NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence

Rome, Italy

Insights on Strategic Advising for Security Force Assistance

Edited by

Nadia Gerspacher

Ludovica Glorioso

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Prepared by the International Group of Experts

at the Invitation of the NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence

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About NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence

NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence (NATO SFA COE) is a multinational entity accredited by NATO as a 'Centre of Excellence' with Italy, Albania and Slovenia as Sponsoring Nations.

By virtue of its high potential deriving from multiple military and civilian professionals and the use of a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, the Centre is a hub of reference in the Security Force Assistance field at the national, international and NATO levels.

It provides expertise to contribute to the development and experimentation of concepts and doctrines. The Centre also acquires and elaborates lessons learned, contributes to the definition of development models capacity in support of local forces in crisis zones where there is a North Atlantic Council approved NATO operation or mission and conducts educational and training activities for instructors, mentors and personnel belonging to other nations.

To broaden its spectrum and benefit from a different perspective, the Centre also collaborates with universities and international civilian and military organisations to provide a unique capability to the Alliance and NATO Partners.

**NATO Security Force Assistance
Centre of Excellence
Rome, Italy**

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Foreword

It is my great pleasure to present the latest editorial project of the NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence (NATO SFA COE).

The COE has proceeded with the development of SFA-related issues within the framework of international missions. It aims to play a proactive role in developing the SFA doctrine by producing independent research and publications to enrich the debate within NATO.

In recent years, several drivers of institutional instability have emerged in the international landscape. These rapid changes have shifted the attention towards the contribution that SFA can make in crisis zones where NATO is called on to operate. SFA is a systemic approach that covers all NATO activities that develop and improve or directly support the development of local forces and their associated institutions in crisis zones. The sole provision of military security has proven to be ineffective in solving local conflicts. To achieve lasting peace, more emphasis should be placed on solving the root causes of the crises, adopting a comprehensive approach that promotes the interrelation between the military and civilian dimensions, effective chances of economic development, the protection of civilians and human rights, respect of the rule of law and good governance. Each effort should contribute to strengthening the legitimacy of the local institutions and boost their goodwill by enhancing their cooperation and their determination to be self-sustainable and empowered as soon as possible.

Since its first publication, *Promoting the Rule of Law and Good Governance. SFA Implications in International Initiatives*, the COE has worked to prepare this new publication to address the role of strategic advisers in SFA activities and how their efficacy can be enhanced. This book aims to define behaviours, best practices and training methods for SFA operators engaging in complex scenarios while preserving a comprehensive approach.

Strategic advisers are called to operate in a complex and dynamic context where institutional entities, informal stakeholders and military operators are interdependent, hence potentially producing disruptive behaviours at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The primary methodological assumption commonly shared by the

contributors is the attention toward the understanding of the local context and the human factor because the awareness of local dynamics is essential for effective advising. Mapping existing capacities in the local context and the gap that exists between such capacities and the optimal capacity is a central skill for the adviser to promote real reforms in the security sector, which address, inter alia, social and economic issues.

Significant effort was put into securing the participation of a preeminent group of international experts in this volume to ensure varied and qualified perspectives to present new models in support of local forces in international missions. The interdisciplinary approach has been used to foster a productive discussion aimed at identifying important issues and proposing solutions so that the advisers can fulfil their goal of attaining sustainable and long-term stability. The volume represents a unique initiative in this field, identifying current issues and offering solutions.

We hope that this book will be a useful tool for our community composed of Alliance members and Partners, proving instrumental for the attainment of positive results for future missions. Each stage of this editorial project has been inspired by the idea that the efforts of military forces and civilians should be coordinated because they operate in a common scenario. The skills and tools identified in this book are not simply theoretical but practically relevant and globally applicable.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the editors, contributors and peer reviewers that brought this project to fruition. This volume represents a further step towards identifying new guidelines for the development of a new generation of advisors. The outcome of this project is an essential premise for establishing a durable set of programmes to face contemporary challenges in crises on the world stage.

Col. Massimo Di Pietro
Director, NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence

Introduction

This manual has been realised by the NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence (SFA COE), Rome, Italy. The views expressed by the individual authors do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. This compendium is an effort to collect diverse views on the same vital subject.

It comprises eight chapters, analysing the various aspects and challenges experienced by advisers in crisis zones. Each contribution should be considered as a piece of the wider puzzle represented by the formation of a new generation of advisors. The manual starts by providing a framework for the strategic context of SFA operations, focusing on best practice to guarantee the establishment of a stable and safe environment.

Particular importance for SFA activities is the strategic adviser. The book starts with insights shared by **Susan Pond** and **Ludovica Glorioso**, on the importance of placing good governance and rule of law at the heart of efforts within the framework of SFA operations. They highlight the objectives of a senior advisor to encourage decision-makers to embed integrity, transparency and accountability into the procedures and policies and to ensure effective stability in accordance with a solid legal framework.

Vlasta Zekulic's chapter underlines the connection between strategic advisors' operations and the concepts of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Building Integrity (BI) to analyse the lessons learned in planning, monitoring and evaluating the impact of SFA missions. Regular review and assessment are the keys to avoiding mission creep and waste of resources.

To develop concrete and dynamic environmental awareness, **Bettina Kircher** examines the wide range of tools and techniques that can be used to analyse the local context of host nations for a baseline assessment activity through cases studies in Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and the Ivory Coast.

The advisor's profile, the training process and the education that should be undertaken are framed and analysed in **Nadia Gerspacher**'s chapter to address the

lack of knowledge and skills generally experienced by advisors during their missions. The essay highlights how to prepare advisors with intentionality to empower them to build the capacity of their counterparts and security institutions sustainably.

David P. San Clemente offers a six-step approach to defining Capacity Building Activity Planning (CBAP) which he uses to analyse the case of Afghanistan. He argues that many Capacity Building Activity (CBA) programmes fail to achieve the implementer's desired outcomes, though significant resources and energy are expended. The chapter illustrates how a lack of proper planning is routinely the source of failure and many specialists confuse activity with the achievement of strategic goals. San Clemente discusses a framework where deviations and adjustments to an initial plan can be managed through an iterative process where operational and tactical movements are constantly aligned to strategic objectives.

James M. Cunningham's chapter provides some criteria that can be used to track success and failure because of critical weaknesses during SFA operations. He advocates having a rigorous Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capability for SFA is fundamental to determine the return on investment on all international financing in terms of accountability and transparency and to detect which SFA activities are concretely furthering NATO's long-term goals.

Julie Chalfin and **Brett Sudetic** explain the important role played by donor states in defining programmes for CBAs. The authors highlight the attributes and capacities that a strategic advisor should develop before moving onto the ground and interacting with the local counterparts to attain a positive and constructive dialogue with local counterparts. The chapter describes the main documents used to establish the needed trust and commitment to undertake difficult and complex reforms.

The last chapter, written by **Will Bennett**, refers to a long-term perspective on strategic planning to avoid the mainstream elite-centric method to produce stability and security. The author illustrates that the process of creating stability and building trust should pass through the involvement of civilians and local actors that are usually more sensitive to rapid changes in the operating environment.

The authors elaborate on a plethora of tools that aim to be useful for practitioners to navigate the many tasks that await advisors as they strive to identify the most

viable solutions to capacity gaps and to contribute to sustainable capacity of host country counterparts and governance processes. The figure of a strategic advisor can play a crucial role in overcoming the many issues faced by advisors and their deploying institutions. The collection of good practices shared in each chapter of this volume offers a collection of approaches and tools meant to address the challenges of Security Force Assistance.

We hope that the Manual will serve to inform future SFA operations conducted in crisis zones.

Dr. Nadia Gerspacher
Senior Expert

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NATO SFA COE

CHAPTER 1
Tools for promoting rule of law and good governance in crisis zones

Susan Pond & Ludovica Glorioso

Key Points

- Before deploying, do your homework to understand the nexus between security, corruption and poor governance and the critical importance of placing good governance and rule of law at the heart of efforts to provide security force advice.

- International organisations and civil society have developed a wide range of tools and best practices to support strategic force advisors; those developed by NATO Building Integrity are designed and tested for the defence and security sector and are used by NATO and non-NATO nations.

- Know what success looks like. Developing and updating a plan that clearly articulates the end game and sets out agreed measures of performance is essential for decision makers in the host and donor countries.

- Strategic risks such as corruption have a greater impact on fragile states weakened by conflict, poor governance structures and limited resources, ignoring this risk will undermine every effort to build effective capacity in all areas. Building capacity is a multi-year process, long term commitment that requires sustained effort. Progress will not be linear, expect resistance and set-backs including unintended consequences.

- Acknowledge mistakes, be prepared to learn lessons from the situation and adjust the plan and your actions accordingly. Make time to contribute to the collection and review of a NATO lessons-learned process and share your success and mis-steps with your successor.

- SFA is a mission set that works to ensure a stable, equitable, transparent and predictable security environment that respects international laws and standards.

Keywords: good governance, building integrity, civilian support, role of the SFA advisor, opportunities defence and security sector.

1. Introduction

Congratulations! You are a seasoned practitioner chosen to provide advice and contribute to '*the development of systems, processes, policies and procedures that address the inadequacies of weak governmental institutions*'.[1] Some of you may be seasoned practitioners but it is more likely that you are not an expert on good governance in the defence and security sector, nor on your assigned country. You may not even consider poor governance as a strategic risk or you might assess it as a secondary issue to be addressed once systems are in place and the security sector has acquired needed operational capabilities. This contribution comes from the experience in the development and implementation of NATO's Partnership for Peace and the Building Integrity (BI) Policy and toolkit[2] working closely with donor states and host nations including countries in Africa, Central Asia, the Balkans and Eastern Europe. While this article focuses on the defence and security sector (primarily the armed forces and police), the problems and recommended actions may be relevant to the public sector as a whole. The chapter illustrates the relationship between state fragility and corruption and the importance to promote integrity, transparency and accountability in the decision-making process.

2. Knowing your environment and the importance of good governance in the security sector

Wherever your assignment, it is most likely in a country identified by the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as fragile, 'characterised as the combination of exposure of risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, systems and or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks'.[3] If this situation remains unchanged, increased poverty, violence, inequality, displacement and political and environmental degradation are to be expected. Your task is to provide strategic advice to the leaders confronting these challenges. In all likelihood, the security sector is not the only area that has capacity shortfalls and donors are providing a cadre of advisors to support other

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[1] Nadia Gerspacher, 'Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance, A Practical Guide', (Boulder, CO: Kumarian Press, 2016).

[2] Before departing on mission reviewing resources are recommended. The documents are available on the NATO website including NATO BI education and training resource at: https://buildingintegrity.hq.nato.int/Resources.aspx. and completing the "On-line BI Awareness Training" on NATO's Joint Advanced Distributed Learning (JADL) platform.

[3] OECD, 'States of Fragility 2020', September 2020, pg.15, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/ba7c22e7-en.pdf?expires=1645541067&id=id&accname=oid025361&checksum=D3D2E81A7E2AC0CD6262AFB511BD4CC1.

key ministries responsible for the delivery of justice, education, health and other services to the citizens of the host nation.

> According to the UN, Good Governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It ensures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard in decision making. It is responsive to the present and future needs of society.
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> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, What is Good Governance? Report 10 July 2009. UN ESCAP, 'What is Good Governance?', (July 2019).https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf.

The nexus between security, corruption and poor governance is well understood by the international community. Corruption, illicit trade, trafficking and money laundering are highlighted in the 2004 UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on *Threats, Challenges and Change*, as contributing to state weakness, impeding economic growth and undermining democracy.[4] The UN was not the only organisation to recognise this situation. In parallel to UN-led efforts, the NATO nations and Partners meeting at the Istanbul Summit in 2004 adopted the *Partnership Action Plan for Defence Institution Building* underlining the importance of good governance and accountability in the defence and security sector.[5] Research by Transparency International[6] and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace[7] among others, also drew attention to and highlighted this link between security, corruption and poor governance.[8]

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[4] United Nations, 'A more Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility: Report of the Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change', 2004, [A/59/565], https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/gaA.59.565_En.pdf.

[5] The ten principles considered fundamental to the development of effective and democratically responsible defence institutions are discussed by Dr. Nadja Milanova in Chapter 10. See for official text LIBRO Promoting the Rule of Law 17X24 232 PAG.pdf (nsfacoe.org): '*Promoting the Rule of Law and Good Governance. SFA Implications in International Initiatives'*.

[6] See Transparency International Germany, Corruption as a threat to stability and peace, 2014, https://ti-defence.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2014-01_CorruptionThreatStabilityPeace.pdf and Transparency International UK, 'The Big Spin: Corruption and the Growth of Violent Extremism', 2017, https://ti-defence.org/pub;ications/.

[7] Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 'Corruption the Unrecognised Threat to International Security', 2014, (June 6, 2014). https://carnegieendowment.org/files/corruption_and_security.pdf.

[8] For a more in depth understanding of the relationship between governance, security and corruption consult the works of See Dr. Louise Shelley 'Dirty Entanglements', (Cambridge University Press, 20149 and Dr. Alina Mungiu-Pippidi.' The Quest for Good Governance', (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

> In a NATO context 'corruption is the abuse of public resources, entrusted power or authority for private gain'.
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> NATO SHAPE, 'Building Integrity in Operations', Allied Command Operations Handbook, 2020, https://shape.nato.int.

By the time heads of state and governments endorsed the NATO BI Policy in 2016[9], several nations and organisations had identified corruption and poor governance as security challenges that 'undermine democracy, the rule of law, economic development, erode public trust in defence institutions and have a negative impact on operational effectiveness'.[10] Taking this into account, the NATO BI Policy recommends that integrity, transparency and accountability be embedded in the core business of defence institutions.[11] While others may view corruption through an economic prism, NATO is at the forefront of recognising corruption as a strategic risk. Individual nations continue to take a step toward understanding the links between security, corruption and poor governance. Recognising the fight against corruption as a core national security interest, in December 2021 the United States published its strategy for countering corruption identifying corruption as a 'fundamental threat to the rule of law, corruption hollows out institutions, corrodes public trust, fuels popular cynicism toward effective, accountable governance'.[12] As a result, many donor nations have come to acknowledge that transferring equipment and developing operational capabilities alone is not enough to ensure long-term sustainability. Departing forces often leave behind stocks of military and civilian equipment that cannot be repaired, properties that cannot be maintained and trained personnel that leave public service because of a lack of opportunity and better-paying jobs in the private sector. Core institutional competencies need to be developed in the security sector to support key areas such as logistics, enabling nations to prioritise and manage limited resources by understanding what equipment they need to procure, how well it is operating, what personnel they need, where to assign them and what training to required. The decisions taken in 2012 by nations such as Norway and the US to develop the Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector (CIDS) in Oslo and in 2019 to retool the Centre for Civil-Military Relations and establish

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[9] NATO BI, "*NATO Building Integrity Policy*", (July 2016) 2.3.2 - NATO Building Integrity Policy_en.pdf. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_10/20171129_171031-bi-ref-cur17.pdf.

[10] NATO BI, *"Good governance and building Integrity in the defence and security sector,* (2016) https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_10/20171129_171031-bi-ref-cur17.pdf.

[11] NATO BI, "*Nato Building Integrity Policy"*.

[12] White House, 'United States Strategy on Countering Corruption', December 2021. :https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/United-States-Strategy-on-Countering-Corruption.pdf.

the Institute for Security Governance in Monterey are an acknowledgement that the 'train and equip' approach needed to be re-evaluated. Many in the international community have come to realise the importance of developing operational and institutional capabilities and leadership in tandem and including policies, procedures and systems designed to strengthen defence and security institutions. Understanding these links and ensuring that good governance is embedded in the knowledge and ideas shared with the senior decision-makers in the security sector is a priority task. Failure to do so will hasten the negative consequences highlighted by the OECD. It also undermines the credibility of the international community and will erode the willingness of the international community and their taxpayers to provide 'blood and treasure'.

The structures and procedures of the security sector in the host country may be very different to your own experience. As an advisor, you may feel more like a detective trying to identify reliable and trustworthy sources of information. Security forces may be subject to little or no control from parliamentary committees, judiciaries, audit offices or anti-corruption bodies. In many countries, defence purchases are exempt from procurement legislation. Across the globe, many security forces are engaged in enterprises such as construction, catering and travel to supplement the publicly funded budget. Security forces may also be significant property owners, providing lifetime housing to military personnel and operating recreational properties throughout the nation. There is likely little if any oversight of these activities. Commissions and promotions may not be based on merit. There may be no system to track equipment or spare parts. Promoting policies and systems addressing equity issues, commonplace in most OECD nations, may be a challenging part of your post.[13] Strategic advisors should be sensitive to the fact that corruption and conflict have a greater negative impact on women and children. Research carried out by Sweden concludes that taking into account women's lower status and power position in society 'women risk being exposed to physical abuse, sexual exploitation'.[14]

A review of the end-of-mission report by your predecessor and lessons learned is a good starting point to developing a picture of the current situation. If you don't speak the local language, you may need to engage a translator or interpreter to assist you. Do not make the mistake of only consulting sources in your own language.

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[13] DCAF, 'Defence and Gender', February 2020, https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/GSToolkit_Tool-3%20EN%20FINAL_0.pdf. and US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 'Support for Gender Equality', February 2019, https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-21-18-LL.pdf.

[14] Swedish International Development Agency, 'Gender and Corruption', March 2015, https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/-gender-and-corruption.pdf.

Your assignment coincides with the unprecedented transfer of financial and other out-of-country resources to a host nation's governance system characterised by limited transparency, accountability and integrity. At the same time, host nation leaders will be confronted and overwhelmed with advice, at times contradictory, from multiple stakeholders promoting their own agendas (and commercial interests). This situation, combined with operational imperative, makes the security sector an attractive target for petty and grand corruption. As a strategic advisor, your priority should be focused on bringing ideas to the table that will help leaders build operational capabilities and address governance shortfalls. This includes identifying corruption risks and identifying solutions tailored to the needs of the host nation.

While you are not in a position to detect and prosecute corruption, as structures are transformed and operational capabilities developed, your objective as a senior advisor is to encourage decision-makers to embed integrity, transparency and accountability into the procedures and policies of the security sector. Reducing risks of corruption will enhance good governance and operational capabilities and support the rule of law. It will also enhance the trust and confidence of security personnel, the public and donors.

It is no surprise that areas of greatest concern are associated with the management of resources – personnel, financial or assets. Poor governance in the management of personnel may result in salary harvesting (demanding payment from those under your command), ghost personnel (creating identities of personnel that don't exist so that their salaries can be pocketed) and sexual abuse (demanding sexual favours in exchange for promotion or other opportunities such as travel). It is common in systems with limited financial resources to increase the level of authorisation so that even relatively minor expenses such as authorisation for travel of personnel out of the country require authorisation of the Minister and maybe even the President. While adding signatures may seem like a good way to introduce checks and balances, in practice the more layers and more complicated the process, the more opportunities for misuse of public funds and positions.[15]

3. Knowing the end game – developing a plan and agreeing on what success looks like

One of the most common complaints and frustrations from Ministers and leaders in host nations is about the endless interviews and questionnaires foisted on them

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[15] Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector 'Toolkit for Civil Assessment of Public Expenditures in the Security Sector', 2016, https://cids.no.

by the international community every time a new advisor shows up (every 6-12 months in some cases). International stakeholders each have their own methodology and there is a great reluctance to draw on research and data that has not been self-generated. This eats up valuable and scarce resources and time and will thwart your ability to support implementation. The SFA advisor should make every effort to reduce duplication, promote sharing of information and build a consensus among the international donors to achieve a common understanding of needs and sequencing. Unless you are the first in your position, locate your predecessor and review the roadmap developed with the senior leaders of the host nation and additional reports including lessons learned or after-action recommendations.[16] Your objective is to support the senior leadership in the implementation of this plan and keep it updated. The plan will extend beyond the period of your assignment and should ideally extend beyond the period of military engagement and needs to evolve as conditions on the ground change. You may not have a face-to-face handover at the end of your tour. Whatever the circumstances, your assignment is not complete until you have submitted an end-of-mission report referencing the road map and highlighting what has been achieved, the likely problems in the next cycle and lessons learned.

If you did not inherit such a plan, your task is to help senior management to develop one, get it down on paper, keep it updated and promote buy-in from other stakeholders (host nation and international stakeholders). Remember, this is not your plan; it is the nation's plan, but advisors play an essential role in securing and sequencing the resources and support of key stakeholders who are providing the necessary resources to implement the strategic plan. The plan and accompanying roadmap set out the strategic objectives, milestones, timeline and performance metrics. Deciding what success looks like is critical. In the short term, host nations will rely on public funds provided by taxpayers outside of their jurisdiction. In the long term, this is not sustainable and decision-makers will be faced with the challenge of adjusting the level of ambition to ensure the plan is affordable to a government that is facing multiple challenges to provide resources for security, housing, health, education, transportation, communications and other essential services.

Transforming government structures is a long-term commitment that is usually measured in years and decades. Your assignment, which could be for as little as six months, represents a valuable, yet small contribution to a government that is facing multiple challenges of building new capacity across the government and the country. Having a plan that clearly articulates the end game and measures

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[16] Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church and Kirby Reiling, 'Lilies that Fester; Seeds of Corruption and Peacebuilding', in *New Routes* Vol. 14, 2009, https://sites.tufts.edu/ihs/files/2021/06/New_Routes_Journal_of_Peace_Research_and_Action_3-4_2009.pdf.

performance is essential for decision-makers in both host and donor nations. You can help them achieve this.

