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Financing Security Sector Reform: A Review of Official Development Assistance Data

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ABOUT THE SSR ISSUE PAPERS

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SUMMARY

Major aid donors and international organizations have become increasingly more involved in efforts to reform the security and justice institutions in developing countries over the past 20 years. Emerging doctrines on security sector/system reform (SSR) have attempted to systematize these efforts. The goal of international support for SSR has been defined as helping countries meet their security and justice challenges in a manner consistent with democratic governance. There have been difficulties, however, in putting these principles into action.

A lack of data is one of the main challenges for researchers and practitioners attempting to conduct comparisons and extract lessons to advance the debate over the suitability of the current SSR model. The existing data is not sufficient for making conclusions regarding the overall pattern of SSR expenditure — it needs to be supplemented with data that captures external assistance to projects and programs that are not accepted as developmental.

The size of external support for SSR activities is an essential element in conducting policy evaluations, and the focus of the paper, which suggests that many agencies discuss the effectiveness of SSR programming without having a system for tracking SSR assistance. The paper considers the data typically given to indicate that international support for SSR has increased, along with the context of the data collection, which often results in incomplete data.

Data tracking of all SSR contributions is required in order to obtain a clearer picture of external support for SSR and evaluate policy effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, thereby improving reform efforts across countries.

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INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, major aid donors and international organizations have become progressively more involved in efforts to reform the security and justice institutions of various countries in the developing world. The World Bank's *2011 World Development Report* suggests that strengthening the legitimate institutions that provide security, justice and jobs is crucial to break "cycles of violence" (World Bank, 2011: 2), but such efforts have been more clearly systematized in the emerging doctrine on SSR. Based on early policy interventions in South Africa and Eastern Europe and on the accumulated experience of peace-building missions, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) played a central role in codifying the SSR doctrine around a set of principles and "lessons learned" (see, for instance, its 2007 *Handbook on Security Sector Reform*). This doctrine, often understood as the concrete expression of the security-development nexus, defined the goal of international support for SSR as helping countries meet their security and justice challenges in a manner consistent with democratic governance (OECD, 2007: 21; United Nations [UN], 2008: 6).

Despite rising consensus around these goals, stakeholders seem to have found it difficult to put this set of principles into operation (Sedra, 2010: 17). Slow implementation and slow progress have led researchers and practitioners to question the applicability of the SSR model as currently formulated. The debate gravitates around the feasibility of comprehensive reform of the security sector, the required time frames, and the types of environments in which the doctrine can succeed. A serious obstacle to advancing this debate, however, is a lack of appropriate data necessary to conduct comparisons and extract lessons in a systematic manner. An array of country studies has produced invaluable information regarding individual experiences, but it is

uneven and overly determined by the political salience of particular conflicts.

This paper focuses on one aspect of the information required to conduct policy evaluations: the size of external support for SSR activities. It shows that many agencies discuss the effectiveness of SSR programming in the absence of a comprehensive system for tracking SSR assistance. The data that is sometimes invoked to show how international support for SSR has increased is examined. The general context in which such data is collected, and why it is faulty and incomplete are then considered. The paper concludes by briefly suggesting what information is required to obtain a better picture of external support for SSR. The intention is not to suggest that the fate of SSR programming hinges exclusively on the size of the donors' contributions, but rather that a clear picture of such contribution is necessary in order to examine the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of reform efforts across countries.

