the exposure of the senior

officer corps to the parliamentary process, the party-political process and the civilian budgeting process will sensitise them to the exigencies of political and civilian rule. Joint seminars, team-building exercises, active involvement by political and civilian representatives in the reservist formations of the armed forces,, and joint visits to military installations are amongst some of the mechanisms that can be instituted in this regard. It is important to stress that such partnerships are not equal partnerships, however, and take place within the hierarchy of authority provided for by either a democratic dispensation or, where a “traditional” liberal democratic system does not prevail, a situation in which the inviolable authority of the elected civilian authority is respected (as in Uganda for instance).

Thirdly, the scope of civil military relations needs to be expanded to incorporate non-institutional actors and mechanisms into its orbit as well as a consideration of the role which both police agencies, intelligence services and, in some cases, private security companies may play in either ensuring or undermining civil-military relations. In the case of the former, the South African defence transition illustrates the critical role which can be played by organs of civil society in contributing to the shaping of the mission of the armed forces and ensuring their subordination to civil control. In the case of the latter it is instructive to note that the downsizing of armed forces in many developing countries (a product of both budgetary constraints and inter-lined donor agency/IMF injunctions) has led to a corresponding increase in the size and power of the police force and the civilian intelligence agencies. Notwithstanding the emphasis on their civilianisation, and although not equipped with the organisational and logistical ability to influence civil-military relations at a national level, they do possess the capacity to influence civil-military relations at a regional and, more particularly, a local level.

Equally perturbing has been the transfer of state functions, intentionally and unintentionally, from state agencies to private security companies - a phenomenon most vividly exemplified by the influence of the private South African security company Executive Outcomes in diverse African conflicts, and the expansion of private security companies throughout Southern Africa generally (the latter increasingly consisting of former police and military personnel drawn from both the former guerrilla armies of the liberation movements and soldiers from the old regular forces). Ultimately it may be more appropriate in many developing countries to speak either of civilian-military relations or even civilian-security relations rather than simply focussing on civil-military relations in the narrower institutional sense of the word.

Fourthly, whilst it may not be possible to erect a integrated and overarching theoretical system or an axiomatic foundational basis which proves capable of explaining all civil-military relations scenarios, it will be possible to elucidate the central values of such a project. The normative dimension of civil-military relations theory needs to be stressed and bolstered and this should be provide a lodestar for all interventions in the

civil-military debate in developing countries. The basis of this normative framework emphasises the importance of democratic civil-military relations and stresses those universal moral values of transparency, accountability and the primacy of elected government within this equation.

Fifthly, a new methodology is required which proves capable of both providing a radical critique of the assumptions of much of contemporary civil-military relations theory, as well as constituting the basis for an ongoing and active intervention in the civil-military relations debate within the developing world. It is proposed here that any theoretical revision can only be effected on the basis on an inter-disciplinary approach that incorporates into its orbit both African and Western intellectual traditions as evident in such disciplines as sociology, political science, international relations, state theory, and the critical-reflective traditions developed in such schools of thought as the Frankfurt School, Post-Modernism and elsewhere.

Methodological Considerations : Combining Force Design Logic with Open-ended Consultation

The design of forces that are commensurate with a country's political, security and economic needs are determined by a range of quantifiable and non-quantifiable variables. Quantifiable variables include such factors as historical traditions, cultural sentiments and the role which armed forces can play in the process of national building. It is difficult to attach a utility value to these force design determinants given the fact that much of their value lies in the realm of symbolic and sentimental value.

It is critical, particularly for developing countries, to develop a methodological approach to force design (be this for their military, police intelligence or paramilitary agencies) that is as logical and scientific as possible and that can be quantified in monetary terms. This is essential if force design processes, budgetary allocations and procurement policies are to be transparent and capable of interrogation by as wide a range of stakeholders as is possible.

To ensure that security sector reform proceeds in a logical and rational manner it is important that a seamless, coherent and integrated methodology is used in this process. The following is suggested:

- a. As far as possible a country's national interests (both domestic and foreign) should be determined so as to provide the basis upon which the diverse policy instruments of government can be used in support of the realisation of these interests.
- b. These national objectives should be quantified via the definition of appropriate roles for the security forces of the country concerned.

- c. The roles should be further quantified into appropriate tasks per role cluster which the security forces are and can be expected to execute in support of the country's national objectives.
- d. From a consideration of these tasks a variety of force design options for the security forces can be considered. These force design options should reflect the appropriate force levels, equipment requirements and organisational features for the security forces envisaged for the country concerned.
- e. From a consideration of the above the general resource requirements for the security sector concerned should be optionalised and this should be reflected in the appropriate budgetary arrangement for the country concerned.