4. Knowing the obstacles and overcoming resistance

To quote the then Director of the Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector, 'it is much easier to spot what needs to be changed than it is to make the changes'.[17] Any expert on transforming public or private sector structures will tell you that most efforts fail. The range of obstacles and resistance cannot be underestimated. Some individuals will resist, fearful that it undermines their status, curtailing their ability to make decisions and jeopardising their financial opportunities.[18] Others may view proposed changes as interference from outsiders. Some will feel the current system works for them and will be uncomfortable with any attempt to disadvantage them. The legal framework of the host nation may not permit the proposed changes. There may be little protection for whistle-blowers to assure their physical safety and ensure there are no reprisals for making reports of wrongdoing.[19] It may not be career-enhancing for individuals from the host nation to be seen to be working with outsiders or making changes. Some may even face physical threats and violence to themselves and their families. Ministers and decision-makers may want to avoid the situation altogether and seek out-of-country assignments that are more secure and more advantageous. Whatever the reasons, advisors need to tread carefully as you may place yourself or others in harm's way. Any plan must be developed and championed by decision-makers of the host nation. Changes must be seen as their initiative. Advisors must resist the temptation to push ahead, such a take-charge attitude will not contribute to lasting change.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) and others responsible for security are an integral part of the government and will need the support of other cabinet colleagues. Justice and the rule of law also rely on police officers, border guards, prison guards, intelligence services and others.[20] The Ministry of Justice is the main

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[17] Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector, 'Integrity Action Plan', 2014:https://cids.no/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Integrity-Action-Plan-handbook_web.pdf.

[18] In one country, the motor pool established a profitable business, upgrading the tires of the staff cars regardless of wear and selling on the used tires. A proposal to replace the informal arrangements with a new system to manage the MOD pool of government vehicles was fiercely opposed by those profiting from the sale of used tires.

[19] For more information on terms and examples of whistleblowing cases the Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector, 'Guide on Whistleblowing in the Defence and Security Sector', 2020:https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/11/pdf/201105-BI-GGG10-en.pdf.

[20] OECD, 'Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice', (February 25, 2008) https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/the-oecd-dac-handbook-on-security-system-reform_9789264027862-en.

player in ensuring the implementation of the rule of law and administration of the legal system. If the host nation is not able to detect and prosecute wrongdoers, including those engaged in grand and petty corruption, there is little incentive to change behaviours. Any plan to strengthen good governance in the security sector must have the support of the Ministers of Justice and Interior.

The plan must also be supported by the Minister of Finance. A small percentage of the security sector will be funded by the resources of the host nation. Ideally, this percentage will grow as the economy improves and the government can set and collect taxes. A plan that shows how resources will be accounted for is key to securing the support of the Ministry of Finance and the international community. In the absence of a coordinated plan supported by the Ministry of Finance, international donors will be reluctant to put money into a budget.

The advisor may help the Minister secure buy-in from other stakeholders which may include other ministries and representatives of the international community. In some situations, it may be easier for an advisor to use their convening power to get key stakeholders around the table. Maximum effort should be made to adopt the practice of the host nation chairing such meetings and limiting the number of meetings that exclude the host nation. The SFA advisor must be careful not to present themself as a decision-maker or speak on behalf of the host nation.

There will be many pockets of resistance to change. One of the biggest challenges will be overcoming resistance to stocktaking and developing a database to account for resources, be it people, weapons, fuel or vehicles. As long as the numbers are not known, the system and individuals cannot be held to account. Salaries can be misappropriated by individuals, fuel sold on the black market and weapons can end up in the hands of malign actors and used against civilians and international security forces. Some challenges may seem easier to fix: for example, publishing pay scales for all ranks and transferring salaries electronically to reduce the number of opportunities for those with 'sticky fingers'; or conducting blind testing for recruitment and promotion which, in some nations, has increased the number of women in the security forces. In key areas such as procurement, a policy of rotating staff to limit the development of cosy relations with suppliers is considered best practice.

The change will include a review of priorities, force structure, equipment and assets. Discussion of adjusting staffing levels and divesting equipment and assets that are surplus or outdated will be painful. Any proposal to reduce the number of flag officers and the overall strength of the security forces will not be welcomed. There will also be those who may look at the disposal of property and other assets as an opportunity for personal financial gain. The decision to close

or divest military property is a sensitive issue in any nation. Expect resistance. These conversations need careful handling. Advisors may be able to soften the impact by garnering international support. Many donors will have funds earmarked for the safe disposal of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) or munitions, retraining of military personnel to civilian careers and clean-up of military properties.[21]

Reports such as those produced by Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) provide ample evidence of the impact of corruption and poor governance.[22] Some nations taking part in the NATO BI Self-Assessment Process have published their reports on the MOD website. Resources developed by other international organisations including the United Nations,[23] OECD and civil society actors such as Transparency International – UK Defence and Security set out in the bibliography may be considered a starting point.

While the SFA advisor is not a spokesperson or communications expert, all SFA advisors must be aware that the decision-makers they support will be under pressure to communicate and share information up and down and across government, with the public and with international donors. Any plan must also take into account the development of a communications and information plan. We live in an age of citizen journalists and nearly everyone has a camera.

In post-conflict settings, advisors need to have a clear framework of the context in which they operate, focussing on the best practices and analysing the lesson learned in planning, monitoring and evaluating. Stability and justice are long-term objectives and effective training programmes in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) would be developed and adapted to the organisational structure of the host nation where the local forces operate. IHL is also relevant to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) activities for avoiding the perpetuation of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. A structured approach to PoC has also to be observed for integration into the planning and

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[21] For example, NATO is one of a number of organisations with a proven track record, successfully leading trust fund projects pooling resources from many donors for the safe destructions of SALW, MANPADS and APL including in the Balkans and Ukraine. See: https://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natohq/topics_48895.htm?selectedLocale=en.

[22] US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 'Corruption in Conflict: Lessons Learned from the US Experience in Afghanistan', (September 2014); US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 'Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the US Experience in Afghanistan', (September 2017); US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 'Divided Responsibility: Lessons from the Security Sector Assistance Efforts in Afghanistan', (June 2019). See https://www.sigar.mil.

[23] See UN E-Learning tools on the fight against corruption https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/news-elearning-course.html and https://securitysectorintegrity.com/bi-tools/tools-and-resources/.

conduct of mission and operations. Protecting civilians is an ethical and legal imperative that establishes the conditions for post-conflict stability. As emphasised by International Organisations (IOs), the failure to protect civilians can perpetuate violence and create additional drivers of conflict and become a significant obstacle to the support of the local forces and undermine the operational environment.[24]

5. Knowing available tools and resources – NATO Building Integrity

The decision taken by NATO members at the Brussels Summit in 1994 to launch the 'Partnership for Peace' set the scene for political dialogue and laid the foundations for the development of a comprehensive set of tools, policies, procedures and personnel dedicated to providing advice and practical support to strengthen good governance in the defence and security sector. The ten principles for effective and democratically responsible defence institutions are set out in the *Partnership Action Plan for Defence Institution Building* (PAP-DIB) and adopted at the Istanbul Summit in 2004. [25] The advice and practical tools offered through the NATO BI Programme and tool kit established in 2007 build on this experience and lessons learned. At the heart of the BI programme is the BI Self-Assessment and Peer Review Process.[26] The assessment sets out a number of questions which are organised in eight key areas:[27]

- Democratic control and engagement;
- National anti-corruption laws and policy;
- Anti-corruption policy in the defence and security sector;
- Personnel behaviour, policy, training and discipline;
- Planning and budgeting;
- Operations;
- Procurement; and
- Engaging with defence companies and other suppliers.

Even if the host nation has not volunteered to take part in this process, the docu-

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[24] For a deep analysis of the cross cutting topics see: Knowles et al., 'Promoting the Rule of Law and Good Governance. SFA Implications in International Initiatives', L. Glorioso (Ed.), NATO SFA COE Publication, Rome, Italy, 2021.https://www.nsfacoe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Promoting-the-Rule-of-Law-and-Good-Governance.-SFA-Implications-in-International-Initiatives..pdf.

[25] See Knowles E. Ibid.

[26] NATO, 'Building Integrity Self-Assessment Questionnaire and Peer Review Process', 2007, https://buildingintegrity.hq.nato.int/Resources.aspx.

[27] NATO, 'Building Integrity', Last Updated 9 December 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/topics_68368.htm?selectedLocale=en.

ment can serve as a useful checklist to guide conversations with decision-makers. Several NATO and non-NATO nations have made use of this process. CIDS supports the implementation of NATO BI and has developed several resources addressing good governance in the defence sector.[28] In addition, several nations taking part in this process have made BI reports available on their government websites. Peer-to-peer conversations and engagement with subject matter experts are also effective. Matching up decision-makers in the host country with peers who have faced similar challenges can lead to enduring relationships. The experience of nations with more limited resources and those who have been confronted with serious challenges may be more suitable. The experience of the biggest or best-equipped nation may not be the most appropriate, extend your search to countries that have been confronted with similar challenges.

The BI tool kit includes guides to good governance, a reference curriculum, a compendium of best practices and education and training material tailored to individual countries. A number of these resources, developed in partnership with CIDS and the NATO Centres of Excellence are available in English, French and several other languages.[29] NATO BI also works closely with the United Nations (UN), World Bank, OSCE, the African Union (EU), the European Union (EU), the private sector, academia and representatives of civil society.[30]

In February 2021, the *Military Concept of BI in Operations* was agreed upon by the North Atlantic Council. The handbook is aimed at military and civilian staff across NATO Command structures and seeks to 'create a more comprehensive appreciation of the risks and impact of corruption on a military mission'.[31] The ACO Handbook *Building Integrity in Operations*, in line with the NATO Code of Conduct highlights that corruption can lead to the deployment of inappropriate equipment, reduce combat capability and undermine the trust in the armed forces and governments.[32]

SFA advisors may also wish to consult the 'Smart Sheets' developed by the US Institute for Security Governance addressing a range of topics including logistics,

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[28] Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector, 'Criteria for good governance in the defence sector, International Standards and Principles', 2015, https://securitysectorintegrity.com/publication/criteria-good-governance-defence-sector-international-standards-principles/.

[29] Building Integrity Good Governance Guides developed by CIDS are available in English, French, Armenian, Dari, Pashto, Russian and Ukrainian. For complete range of texts see https://cid.no.

[30] See at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_68368.htm).

[31] NATO Building Integrity, see: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_176240.htm?selectedLocale=en.

[32] NATO SHAPE, 'Building Integrity in Operations', (*Allied Command Operations Handbook*, 2020), https://shape.nato.int.

maritime capacity and cybersecurity.[33] Additional resources prepared by Transparency International UK Defence and Security team are recommended.[34]

6. Knowing your limits

An advisor must be knowledgeable of NATO and national policies, seeking out best practices such as those developed through NATO BI and NATO Centres of Excellence. An advisor must also be humble. Any casual review of news headlines will reveal that the international community faces governance challenges and does not always get it right. Even well-established, well-resourced NATO nations, on occasion, can fall short.[35] Democracy is fragile and systems need to be constantly examined and enhanced to ensure that the rule of law is upheld. One person does not have all the answers but, as an advisor, you can draw on the experiences of other nations who have confronted similar challenges and are willing to share lessons learned and best practices. This means developing a good working relationship with the host nation and the staff responsible for mentoring, training and education. This approach to promoting good practice is at the centre of NATO BI.

Your role as a strategic advisor does not come with a magic wand. Poor governance and corruption are so tightly bound together it is difficult to unpick these threads. The solution is to focus efforts on strengthening good governance in the systems, processes, policies and procedures. Your objective is to build resilience to strengthen transparency, accountability and integrity. This task will not be completed during your assignment period. While all advisors are anxious for change to be underway and even more anxious for it to be completed, it is more important to focus on right-sizing, durability and resilience. Ask, 'Is this sustainable, will this change continue to be implemented without the ongoing support of international stakeholders?'

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[33] See Institute for Security Governance, 'Smart Sheets', https://instituteforsecuritygovernance.org/resource-library.

[34] See Transparency International, 'Corruption Treats and International Missions: Practical Guidance for Leaders', 2014 and 'Mission Made Possible: External Oversight and anticorruption in Fragile States', 2018, https://ti-defence.org/publications/.

[35] In April 2021, The Canadian government appointed former Supreme Court Judge Louise Arbour to conduct an investigation into sexual harassment and misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. This was prompted by a number of allegations involving senior military leaders including the past and current Chiefs of Defence. By the end of 2021, the Minister of Defence offered a full apology for the sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces and accepted that civilian, not military, authorities should handle military sexual misconduct cases. See https://www.canad.ca Minister of Defence speech 13 December 2021 'DND/CAF Sexual Misconduct Apology- Minister of National Defence's Apology' and backgrounder 29 April 2021 'Launch of Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces', https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2021/04/launch-of-an-independent-external-comprehensive-review-of-the-department-of-national-defence-and-the-canadian-armed-forces.html.

While your primary focus is on supporting the host nation, strategic advisors should also be aware of their own conduct and monitor the conduct of the international community to ensure words match deeds.[36] Many advisors patiently explain good practice only to turn around and do something contrary to the advice offered based on 'operational imperative'. This might include letting contracts for road repair without competitive bids because the route needs to be open to permit the movement of military equipment and personnel; or transferring equipment without proper records. Is it any wonder a host nation cannot develop an effective inventory of spare parts if they do not have a record of the number of vehicles provided by the international donors?

Change is never a straight line. Progress will be uneven and stubborn pockets of resistance will endure long past your tenure. Setbacks must be anticipated as the security; political and financial situation evolves. Pay close attention to the direction of change. Remember you are investing on behalf of your government and the taxpayers of your nation. Is good governance capacity being developed? Whatever the pace of these efforts, the task of the security sector advisor remains clear and contributes to the development of systems, processes, policies and procedures that address governance inadequacies.

7. Conclusion

This chapter is intended to help practitioners who will be called on to advise in very complex environments. It provides practical examples drawn from real life and identifies several resources and tools to help advisors navigate the challenges that will confront them in the course of their assignments. While every situation will be unique, three enduring principles will be at the core of your work as an SFA. **First**, remember that you are an advisor. You can present options and identify likely outcomes but you are not a decision-maker. Staying in your assigned role will often be frustrating but do not be tempted to cross the line from advisor to decision-maker. **Second,** you need to have a clear understanding of what success looks like to the host nation and the donors. Knowing this and having a shared understanding with stakeholders is critical to the success of the mission. This must be clear to all parties from the outset and updated over time to be aligned with the changing situation. It should be written in plain

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[36] In 2018 the UK government imposed a three-year ban on Oxfam International for sexual exploitation carried out by its staff in Haiti. In March 2021, it was again suspended by the UK government for sexual exploitation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. See also the account of corruption of the UN LOFTA Trust Fund exposed by US SIGAR in the Quarterly report issued April 2011, https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2011-04-30qr.pdf.

language with agreed metrics and a timeline. **Third**, you should expect to confront individuals from donor nations and host nations, with a variation on, 'You should not expect to discuss good governance and corruption while forces were conducting kinetic operations' and efforts related to this topic will have to wait until 'the shooting stops' to engage decision-makers on this topic. This of course ignores the fact that poor governance and corruption feed and may prolong a crisis. Addressing these issues in conjunction with supporting the rule of law must be an integral part of the operational plan for every phase of the crisis. Leaving it to the recovery and reconstruction stage is too late and will undermine the success of the operation. Getting the right person 'into the right job at the right time was one of the most significant failures of the [Afghanistan] mission and [it was] one of the hardest to repair'.[37] We should learn from these costly mistakes as we move forward.

There will be a continuing need to develop a cadre of civilian and military SFA who are trained to support decision-makers grappling with the challenge of managing the various stages of a crisis. We must learn from our mistakes and missteps and get better at the planning, delivery and evaluation of this task. Supporting security forces that are committed to the rule of law and upholding human rights are key to our collective long-term peace and development. Real-world events should give us pause but should not deter us from drawing lessons (sometimes painful), improving our skills and updating our tools. The international community assesses hostile actors by their deeds, not words. We should expect no less scrutiny of ourselves. Collaboration with world-leading experts from international organisations for developing an interdisciplinary approach to SFA operations is important. As emphasised in NATO SFA COE roundtables and publications, 'SFA is a mission set that works to ensure a stable, equitable, transparent and predictable security environment that respects international laws and standards'.[38]

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[37] The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 'What We Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction,' August 2021, https://www.sigar.mil.

[38] See the official text at: https://www.nsfacoe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Promoting-the-Rule-of-Law-and-Good-Governance.-SFA-Implications-in-International-Initiatives..pdf.).

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CHAPTER 2

SFA advising in the NATO context: principles and norms that support SFA advising

Vlasta Zekulic

Key Points

- The role of strategic advising is indivisibly linked with two overarching concepts: Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Capacity Building (CB).

- SSR is increasingly used as an instrument in analysing the processes within the security domain and is an important indicator of the direction, pace and coverage of overall social reform.

- Without stabilisation and reconstruction, elements that complement military actions, many areas could lapse back into conflict.

- Underlying criteria for entering into capacity building activities will be the promotion of democratic values and human rights, contributing to security and stability and developing or enhancing interoperability.

- During the capacity building planning process, a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the political, socio-economic, gendered and human security situations are needed.

- The selected programme should create a balance between effective delivery and accountability in the field and the overarching objectives of the donor nation or organisation.

- Knowledge and experience of defence sector reform, technical experience relevant to their field of advising and experience in change and programme management are key requirements for advising activities.

- Whenever possible, reforms should be designed and implemented by local actors under the guidance and advice of external experts.

- Unity of effort between security providers is needed to avoid fragmentation.

Keywords: security sector reform, capacity building, strategic advising, concept development.

1. Introduction

This chapter showcases the policy construct required to deliver strategic advising activities. From the very beginning, it is clear that there is not just one policy construct. Strategic advising as a function is most associated with Security Sector Reform (SSR), defence and security capacity-building activities or stabilisation and reconstruction efforts. However, even within these constructs, understanding what it is and how should it apply remains vague and ill-defined. The complexity broadens when we look into how international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and European Union (EU) understand what it is and how to use it. Despite that ambiguity, or perhaps because of it, capacity-building today is the most common form of international intervention.

To explain the role and policy construct for the use of strategic advising, this chapter will first clarify two overarching concepts that are most commonly associated with it – SSR and capacity building (CB). The analysis will compare the use of these concepts in different international organisations. Secondly, the chapter will lay out the issues that any organisation or nation should consider when developing a policy or mandate that envisages the use of strategic advisors. Finally, it offers some examples of the most used tools to evaluate the effectiveness of CB activities, recognising that regular review and assessment are the keys to avoiding mission creep and the waste of resources.

1.1. Security Sector Reform

While there is no clear and agreed set of definitions for SSR, most of those used by international organisations such as the UN, EU or NATO contain two key normative elements. The first is the importance of democratisation and civilian control and the second is the importance of developing effective and efficient SSR, which are of particular interest for strategic advising.[39] The concept of SSR is 'increasingly used as an instrument in analysing not only the processes within the security domain but also as an important indicator of the direction, pace and coverage of the overall social reform. It provides a direct link between the changes in the security sector and the reform of the society concerned'.[40]

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[39] Sabiiti Mutengesa, 'Taking Antonettian Complacency For Normative: The case of donor-driven security sector reform in Sub Saharan Africa', (London: *Thesis King's College*, 2015), https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/taking-antoinettian-complacency-for-normativity(a899ac07-8fc4-45b0-8801-f298ac7cc39f).html.

[40] Timothy Edmunds, 'Security Sector Reform: Concepts and Implementation', *Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Centre for Civil-Military Relations in Belgrade*, 2004, https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/en/publications/security-sector-reform-concepts-and-implementation-2.

The UN defines SSR as 'a process of assessments, review and implementation and monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that have as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law'.[41] Under this overarching approach, the UN facilitates national dialogues, helps develop national security and defence policies, strengthens oversight, management and coordination capacities, articulates security sector regulations and mobilises resources.[42]

NATO closely associates CB with SSR and stabilisation and reconstruction efforts. From a NATO policy perspective, SSR and stabilisation and reconstruction 'include support to establishing long-term stability and strengthened governance, local capacity building and the promotion of ownership by the relevant national authorities, encouragement of the rule of law and establishing the basis for economic, human and social development. The ultimate goal of such efforts is to maintain or to return to, a stable, self-sustaining peace'.[43]

According to NATO's political guidance, operational experience has demonstrated that in many cases SSR and 'stabilisation and reconstruction are essential parts of mission even while combat or counter-insurgency operations are still underway. Military means alone are not enough to accomplish the mission and to fulfil the expected results. Without stabilisation and reconstruction elements to complement military actions many situations could lapse back into conflict',[44] and there may not be enough support from the local population needed to mitigate conditions that could develop into an insurgency or support an ongoing one.[45]

NATO recognises that the primary responsibility in this field sits with other actors – national authorities and various local and international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This particular consideration emerged after the term security sector expanded beyond the traditional view of the military and police as the sole providers of public security. It now includes all elements of the state that are responsible for the development of policies, strategies and provision of resources to provide security for citizens. These

[41] United Nations, 'Security Sector Reform', https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/thematic-areas/access-to-justice-and-rule-of-law-institutions/ssr.

[42] UN Security Council, 'UNSCR 2151', 28 April 2014, http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2151.