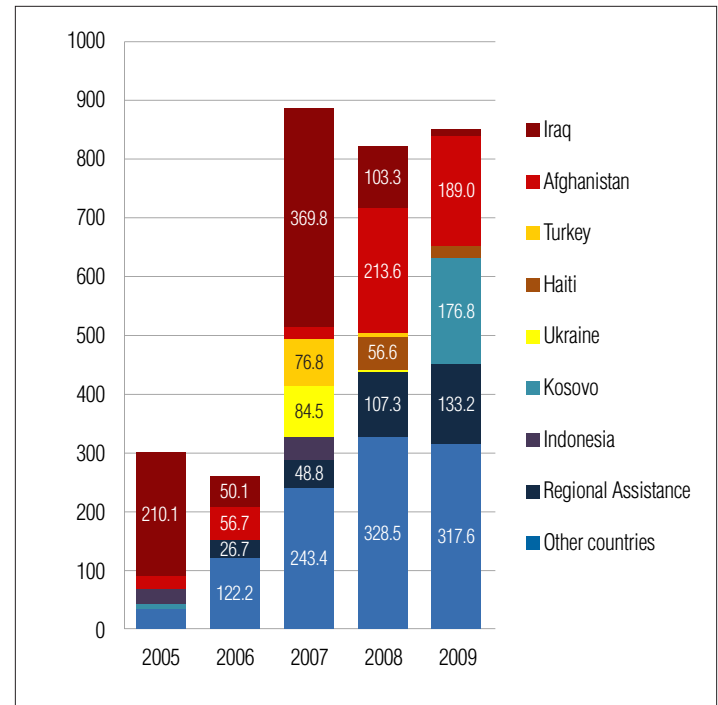
AID COMMITMENTS FOR SECURITY SYSTEM MANAGEMENT AND REFORM

Some researchers and practitioners have used the figures provided by the OECD in the category Security System Management and Reform (SSMR) as an indicator of donors' growing commitment to the SSR agenda. For instance, a recent OECD document, "Security System Reform: What Have We Learned? Results and Trends from the Publication and Dissemination of the OECD DAC on Security System Reform," stated that SSR "is a higher priority at donor/agency headquarters" and that this has resulted in increased human and material resources "committed to SSR policy development and programming" (OECD, 2009: 6). The evidence to back this claim is the growth of official development

assistance (ODA) intended for SSMR between 2004 and 2008.

ODA reported under the heading of SSMR increased significantly between 2005 and 2009.¹ The major shift took place between 2006 and 2007, when ODA commitments in this category more than tripled (see Figure 1). The larger total commitments over the five-year period were intended for projects in Iraq (US\$741.8 million), Afghanistan (US\$498.8 million) and Kosovo (US\$176.8 million). These three countries were the main recipients of SSMR assistance, accounting for 40 percent or more of all commitments in 2007, 2008 and 2009. While commitments for SSMR projects in Iraq came overwhelmingly from the United States, commitments to Afghanistan and Kosovo came mostly from European donors (US\$495 million and US\$161 million, respectively) with only about US\$3 million pledged by the United States to Afghanistan in the five-year period. The reason for this will be discussed in the next section; for now, it suffices to say that assistance to SSR programs is not properly captured by the SSMR category of the ODA reports.

Figure 1: ODA for SSMR (constant 2008 USD millions)



Source: OECD's Creditor Reporting System. Available at: <http://stats.oecd.org>.

In 2005, donors pledged resources for SSMR projects in 40 countries; commitments for Iraq alone added up to 70 percent of total assistance, while Afghanistan (6.7 percent) and Indonesia (8 percent) were also major recipients. The other 37 countries and the regional projects shared about 15 percent of the money committed that year. After 2007, the number of countries receiving commitments for SSMR projects more than doubled so that assistance in this category reached about 87 countries annually. In the five years between 2005 and 2009, a total of 114 countries received assistance for SSMR projects from OECD donors. External contributions in most of these countries, however, were relatively small. In fact, 32 countries received US\$1 million or less for the full five-year period, and 43 more received between US\$1 million and US\$10 million over the whole five-year period. Conversely, 27 countries received between US\$10 and US\$50 million, nine received between US\$50 and US\$90 million, and three received US\$170 million or

1 This paper is based on OECD data available through the OECD's Creditor Reporting System at <http://stats.oecd.org> as of February 2011. Figures show ODA commitments (written obligations backed by an appropriation) in 2008 constant dollars. Please note that commitments are often higher than actual disbursements (as is the case here, especially for 2007).