Ultimately it is only possible to determine appropriate military expenditure once a methodology akin to the above has been pursued. Failure to bestow of level of logicity and predictability on force design processes will render such processes arbitrary and highly subjective. It is equally important, however, to ensure that such processes do not become unduly technocratic, that they are capable of incorporating and empowering diverse actors into this process, and that they are capable of articulating and synthesising a variety of different opinions into a coherent discourse. Two factors are important in this regard.

Firstly, it is important to ensure that such processes are user friendly to as wide a range of stakeholders and interest groups as possible. This will require the utilisation of language and terminology that is accessible and non-alienating - particularly to those groupings traditionally marginalised from the defence debate. Secondly the methodology needs be situationally and culturally sensitive to the peculiarities of the country concerned. This will demand a high level of empathy from those persons responsible for facilitating the process.

Defence debate will have to make significant strides in trying to integrate the long-marginalised "Others" into what was once a markedly restricted discourse. This will demand that the contours of the debate and the ownership of the discourse move into the broader public realm - a realm where it should, increasingly, reside. This will demand new skills and new ways of thinking from those responsible for the facilitation of this process:

".....that dealing with the "other" may entail accepting a mode of preparedness which lowers the profile and importance of "certainty" and control of the unexpected in order to maximise the capacity for improvisation and full bodily participation in the unexpected. This implies that there is not and need not be pre-established formal definitions of what behaviours or cultural traits are acceptable, or of what is compatible with state-ruled modernity. Maybe it is time to resurrect an appreciation of the full value of

“phronesis: the Aristotelean art of prudent and situationally cogent action. It also seems possible to give more acceptance to the idea of virtuoso improvisation of what is acceptable and adequate”⁽¹⁰⁾

From Threats to National Interests : What are the Armed Forces of the developing world for?

Almost all modern armed forces of the developed world, particularly during the post-Second World War period, have maintained that the primary role of a Defence Force is to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the nation. This remains its central *raison d’être*, its right to existence. Yet, is this an accurate reflection of what armed forces have been used for in the past, and the roles in which they are likely to be deployed in the future? It is contended in this paper that this is neither an accurate reflection of what modern armies, with few exceptions, have busied themselves with in the 20th century, nor of the roles which the African armed forces have been expected to execute since their establishment.

Notwithstanding the crucial responsibility of the state to guarantee the security of its citizens, much of the justification for the retention of the armed forces for utilisation in their primary role concentrates on a narrow definition of the role which “threat” plays in modern, interstate relations (such threats always being seen as that of a conventional, external aggressor). What is rather required is a “paradigm shift” that allows for the creation of new concepts and theories which are capable of explaining the role and functions of armed forces in an increasingly complex, and post-modern, world.

It has been precisely in the “non-traditional” military arenas, the secondary functions, that African armed forces have historically been deployed and are currently being deployed (peace support operations, developmental tasks, support the police, regional security etc).

Two observations can be made in light of the above if one contrasts the actual use of the African armed forces, both historically and currently, and the manner in which current African defence doctrine justifies the retention and design of our armed forces. The first is the extent to which the notion of a classic modernist Defence Force, configured to protect the country against an external conventional threat, continues to enjoy a disproportionate influence in the minds of the Defence Force planners and strategists. This appears to be the twin product of the dominance of certain concepts and categories in the minds of African defence strategists, and the historical influence of Western (largely 20th century) concepts on defence thinking (an influence that was also noted in the civil-military relations debate). Secondly, the preceding examples illustrate the extent to which African armed forces have been involved, both historically and currently, in the execution of a variety of secondary functions on a continuous and regular basis. What are the implications of this for the theoreticisation of a more appropriate African defence architecture?

The answer to the strategic and intellectual challenges outlined above lie not in a reformulation of answers, but in a reconstruction of the questions that underpin much of the logic and methodology of defence thinking. Rather than positing an external (invariably conventionally armed aggressor) as being the justification (and answer) for the question "What are Armed Forces used against?", it would be more appropriate to rephrase the question to read "What are Armed Forces for?". The answer to this question is less complex than it seems and a suggestion is made in this regard.

It would be more appropriate, it is argued here, to define Armed Forces as those policy instruments (be they landward, maritime or airborne) which are placed at the disposal of the state to manage those crises of sufficient magnitude which other state departments, either collectively or individually, are not equipped to manage. They do this because of their unique features - their ability to project force, their superior organisational abilities, and their ability, if required, to judiciously manage the instruments of state violence. The nature of those tasks which the state may expect the armed forces to execute will be determined by the short-to-medium term environment within which a country is placed specific on the basis of continually changing political, developmental and budgetary realities.