[43] NATO, 'Political Guidance on Ways to Improve NATO's Involvement in Stabilisation and Reconstruction', 8 Oct 2010, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_2416.pdf.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

include broader law enforcement agencies, paramilitary forces, border guards, intelligence agencies, the judicial system and penal institutions and the government departments and ministries that formulate policy and manage these institutions, areas in which NATO institutional knowledge and expertise are limited.[46]

The concept of SSR developed along with this shift towards human security. EU policymakers have invested much energy in designing how to support SSR through a human security lens. The EU recognised the need to create and foster the 'political, social, and economic conditions for stability as essential for a country's security and a prerequisite for development. Consequently, capacity building – including institution building, security sector reform or human capability development – became a key element in the EU's engagement with third countries'.[47]

The EU opted for the combined use of instruments including security, conflict prevention, governance support, resilience and longer-term development aid as key requirements to address conflicts more effectively and build sustainable peace.[48] In practical terms, this resulted in:

1) the launch of a new 'Capacity-Building for Security and Development'[49] initiative in 2018 to support military activities that contribute to sustainable development;

2) the establishment of EU Trust Funds for projects with a clear security dimension; and

3) the creation of a European Peace Facility in March 2021[50] to finance a range of assistance measures for foreign military actors in the form of training, advice, infrastructure or equipment.

Further work is underway to resolve challenges related to balancing the interests

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[46] P. Fluri, M. Hadzic, 'The Sourcebook on Security Sector Reform', *Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Centre for Civil-Military Relations*, (Belgrad, 2004), pg. 7, https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/en/publications/security-sector-reform-concepts-and-implementation-2.

[47] DCAF, 'SSR and SSG', https://www.dcaf.ch/about-ssgr.

[48] Matthias Deneckere, Ashley Neat and Volker Hauck, 'The future of EU security sector assistance: learning from experience', *ECDPM*, Discussion Paper No. 271, May 2020, https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/ECDPM-Future-EU-Security-Sector-Assistance-Learning-Experience-Discussion-Paper-271.pdf.

[49] Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council Capacity building in support of security and development - Enabling partners to prevent and manage crises. JOIN/2015/0017, / https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52015JC0017.

[50] European Council, 'EU sets up the European Peace Facility', 22 March 2021, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/03/22/eu-sets-up-the-european-peace-facility/.

and values of member states, stabilisation vs. transformation of security sector governance, short-term responses vs. long-term engagement and improving the speed of adaptation to local realities.[51]

> 'SSR has been an integral element of intervention in conflict and post-conflict environments for some years and has been the chief vehicle for the development and enhancement of intelligence, policing and security capability of local and regional security forces. However, the results of SSR programmes are at best mixed and frequently show conflicts in programming between global and local approaches, national and human security, technocratic programmes and political problems and state and non-state structures. With an increased level of knowledge driven by a series of field evaluations and reassessment of approaches, the international community is currently searching for more effective approaches in this type of environment'.
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> Paul Jackson. 'Capacity Building and Security Sector Reform', (The Palgrave handbook of Security, Risk and Intelligence, May 2017), pg. 281-296, https://rd.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/978-1-137-53675-4_16.

A more focused and operational concept of capacity building is becoming the preferred option.

1.2. Capacity Building

'Capacity building is a process by which people, institutions and societies can develop, strengthen and expand their ability to meet their goals or fulfil their mandates'.[52] According to the UK Department for International Development, capacity building 'constitutes a core component of many development programmes, including SSR, and is central to efforts to improve the delivery of citizen security in an effective, responsive and accountable manner. Yet, while much has been written about SSR, including critiques of its effectiveness, understandings of 'capacity' and 'capacity building' remain under-explored.[53]

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[51] Matthias Deneckere, Ashley Neat and Volker Hauck, 'The future of EU security sector assistance: Learning from Experience', *ECDPM*, Discussion paper no. 271, May 2020, https://ecdpm.org/publications/future-eu-security-sector-assistance-learning-experience/.

[52] Nadia Gerspacher, 'Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance – A practical guide', (Kumarian Press: Sterling Virginia, 2016), pg. 9.

[53] Denney, Lisa and Valters, Craig, ' Evidence Synthesis: Security Sector Reform and Organisational Capacity Building,' Department for International Development, (London, November 2015), pg. III, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57bc170140f0b61272000010/Security-sector-reform-organisational-capacity-building.pdf.

UN CB efforts also cover areas such as political transition, anti-corruption, illicit trafficking, countering terrorism and emergency preparedness. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) regards CB as a long-term, continual process in which all stakeholders participate.[54] It is a holistic approach to human development. The UNDP model is built on three tiers: 1) unlock the potential of the society through the drafting and enactment of policies and legal structures; 2) build institutions and community organisations; and 3) develop human resources and strengthen oversight and managerial systems.

Under the strategic guidelines provided in the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept, four interlocking policies – Policy for a More Efficient and Flexible Partnerships,[55] Comprehensive Approach,[56] Stabilisation and Reconstruction,[57] and the Security Force Assistance Concept[58] – gave NATO a clear mandate to support defence and security-related CB and became an important element of NATO's regional cooperation efforts and main bilateral cooperation programmes.

NATO's defence and related security CB efforts encompass advice, assistance, support, training and mentoring activities in the defence and related security sector. These efforts are focused in particular on strategic level advising on defence and related security reform and institution building, including on building or reforming national security architecture, policy and defence planning development and related procedures.

Allies have agreed that NATO can undertake CB activities in support of a partner nation, international organisation (providing added value complementarity to the lead organisation's efforts) or non-partner country (providing that the nation requested NATO's assistance). Underlying criteria for entering into CB activities will be the promotion of democratic values and human rights and contributing to security and stability and developing or enhancing interoperability. However, the

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[54] Capacity Development, 'A UNDP primer. United Nations Development Programme,' (New York, 2008), pg. 20, https://www.aesanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Capacity-Development-A-UNDP-Primer.pdf.

[55] PO (2014)0582, 'Enhancing NATO's role in Defence and Related Security Capacity Building, ' 27 August 2014.

[56] C-M(2008)0029-COR1, 'Proposal on a Way Ahead on Comprehensive Approach,' 2 April 2008; PO(2010)0143-FINAL, 'Political Guidance on Ways to Improve NATO's Involvement in Stabilisation and Reconstruction', 8 Oct 2010; PO(2011)0045, 'Updated List of Tasks for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Approach Action Plan and the Lisbon Summit Decisions on the Comprehensive Approach ', 4 March 2011.

[57] PO (2004)0059, 'Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB)', 2 June 2004.

[58] MCM-0034-2014, 'NATO Security Force Assistance Concept', 28 Mar 2014, see at: https://www.esercito.difesa.it/en/organisation/The-Chief-of-General-Staff-of-the-Army/Training-Specialisation-and-Doctrine-Command/Infantry-School/Documents/2nd-Establishment-Conference-SFA/05%20-%20Last%20Version%20as%20of%202%20May%202017%20Concept%20of%20the%20NATO%20SFA%20COE.pdf.

availability of experience, expertise, capacities and best practices of individual Allies will also be taken into account.

Individual nations can also independently support capacity building. When engaged to do so, they act within the scope of their national understanding of what CB is. The UK's Department for International Development defines it as an activity involving individual and organisational learning to build social capital and trust and to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to create an organisational culture that allows organisations or groups to set objectives, achieve results, solve problems and gives organisations the adaptability and the flexibility necessary for long term survival.[59] On the other hand, the US Agency for International Development focuses in its capacity-building work on strengthening core public administration capacity at both the national and subnational level and less on building organisational culture. The goal is to enable public sector institutions to deliver basic public services effectively and transparently.

2. Mandating considerations

Despite differences in definitions, organisational approaches or policy end-states, all of the approaches outlined above, at its core, focus on the ability of individuals and institutions to carry out their tasks and of societies to meet the needs of their citizens. For these goals to be achieved, several key elements have to be taken into consideration when developing a plan and a mandate for CB and the use of strategic advisors.

2.1. Understanding of the circumstances under which the activity is launching

At the beginning of the CB planning process, there is a need to 'undertake a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the political, socio-economic',[60] gendered and human security considerations, security and institutional situation and assessment of the physical infrastructure in a potential theatre of operations. Analysis should take into account all available assessments, analyses and capabilities of other actors, particularly from other international and regional organisations and from civil society and non-governmental organisations. Sources of analysis should be as broad as possible to help planners deeply understand the root causes of the problem, the evolution of crisis or related security challenges,

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[59] Denney, Lisa and Valters, Craig, "Evidence Synthesis: Security Sector Reform and Organisational Capacity Building".

[60] NATO Guidances, 'Political Guidance on Ways to Improve NATO's Involvement in Stabilisation and Reconstruction', 2010, pg.3 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_2416.pdf.

fragility and permissiveness of the operating environment and the role played by key domestic and foreign, friendly and adversarial stakeholders. Assessment serves as a solid foundation for the design, planning and implementation of CB programmes and provides a baseline against which evaluation and measurement of effectiveness will take place.

Once completed the analysis should offer diverse courses of action with associated opportunities, threats, risks and required resources for successful implementation. The selected programme should aim at creating a balance between effective delivery and accountability in the field and the overarching objectives of the donor nation or organisation. Recognising the holistic nature of any defence sector reform, planning should account for complex interdependencies by prioritising and phasing different activities within the programme cycle.

These considerations should also guide the selection of strategic advisors for the delivery of programmes and the development of tailored pre-deployment training programmes. The requirements for strategic advisors must include but are not limited to the substantive knowledge and experience of defence sector reform, technical experience relevant to their field of advising (policy development, management, budgeting, logistics, training etc.), experience in change management (to help create a vision for change and guide reform processes in the complex environments) and programme management skills.[61]

2.2. Ensuring local ownership

Any CB plan or mandate should clearly articulate who the target audience is and how it will ensure local ownership of the reforms. 'Local ownership implies that the reform of security policies and practices, institutions and activities in a given country must be designed, managed and implemented by local actors rather than external actors'.[62] 'Different historical, political, cultural, structural and social legacies create environments that require local, context-specific strategies for reform. Imposing an externally generated blueprint for reform avoids the domestic perception of the problem and ignores local absorption capacity'.[63]

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[61] DCAF, 'SSR in a Nutshell, Manual for Introductory Training on Security Sector Reform,' 2012, https://issat.dcaf.ch/content/download/2970/25352/file/ISSAT%20LEVEL%201%20TRAINING.

[62] Nathan, Laurie and Bernardo Arévalo De León, 'No ownership, no commitment: a guide to local owner-ship of Security Sector reform,' (University of Birmingham, 2007), pg. 4, https://www.semanticscho-lar.org/paper/No-ownership%2C-no-commitment%3A-a-guide-to-local-of-Nathan-Leo%CC%81n/14a85 1647e3e31134272c498f4d0ca4bab76abcd.

[63] Islam Yusufi, 'Security Sector Reform in Southeast Europe,' *International Policy Fellowship*, July 2002, see website: http://www.policy.hu/yusufi/researchpaper.html.

While it is true that any reform needs reformers driving the processes from within, finding such actors may be difficult, particularly at the beginning of the reform process.

Part of the challenge in identifying the right local champions stems from the belief in some organisations that local ownership is not synonymous with and should not be understood as government ownership. While this approach has its merits in promoting a broad people-centric approach, experience from the field clearly shows that CB is more successful where it acknowledges the political nature of reforms and is designed accordingly.

This includes recognising that CB is itself deeply political as it involves changing power relationships. CB therefore should be tailored to the local political realities and should gain political support for reform.[64] This political dimension of reform is supported and reinforced by the technical dimension that is key to delivering specific, tailored and practical capabilities to key stakeholders.

2.3. Institutional implementation considerations

Just as capacity can be disaggregated into individual, institutional and societal levels, so can CB. Many CB activities have limited effects because they focus on only one of these levels. While it is important to strengthen the capacity of individuals, it is just as important to strengthen the society so that it can start and continue to produce individuals who have the skills, knowledge and sense of civic duty to staff governmental institutions.

Every country is usually an interconnected and interdependent system of systems and CB activities should be planned and approached with that complexity in mind. The system has various inputs that go through processes to produce outputs, which together accomplish the overall goal for the system. If one part of the system is altered, the nature of the overall system will likely change.[65] Therefore, at the institutional level, CB can be further disaggregated and decentralised into a variety of sublevels: national government institutions, local governmental outposts and civil society organisations. Of all the sectors of public policy, the security sector has historically proven one of the most resistant to public input. Sometimes the requirements of secrecy have imposed constraints on the types and amount of information that is released by security sector institutions to the

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[64] Denney, Lisa and Valters, Craig, "Evidence Synthesis: Security Sector Reform and Organisational Capacity Building".

[65] Gerspacher N., 'Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance,' Kumarian Press, 2016, pg. 11.

public. Even with these obstacles, any effect achieved depends on the action taken across all levels.

2.4. Unity of effort

To ensure efficiency, defence and related security, CB activities should make the best use of existing structures and means, including human resources, wherever they may be. The roles and activities of international actors in the region, in particular the UN, NATO, EU and the OSCE, have to be taken into account and recognised in any plan or mandate, as cooperation and coordination among these or other organisations will be required in any CB scenario.

To be effective, coordination should take place between both national and external actors designing, supporting and implementing reform processes from the tactical to the strategic level.[66] Regular and transparent coordination, cooperation and communication ensure cost-effectiveness, avoid duplication, manage interactions and mainstream all cross-cutting issues and challenges. Planners also have to bear in mind that some humanitarian actors may tend to safeguard their 'principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality to protect their personnel and recipient communities',[67] and refuse to coordinate activities with others whom they see as more biased, such as NATO.

2.5. Regular review and assessment

Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating reform activities 'should be undertaken on a continuous base during the implementation phase of the programme and after its formal conclusion to assess whether the programme achieved its stated objectives'.[68] However, any reform is a process rather than an endpoint and so measuring success or failures can be difficult. The complexity of challenges these activities aim to solve and the holistic nature of CB activities means that results may be seen only after some time when the big picture can be considered. At a minimum, the mandates and plans should include clear qualitative and quantitative benchmarks leading toward the long-term goal of governance and development. These benchmarks could be defined based on: the relevance of delivered activity; the effectiveness of bridging the target audience closer to the objective; efficiency (qualitative or quantitative) in relation to the identified baselines; the effect of the

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[66] DCAF, 'SSR in a Nutshell,' https://www.dmeforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Manual20for20Introductory20Training20on20Security20Sector20Reform_DCAF_2012.pdf.

[67] NATO Guidances, 'Political Guidance to Improve NATO's Involvement in Stability and Reconstruction,' 2011, pg.4.

[68] DCAF, 'SSR in a Nutshell,'2012.

change (positive or negative) produced by the CB activities; and sustainability indicating whether benefits are likely to continue after donor presence and funding is withdrawn.[69]

Ideally, one of the three methods for evaluating the effectiveness of CB activities could be considered:[70]

1) Generic Framework Approach. This provides a normative 'ideal' type against which performance can be measured. At its crudest, it measures performance by ticking a series of boxes, each of which corresponds to particular normative criteria. The criteria in this model are often not absolutes and are open to subjective interpretation and variation.[71]

   For example, in Liberia, the major donor the US took responsibility for the military, first by outsourcing it to a private military company, DynCorp, and later by taking a direct,[72] hands-on approach.

   Raising an army is complex and DynCorp focused on five key elements of army building: (1) public sensitisation, (2) recruiting, (3) vetting, (4) training and equipping and (5) formulating strategy and institutional support. Against these five selective steps, 15 years later, the 2,000 strong militaries have been stood up and the project has been deemed a success. However, the self-sustainment of the military is still highly questionable,[73] and other security actors such as police or intelligence institutions were left to the UN and other donors, with predictably lopsided results.[74]

2) Collective or Regional Approach. This measures performance against specific international institutional agendas. This approach has the advantage of providing specific criteria for the capacity being built. Its disadvantage is that it looks at each capacity individually and does not show the effect on the overall reforms efforts.

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Timothy Edmunds, 'Security Sector Reform: Concepts and Implementation', *Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Centre for Civil-Military Relations in Belgrade*, 2004, pg. 45-60, https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/en/publications/security-sector-reform-concepts-and-implementation-2.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Sarah Detzner, ' Modern post-conflict security sector reform in Africa: patterns of success and failure', *African Security Review*, 26:2 (2017): 116-142, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10246029.2017.1302706.

[73] MacDougall, C., 'Too small to succeed? Liberia's new army comes of age', *Al'Jazeera,* 4 March 2014 http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/3/4/too-small-to-succeedliberiasnewarmycomesofage.html.

[74] Spatz, B., Thaler, K.M., 'Has Liberia Turned a Corner?', *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 29, Number 3(2018): 156-170, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Has-Liberia-Turned-a-Corner-Spatz-Thaler/f0d4460b89dd932f57f1232a35b192ec3cbdbdc9.

For example, in the case of SSR in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and South Africa where governments took a transformational and not an incremental approach, the existing institutions have been radically changed and, in comparative terms, the projects were deemed successful. However, "success" is a term that must be applied cautiously regarding SSR efforts and in the case of the three named countries it is not used to imply the achievement of a final goal, but rather significant and sustained improvement in day-to-day security conditions for the majority of the people within a state when compared to prior conditions',[75] and when to compared to other countries in the region going through the same process. 'Thus, cases that are clear SSR successes in terms of improvement may still host high levels of crime, political repression or other serious threats to human security'.[76]

3) Process/facilitation Approach. This measure focuses on specific empirical rather than normative criteria which act as facilitating elements for reform. It requires breaking down every element of reform to its most basic form and assessing the change against the baseline established at the beginning of the CB process. This provides a useful mechanism for measuring and assessing progress but is resource-heavy and becomes increasingly complex if there are several interlinked and interdependent lines of CB.

For example, as part of the comprehensive police reform in Latin America, the sub-reform area focused on gendered CB.

LATIN AMERICA REFORM STANDARDS

1) Develop and implement protocols to investigate, prosecute and support victims of Gendered Based Violence (GBV);
2) Establish gender-responsive codes of conduct and policies on discrimination;
3) Vet police recruits for histories of GBV and domestic violence;
4) Create incentive structures to award gender-responsive policing along with respect for human rights and
5) Where feasible establish Women's police stations.

Kristin Valasek, 'Security Sector Reform and Gender.' Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit. Eds. Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek, (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW,2008), https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/f/30655.pdf.

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[75] Detzner S.(2017), 'Modern post-conflict security sector reform in Africa: patterns of success and failure', *African Security Review*, pg.123.

[76] Ibid.

The success of reforms has been measured by an ability to prove that each of these measures has been fully implemented without an in-depth understanding of how extraordinary success in one or failure in another influences the overarching aims and objectives of reforms.

3. Conclusion

The surge in CB activities today reflects three key considerations: (1) perceived inadequacies of previous approaches to stabilisation and reconstruction; (2) CB advantages in conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution, as they provide better and more flexible tools for the development of good governance practices and development assistance; and (3) support development of long-term partnerships and networks between the governments.[77]

These findings are also reflected in proposal 6 of the NATO 2030 process, *The Transatlantic agenda for the future*, to 'Boost Training and CB.'[78] One of the key findings is that outside the framework of ongoing operations, the Alliance is currently not organised to train local forces at scale and with predictability. The collapse of Afghanistan's security forces in the immediate aftermath of the withdrawal of the NATO forces after 20 years of presence is a brutal testament to it. Therefore, in 2022 Allies are committing to building on the steps taken since 2014 and the development of the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative to enhance NATO's partners' capacities in areas such as fighting terrorism, countering hybrid attacks and contributing to stabilisation.

While this is a noble effort, there is no blueprint for future operations. Each engagement needs to be carefully analysed, planned and tailored to address and encompass unique historic, cultural, ethical, societal, economic and security circumstances. Even if the donor organisations and nations believe that they have developed a perfect plan built on their strengths, understanding what 'success' will look like is extremely important. Continuous realistic and overarching review and assessment are key prerequisites to understanding the path that the mission is on, as are retaining flexibility and unity of effort to make timely adjustments and achieve desired goals.

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[77] N. Gerspacher (2016), 'Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance – A practical guide', pg. 12-13.

[78] North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, ' NATO 2030', June 2021, see website: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/6/pdf/2106-factsheet-nato2030-en.pdf.

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CHAPTER 3

Understanding the local context on a Mission as a key enabler to providing advisory and capacity building support

Bettina Kircher

Key Points

- Mapping is a tool to assess or visualise context dynamics and stakeholders. It can be used to understand conflicts and helps to give a holistic yet simplified view of a particular context at a given time.

- The objective of conflict mapping is to illustrate the main actors and issues, relationships and root causes of conflict. Each relationship between each actor is different and changes over time. Therefore, assessment should be iterative processes.

- Taking into account root causes and contributing factors leading to the outbreak of armed conflict or civil war can help to design needs-based interventions while identifying gaps and avoiding duplication.

- A comprehensive conflict analysis as a participatory and inclusive process involving local, national and international stakeholders helps to understand the socio-political and economic context and conflict dynamics.

- In order to get a more nuanced understanding of local factors, actors and dynamics, gender issues (such as age, sex disaggregated data, cultural/religious affiliation etc.) should be integrated into any context analysis.

- Assessments should not only touch upon macro and micro-level environments within which capacity-building interventions occur but also take into account inter-organisational relationships (IORs) to create synergy effects.

- External interventions, in particular capacity building and advisory activities, do have a political impact on the local context. It is, therefore, crucial to act in a conflict- and culturally sensitive way to avoid adverse effects on the host nation.