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Alejandro Pachon is a Ph.D. student at the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs. He holds an M.A. in public and international affairs from the University of Ottawa, a B.A. in political science from the University of Alberta and a B.A. in sociology from Universidad Nacional de Colombia. His current area of research concerns the effects of external support on domestic institutional development, particularly on security institutions. In this context, Alejandro's work seeks to examine the security-development nexus as well as the doctrine of security sector reform.

more. In total, the 10 major recipients (particularly Iraq and Afghanistan) absorbed more than 50 percent of the resources intended for SSMR.

The three largest recipients, aside from Iraq and Afghanistan — Kosovo, Ukraine and Turkey — all received a single commitment in a particular year (see Figure 1), though this was neither preceded nor followed by similar commitments. In the case of Kosovo, most of the assistance in 2009 came from European Union (EU) institutions to support external relations, conflict resolution and other stabilization measures. In 2007, Ukraine received a commitment of US\$32 million from the United States for anticorruption programs and government reform, and US\$48 million for border management from the European Union. Turkey, for its part, obtained a US\$57.5 million commitment from the European Union to establish a reception, screening and accommodation system for refugees and asylum seekers, and US\$13.5 million for border management. Countries that received smaller amounts of total ODA exhibit a

similar pattern of large and isolated contributions. For instance, Moldova received large contributions in 2007 and 2008, as did Chad in 2009 and Lebanon in 2008. Other countries — including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, the Palestinian territories and the Democratic Republic of Congo — do not exhibit this pattern. They all received significant commitments in more than one year. Haiti is somewhere in the middle, with relatively small commitments in 2005, 2006 and 2007, a spike in 2008 (US\$56.6 million) and a smaller commitment in 2009 (US\$19.6 million). Spikes in the assistance for Haiti in 2008 and 2009 came from Canada in support of several objectives, including police training, corrections reform and migration management.

It is difficult to decipher the meaning of these patterns without more information. The isolated nature of commitments made to many major recipients seems to initially support the contention that “despite the 2005 elaboration of the definition of ODA to include a wide spectrum of SSR activities, funding in many cases remains ad hoc and project based, rather than geared towards long-term programming commitments” (OECD, 2009: 12). This need not be the case, however, if the commitments reported under SSMR as ODA are accompanied by other commitments and disbursements that are not accepted as development assistance by the OECD.

The data shows a significant and steady growth of assistance for regional (rather than country-based) projects in SSMR. This type of assistance is directed to intergovernmental organizations or to several countries at once to promote regional security (such as border control) or policy initiatives (such as research on policing). ODA for regional initiatives constituted more than 15 percent of all commitments to SSMR in 2009, up from 3.5 percent in 2005 (see Figure 1). This is both an absolute and a relative increase. With the field dominated

by country analyses, however, there is little information about these types of projects.

Assistance reported under the SSMR category of ODA clearly increased, and this increase had some peculiarities as it was due to:

- Augmented assistance for projects in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- Large one-time commitments in such countries as Turkey, Ukraine and Kosovo;
- The multiplication of recipient countries that receive small commitments; and
- A steady growth of assistance for regional projects.

According to the SSMR data, few selected countries received more development assistance and, simultaneously, more countries received small amounts. The increase in reported SSMR aid is due to both. These conclusions are only valid for the ODA reported in the SSMR category and not as a picture of donors' commitment to SSR in general; a complete picture of financial flows into security sector reform is not readily available.

WHAT SSR ACTIVITIES ARE CLAIMED AS ODA?

When the OECD started collecting information on ODA in the 1960s, donor transfers associated with security activities were excluded as alien to development. Only in the past two decades has this practice come under increasing scrutiny as the connections between security and development became more evident (Ball, 2010). The recognition of these linkages led the OECD (and later the UN and European Union) to craft a doctrine for security assistance aimed at strengthening both the effectiveness and the democratic governance of the security sector (OECD, 2007: 21).