Notwithstanding the belief of most defence planners in the aphorism of "We design and budget for the primary function and we execute the secondary functions with the collateral utility derived from our primary force design", a real tension does appear to be developing between this perspective and the emerging realities of the secondary function arena. This tension is reflected at two levels. Firstly it is partially reflected in growing political and public pressure calling for the increased deployment of armed forces in their secondary roles - particularly when it concerns political and financial motivations for maintaining defence expenditure at its present levels.

Secondly, African armed forces cannot, and with growing pressure to participate in the secondary function arena will be less likely to, execute secondary functions on the basis of collateral utility. Most African armed forces have neither the budget, the equipment (in terms of inventory size and capabilities), nor the personnel to do so. A much more realistic assessment of the role which the secondary function plays in determining force design, equipment purchase and training requirements needs to be made. This is already a process with which many modern armed forces are underway - the influence of Canada's and Denmark's participation in peace support operations on their respective force designs, and the role of the UK's foreign policy requirements in determining the size and capabilities of British armed forces for instance. Some suggestions with regard to a more precise "balancing" of primary and secondary functions in African force planning are outlined below:

a. Although forces will be maintained for preservation of territorial integrity and sovereignty, these will probably tend towards cheaper, lighter and less technology-intensive forces with a strong emphasis on reservist and part-time components. Certainly a more detailed appreciation needs to be made of the extent to which under-explored doctrines such as civilian-based defence and guerrilla tactics be utilised in national defence strategy (particularly in those post-independence countries that have emerged from a liberation struggle tradition).

b. A greater recognition needs to be afforded to the secondary functions within the context of defence policy and planning. Two important factors need to be considered in this regard:

i. This does not entail an abrogation of the responsibility of the state to provide for the preservation of territorial integrity and the protection of sovereignty. It simply entails executing this in as cost effective a manner as possible and in such a way that the state does not lose the ability to execute the other tasks which the armed forces will be called on to perform in the short, medium and long-term.

ii. A prioritisation of those secondary functions for which it will be necessary to budget and design. For financial and practical reasons it is clearly impossible to budget and design for all those secondary functions listed in the “task clusters” referred to above. However, it is clear that certain “task clusters” will have a direct impact on defence budgeting and force design configuration. These will include such activities as peace support operations, border security, support to the SAPS in the maintenance of law and order, and maritime protection.

Certain “task clusters” should not be designed for, however, and should either be avoided or only executed if the armed forces have the short-term capacity to do so. These include those “task clusters” such as support to the RDP, designing for specific foreign policy initiatives, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. Allowing a developing country, and a country oriented towards the judicious use of its scarce resources, designing its armed forces solely for its primary function, appears to be a luxury that few developing countries can afford.

CONCLUSION

The security sector reform debate is still in its embryonic stages. Considerable political, practical, conceptual and strategic work still needs to be done on SSR before a fully-fleshed and sufficiently flexible SSR approach can be developed that will be easily applicable to most situations. SSR represents an ideal opportunity for both donors and recipient countries to begin with the serious task of reconstructing the battered security sector within many parts of the developing world - an architecture that has been used and abused by both colonisers and post-

independence governments alike. Abraham Lincoln's words are apt in this regard:

We can only succeed by concert.....the dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise to the occasion. As our case is new so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves ⁽¹¹⁾

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- 2.) See Morris Janowitz' "The Military in the Political Development of New Nations : An Essay in Comparative Analysis", University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1964 for an overview of these arguments.
- 3.) The armies of both the African National Congress of South Africa (Umkhonto We Sizwe) and the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army) fought together in number of different campaigns throughout the 1960s and 1970s in both Zimbabwe and South Africa.
- 4.) South Africa benefited considerably from the presence of Danish and Dutch police advisors during its protracted, and often difficult, transition between 1990 - 1994 and during its process of police restructuring from 1994 onwards. The Danish government funded a Southern African defence management programme centred at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg but including four other centres within the sub-region. The focus of the programme was the education of both civilian officials and military officers in the principles and practise of democratic civil-military relations. The British Ministry of Defence extended the ambit of the British Military Assistance Training Team (BMATT) in South Africa to include a British Defence Advisory Training Team (BDATT) which had as its brief the rendering of assistance to the country in the creation and consolidation of its executive mechanisms of civil oversight over the armed forces (most notably the restructuring of the Ministry of Defence).
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