- Cultural sensitivity implies knowing and adapting to the local culture including gender dynamics, of communication and behaviour.

Keywords: mapping, conflict analysis, security sector, intercultural competence, conflict sensitivity.

1. Introduction

Planning and implementing capacity-building initiatives and advising activities directed to security forces require a deep insight and understanding of both the host nation's politico-military, socio-cultural and economic situation and those of its counterparts. This chapter looks at tools, techniques and interpersonal skills to assess the local context and contribute to a sustainable capacity-building process. The various ways of conducting context analyses described below help us to understand and respond to the needs which drove the actors involved into conflict: with multiple cause diagrams, main root causes, contributing factors and triggers for the outbreak of war can be visualised. A Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental and Security (PESTLES) analysis looks at the macro environment of conflict, and a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis identifies windows of opportunity by assessing the situation before beginning an operation. Mapping the local landscape of both state and non-state security and justice actors is pertinent in this regard for inclusive consultation, facilitating dialogue and identifying gaps, avoiding duplication and buy-in of potential spoilers to the peace process. Assessment should therefore ensure that all actors from both the Security Sector and Justice Sector, including both non-state and state actors, are examined. With conflict mapping we are trying to determine who is involved in the security and justice systems, what their roles are, how they interact, and what their positions, interests and needs are. Good practice means avoiding adversary effects, acting in a cultural and conflict-sensitive way by adapting to the local culture of communication and taking into account local norms and values.

2. Baseline assessment of the host nation: conflict and stakeholder analysis

All international action in a conflict will affect both conflict dynamics and broader political dimensions. Advisory support and capacity building measures touch on political sensitivities, norms, values and power dynamics as they aim not merely at teaching, but at changing minds. Carrying out needs-based conflict analyses are therefore at the core of any baseline assessments of the local situation at the planning stage and during any intervention. Yet, due to the complex and multi-levelled nature of war and conflict, there is no single explanatory framework or approach to explaining war.[79] Therefore, out of the wide range of tools and methodologies, only the most eminent and practically applicable tools are mentioned below.

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[79] Goodhand, J., Vaux, T. and Walker, R., 'Conducting Conflict Assessments: Guidance Notes', *Department for International Development, London*, 2002, https://gsdrc.org/document-library/conducting-conflict-assessments-guidance-notes/.

2.1. Multiple cause diagram: Causal factors associated with the outbreak of civil war in Sierra Leone

This mapping technique helps to identify the main actors and the larger context and the root causes including triggers for the outbreak of war. In the country case study of Sierra Leone (see Figure 1), the first step was to look at the long-term factors underlying the war to assess a country's vulnerability to the outbreak of conflict. To do so, the historical context and physical and demographic features relevant to the conflict are examined. The analysis is based on the UK Department for International Development's (DfiD) Conflict analysis[80] and sources provided by the Open University during my post-graduate studies in Conflict- and Development Management.

At the time of the outbreak of war, Sierra Leone was facing a demographic problem with 45% of the population being younger than 15 and this angry and unemployed youth was being marginalised by a corrupt government. Diamonds, the main state mineral resource and source of revenue, were mismanaged by patrimonial one-party governments inherited from the tradition of colonial rule. Subsequently, sources of tension were mapped out in the political, security, economic and social structures of Sierra Leone and at international or regional levels. The identified elements such as undisciplined armed forces, declining state resources and financial background linkages were developed to graph the causal factors in a loop leading to two main root causes: state collapse and social exclusion (see Figure 1). During the late 1970s, an economic crisis emerged with a balance of payment deficit of US$ 215 million. Official development assistance, needed to fill the gap, increased from US$ 15 million in 1976 to US$91 million in 1980.

On independence in 1961, Sierra Leone had inherited a weak authoritarian government with 'indirect rule' (local laws had never been codified) from the colonial era which was based on a one-state party and a reputation for corruption. President Momoh took over power when diamond income fell sharply due to mismanagement of state resources such as the distribution of mining licences to favoured people. The subsequent collapse of state services and President Momoh's official declaration that education is a privilege instead of a right had a devastating effect on the frustrated youth.[81] They were marginalised by the imposed educational disadvantage. Respective to the second step of the Department of International Development's (DFID's) analysis, key actors influencing the conflict or being most affected by the conflict have been pinpointed: in this regard, the frustrated youth's

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[80] UK Department for International Development (DfID), 'Conducting conflict assessments: Guidance Notes, Department of International Development, UK, 2002.

[81] Open University, 'TU875 War, Intervention and Development. Case Studies', pg. 9-14, https://www.open.ac.uk/library/digital-archive/module/xcri:TU875/study.

sense of injustice turned it into a social movement which eventually merged with the rebel movement threatening the government, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Therefore, the RUF constitutes the 3rd main source of conflict (see Figure 1). Liberia's Charles Taylor fuelled the war and was the first head of state being tried by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the Sierra Leonean civil war.[82] The third step of DFID's analysis, factors preventing conflict, are not included in this exercise.

Part of an international junction that galvanised the conflict included the United Nations Security Council which for the first time gave an explicit mandate to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. Other external responses implied the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions in Sierra Leone (UN-AMSIL) with its focus on the protection of civilians,[83] and on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and the interventions of the UK and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).[84] Although the DDR process in Sierra Leone faced several challenges (for instance, minor and female ex-combatants were to a large extent denied benefits due to a misconception of eligibility criteria), the social reintegration or integration of ex-combatants in the armed forces or police force contributed to a sustained peace process in Sierra Leone.[85]

As seen in the example of Sierra Leone, long term roots of conflict such as inequalities (unequal access to social services and education or unequal distribution of state resources) may serve as an entry point for capacity building and advising activities. Advisory support could include advocating for more inclusive access for young people including young women to vocational training or parts of the security sector such as (the police) at the respective ministerial level. Causal factors for the war such as endemic corruption or unjust social structures are key contributing factors and must be addressed as part of any comprehensive solution[86]. Addressing these causes of war through advisory support or capacity-building activities may contribute to more sustainable results and local ownership.

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[82] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/26/charles-taylor-war-crimes-hague.

[83] See also NATO Security Force Assistance (SFA) Center of Excellence (CoE): *Promoting the Rule of Law and Good Governance, SFA implications in international initiatives, Ludovica Glorioso (Ed.),* 2021, pg.121. For detailed info on the UN approach to DDR see pg.93-118.

[84] The Open University, *Civil War, Civil Peace,* Yanacopulos, H. and Hanlon, J (eds), Milton Keynes, in association with Oxford, U.K. and Ohio University Press, 2006, pg.54.

[85] United Nations Conference Report on DDR and Stability in Africa, 2005.

[86] Open University, 'TU875 War, Intervention and Development. Case Studies, https://www.open.ac.uk/library/digital-archive/module/xcri:TU875/study.

Figure 1: **Multiple cause diagram explaining for the outbreak of civil war in Sierra Leone in 1991**

© Bettina Kircher
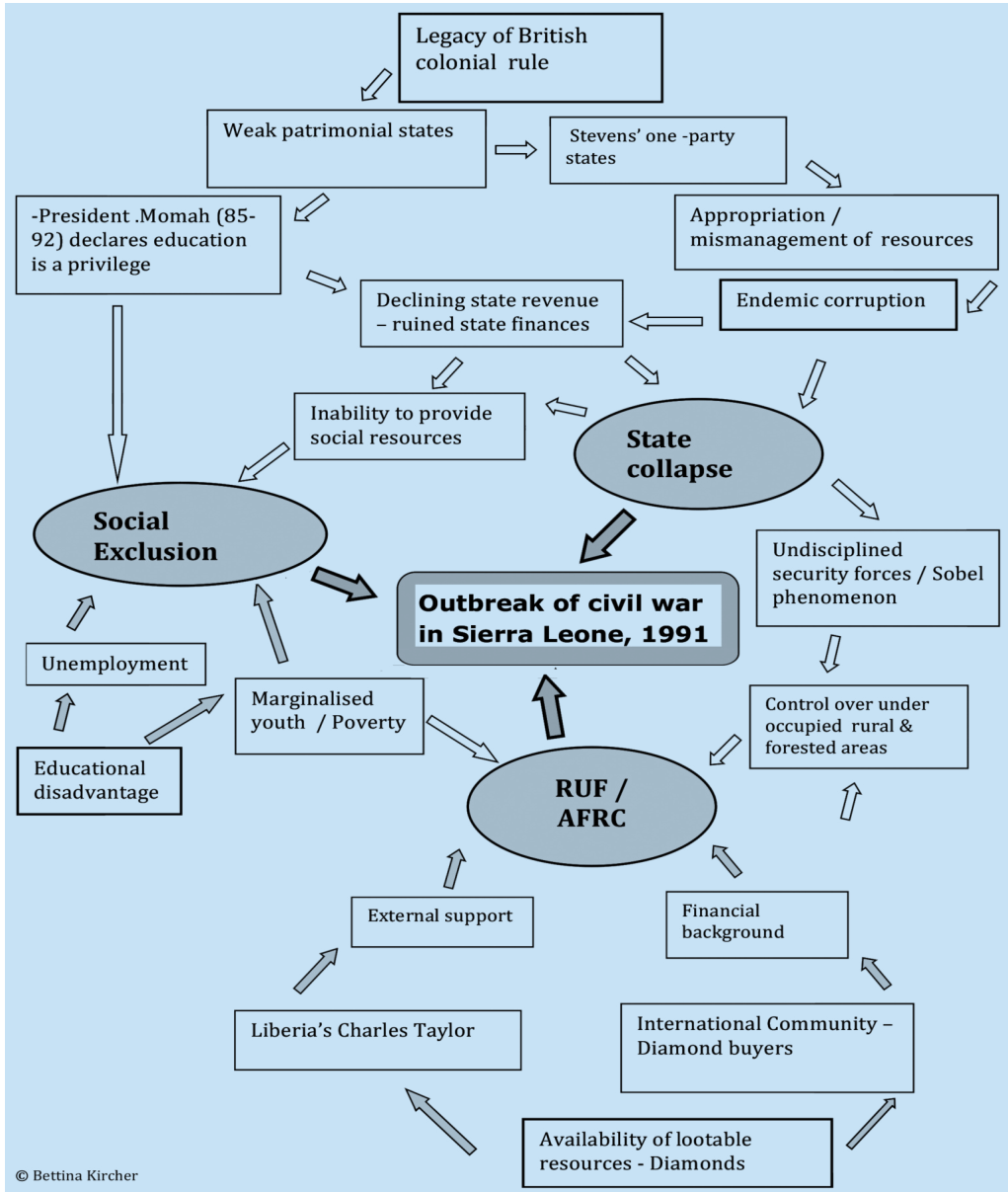
2.2. PESTLES and SWOT analyses

PESTLES is an evaluation tool on the macro-level to give deeper insight into the host nation or region where intervention is planned by analysing a variety of interdependent indicators. It assesses the macro-environment within which advisory activities

occur and the comprehensive analysis helps us to understand how each of the factors can affect and be affected by an intervention. It considers the political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental and security aspects. In Sierra Leone, the political dimension would translate into the legacy of an authoritarian regime, the environmental aspects would include the abundance of natural (and lootable) resources feeding the war, and the security aspect would include the phenomenon of SOBELS[87] and the RUF as non-state armed rebel forces challenging the state's monopoly for the use of force with weak state security provision and oversight.

SWOT analysis combines an internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses with an external analysis of opportunities and threats. This strategic planning tool can be used to analyse a specific situation before an operation or to define strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks in a participatory way. A SWOT analysis is also useful to turn weaknesses into opportunities by identifying entry points for future interventions. For instance, the risk of excluding certain ethnic, marginalised or vulnerable groups from political life or the unintended consequences of local reform processes may serve as an entry point for recommendations. Advisory efforts may then be directed towards enhancing civilian democratic control such as the parliamentary or constitutional reforms in Côte d'Ivoire in the aftermath of the post-electoral violence. [88] The threat of local media being used as means of suppressing dissent might serve as an opportunity to introduce, for instance, community radio (e.g. United Nations Radio in Côte d'Ivoire, ONUCI-FM[89]) as a platform for the grievances of socially excluded people. Applying SWOT analysis to a local force, strengths could translate into disciplined, well-managed and well-equipped troops supported by nearby family networks or diversified troops with former warring parties horizontally and vertically integrated. Weaknesses of a local force might be financial constraints for military equipment, the abundance of ghost soldiers or missing accountability towards the local population. Entry points or opportunities for advisory or capacity building initiatives could then be human rights, legal or leadership and management training or supporting an operational audit and census of local troops to contribute to accountability and effectiveness. Threats for both an advisory mission and the host nation could be military coups

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[87] Abbreviation used for Governmental forces acting as soldiers during the day and turning into rebels at night: SOLdier-reBEL.

[88] For more detailed info see: United Nations Security Council: Final progress report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire, New York 2017, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/858385/usage?ln=en.

[89] United Nations Security Council: Role of United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire. Special report of the Secretary – General, New York 2018, pg. 13-14. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2018_958.pdf.

with the unlawful use of force or young officers rebelling against higher ranks within a national army.

Applied on a training, advisory or capacity-building mission, an identified weak point could be the loss of institutional knowledge due to the high turnover of staff or overlapping and duplication of training activities. This could serve as an opportunity to improve synergies with other organisations or through inter-institutional relationships (see Section 2.4).

Figure 2: Structure of a SWOT analysis
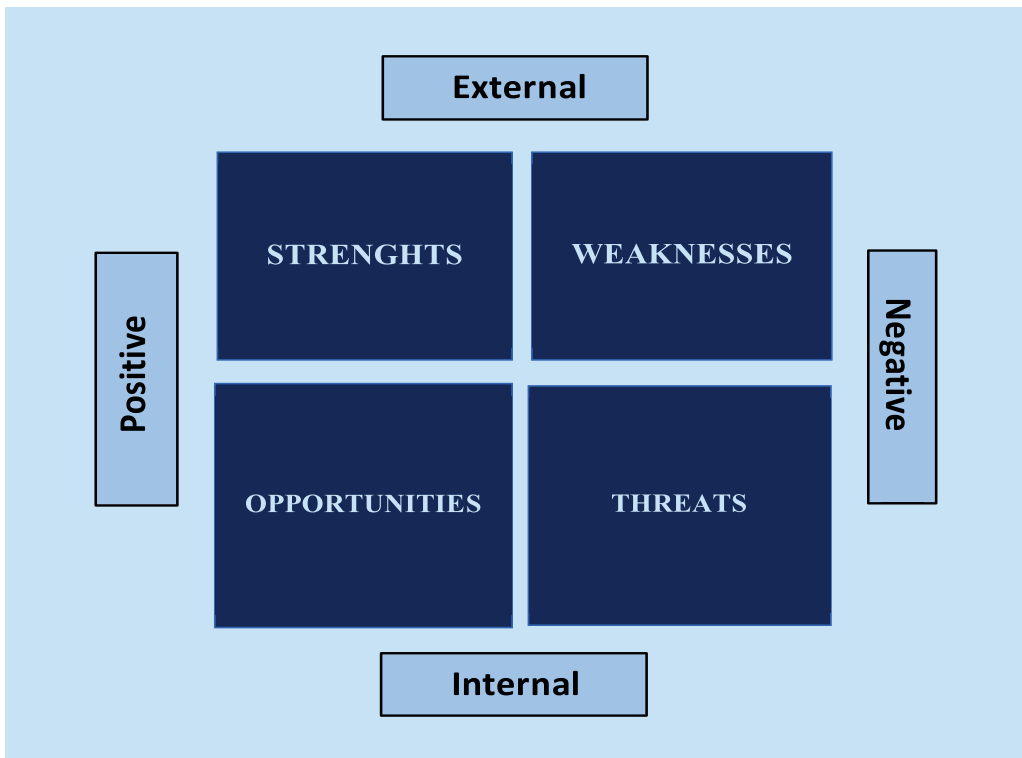
2.3. Concept maps of inter-organisational relationships (IORs)

Mapping of inter-organisational relationships (see Figure 3) serves to visualize multi-dimensional relationship building between state, private sector and civil society and may also be used to identify possible entry points for future operations. Figure 3 is a non-exhaustive generic example of DDR, showing only the inter-institutional relationships between state, civil society and the

private sector but omitting non-state actors. By also considering power and wealth relationships, the chances of success and wider buy-ins by the local population, communities and social groups may be evaluated. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)[90] and Community Based Organisations (CBOs), for example, may entertain IORs with the state through media and communities and create synergy effects. If civil society manages to grow into an effective force it can provide platforms for debate, amplify the voice of underrepresented groups and mobilise popular opinion and action.[91] CSOs can also play an important role in encouraging reforms that represent the populations' security and justice needs.[92] Gender analysis may serve to identify the specific needs of women and young people and to ensure their participation in security related decision making.

The private sector often plays an important role in re-integrating ex-combatants economically while CBOs can co-operate with the government to facilitate their social re-integration. CBOs and civil society may also present a challenge to the government since they are able to hold the state to account in their primary function to counterbalance the balance of the state[93] (watchdog function/counter-power). Coordination and competition within international organisations and multi-lateral agencies are often a daily occurrence and it is worth having a deeper look into their mandates and operations to fill gaps instead of facilitating a duplication of activities.

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[90] CSOs are formed by people joining together to pursue common interest. Civil society is distinct from government, business or kinship-based institutions, private sector or military. It includes non –governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), trade unions, media groups or neighbourhood and church groups, see: Anirudh El-Bushra, 'Changing Policy and Practice from Below: Community Experiences in Poverty Reduction', *Civil Society Team of the United Nations Development Programme(UNDP)*,2006,pg.248,https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/ChangingPolicyandPracticefromBelow.pdf.

[91] Yanacopulos, Helen and Hanlon, Joseph eds., 'Civil war, civil peace'. (Oxford, UK: James Currey Publishers, 2006), http://oro.open.ac.uk/2210/.

[92] OECD DAC, 'Development Co-operation Report 2005: Efforts and Policies of the Members of the Development Assistance Committee', (Paris: 7 February, 2005), pg.224, https://doi.org/10.1787/dcr-2005-en.

[93] Howell, J. and Pearce, J.,"Civil Society and Development", (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), pg. 2.

Figure 3: DDR, Relevant Actors and Stakeholders
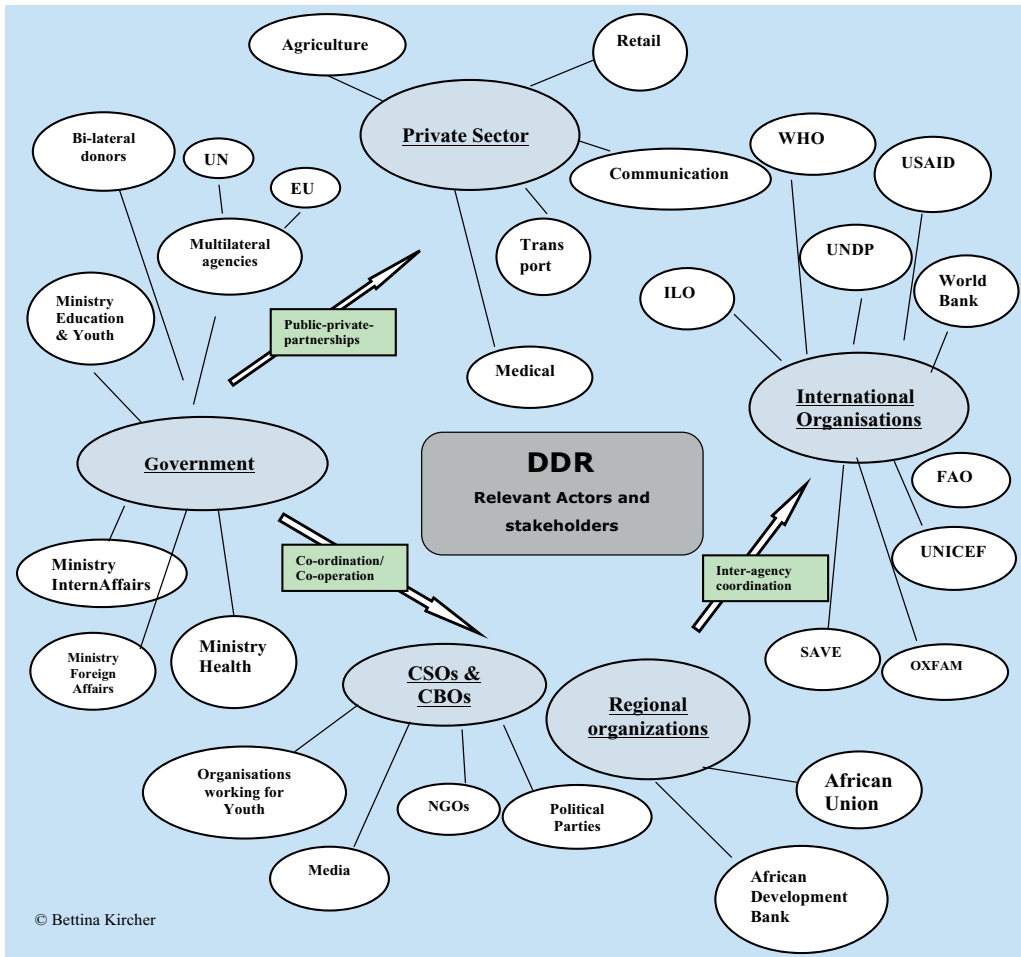
3. Baseline assessment of the host nation's defence and security institutions

There is a wide range of tools and techniques that can be used to analyse and understand the situation of host nations and to facilitate networking and relationship-building. Depending on context and mission mandate, quantitative and qualitative assessments of the target population can be difficult. Baseline assessment activities may also include the mapping of the security and justice actors by visualising the relationships between stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels. This contributes to a holistic view of the conflicting parties, but also other actors and stakeholders and helps to avoid missing out on core players or potential spoilers unfavourable to conflict-resolution.