In March 2005, after an 18-month process, the OECD finally expanded the definition of ODA to include assistance for some activities associated with SSR: improving civilian control over the security system (oversight, budgeting and management), civilian peace building, the prevention of the recruitment of child soldiers, and the control of small arms and light weapons (OECD, 2005). These activities were not previously eligible to be reported as ODA. Other SSR activities, however, remained outside the definition of development assistance, especially those related to military training. In the last instance, the exclusion or inclusion of particular activities reflects the debate around the extent to which security matters are part of the development agenda.

Many in the development community are concerned that traditional military aid can be rebranded as development assistance, and that resources that would otherwise be used for traditional developmental goals may be diverted (Baranyi, 2010). They are thus understandably reluctant to accept the reporting of military activities as development assistance. The result is an operational separation of the "train and equip" activities intended to improve effectiveness from those

intended to improve democratic governance and oversight of the security sector as resources are variously channelled through national defence departments and development agencies.

ODA data does not capture the external support for training and other SSR activities of a military nature (OECD, 2007: 250). Additionally, two other SSR items were explicitly excluded from the ODA definition in the 2005 meeting: training of the military on certain non-military matters (such as human rights) and peace keeping activities, both of which “involve large sums, mostly from defence budgets” (OECD, 2005). These exclusions are significant given the importance of training in both military and non-military matters for the effective development of domestic capacity to provide security. The point here, however, is not to suggest that all SSR activities should be reported as ODA, but to indicate that the ODA figures are only partial and that analysis

of SSR programming requires a more comprehensive system for tracking SSR assistance.

Two years after expanding the concept of development assistance to include some of the activities associated with SSR, the OECD further specified the type of activities that can be claimed as ODA in its *Handbook on Security Sector Reform* (2007). According to this document, public sector financial management, legal and judicial development, government administration and the strengthening of civil society can be reported as ODA, as well as the activities already mentioned in the 2005 documents. Money channelled to SSR programs can now be reported in 10 different ODA categories (OECD, 2007: 250) (see Table 1). Comparing these categories with the actual codes under which assistance is reported in the OECD handbook, two things become apparent: first, there is not an exact match between the categories and the codes for reporting; and second, SSMR is only one of the 10 categories.

Table 1: ODA Purpose Codes for SSR Activities

SSR Activities According to the OECD Handbook	ODA Purpose Code	
	Conflict, Peace and Security	152
Security System Management and Reform	Security System Management and Reform	152 (10)
Civilian Conflict Prevention and Peace Building	Civilian Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Resolution	152 (20)
Post-conflict Peace Building (UN)	Post-Conflict Peace Building (UN)	152 (30)
Demobilisation and Disarmament	Reintegration and SALW Control	152 (40)
Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) (Proliferation Control, Prevention, or Reduction)		
Child Soldiers (Prevention and Demobilisation)	Child Soldiers (Prevention and Demobilisation)	152 (61)
	Government and Civil Society — General	151
Public Sector Financial Management	Public Sector Policy and Administration Management	151 (10)
	Public Finance Management	151 (11)
Legal and Judicial Development	Legal and Judicial Development	151 (30)
Strengthening Civil Society	No corresponding ODA code	
Government Administration	No corresponding ODA code	

Assistance for the SSR activities identified by the OECD members in 2005 is now reported under the heading of “Conflict, Peace and Security” (ODA code 152), while assistance for those activities added in 2007 comes under the heading of “Government and Civil Society — General” (ODA code 151). An important difference between these two categories is that resources reported under code 152 are directed to SSR programs in particular, but the same cannot be said of the resources reported under code 151. The latter may include activities that are intended for projects outside the realm of SSR. For instance, in 2009, donors pledged US\$667 million in assistance to Afghanistan in the category of “Legal and Judicial Development.” The bulk of this money (US\$575 million) was to come from the US State Department for its International Narcotic and Law Enforcement program, while the rest was to be allocated in diverse projects including justice sector reform, public outreach, legal aid, police training and promotion of the rule of law. Some of these activities are part of SSR programs, but it is not certain that all of them are. Assistance reported under code 151 needs to be disaggregated to separate aid intended for SSR projects from aid that is not.