> **Security and Justice Actors:**
>
> According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) actors in the security sector include armed forces and law enforcement agencies (police, gendarmerie, border guards, customs), the criminal justice system (prosecution services, penal courts), oversight bodies (financial, judicial and political oversight bodies such as ministries, parliamentary committees, judiciary, audit offices) and non-statutory security forces (including guerrillas, traditional authorities, private security companies, militias). For a more detailed view see Figure 5.

3.1. Actor mapping

Actor analysis is crucial to understanding the conflict dynamics, whether it is intensifying or decreasing and where the actors and the root and proximate causes of conflict converge. Close examination and understanding of the characteristics of individual actor groups are necessary if operations directed at strengthening capacities and advisory support seek to change the behaviour of the local counterpart: Mapping is therefore a means to understanding the characteristics, motivations and interests behind the positions of actors and helps identify possible incentives.[94] An initial mapping of key local, national, regional and international actors may also feed into the work of national authorities. In the Central African Republic (CAR), for example, an initial mapping of key national and international actors within a broad consultative process for OECD DAC Handbook on SSR[95] fed into the work of the national SSR Committee.[96] As shown in Figure 4, the following four categories facilitate the classification of all actors:[97]

> 1) Core state security providers (legitimate use of force).
> 2) Core state security and justice oversight.
> 3) Non-state security and justice provision.
> 4) Non-state security oversight.

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[94] Based on OECD (2006), 'Development Co-operation Report 2005: Efforts and Policies of the Members of the Development Assistance Committee', https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/development-co-operation-report-2005_dcr-2005-en, *OECD Publishing*, pg.48-49 and DCAF/ ISSAT,'SSR in a nutshell', pg.15-18, https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/2970/25352/ISSAT%20LEVEL%201%20TRAINING%20MANUAL%20-%20SSR%20IN%20A%20NUTSHELL%20-%205.3.pdf.

[95] OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice, *OECD Publishing*, 2011.

[96] Rory Keanei and Alan Brydeni, 'Security System Reform: What Have We Learned?',(*OECD*, 2009), https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/the-oecd-dac-handbook-on-security-system-reform/security-system-reform-what-have-we-learned_9789264027862-11-en.

[97] The OECD DAC, 'Section 10: Monitoring and Evaluation', in The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice, *OECD Publishing*, 2011, https://docplayer.net/12218960-Section-10-monitoring-and-evaluation.html.

Figure 4: Illustration of the four main categories of the Security and Justice sector

| State providers | Non-state providers |
| State oversight | Non-state oversight |

© DCAF/ISSAT
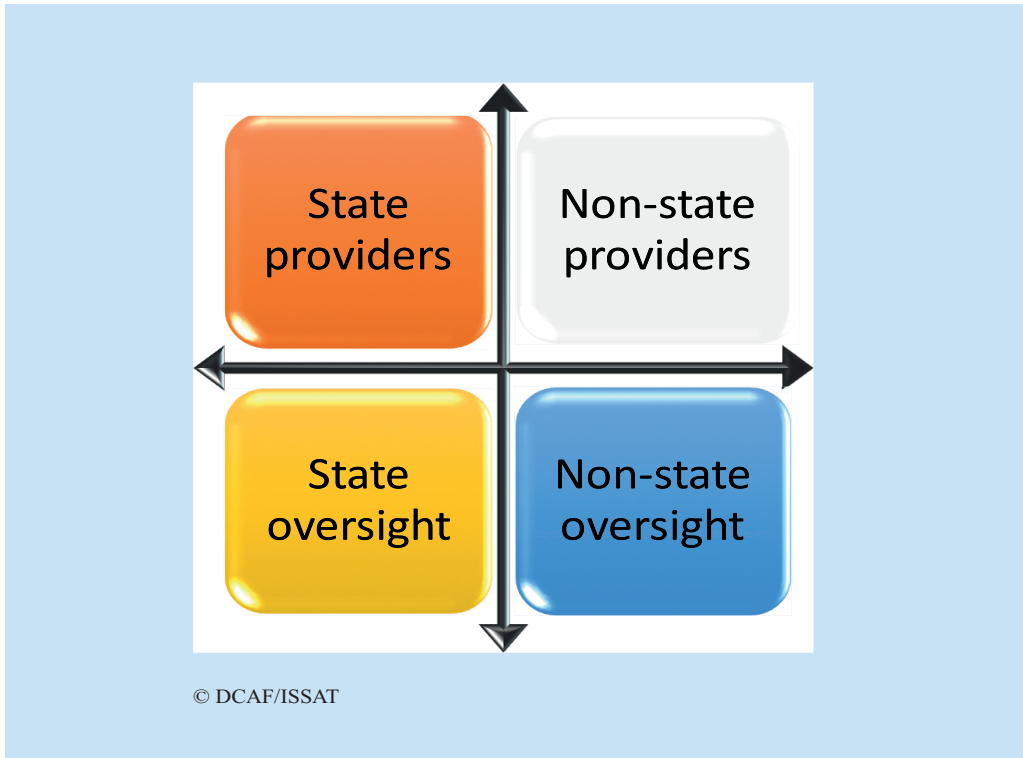
By looking more closely at these four categories (see Figure 5), this kind of mapping ensures that no particular actor is overlooked. Between these categories, there are grey zones where semi-state or semi-legitimate actors can be found. Usually, the state providers in the top left box are the best known to the public as they carry the mandate of the legitimate use of force (armed forces and law enforcement). State institutions following a conflict are usually weak or illegitimate in the eyes of the international community while civil society organisations, as part of the non-state oversight category, may be marginalised or partially controlled by the state. Attention should be paid to which CSOs have links to and influential relationships with security and justice actors. It is worth assessing whether, besides political participation, civil society organisations are able to fulfil their role in advocating and sensitising the general public to raise general awareness of all individuals. To what extent is civil society able to fulfil its function as a watchdog? Are media structures representing public views or are they censored or financed by the state and inclined to communicate indoctrinated state norms and values? Are media and civil society able to reflect the views of all so-

cial groups? In Sierra Leone, for example, women played an important role as part of an active civil society in advocating and persuading their sons and husbands to stop fighting.[98]

Security oversight is part of a state oversight mechanism and parliament is the most prominent alongside any other state watchdog. As to internal oversight these can be for example gender –related complaint mechanisms within Armed Forces, Ombuds or National Human Rights Institutions or Female Armed Forces Associations.[99] Security management is composed of diverse ministries and judicial or police councils. Some players may have a dual role as both a security provider and management, such as judicial services. Mobile courts for example in North Kivu, DRC may step in to provide additional access to justice for the population due to high caseloads and at the same time they are accountable to the Ministry of Justice.

> Actors who may have a significant impact on security system governance, apart from parliamentarians, can also include local elected bodies, politicians, ethnic leaders and other traditional structures or veterans.[100]

Mapping of actors should consider the legitimacy of such locally elected and embedded bodies or their political power over the population or influence on political decision-making. Another factor to consider is to what extent locally trusted and respected leaders can contribute to advocating for reconciliation, social cohesion or peace. Trusted elders might influence young fighters regarding adherence to negotiated cease-fires. At the same time, younger members of society have also started to take over the function as 'gate keepers' in the communities, for instance recent coups have been carried out by the younger military.

Since each security and justice system is different, other non-state actors may play a significant role as security or justice providers such as traditional courts, paralegal services, local defence units, home guards, vigilante groups or neighbourhood watch groups to fill security vacuums. It is important to assess their legitimacy, quality of service and oversight function,[101] and acceptance by the local population. In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 80% of justice provision is deliv-

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[98] Open University, Women & War, Video, 2005.

[99] For a deeper insight into how to integrate a gender perspective into armed forces internal oversight see: DCAF Research Paper, 2014: Integrating a gender perspective into internal oversight with Armed Forces, https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Policy-and-Research-Papers/Integrating-a-Gender-Perspective-into-Internal-Oversight-within-Armed-Forces.

[100] OECD DAC, 'Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice', *OECD Publishing*, 2007, https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/themen/fragile-kontexte/224402-oecd-handbook-security-system-reform_EN.pdf.

[101] OECD, 'Statistical Reporting Directives', 6 April 2007, pg.48, see: https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC(2007)34&docLanguage=En.

ered by non-state actors which may operate in the vacuum of state authority or parallel to state institutions.[102]

In North-East Nigeria, for example, the population trusts the services of vigilante groups known as the non-state voluntary police services (VPS) over the national police. There is a multitude of actors who provide security while state actors such as the national police are often the last resort for the population which is more inclined to put criminals through the traditional criminal justice chain than the formal one.[103] Often, non-state security providers can also be justice actors. Non-state actors such as the vigilante groups in Nigeria often sit in the middle of legality and illegality. In the case of the north east, the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) has received government funding and support from the UN.[104] The UK's Justice for All (J4A) program has contributed to the formulation of a Code of Conduct for vigilantes in north east Nigeria within the framework of its capacity-building measures from 2011 to 2017[105].

The Dozo in Côte d'Ivoire are another example of informal security provision playing an active role in securing communities where state security institutions are not functioning. The UN estimates that there are 18,000 of these traditional hunters across the country. 'However, their operations have raised issues of accountability as allegations of abuse and misconduct have been reported'.[106] This underlines once more that non-state actors need to be assessed according to acceptance by the population, their legitimacy, accountability to the population and respect for human rights.

Under the state oversight category, it is also important to include actors who may have a significant impact on security sector governance such as parliamentarians and specialised committees or judicial authorities. On the non-state oversight level, ethnic leaders and other traditional structures, locally elected bodies and politicians may play a significant role. 'It could also include political groups, retired members of the security forces, veterans, dependents of serving and former members of the

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[102] OECD DAC, "Handbook on SSR" 2007, pg.11, https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/themen/fragile-kontexte/224402-oecd-handbook-security-system-reform_EN.pdf.

[103] https://www.britishcouncil.org.ng/sites/default/files/c1.4_impact_report_august2012.pdf.

[104] In 2017 the CTJF got delisted from the UN list is an armed group recruiting children following a decrease in recruitment of children and the group's commitment to implement an action plan he signed with the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) in 2017 to end the recruitment and use of children. See: https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/unicef-hails-un-delisting-of-cjtf-from-armed-groups-recruiting-children/2396081.

[105] J4A Justice for all Nigeria Monitoring Impact, August 2012, https://www.britishcouncil.org.ng/sites/default/files/c1.4_impact_report_august2012.pdf

[106] United Nations Security Council: Final progress report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. New York 2017, See: https://reliefweb.int/report/c-te-divoire/final-progress-report-secretary-general-united-nations-operation-c-te-d-ivoire.

security forces and business groups'.[107] Liaising and networking with both the private sector and veterans who often engage in the economic reintegration of ex-combatants might increase the synergy effects of civilian-military cooperation.

Figure 5: The Security and Justice sector

© DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Governance: 'The Security Sector', SSR Backgrounder Series, DCAF, 2015, pg.3, https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_1_Security%20Sector%20Governance_0.pdf
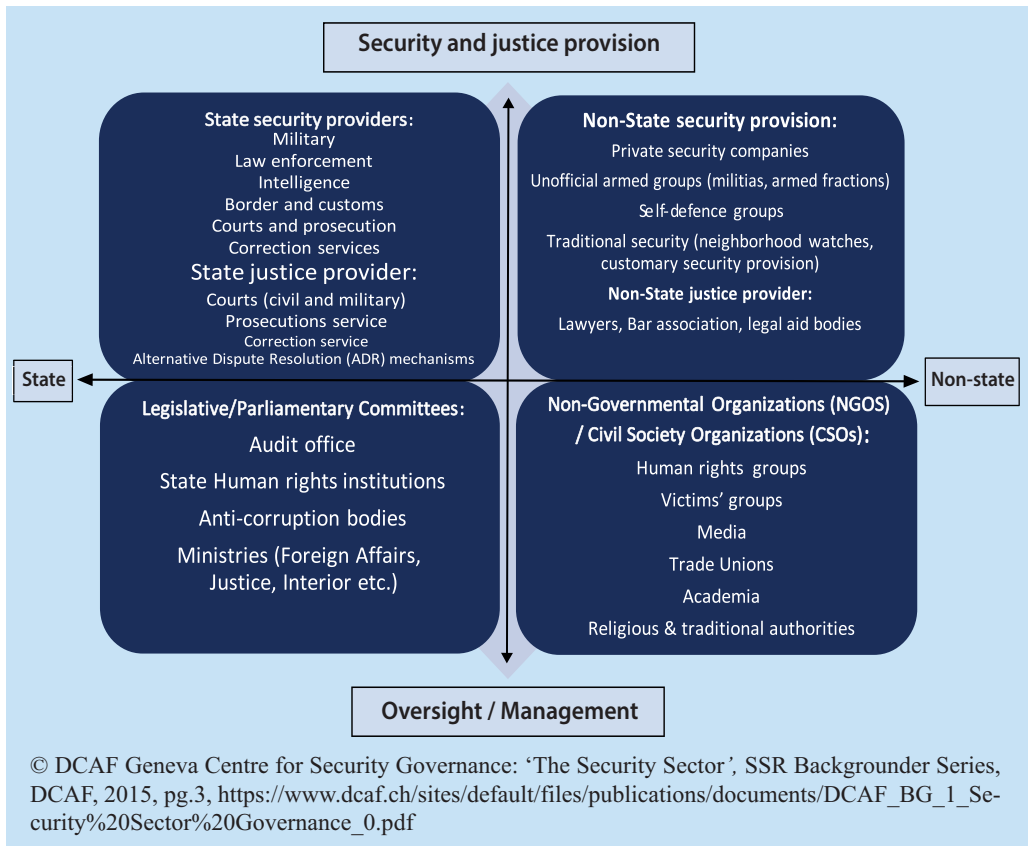
3.2. Conflict mapping
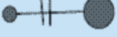
Conflict mapping is a tool to visualise the host nation's relevant actors, their relationships in a certain context and important issues to identify entry points for interventions. Visualising interlinkages between the actors can contribute to understanding the conflict and power dynamics and sheds light on who the actors and main conflicting parties are, what control they have over security func-

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[107] OECD DAC, 'Handbook on SSR', 2007, pg.48,https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/themen/fragile-kontexte/224402-oecd-handbook-security-system-reform_EN.pdf.

tions of the state and wich key issues between the parties should be mentioned.[108] These issues and the main actors can be barriers or gateways to potential solutions to issues such as the proliferation of arms, the financing of war through corruption or the prospects for mediation. A variety of symbols can be used to highlight potential or existing issues between the actors (see Figure 6), which in turn can help to assess respective effects on the operations on the ground.

Once all parties to the conflict and internal, external and regional actors relevant to the security sector are visualised, the power relationships between them can be illustrated by the symbols in Figure 6.

Figure 6: **Symbols for conflict mapping**

Possible symbols used in conflict mapping

Circle = parties involved in the situation. The size of the circle symbolized the power of the conflict party in relation to the conflict. The name can be written in the circle.	Arrow = predominant direction of influence or activity
Straight line = close relationship	Zig zag line = discord, conflict. Lighting bolts can be added to indicate hot events.
Double line = Very good relationship, alliance	Crossed out line = broken connection
Dotted line = weak, informal or intermittent links	Half circles or quarter circle = external parties, third parties
	Rectangular boxes = issues, topics or things other than people and organizations

© Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Tip Sheet: Conflict Analysis Tools: https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/Conflict-Analysis-Tools.pdf

3.3. Approaches to assessing functions and size of the security sector

Assessing the functions and size of the target sector and target counterpart may help to identify national capacity gaps and should be part of any needs assessments. Although difficult, both mapping techniques can contribute to the identification of entry points for capacity building. Needs-based assessments may

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[108] Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), Swedish Contact Group,' Security Sector Reform Assessment Framework', 2007, pg.36, https://fba.se/contentassets/bf97e14d2341492cafaed1dfede54a7d/ssr-assessment-framework.pdf.

provide opportunities to develop cross-cutting skills, e.g. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) or communications, like in the Côte d'Ivoire where the Security Council Secretariat (CNS) took over M&E functions to monitor the implementation of the national security sector strategy after post-electoral violence in 2010.[109] Participatory approaches seek 'to involve as many former or current conflict parties as possible and groups that have been marginalised or are generally under-represented on issues of security and defence and/or DDR/SSR.'[110]

Function of the National Security Council (Conseil National de Securité) in Côte d'Ivoire

With the adoption of the National SSR strategy by the Ivorian National Security Council (CNS), it took over oversight and implementation of the national SSR strategy including M&E of the DDR process.

[1] This allowed ONUCl to support the National Security Council Secretariat (CNS) in developing indicators and benchmarks to monitor the implementation of the national SSR strategy.

[2] Advisory support directed to capacity building and sensitization seminars for local SSR actors like civil society, armed forces and administrative authorities may contribute to more sustainable results and national ownership.

[1] United Nations General Assembly Security Council: Securing States and societies: strenghtening the United Nations compregensive support to security sector reform, Report of the Secretary General, 2013 https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/35390/514513/Second%20Sec%20Gen%20Report%20on%20SSRSecuring_States_and_Societies_A%2067%20970_S%202013%20480.pdf.

[2] La force de la paix: ONUCI Bulletin thematique Côte d'Ivoire, Reforme du Secteur de la Sécurité - RSS, Volume 4 - N°1, Février 2013; https://onuci.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/old_spip/docs/rss.pdf.

3.3.1. Mapping by functions

Mapping the target group by function[111] serves several purposes. It can be used to find out to what extent an institution or organisation is interacting with one or several thematic areas. At best, overlaps or gaps can be made visible and therefore help to include relevant actors in inclusive planning and implementation processes to facilitate coordination and cooperation. If you intend to strengthen capacities for maritime security, for example, it helps you to involve all the relevant actors actors like Maritime

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[109] United Nations Security Council, 'Final progress report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire', New York 2017, p.14.

[110] OECD DAC, 'Handbook on SSR', 2007 , https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/the-oecd-dac-handbook-on-security-system-reform_9789264027862-en.

[111] See DCAF/ISSAT,' Top 10 Programming Tools', (28 January, 2017), pg.18-19, https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Tools/Top-10-Programmeming-Tools-for-Security-and-Justice-Sector-Reform.

Police Units, Courts and Judiciary, Air & Maritime Force, Port Authorities and not just the most obvious ones such as the coastguards. Figure 8 is an example of mapping the security sector along function lines. It shows that if, for example, you plan capacity-building activities for drug enforcement, seven agencies need to be involved and bring their respective expertise. This method of mapping also helps you to identify what functions certain institutions or agencies ought to be doing but are not. For instance, there might be gaps in aviation security if services are working on immigration and border security but not on customs and organised crime. Also, the national police seem to be the only agency working on anti-terrorism while national intelligence or Special Forces could also play a role. Finally, you might find that certain functions are not covered at all or dealt with by too many actors doing the same thing. Identifying gaps and avoiding duplication is therefore one of the objectives of mapping by functions. Mapping of reporting lines as a sub-category of mapping by functions can contribute to determining who is doing what and accountable to whom. For example, incomplete mapping of reporting lines during the facilitating of training in human rights and gender with the Somali Coast Guard by EUCAP Nestor in Djibouti resulted in uncertainty, over whether the Coast Guard was covered by the Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement of land forces, national police or naval forces.

Combined with mapping by numbers (see below), mapping by function can help spot over- or under-staffed divisions and units.

Figure 7: Mapping by functions

	Public order	Crime detection	Crime prevention	Close protection	Drug enforcement	Anti-Riot capacity	Organised crime	Anti-terror	Intelligence	Immigration	Customs	Border security	Civil emergencies	Prison security	Court security
National Police	X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X
Border Security					X					X	X	X			
Traffic Police	X														
Municipal Police	X	X	X		X										
Presidential Guard	X			X											
Special Forces	X			X	X	X		X				X	X		
National Intelligence Agency	X	X			X		X		X						
Gendarmerie	X	X	X		X	X						X		X	
Airport Security Service	X			X						X		X			
Correction Service														X	

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3.3.2. Mapping by size: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants with the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI 2012)

Getting access to reliable and holistic data sets, statistics and sources of national institutions to map the size of your target group can prove difficult in a country in or emerging from conflict. For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire, it was one of the main challenges for the UNOCI DDR division to plan disarmament and demobilisation operations for an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 former combatants.[112]

Moreover, mapping the size of militias operating in the western part of the country had also proven to be difficult as data gathering was undertaken by several UNOCI divisions in collaboration with other governmental agencies and state institutions who showed reluctance or preferred not to disclose any information to their international counterparts at the UN, once more underlining the importance of trust relationships. Effective advising on the planning and implementation of the DDR programme was therefore a continuous challenge due to an insufficient reliable number of militias and their operational status along the Liberian border.

One of the objectives of mapping the size of your target group is to distinguish between the mandated number of group members and the actual numbers. What is the number of your target group? How many are budgeted for? How many are actually on the ground? Focusing on these questions helps to streamline capacity. It can also help to devote more attention to a particular group or geographical area as seen in the Ivorian case above.

Mapping by numbers might also be carried out to provide useful results. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2005, the civilian EU Common Security Defence Policy (CSDP) mission (EUSEC) found that there were 70,000 ghost soldiers[113] on the payroll of the armed forces.

4. Good practice on the ground

When it comes to converting analysis into practical initiatives, two intertwined approaches should be mentioned and taken into account. First is the 'do no harm' framework [114] which seeks to minimise potential negative impacts of operations

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[112] United Nations Security Council: Thirtieth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, New York 2012, pg.7.

[113] For instance, soldiers who were receiving salary but were not in active duty or registered or simply DCAF/ISSAT Resource library: https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Case-Studies/Chain-of-payments-project-within-the-Armed-Forces-of-the-Democratic-Republic-of-Congo-FARDC..

[114] For a detailed explanation of Anderson's framework see Mary B. Anderson, 'Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War ', (Boulder Co, Lynne Rienner, 1999).

on conflict dynamics[115]. It seeks to minimise the potential negative effect of external interventions on conflict dynamics. Once the kind of potentially harmful side effects is recognised, predicted, categorised and quantified, they can be mitigated and operations can be adapted.[116]

Second, 'doing things with people not for them'**.** With a focus on participatory approaches and national and local ownership, any durable solution would then be process-based, not simply meeting needs.[117]

4.1. Cultural sensitivity

Paying attention to questions of culture in preparatory research and programme design and implementation means:

> identify[ing] cultural differences between any who are intervening from outside and those who are involved in the conflict and exploring the implications of those differences, both in terms of what is respectful to the human beings involved and of what will be needed in addressing the conflict.[118]

Cultural sensitivity 'means that external actors must pay particular attention to both the form and substance of their engagement'.[119]

In the case of external interventions in general and strategic advising in particular, this translates into avoiding potential adverse effects by acting with cultural awareness including gender roles and applying a conflict-sensitive lens. For instance, UNOCI DDR division was faced with the challenge of how to respond to the needs of marginalised segments of the ex-combatant group, namely the Dozo.[120] In the rebel-controlled northern part of Côte d'Ivoire, the Dozo had par-

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[115] Once the potential harmful side effects are recognized, predicted, categorised, and quantified they may be mitigated and operations can be adapted, (Goodhand, J., "Politics, Policy and Practice", chapter 8 in "Aiding Peace? The Role of NGOs in Armed Conflict", *ITDG Publishing*, UK (2006): pg. 171-193, https://gsdrc.org/document-library/aiding-peace-the-role-of-ngos-in-armed-conflict-politics-policy-and-practice/.).

[116] Goodhand, J., 'Working 'in' and 'on' war', 2006 Working 'in' and 'on' war', in Yanacopulos, H. and Hanlon, J (eds) *Civil War, Civil Peace, (*The Open University, Milton Keynes, in association with Oxford, U.K. and Ohio University Press, 2006). https://gsdrc.org/document-library/working-in-and-on-war/.

[117] Thomas, A.' Reflections on development in a context of war', 2006.

[118] Diane Francis, 'Culture, Power Asymmetries and Gender in Conflict Transformation', *Berghof Research Center for Constructive ConflictManagemen*,2004, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-663-05642-3_5.

[119] OECD DAC, Handbook on SSR', 2008.

[120] The Dozo (also spelled Donzo or Donso), are not limited to Côte d'Ivoire. Dozo fraternities are also present in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and other West African countries. See Fahiraman Rodrigue Kone, 'Traditional Dozo Hunters in Côte d'Ivoire's security system', in *Identity and governance in Africa, (*Mapinduzi Journal 3, 2013), https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/28759916/mapinduzi-journal-peaceworkafrica.

tially filled the security vacuum by providing neighbourhood watch systems after the outbreak of civil war and the subsequent withdrawal of state security provisions. The Dozo are hunters by tradition and adhere to their own ethnic traditions, norms and values. Including the Dozo in the voluntary disarmament operations involved exchanging their rifle for a national DDR ID card, and this may have challenged their sense of belonging and identity. As one of my interlocutors put it: 'A Dozo without a rifle is not a Dozo'.

The Dozo identified themselves as a 'parallel or complementary' security force. In the course of the DDR process, these cultural implications may not have been given sufficient attention. Moreover, state re-integration programmes were not sufficiently shaped for the needs of the Dozo who were known for having re-armed after the disarmament process and were subject to allegations of human rights violations against the civil population.[121] This highlighted the need for assessing the population's perception of Dozo as a national security provider via public consultation, for a more thorough analysis of Dozo's priorities, needs and organisational structure, for facilitating direct dialogue between authorities and the Dozo or for formulating a common vision.

4.2. Inter-cultural communication

Apart from knowing the context and stakeholders in the host nation, practical solutions help advisors avoid pitfalls and misunderstandings which may jeopardise operations. Understanding the advising context implies both awareness and adaption to the local culture of communication and behaviour. The Council acknowledges that:

> intercultural dialogue can help to bring individuals and peoples together and help towards conflict prevention and the process of reconciliation, especially in regions which are facing politically precarious situations.[122]

One of the objectives identified is promoting intercultural dialogue through the pursuit of awareness-raising activities. The Council of the European Union also suggests strengthening support for multilingualism and the development of intercultural skills.[123] Especially in conflict-affected areas, advising in a culturally diverse environment can be difficult. There is also need to address different parts of society such as elders or women in very different ways, particularly in light of your own age and

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[121] United Nations Security Council, 'Final progress report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire', New York 2017, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/858385/usage?ln=en.

[122] Council of the European Union: Council conclusions on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States, 20 November 2008, pg.2-4, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104189.pdf.

[123] Ibid.

gender. Knowing both the local culture of communication and reflecting on your own communication style helps to build rapport and mutual trust and contributes to more sustainable results. The Clingendael Institute distinguishes between four pillars of communication styles: process, idea, people or action orientated. With an online self-test,[124] you can find out your preferred communication style and other key traits.[125]

The intercultural communication and behavioural skills that facilitate the tasks of an adviser and help to construct a relationship of mutual trust are important. Particularly in multi-cultural contexts, interpersonal skills such as active listening, facilitating dialogue, building mutual trust, adaptability, empathy, ability to engage with officials on different levels, and the ability to work in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment are even more important than hard skills for advisers in the field. Sustainable and effective capacity-building measures are not only evaluated by the systematic transfer of knowledge, language proficiency and professional experience but are assessed by the extent to which behaviour has been adapted or changed and own norms and values have been reflected upon.

While it is certainly more difficult and time-consuming to increase particular soft skills, specialised pre-mission training including practical exercises and realistic role-plays can contribute to acquiring and practising these soft skills through participatory approaches. A Training Requirement Analysis (TRA) conducted recently by the Centre for European Perspective (CEP) under the European Union Civilian Training Group (EUCTG) and directed toward civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions of the European Union revealed that mission members perceived inter-cultural awareness and language skills as one of the main challenges when engaging and communicating with the host population and colleagues in-mission.[126] This underlines the importance of understanding the context of the host country and its security situation and cultural aspects before being deployed.

An adaption of the training culture is needed. Instead of focussing primarily on learning outcomes, individualised competence-oriented training should ensure advisers and mentors acquire and practise these competencies.

Bridging the cultural gap thus is not only a matter of transferring knowledge but of changing minds and behaviours.

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[124] See website: https://clingendaelacademy.com/clingendaelculturalcompass/story.html to find out about your preferred communication style. If needed, click on ‚refresh' to start the test.

[125] https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/.

[126] Training Requirement Analysis (TRA), Communicational Behavioural, and Cultural skills, Eurtoean Union Civilian Training Group (EUCTG), 2021https://issat.dcaf.ch/ara/download/159565/3341230/2021.03%20-%20ESDC%20EAB%20SSR%20-%20Report%20on%20TRA%20for% 20Civilian%20CSDP%20mission%20-%20Final%20report.pdf.

4.3. Understanding the processes and activities carried out at the political and strategic levels and how they interact with and influence the operational level

If the advising context is not understood or local norms and values are not taken into account, the adviser runs the risk of compromising the concepts of 'do no harm', local ownership (including self-sufficiency of the host nation authorities) and the effect and sustainability of any line of operations. Political implications of training, advising and capacity-building measures may be increased, for instance, by by-passing potential spoilers to peace or reconciliation efforts or increasing the power and patronage of certain groups. Power imbalances may then be entrenched. Training and capacity-building programmes often target behavioural change, yet success is often evaluated by statistics. More sustainable results might be obtained by targeting a change of attitudes and this is where a national vision can come in. Examples that I have observed and have been put into practice by my local counterpart include constitutional reforms, participatory approaches around a national SSR and DDR strategy or renaming of the national army. These initiatives may shape a soldier's or ex-combatant's attitude in the long term. Applied to the Dozo example, this would mean focusing more on a process driven by local needs and values, local ownership and public consultation.

5. Conclusion

Advisory support is a challenging task and networking, relationship-building and building mutual trust are among the competencies needed to be effective. To improve the performance, competency and effectiveness of advisers and mentors, a set of analysis tools can be used to understand the situation where the capacity-building activities will take place and plan accordingly. A thorough assessment of the context involves a mapping of security and justice actors to identify the stakeholders at national, regional and local levels and to understand their relationships, needs and priorities. Power relationships may be visible through inter-organisational relationships on the ground. A deep understanding of the local historic and political context, interests, conflict and power dynamics is essential to ensuring that advisory support to national actors is realistic, culturally sensitive and sustainable. At best it transforms into individual, institutional and societal capacity that will remain in place and effective after your end of the mission.[127]

Conflict analysis helps us to understand the socio-political and economic context and identify entry points for planning and implementing programmes and interventions. Key elements of conflict analysis are an analysis of the context

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[127] OECD DAC, 'Handbook on SSR', 2008, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/the-oecd-dac-handbook-on-security-system-reform_9789264027862-en.

and potential causes of conflict while distinguishing between root causes and causal factors of violent conflict. Analysis of conflict causes should also be complemented by a mapping of the actors, exploring their interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships.

Conflict mapping can visualise diverse players in the security sector and power dynamics, yet it presents only a snapshot of a particular situation. It is therefore a continuous task to adjust your analyses which are subject to change over time.

Good practice in an advisory role means being able to apply a set of communication, behavioural and cultural skills that allow the advisor to perform better in complex working environments with diverse cultures, traditions and habits.

Advisory missions and capacity-building activities must be sensitive to the dynamics of war. Advisors may think of themselves as changing agents' understanding and influencing the conflict guided by the "do no harm" principle and by thinking with the people instead of thinking for the people.

Mapping is a continuous process, thus analyses must be living documents that can provide a shared framework for analysis, strategic planning and policymaking. Each external intervention has an effect at the political level. To understand the local context, one first has to understand the conflict itself. Without such an understanding, advisory missions run the risk of rebuilding the causes of war.

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CHAPTER 4

Insights on Training Advisors: Good Practices and Key Principles

Nadia Gerspacher

Key Points

- Advisors need to adopt a capacity-building stance rather than one that is mission-driven, that is with outcomes established before the engagements with counterparts in the host country.

- Preparing advisors need contextual information, induction into the assistance mission, security training and skill-building for sustainable capacity building.

- The investment in giving advisors the space to adopt the mindset of effective advisors is important to their ability to build capacity and promote change.

- Training is a complex combination of topics that needs to be structured and delivered with logic to send the proper messages to advisors.

- Understanding the context and the culture statically is not very productive or useful when operating in highly dynamic environments. Understanding how to map and analyse is a much more relevant set of skills.

- Including teaching and instruction, not only peer exchanges.

- Learning from training requires a deliberate evaluation strategy rather than basic questions about whether the training was enjoyed. Being able to understand what lessons were learned and which were not allows improvement for subsequent iterations.

- Instructor selection is an important decision and the criteria for that selection need to be established strategically and led by pedagogical arguments.

- Skills and tools that are widely applicable around the world are not theory or theoretical but globally relevant.

Keywords: training and education, pre-deployment preparation, advising, skills, tools, knowledge, pedagogy/andragogy, training methodology.

1. Introduction

After the significant failures in capacity building leading to the take-over of Afghanistan by the Taliban, the international community is at a crossroads when it comes to assisting in building good governance capacity. While the US and many others are deploying advisors to build the capacity of security forces, the training approach lags in terms of length, relevance and appropriateness in preparation for the very important advising missions. Many security assistance providers are designing projects which lean heavily on experts who will work as advisors alongside security officials in many parts of the world.

Advisors thus have a significant role to play in security assistance but often they are not adequately prepared and equipped to be able to build the capacity of partners sustainably, navigate the politics inherent in a reform process and ensure a pace that is not comfortable for many partners. The nature and scope of advising missions are complex and require the knowledge, information and skills needed to navigate the context and promote change.

This chapter offers insights from over a decade of experience conducting needs assessments, designing curricula and delivering training to advisors deployed on security sector governance and reform mandates. There still is a lot to do to prepare advisors to work effectively to support the development of sustainable capacity solutions. The insights in this chapter are meant to be incorporated into the preparation of advisors and design and goal-setting as mandates and projects are formulated.

The SFA community and others are not yet committing enough time and confidence in the proper training and advice on how to prepare technical experts highly skilled in their fields to transfer knowledge in a foreign environment rather than how it is done back home. Advising holds a lot of promise when done correctly.

2. The Promise of Advising amidst the Challenges

Effective advisors can contribute to the policies, procedures and practices of a host government institution. They should not dictate solutions to their counterparts. Rather, advisors draw on their professional expertise to offer ideas and options for counterparts to consider as they seek to perform their functions. Essentially, an adviser needs to know how to transfer knowledge so that the advice offered can inform partner efforts to strengthen their institutional and operational processes.

Deploying advisers is unlikely to foster the desired stability and economic development if the advisers are not given the necessary tools to do their work.

3. The Challenges that Advisers Typically Face

While advising mandates can vary significantly even in SFA missions, the individuals deployed to assist security actors are recruited from a pool of practitioners with experience and knowledge. This expertise ranges from tactical and operational expertise to institutional functions such as procurement, logistics management, cybersecurity and human resource management. Most have served in the military or as police officers or are active and deployed or seconded by their governments as part of the investment in international assistance.

Advisors, especially civilian experts who are best placed in diagnosing and prescribing institutional reforms, can contribute substantially to capacity - and institution-building efforts. Doing so, however, requires additional skills and tools that include understanding culture as a concept, developing legitimacy, the credibility of an expert as a valuable resource to their counterparts, building the capacity of local actors, and coordination and possible collaboration with other international actors.

Many advisors complain about both limited capacity and a lack of willingness to reform once they begin working with local counterparts and stakeholders. Such reports likely reflect a part of reality, the skewed perceptions of the advisers, or both. Legacies, organisational culture and existing systems make it difficult for advisors to identify opportunities for changes. Advisors need to find ways to create the space for sharing their ideas for change. Because they are unlikely to fully understand the way decisions are made in a given institution, their abilities to 'assess the local situation accurately, build relationships and identify viable avenues to reform may be hindered significantly'.[128]

Without an official inside the institution who opens doors, introduces the advisor to other relevant staff and leaders and guides the advisor through formal and informal processes and discussions, advising lacks access. Without access, advisors can do little more than be turned into action officers who will be tasked to develop doctrine, policies, SOPs and training curricula. Without the consultation and input of counterparts, the work of advisors will suffer from a lack of buy-in and even understanding. This type of dynamic fails to lead to sustainable change that will be integrated into a new normal.

Years of the bitter experience of promises not being kept by former advisors may

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[128] Gerspacher N. (2012), Preparing Advisers for Capacity-Building Missions, *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report, https://www.usip.org/publications/2012/07/preparing-advisers-capacity-building-missions.

have left counterparts weary of new advisors coming in. Indeed, advisers will encounter challenges that are not of their making but rather is that of their predecessors. As a result, advisors may have to combat negative reputations that have to be turned around to be solicited by counterparts in their efforts to institute stronger processes and practices. 'Advisors have usually built their professional reputations by doing – that is, by achieving practical, concrete results – rather than by teaching others how to achieve results'.[129]

Another issue faced by advisors in many countries is the risk of competing for the time and ear of counterparts. In many cases, advisors deploy to countries in which other providers of security assistance operate and may have operated for some time. This means that counterparts are getting advice from various sources and those sources may not share the same technical advice. In some instances, the advice of different advisors, countries or international organisations differs so much that they confuse counterparts who will be forced to choose. That choice will mean that some advisors will receive more time with counterparts and access to processes and practices.

4. Typical Approach to Training Advisors for their Mission

Before going into the logic, structure and nature of a training programme for advisors, the mindset and attitude of advisors and their mandators needs to be understood. Even the word mission is a word that is misleading in advising. Observations during a number of advising missions have shown that advisors are not on a mission in terms of having an assignment that is already established. An advisor is a capacity builder although that concept involves carrying the complex operationalisation of many roles including partner, supporter, coach, facilitator and sometimes teacher, although not as often as one may want. A capacity builder engages in supporting host country reform projects that include change management, developing plans, work plans, implementation plans, presenting options and ideas for vetting by ministry officials and supporting efforts to mitigate negative consequences and resistance to change from any level of staff or other stakeholders.

Thus, training advisors start by imparting *a mindset, attitude and behaviour* which translates into assuming the role of an outsider who has substantive expertise to share but will not accomplish anything without access to counterparts, documents

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[129] Ibid.

and political and decision-making processes. This is done by providing advisors with an established view of the activities they will engage in once in-country, a terminology that is well understood and accepted, and a vision for what they will be able to accomplish in comparison to approaching their work more from a mission perspective.

Once this very important approach has been established, the training curriculum and programmes that are typically provided in a pre-deployment setting include three kinds of content.

> First are informational briefings about the specific environment in which the advisers' projects are to be carried out and topics focus on involving local actors, a history of the country and the conflict, cultural considerations and language skills. Second, induction training explains how the advisors are to participate in the mission and defines the mission, including procedures and rules of engagement. And third, security training teaches advisers how to operate in a highly insecure environment, usually through imparting situational awareness and teaching tactical skills such as defensive driving.[1]
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> [1] Ibid.

These training topics are important components of adviser training and should continue to be offered. However, they do not add up to an adequate training curriculum as none of those content types instructs and trains advisors on how to build capacity effectively.

Apart from navigating the context and understanding the international community efforts and structures, an advisor only becomes an adviser once a transformation from practitioner to advisor has been affected. Helping a practitioner with logistics management experience become an effective advisor will require a transformation.

> Advisors have to learn to operate without formal authority. At home, they are likely to have an impressive professional reputation, but once deployed they will find that they need to build a new reputation, demonstrating their ability to apply professional expertise to a local situation. Moreover, to work within a new culture, advisers must engage local actors in a peer-to-peer fashion, establishing themselves as partners, listeners and sources of support and expertise. Meeting and brainstorming with foreign counterparts require an understanding of complex local dynamics.[130]

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[130] Ibid.

5. The Fourth Element of Training Advisers

Some assistance programmes which deploy advisors to implement security institution capacity-building missions have embraced these principles to inform the underlying logic of the course they offer to advisers. The US DOD Ministry of Defense Advisors (MoDA) training programme, the US DOS Security Forces Capacity Building (SFCB) programme and the DCAF/ISSAT Effective Advising course all provide trainees with three sets of tools to adapt to the distinct demands of the advising project. The first is the ability to cope with a fragile, uncertain and highly stressful environment, characteristic of fragile, conflict-affected countries. The second is the skills required to work with local counterparts to build enhanced systems and, consequently, stronger institutions. The third is knowledge to navigate the complexity of international missions.[131]

This category that is structured around imparting is key to empowering advisors to adopt a capacity-building stance and be effective as advisors and is often missing from the training of advisors. This is in part due to the implied belief that if a practitioner or expert has the relevant knowledge and experience, they can contribute by sharing their ideas for change. Unfortunately, the reality is that without providing the space for advisors to transform, they have no other tool but to influence change toward replication or interoperability. The lessons from the past 25 years of security assistance overwhelmingly point to the need for ensuring reforms are adequate for the host country. The challenge is that right-sizing is a highly complex and both technical and political endeavour that takes time, perseverance and commitment. And these come neither easily nor automatically.

To empower advisors to work collaboratively with security officials in host countries, the time, space, skills and tools should be offered to them. This relatively small investment has revealed significant payoffs in effectiveness, capacity building and the promotion of sustainable solutions to capacity gaps, not to mention contributing to the reputation of the donors as partners over the long term.

6. The Guidance of Key Principles

To support the adoption of the mindset of a capacity builder, training should be based on the integration of four core principles that are crucial to security governance reform. They are supporting local ownership; designing for sustainability; doing no harm; and demonstrating respect, humility and empathy. These core

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[131] Ibid.

principles set the tone for the programme and can provide advisers with a mantra that is reiterated throughout the training programme in many different ways.[132]

• The principle of supporting local ownership means that any reform in a partner institution should be the result of joint development of solutions to capacity gaps that leverage both the expertise of advisors and that of counterparts and the validation by both advisor and counterparts that the change can be made, is viable and can become part of the processes and practices of security institutions and forces.

• Designing sustainability ensures that the solutions developed by the advisor and counterpart address the actual threats faced by the counterpart institution and that the financial resources, competence and political will can accommodate the new processes or practices over the long term.

• Doing no harm – an idea well known to the peacebuilding and development communities – requires that the advisor and the counterpart, together, determine which negative consequences can result from a particular change and mitigate them.