Why do specialists interpret the numbers in the SSMR category as an aggregate figure for SSR assistance? Using the SSMR figures, Muggah and Downes affirm that “enthusiasm for SSR is expanding,” and “a cursory review of ODA trends reveals a threefold increase in reported SSR spending (between 2004 and 2007)” (2010: 144). Similarly, the 2009 OECD document mentioned earlier presents SSMR figures as indicative of donors’ commitment to SSR in general, despite a high level of specialized input.² The problem with this practice is

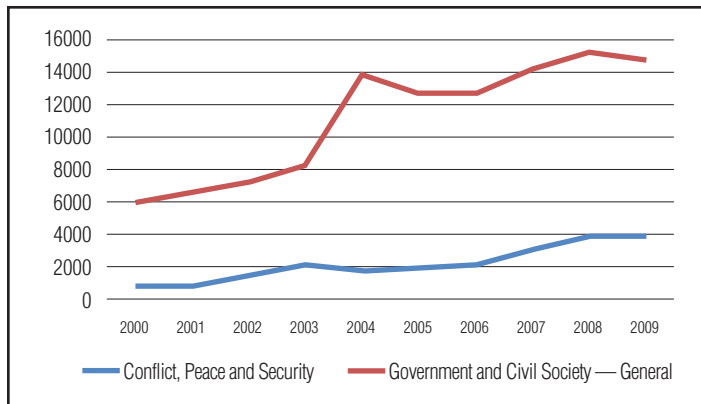
that it may lead to false conclusions. A large portion of the growth in the SSMR category of ODA stems from commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as from large one-time contributions in other countries. If these types of commitments were to diminish in the following years and that, as a result, the SSMR figures became smaller, would it be correct to assume that “enthusiasm for SSR” is diminishing among donors? Evidently, such a conclusion would not necessarily follow. A complete assessment of donors’ commitments requires examining all SSR expenditures. Unfortunately, this figure is not currently available.

Until a more comprehensive examination of SSR expenditures is undertaken, any generalizations about donor commitment to SSR based on OECD data are faulty. Nevertheless, this data does accurately indicate that ODA for SSR projects has increased over the last few years.

An examination of aid commitments in the last decade indicates that ODA reported in the “Government and Civil Society” category (code 151) increased significantly from about US\$6 billion in 2000 to US\$14.8 billion in 2009. The largest increase took place between 2003 and 2004 (about US\$5.5 billion in a single year). Simultaneously, ODA for the activities reported in the “Conflict, Peace and Security” category (code 152) also grew rapidly — albeit more modestly in absolute terms, from US\$820 million in 2000 to US\$4 billion in 2009 (see Figure 2). In both cases, there were significant increases since 2006, which coincides with the first year in which SSR activities started to be reported as ODA.

2 This document, entitled “Security System Reform: What Have We Learned?” authored by Rory Keane from the OECD and Alan Bryden from DCAF, was approved by the members of the OECD’s International Network on Conflict and Fragility after substantial discussions on an earlier draft.

Figure 2: Aid Commitments (constant 2008 USD millions)



Source: OECD's Creditor Reporting System. Available at: <http://stats.oecd.org>.

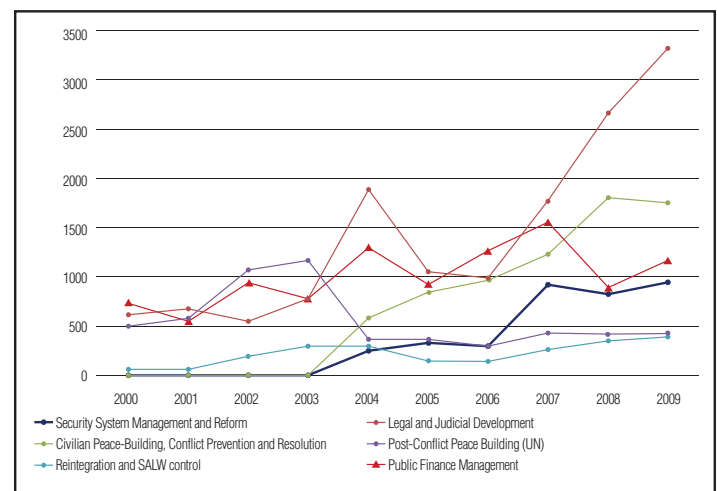
The increase in assistance reported under “Conflict, Peace and Security” is particularly relevant, as resources in this category are all directed to SSR activities. A more disaggregated analysis shows that this growth has been mainly driven by an increase in the commitments to “Security System Management and Reform” and to “Civilian, Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Resolution” (Figure 3).³ Contributions to civilian peace building came from a variety of countries, with significant commitments from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway and the Netherlands. Other items in this category (Child Soldiers and Reintegration and SALW Control) barely grew, while commitments for UN “Post-Conflict Peace Building” actually decreased significantly. The contrast between UN peace building and civilian peace building is worthy of attention, but it is not readily apparent that the behaviour of these two variables is connected.