• Respect, humility and empathy are crucial to the identification of the right solutions to capacity gaps given the existing capacity, the culture, the history and the acceptance of gaps. Respect is the foundation for the advisor to build on existing capacity rather than ignoring current processes and practices and creating parallel systems. Humility means that the advice shared is explained realistically without sending the message that it will solve all problems. It involves being modest and supportive and avoiding being arrogant, contemptuous or rude. Empathy is the ability to understand why and how local actors behave as they do in light of their own environment and culture.

When advisors are capable of informing their actions, engagements and demeanour to these principles, they can establish relationships with their ministry counterparts at a pace that is noticeably quicker than the norm. Swiftly establishing a mutually beneficial relationship allows for concrete achievements that include piloting simple, locally-designed solutions that fit the context given will, capacity and resources. Advisors who use this framework from the beginning have been successful in tracking the location and status of Afghan National Police vehicles; developing and implementing a process to assess Iraq's efforts to reform its ministries; helping Bosnians to improve procurement systems to equip their armed

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[132] Gerspacher N. (2016), 'Strategic advising in foreign assistance', Kumarian Press.

forces; improving compliance with health standards at the Afghan National Army slaughterhouse; and helping ministry counterparts develop an internal audit mechanism for the Afghan National Police to ensure transparency and oversight.

7. Skills and Tools for Effective Advisors

Debriefs of ministry and security officials in many countries point to the need for advisors to develop a relationship of confidence and respect with their counterparts. Advisers have been commended for openness and flexibility, demonstrating abilities not only to engage counterparts successfully but also to identify solutions to long-standing productivity and systemic problems. When advisers are unable to promote and support change, it is seldom due to a lack of expertise in their field but because they do not know how to draw on that expertise to allow it to be communicated to local counterparts. Expertise and experience are insufficient; in whatever section of government advisers are working, they also need to know how to transfer that expertise.

The skills and tools category of pre-deployment training should be organised around four key elements:

1. Knowledge of how to adopt a stance that sends signals to the counterpart that the advisor understands the role of a technical expert deployed for a short time to support change in a given area of expertise. This includes techniques for building relationships and understanding how to create the space and safety for exchange and access to policies, procedures, practices, sites and staff. They also need to understand how to navigate typical obstacles and manage dilemmas over the long term, communicate across cultures and support the change management process on which their project sets their counterparts. It also includes understanding how change takes place, how to pre-empt resistance to change, and identifying champions of change and local ideas for solutions. Understanding one's own social style, conflict style, personality traits, biases and an honest assessment of values, world view and strengths and weaknesses are key knowledge areas that allow the advisor to put have the self-awareness needed. These areas of knowledge greatly influence the assumptions that advisors allow themselves to make in the absence of awareness and intentional reflection.

Substantive or technical knowledge is the subject area in which an advisor is an expert and experienced practitioner. While this is not the content of training for pre-deployment training, advisors should be recruited for that expertise, provid-

ing opportunities to leverage that experience. This is the greatest challenge of an advising mission; making one's expertise valuable and valid in a different situation. It requires knowledge of the areas mentioned in the previous paragraph, lest there be much customisation. Advisors are likely to be civil servants or military officers with extensive experience in running programmes, departments or administrative systems or practising a craft, such as judging, policing or managing correctional facilities. However, they are highly unlikely to have experience in – or even to have devoted much thought to – reforming post-conflict institutions and their systems.[133] This shift from practitioner to advisor is referred to in detail elsewhere and can be consulted.[134]

2. Skills that will allow them to adopt the role of the effective advisor, adopt a learning stance and shift their approach to a capacity-building logic will allow them to build a mutually beneficial relationship with the host country officials and officers to support the necessary reflection on existing systems, their effects on the ability of the security institution to provide security to their population and identify the gaps and solutions to those gaps while supporting the change process. The skillset is heavily influenced by communication skills with a focus on positioning oneself as an outsider who aims to support efforts without taking over and performing key tasks that belong to the staff and leadership of the institution. These skills include strategic listening, which is the art of engaging in a continuous conversation in which counterparts' ideas and reflections are validated, heard and taken into consideration as the leading source of information for assessments and developing an understanding of the pitfalls and opportunities in the context. Beyond strategic listening, storytelling, establishing narratives and messaging, learning to say no diplomatically and managing the expectations of both their mandators and of their counterparts is important.

3. Tools are different from skills as they can guide advisors in the way they approach their projects, counterparts and colleagues. A tool is a set of questions, criteria or documents which provides advisors with an example of how to proceed in concert with skills that they need to deploy. This is particularly useful for the following tasks that are key to advising effectively. Advisors may not have the experience, wherewithal or time to develop these tools on deployment. These tools should not be as rigid as reporting requirements, but they should be a model that advisors can tailor to their style and area of expertise to the extent needed. These

[133] Gerspacher N. (2012), Preparing Advisers for Capacity-Building Missions, *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report, https://www.usip.org/publications/2012/07/preparing-advisers-capacity-building-missions

[134] Gerspacher, N. (2016), 'Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance: A practical Guide', Kumainon Press.

tools, finally, should be a foundation for advisors to continuously operate from an informed standpoint. They should empower advisors, not constrain their activities in a pre-established outcome and they should be included in the training so that they may embrace them and practise using them before deployment.

Some examples of tools include:

• Mapping of existing efforts that affect the advisor's project and activities;

• The attributes of an effective advisor – a guide to follow the persona of the advisor that counterparts welcome;

• Mapping existing capacity and gaps; and

• Mapping existing stakeholders and their activities including stakeholder analysis and a guide for identifying the engagement strategy for each relevant stakeholder.

4. Preparation through practice. The structure of the preparation programme and curriculum is particularly important. As is widely understood but not integrated systematically in existing training programmes, adults learn best from the material offered in a manner that is logical in one way or another. The logic can be around moving from theoretical knowledge and lessons learned to specific cases and examples. And all curriculum needs to be implemented in a way that allows the practitioner to integrate skills and knowledge that they believe will be applicable and relevant to them. When that relevance is not obvious, it needs to be explained for the practitioner to have buy-in in the learning process. Many adults are more attracted to country-specific than to conceptual material and other knowledge and skills necessary based on lessons learned. This is when justifying the content provided to advisors is key to the integration of the curriculum.

Therefore, starting a curriculum with the key aspects that lead to sustainable capacity building provides a necessary foundation for navigating complex security assistance missions or projects. Fitting into the context of a mission requires a broad swathe of substantive knowledge to ensure advisors develop a vision of the various elements that they will need to navigate the complex components and challenges of advising activities. Cultural adaptability, gender mainstreaming, coordination and collaboration across the international community provide opportunities to weave in cross-cutting themes that can be addressed from various angles, nested in the content being provided in individual sessions.

In addition to the diffusing of knowledge necessary for the navigation of advising activities, practice is crucial to the integration of the knowledge and the skills

that are taught throughout a training course. The application through practice that takes place through tabletop exercises, scenario-based exercises, role-playing simulations – online and face to face – and the analysis of case studies of real and/or fictional scenarios offers advisors the opportunity to practice new skills in a safe environment, where one can make mistakes and learn from them with peers. This space and time are a worthwhile investment because it allows advisers to find uses that make sense to them for the knowledge and skills taught.

Specific areas that advisers should practice include:

• building a relationship with other international actors and with local counterparts and stakeholders;

• adapting to the cultural specificities of the local environment;

• cross-cultural communications skills, including active listening;

• participating in meetings;

• identifying possible solutions and presenting them to the appropriate authorities; and supporting the implementation of solutions.

Gerspacher N. (2012), Preparing Advisers for Capacity-Building Missions, United States Institute of Peace, Special Report, see: https://www.usip.org/publications/2012/07/preparing-advisers-capacity-building-missions.

The impact of including these topics in the training course to prepare advisors is a process of socialisation of the approach required for sustainable capacity building. It needs to go beyond the question-and-answer period that is often left to the end of presentations or sharing anecdotes about challenges. Practice is the opportunity to integrate the instruction and it will likely only happen during these application phases in which participants work in small groups to grapple with the utility and relevance of the knowledge, skills and tools offered to them.

8. Crosscutting Themes

Several issues impact the advising project that can be woven throughout the training without necessarily making them a dedicated session. These issues are that are sensitive, complex and cannot be mastered by advisors during pre-deployment preparation. Interestingly, these issues figure in most training but the best we can do is provide a space for discussion. For example, rather than briefing about culture and dedicating a lot of time to language instruction, integrating cultural considerations in presentations, discussions and especially practical application helps to prepare advisors for adapting to a foreign cultural context. But the culture itself is not the object of the advisor.

8.1. Cultural awareness

Cultural awareness training is widely adopted as part of preparation programmes for advisors. Most of those curricula involve briefings on the cultural specificities of the country or region of deployment of advisors. More important in the training course is the development of an understanding of culture as a concept which can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding that results from widely different worldviews. Advisors should develop a cultural compass to have the tools to operate in a given environment with so many nuances of approach and habits that they cannot just be briefed. They need to have a good understanding of the concept of culture to empower them to understand its relevance and how it manifests itself in their daily engagements with counterparts and other international actors. 'It is difficult to prepare advisers for all the cultural adaptations they will have to make, but a training programme can make them more aware and analytical about this very important aspect of their work'.[135] This type of training approach focuses on cultural adaptability.

While language and culture training are common in pre-deployment preparation programmes, these are best as rapport-building tools as mastering the language and being able to navigate the complex and diverse cultural context in a country is not realistic, especially in highly technical official settings. While cultural orientation training and language instruction are desirable, they should refrain from sending the message that advisors will be able to engage their counterparts in highly sensitive, political and technical issues and drive change in the security institutions of the country. It is also important to distinguish between providing information about a specific culture and understanding the concept of cultural differences. The former is best left to briefings. The latter can inform layers of complexities throughout knowledge and especially in skill-building sessions and particularly during exercises. This allows participants to practice navigating any cultural context.

8.2. Understanding Gender in Advising

Most capacity-building projects and activities include a gender component but the role that gender plays in advising, except in the case of gender mainstreaming a security force, is not well understood and much more reflection is needed on the topic. Gender is often conflated with the gender of the advisor and how women can establish and maintain credibility as an expert in the eyes of counterparts, especially in traditional societies and promoting the recruitment and promotion of women as a security sector reform endeavour. Training that provides instruction on how to

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[135] Gerspacher N.; "Preparing Advisers for Capacity-Building Missions".

contribute to security sector governance and reform usually includes a session about women in the security forces and institutions. That topic should be left to Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSGR) training. They are not about advising effectively. There is little to say about women advisors as women per se in training. So the most effective way to address the issue of women advisors is throughout the training during rapport-building skills sessions, for example. Addressing the possible challenge is more about being a good listener and being able to demonstrate agile and flexible approaches to capacity gaps of counterparts. In the absence of specific knowledge, skills or tools that can be imparted, raising the awareness of the utility of each taught can also support overcoming gender-related obstacles.

9. Training Evaluations

Pre and post-training assessments and evaluations are key to ensuring that learning is taking place and that it takes place from iteration to iteration of a course. Course evaluations are key to the development of relevant and impactful training courses. 'They can reveal much about the training's effectiveness and efficiency'.[136] Today, many evaluations do not go into the depth necessary to understand the outcomes and effects of a training course on the readiness of advisors. So, evaluations are an important strategic tool that requires attention.

> An evaluation should have separate sections for each of the training goals. If improving trainees' weapons skills is one goal and if learning how to coordinate with international actors is another, the evaluation should have separate sections for each. Those reviewing the completed evaluations should also bear in mind that trainees give most of their learning energy to sessions devoted to security and logistics issues and less to more knowledge-based sessions. The dynamic of preparation for deployment is important to remember when designing and evaluating a training programme.[137]

The questions posed to those who complete the course should be must be formulated to solicit answers that communicate the learning that has taken place. Currently, many evaluations tend to ask advisors to comment on their level of enjoyment of a course. The problem is that soliciting feedback on the likability of a session or course offers very little insight into the learning that takes place. Instead, evaluation questions need to focus on the collection of data to inventory the messages received and those which did not get retained or understood fully. A useful question can be for-

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[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

mulated in the following way: 'In this session which focused on promoting local ownership, what takeaways can you share that you will use in your advising activities?' This line of questioning will encourage reflection and analysis of the experience that was provided through the presentation of specific knowledge and skills.

Finally, evaluations are not the only tool that allows evaluative aspects. Needs assessments that are conducted before the development of a specific course and each time an iteration is to be implemented are key to guiding the selection of the knowledge and skills being taught. 'Decisions on a programme's content and delivery must also be based on needs assessments conducted periodically with returning advisers'.[138] The implementation of the course should be driven by the results of this needs assessment. This is in contrast to the way many programmes are implemented today whereby a topic is selected and an expert chosen to share their insights in the training. Without knowing the audience, its capacities and shortcomings, the course will be unlikely to present relevant and useful tools at the level that is required for a specific audience.

Impact evaluations that aim to measure the influence of the curriculum and methodology of a training course are also key to understanding if and to what degree a course provides the tools necessary to advisors. This type of evaluation requires soliciting feedback from advisors once deployed and settled in after a few months of advising to understand the performance they are capable of and how they navigate the context and tasks, identifying their ability to put into practice what has been taught to them during the training course. When possible, counterparts who are working with advisors can be solicited to answer questions that would allow the understanding of the approach, style and access to relevant actors and systems by the advisor.

10. Instructors and Facilitators

While the curriculum and the methodological choices that make up a training course are important, the profile of the instructor is equally a strategic choice. These two considerations should guide the selection of instructors including expertise and the ability to transfer their expertise in a way that is useful to advisors. Today, many pre-deployment preparation programmes rely heavily on subject matter experts who have performed advising or other relevant duties. Advisors in training are most often drawn to rank, reputation and interesting stories rather than widely adaptable knowledge and

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[138] Ibid.

skills. The challenge with many subject matter experts is that they often represent one data point in terms of experience and those can be generalised by the audience to a point where practice becomes absorbed without being necessarily relevant more broadly. For example, a subject matter expert who may have experience in one country may give advisors what becomes an essentially misleading impression of the conditions they will encounter. This pitfall can be avoided when the selection of instructors favours those who can share generalisable concepts that are validated by their experience. A mix of practitioners and academics can be the right balance. Overall, the most important idea is that the tools provided to advisors allow them to think critically and build on existing dynamics rather than replicate instructors' actions. 'The best instructors can teach critical thinking, bridge theory and practice and apply ideas to practical skills and cases. Instructors should be trained in adult education'.[139] Guest speakers should also be carefully vetted according to the same requirements.

A central adult learning principle is immediacy, mandating that adult learners require a highly relevant and adaptable set of knowledge and tools that will serve them well in their advising activities. As a result, advisor training courses are most useful when they include explanations and opportunities to practice integrating a given project or mission and the lessons of the course. This also means that care needs to be put into the selection of the examples and cases presented to ensure that the impact of the application of a tool, knowledge or skill is clearly observed and understood and a vision of its application in a different context is clear.

11. The Utility of Needs Assessments

Conducting needs assessments is too often missing from course design, development and delivery. A needs assessment is a set of questions that should be asked of both those who design advising projects and have specific expectations around performance and a sample that is representative of the participants. It is an analysis of the responses that aim to identify the knowledge, skills, tools, information and exercise scenarios that would most effectively prepare advisors to take on their role and project. Training programmes are not generic and should respond to the needs of mandators and participants.

Without needs assessments, training is designed based on opinions, personal lessons and knowledge without a deliberate matching of the needs of programmes, projects and participants. The resulting curriculum becomes more speculative and a matter of opinion about what the training needs to include, and it is largely informational and weak in skills development and even less likely to in-

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[139] Ibid.

clude useful tools that advisors need to integrate into their work. Mandators often want to stipulate what they want to be taught in courses and that is a good beginning but without the collection of data and its analysis, the intentionality, adequacy and relevance of the training are lacking significantly.

12. The Theory vs Context Debate

There is a lot of conflation and not enough attention paid to the role that country briefings play in training. While many training courses currently mix knowledge and skill-building sessions with briefings that focus on sharing information about a specific context or dynamic, that practice is problematic. The general and the specific context are complementary, and the latter serves as an illustration rather than a lesson.

> This is perhaps easiest to see when talking about culture: the difference between knowledge and briefings lies in distinguishing between cultural adaptability training generally and imparting knowledge about a specific country's cultural norms and habits.[140]

But context preparation is important, especially when presented as the foundation that allows for the adaptation of knowledge and skills that make up the curriculum of a training course.

The following points can make up a useful session or be spread across knowledge and skills sessions:
- Introduction to the history, culture, politics and economics of the country.
- The structure of the multinational command.
- The parties involved in the effort.
- The organisational structure of the ministry within which the adviser will work.
- Informal and formal decision-making processes.
- Specifics about the institution being reformed.
- Existing progress made capacity building in a given context.
- An assessment of the current capacities of targeted intuitions/actors.
- The reputation and acceptance of security assistance activities.
- The areas of resistance to change that have manifested themselves.

All this information should be presented as due diligence in preparation but

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[140] Ibid.

should be presented as the foundation and background that will empower advisors to ask informed questions. This is key to avoiding sending the message to advisors that this information means that they do not need to learn from counterparts about existing systems, gaps, the context and the culture, the nature and scope of the changes that can be instituted, and the level of acceptance of changes to the *status quo.*

13. Conclusion

Deliberate and adequate training of advisors as they prepare to deploy is of utmost importance to both the hope of having an effect, the return on investment of assistance programmes and to the advisors themselves. For training to be most effective, security assistance policies, strategies and mandates need to be designed around the deployment and expectation that good practice in advising will be part of the equation. Too often, the challenges that advisors face arise from policies, strategies and mandates that do not allow room for local ownership, building mutually beneficial relationships with officials in security institutions and not considering the time and space needed for making change happen in security sector governance and reform projects. Advisors tend to fall back on what they know and work hard at 'helping' their counterparts adopt the system from back at home, whatever the area of expertise. To correct these structural issues that have plagued so many assistance projects and have been responsible for so much time and money wasted, training and the design of training with specific goals in mind will allow programmes to design projects that are likely to lead to sustainable change and to advisors who enjoy access on the ground, confidence from their counterparts and whose expertise is valued and coveted.

Too many waivers for not attending training have been granted by commanders and others under the pretext that advisors are needed right away. But which is better: an advisor who understands the project's how, why, when and what or one who is going to be rushed into a situation for which the lack of preparation renders them a possible liability at worst and a waste of investment at best? Advisors need the space to reflect, prepare and transition. That transition should not be done on the ground; the effect is often reputational costs. Too many security officials have reported having advisors who did not bring added value and approached their engagement not as if they were an outsider, but as if they were going to take over the security institution department, policies, systems and processes. We now know that this is not the solution; Iraq and Afghanistan

are examples of advising without a deliberate capacity-building strategy intentionality and purpose at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

Training is key to the preparation of advisors, but it has to be done in an intentional and focused manner. Investment in the time spent and ideally required, in training is well worth the problem solving that will inevitably follow during advising activities for both advisors and the agencies that deploy them. Pre-deployment training courses need to be comprehensive and equip advisors to understand who decision-makers are and develop strategies to navigate the dynamics in which they operate. Advisors should be prepared to ask questions, conduct consultative assessments and contribute to the development of a viable project of reform and change. Advisors also need time to prepare for developing constructive and supportive working relationships with counterparts.

'The expertise for which advisers are recruited is crucial to the execution of their mission, but it is not enough by itself to enable them to accomplish that mission.'[141] Overall, an effective training course launches advisors into their projects or missions ready to identify ways to share their expertise in ways that support the shaping of a new normal in security institutions and to refrain from importing the systems they know from their home institutions. This approach is not sustainable and should be the primary target of all advising preparation courses.

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[141] Gerspacher N. (2012), Preparing Advisers for Capacity-Building Missions, *United States Institute of Peace*,Special Report, https://www.usip.org/publications/2012/07/preparing-advisers-capacity-building-missions.

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CHAPTER 5

Planning capacity building initiatives: How to implement sustainability Through a Phased Iterative Planning Process

David San Clemente

Key Points

- Planning must focus on a common understanding of desired end states, delineations of responsibilities and combined planning activities. Milestones and grading criteria are vital components of early planning.
- Expectation management, written within the plan, regarding HN performance milestones, task linkage to resources and connection to supporting organisation's (NATO) resourcing are required for sustainment of long-term support from Capacity Building Activity (CBA) resourcing participants.
- Using organisational structures common to and understood by the HN is more important than following NATO or participating nation doctrine for unit compositions. However, proper leadership structures and hierarchies, where final arbitration for decisions occurs, are required.
- Planning provides clear connective tissue between the stated objectives, activities, assessments and resourcing.
- The operational methodology provides the framework for translating the strategic objectives outlined at the outset into specific operational lines of effort and, ultimately, tactical tasks, assessments and feedback loops.
- Lines of Effort (LOEs) using this planning method produce a document and process capable of forecasting task accomplishment, resources allocation and burn rate, and projected task completion dates.
- Activity does not equal accomplishment. The inherent value (or goodness) of an activity does not equate to realised value for the defined CBA.
- Leadership expectations are shaped through planned assessments that provide markers as the CBA tasks are accomplished in furtherance of specific objectives and the overall strategy.
- Report design is an important element of the planning process. The report provides a clear indicator of CBA status at the time of drafting and is direct feedback to all CBA participants of this status and provides expectations for ongoing work.
- Building a solid foundational plan, including the strategic approach, resource acquisition and use, tactical planning, comprehensive assessments and informed reporting creates an ecosystem supportive of sustaining positive CBA results.