In the “Government and Civil Society” category, the largest increase took place in “Legal and Judicial Development.” In 2009, the commitments reported

3 The graphic excludes “prevention and demobilization of child soldiers” because its size is very small. It also excludes “government administration” and “strengthening civil society” because identifying a single code that captures these activities as understood in the handbook has not been possible. Finally, “reintegration and SAWL control” have been interpreted to represent both “demobilization and disarmament” and “small arms and light weapons.”

under code 152 (30) alone were about US\$3.3 billion; just slightly less than those for all the activities under the “Conflict, Peace and Security” category combined (US\$3.4 billion). The largest contributor was the United States, which accounted for 70 percent of the commitments; the largest recipients were Afghanistan (US\$667 million) and Iraq (US\$664 million). As previously indicated, it is not clear how much of this money was specifically allocated to SSR and how much to other programs. Regarding Afghanistan at least, the case can be made that most of this aid should be counted as SSR assistance, provided that support to counternarcotics programs is accepted as a form of SSR support.

Figure 3: ODA for Selected SSR Activities (2008 USD millions)



Source: OECD's Creditor Reporting System. Available at: <http://stats.oecd.org>.

The data seems to support the conclusion that ODA for SSR activities has increased in recent years, but this does not suggest that resources committed to SSR policy development and programming in general, have increased. The difference is that SSR activities go beyond what is reported as development assistance. It is possible, for example, that total resources for SSR have remained the same or even decreased, but are now increasingly reported due to technical changes within the OECD bureaucracy. It may also be the case that unreported activities, such as training of the military in human rights,

now receive fewer resources than reported activities, even if total assistance remains unchanged. There is no evidence to suggest that any of these scenarios are likely, but we cannot be sure in the absence of additional data. Despite the limitations of the OECD data to capture the whole picture of external support for SSR, it is still possible to know whether ODA has increased in this area, by how much, and in what specific categories under two conditions: first, examine all the categories under which such assistance is reported; and second, do not extrapolate these conclusions to SSR expenditures in general.

CONCLUSION

Although ODA for SSR activities has effectively grown, the OECD data alone is not sufficient to make any firm conclusions regarding the patterns of overall SSR expenditure. Nevertheless, the analysis of the data raises some questions worth pursuing in further research: has there been an increase in all SSR assistance or only in that reported as ODA? What explains these changes (whatever their nature)? How have such changes been influenced by US war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan? How do European concerns with border management and population movements determine (or not) the financial flows to SSR programs?

The OECD data needs to be supplemented with data that captures external assistance to projects and programs that are not accepted as developmental by the members of the OECD. While the goal of SSR is to improve both the provision of effective security and the democratic governance of the security sector, the ODA categories better capture the latter than the former. In particular, the data excludes peacekeeping activities and military and police training. These omissions, as noted above, relate to an ongoing debate around the limits of SSR. Many in the developmental community are wary of SSR

becoming a shield for the kind of traditional military aid that dislodged national self-determination in order to advance the interests of global powers. Not all SSR assistance should be considered development assistance, but data tracking of all SSR contributions is required in order to make progress in the evaluation of policy effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

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