Keywords: planning, data, resourcing, methodology, objectives, assessments, reporting.

1. Introduction

All the components of Capacity Building Activities (CBA) are critically important to the successful outcome of any CBA and the achievement of the objectives outlined at the outset. But practitioners must ensure the maximum opportunity for successfully achieving desired outcomes given that each of these components has unique and important characteristics and distinctive requirements. Focused planning for each of these components may be one of the most important elements to ultimate success and the glue binding each element of CBA to another, facilitating the building of lasting capacity within the recipient nation. From the strategic approach to resource acquisition/utilisation to tactical planning and task performance, each step requires a detailed understanding of numerous factors, each incorporated into the overall planning process. AJP-3.16 provides NATO and NATO-led forces with the foundational doctrine for training and development of local forces within a broader strategy of security capacity building.[142] This doctrine clearly highlights the need for a concerted planning effort within Security Force Assistance and further emphasises planning methods for NATO partners.[143] Many CBA programmes fail to achieve the implementer's desired outcomes despite significant resources and energy being expended. A lack of proper planning is routinely the source of failure. Many specialists confuse activity with achievement. Although CBA teams may be working extremely hard and many hours per day, without proper planning and a concerted effort to remain on plan (incorporating thoughtful deviations and adjustments to the plan through an iterative process), frustration for all CBA participants is the likely outcome.

Therefore, understanding the difference between 'planning and doing' and the important inter-relationships therein are at the core of planning and successfully implementing sustainable CBA. This chapter presents these concepts within a phased framework. Each phase is integral to both the planning and execution process of the CBA effort. The outlined phased approach clearly highlights the iterative nature of CBA. Fully understanding this process, its phases and its iterative nature is the first step in accomplishing a successful CBA.

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[142] NATO Standard AJP-3.16, Allied Doctrine for Security Force Assistance (SFA), Edition A Version 1, May 2016, pg. VII, https://www.esercito.difesa.it/en/organiznisation/The-Chief-of-General-Staff-of-the-Army/Training-Specializlisation-and-Doctrine-Command/Infantry-School/Documents/Doctrine-SFA/AJP-3-16-A-Allied-Joint-Doctrine-for-Security-Force-Assistance-SFA-Ed-maggio2016.pdf.

[143] NATO Standard AJP-5, Allied Joint Doctrine for Operational-level Planning and Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive-COPD, Edition A Version 1, May 2016, pg. 3-1, available at: https://www.coe-med.org/files/stanags/01_AJP/AJP-5_EDA_V2_E_2526.pdf.

Figure 1: Capacity Building Activity Planning, A Phased-Iterative Approach
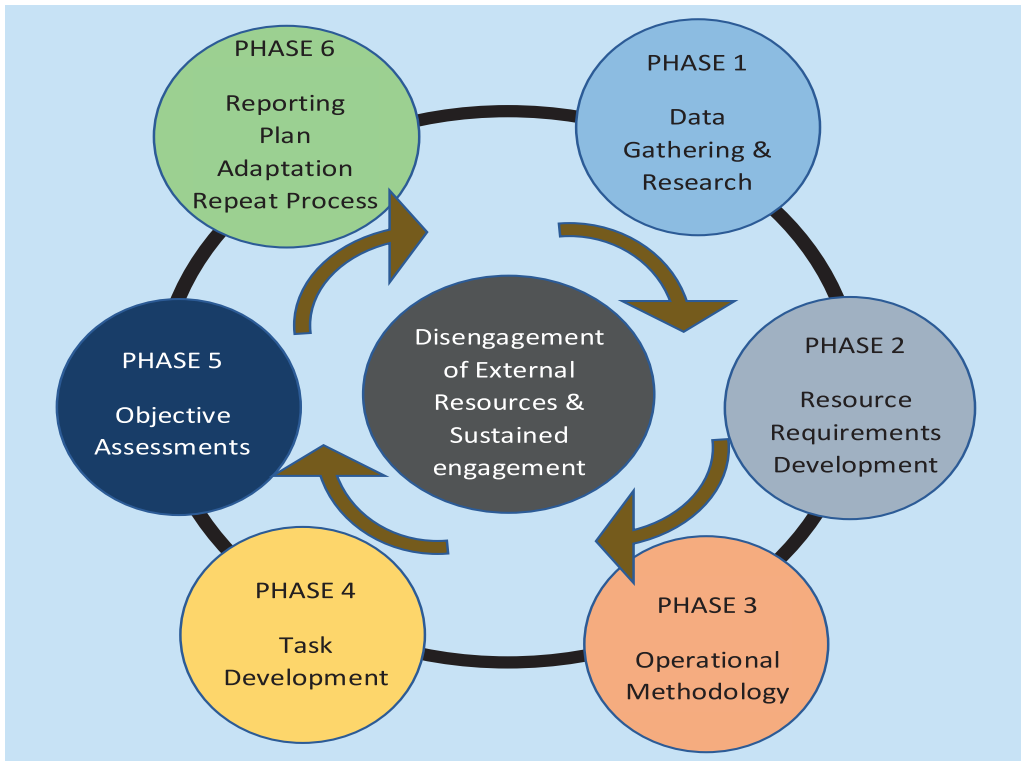
2. Capacity Building Activity (CBA) Planning – The Root of Sustainability

Phase 1. Foundational Planning, 'Poor Prior Planning = Poor Performance'. From the outset, planning must focus on a common understanding of desired end states, delineations of responsibilities and combined planning activities.

Planners should draw on the core objectives of the CBA as the guideposts for planning. There is a necessary focus on Host Nation (HN) primacy providing the best opportunity for internal legitimacy within the HN[144] and ensuring NATO objective considerations provide legitimacy for external stakeholders and the best likelihood for sustained participation.

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144 NATO Standard, AJP-3.16, Allied Joint Force Doctrine For Security Force Assistance (SFA), pg. 3-1, https://www.esercito.difesa.it/en/organisation/The-Chief-of-General-Staff-of-the-Army/Training-Specialisation-and-Doctrine-Command/Infantry-School/Documents/Doctrine-SFA/AJP-3-16-A-Allied-Joint-Doctrine-for-Security-Force-Assistance-SFA-Ed-maggio2016.pdf.

Information preparation of the environment (IPoE)[145] generates a common understanding of supporting (NATO) – supported (HN) relationships for participants. Within this, expectation management, in writing as much as possible, regarding HN performance milestones, links to resources and the supporting organisation's (NATO) resourcing are a must. The 'carrot and stick' approach to resourcing is rarely effective and more likely to generate animosity within the HN. However, milestones and grading criteria agreed to and supported by the HN are vital components of early planning. The HN must have a clear view of itself, its current capabilities and gaps with reasonable expectations regarding objective outcomes. If expectations are unmanageable for either the HN or CBA team, success is unlikely.

Regardless of the CBA undertaken in NATO operations and leadership, a clear understanding of all participating nations' objectives is vital. A clear understanding of historic relationships between all participating nations, especially with the HN, must be included in the planning process and will have a direct bearing on successful outcomes. For example, nations with post-colonial relationships with the HN may be in a better or worse position to properly support NATO and HN objectives. Participant 'baggage' must be understood and considered in the planning process.

Organisations external to the HN with previously established relationships in the tactical and operational environment (Non-Governmental Agencies (NGA), Other Governmental Agencies (OGA), non-NATO countries, etc.) are an important resource and will likely provide some insights into planning processes: for example, Médecins Sans Frontières' involvement in various African nations and support to U.S. military/U.S. AID counter Ebola efforts in 2014 – 2016 across West Africa.[146]

Lastly, foundational to the planning process is a thorough review of the available literature (written guidance, law and policy) available, and any After Action Reports (AARs) reflective of prior CBAs performed under similar circumstances. For example, NATO AJP-3.16 has been mentioned; additional important documents include, AJP-01 (D) Allied Doctrine, AJP-3(B) Allied Joint Force Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations and AJP-5 Allied Joint Doctrine for Operational Level Planning, NATO Defense and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative (DCB). Partner nation publications are also

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[145] Department of Defense, 'Joint Publication 2-01.3.Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment', (May 21, 2014), https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp2-01-3.pdf.

[146] Doctors Without Borders, "Report, Ebola 2014-2015 Facts &Figure", (June 8, 2016), https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/news-stories/research/report-ebola-2014-2015-facts-and-figures.

instructive, U.S. Joint Publication (JP) 3-20 Security Cooperation, U.S. Defense Security Cooperation University – Security Cooperation Programs and the American, British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand (ABCA) Security Force Capacity Building Handbook (ABCA Publication 369),[147] to name but a few.

FIGURE 2: CBA Phase 1 – The Common Framework
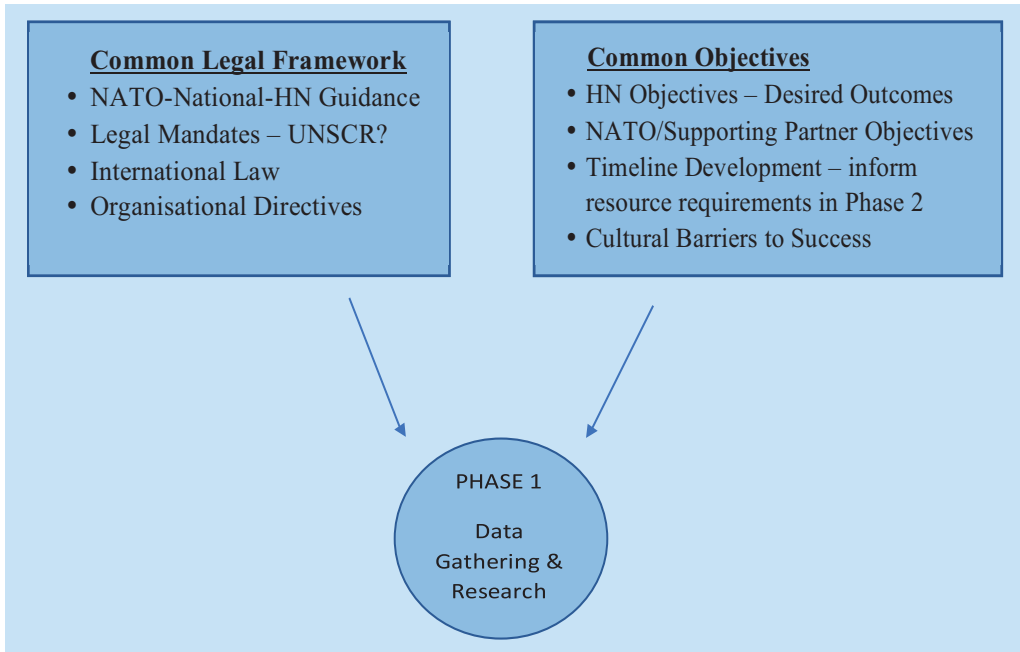
Phase 2. Resource Planning – Manpower, Money and Materiel, 'There's Never Enough to Go Around'.

Rarely do HN expectations for external resourcing match reality, nor do HN leaders typically have a clear picture of their piece of the resource pie needed as part of the plan. The HN must provide internal resources to the CBA effort, without some level of 'cost' incurred by the HN, they are unlikely to value the contributions of others. That said, a clear linkage between foundational planning and requested resourcing, as well as Phase 3 – Operational Planning, leads to the best results. Planning provides clear connective tissue between the stated objectives, activities, assessments and resourcing.

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[147] Michael Veitch, "'Security Force Assistance: Formalizlising an Approach for the Canadian Army'", *Canadian Forces College*, 15 October, 2018, https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/308/192/veitch.pdf.

Regarding resources (manpower, money and materiel), 'how much is enough?' is a difficult question requiring, most often, complex analysis. As an example, during any annual cycle, U.S. security cooperation planners are 'evaluating and reporting on the last fiscal year, planning and executing in the current fiscal year, developing [HN] requirements and mission planning for the next budget year'[148]. Maintaining resource focus on any particular CBA is challenged within this complex environment.

Within the planning process, establishing an appropriate organisational structure facilitates operational design development and refinement of manpower requirements. Understanding overhead, expertise and support manpower needs are core to an appropriately integrated HN-NATO organisational structure. Using organisational structures common to and understood by the HN is more important than following NATO or participating nation doctrine for unit composition. However, proper leadership structures and hierarchies require due consideration within an effective planning process. Clearly understanding where final arbitration for decisions occurs (within what office and with whom) and 'who reports to whom' are crucial to an efficient HN-NATO partnership organisation, minimises the opportunity for confusion and best positions CBA leadership to resolve conflict. Here again, HN primacy can yield positive results, but caution must be exercised not to create an HN authority perceived as a challenge to existing chains of command within the HN.

Understanding material requirements, not only in relation to accomplishing objectives but more importantly aligned with NATO and supporting nations' laws, is an important element of resourcing. In many cases, CBA sponsor countries provide complex equipment without a real plan for training, sustainment and long-term viability within the HN. It is not an uncommon sight across developing nations to see western military equipment 'piled in the corner' and disintegrating due to the ravages of the environment and lack of proper care. Much of this equipment was provided without proper CBA planning and doomed to failure from the outset. Many NATO partners have programs for distributing Excess Defence Articles (EDA)[149] to needy recipients; however, in many cases, the donated resource (typically equipment) provides little real benefit as it is not ac-

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[148] United States Department of Defense,'"Joint Publication 3-20, Security Cooperation, United States Department of Defense"', (May 23, 2017). pg. III-18, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_20_20172305.pdf.

[149] US DoD (2017), Joint Publication 3-20, Security Cooperation, pg. II-5, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/899678/doctrine_nato_cyberspace_operations_ajp_3_20_1_.pdf#:~:text=Allied%20Joint%20Publication%20.%20%28AJP%29-3.20.%20Allied%20Joint%20Doctrine,from%20%20and%20%20complements%20%20AJP-3%2C%20.

companied by the foundational planning process already described. Additionally, expectations for long-term HN stability and use of the military equipment must be understood.

Figure 3: CBA Planning – Phase 2 Inputs
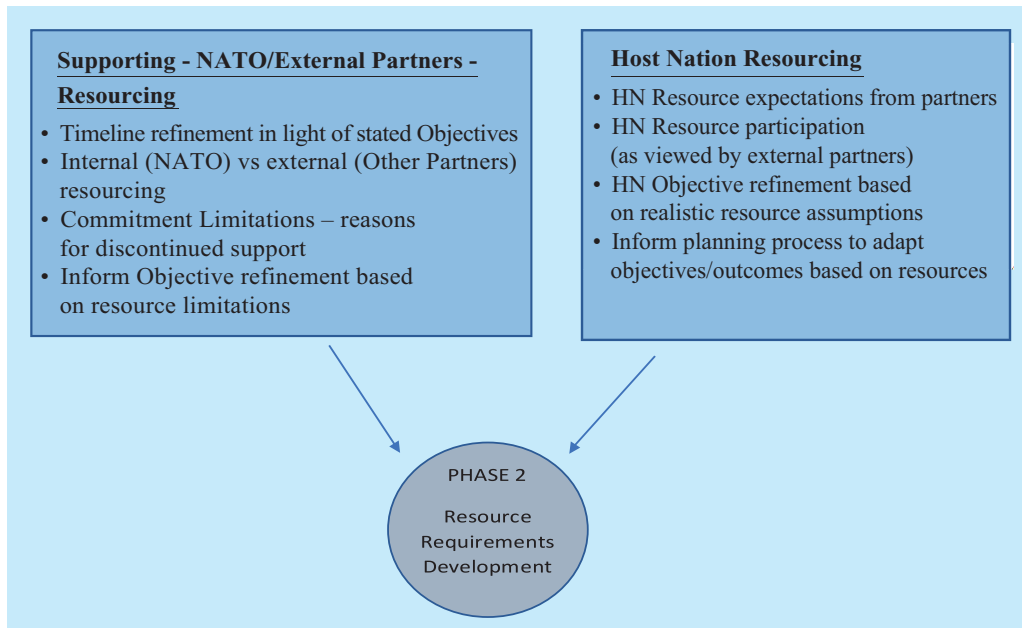
Phase 3. Operational Methodology – What are the Critical Lines of Effort?

A solid planning strategy, resulting in a useable foundational plan and an effective estimate of resource requirements (time required, funding, personnel, equipment, etc.), leads to the development of an operational methodology. This methodology provides the framework for translating strategic objectives outlined at the outset into specific operational lines of effort and, ultimately, tactical tasks, assessments and feedback loops. This methodology supports and facilitates individual tasks, their connection to the larger operational lines of effort and, finally, links them to the strategic objectives. The ability to view all of these disparate tasks within a guiding framework is complex, but a necessity for success.[150] An example taken from the U.S. military joint planning process is seen below.

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[150] Joint Staff J-7, Joint and Coalition Warfighting, 'Planner's Handbook for Operational Design', Version 1, 7 October 2011, pg. I-5, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pams_hands/opdesign_hbk.pdf.

Figure 4: Operational Approach - the Basics

© Joint Staff J-7 "Planner's Handbook for Operational Design"
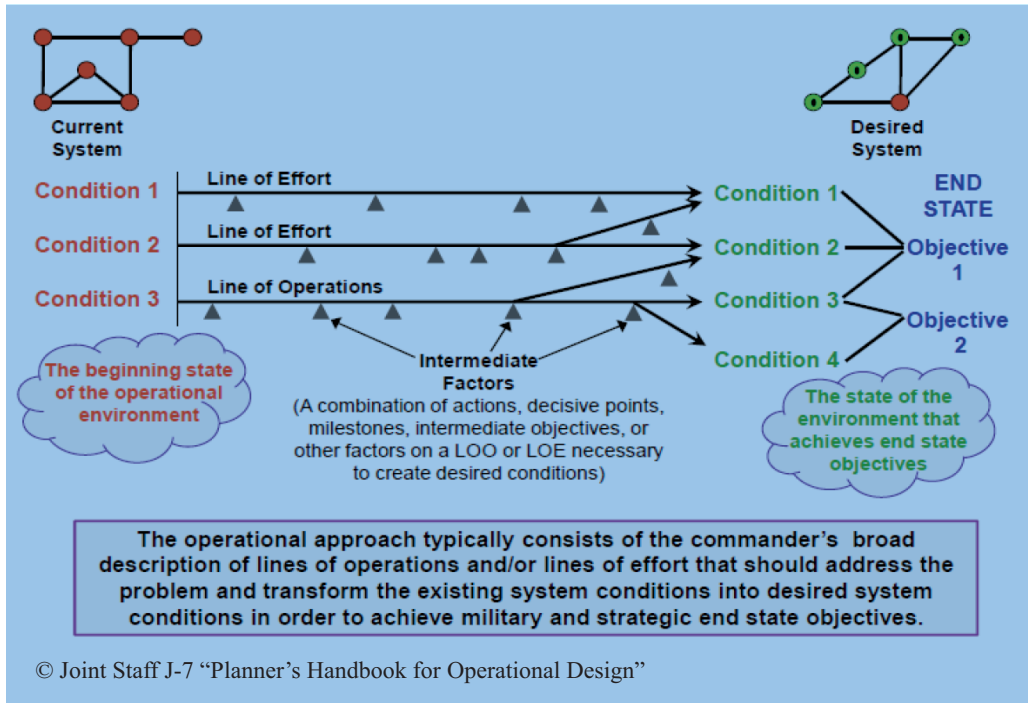
Another method used within numerous military and civilian business planning schema is the development of a graphic visually depicting each objective, the supporting Lines of Effort (operational LOEs) and the subordinate tasks (strategic, operational and tactical) for each LOE displayed over time and in relation to one another; one such example is a GANTT Chart.[151] Figure 5 displays an example of such a chart all the data within this chart is fictitious and is provided as an example of possible content, it is not intended to be comprehensive.

This example chart, although fictitious, provides each LOE (far left) and for each LOE, the strategic, operational and tactical tasks currently planned. Each of these tasks is displayed in relation to time (from left to right) and broken down by phases. When viewed vertically, tasks can be seen relative to time and each other, thus providing an opportunity to identify areas of potential friction or mutual support. When viewed in this fashion, tasks required as precursors to subsequent work can be clearly identified and placed in the plan in such a way as to ensure completion before the supported tasks. Lastly, funding lines can be overlayed

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[151] Clarke, W., "'Henry Gantt's Legacy to Management is the Gantt Chart'", 1922, https://ganttchart.com/history_of_the_gantt_chart/.

both horizontally (over time) and vertically (showing how much each task costs). Using this planning method produces a document and process capable of forecasting task accomplishment, resource allocation, burn rate and projected task completion dates. Ultimately, the ability to tie stated objectives to tasks, resourcing and outcomes cannot be overstated. Both HN and NATO leaders have legitimate expectations to understand progress; this method provides a framework for revealing that progress.

Although there are many methods for organising all the data associated with CBA efforts, the GANTT Chart below is one representation of the data. It outlines a strategic approach, operational lines of effort and tactical tasks over time and in relation to each other. The colours in the chart are included simply as an example; however, colour is a very useful tool for highlighting critical data, accomplished tasks, etc.

Figure 5: CBA Viewed in a GANTT Chart

PHASE 4

Task
Development

Phase 4. Task Development – 'Inherent goodness ≠ usefulness'.

The most common failure for CBAs is an over-emphasis on tactical tasks disconnected from a regimented planning process. This lack of connectivity between strategic objectives, operational lines of effort and tactical tasks causes numerous problems, the most prominent being wasted resources.

'Activity does not inherently equal accomplishment'. The inherent value (or goodness) of an activity does not equate to realised value for the defined CBA. Discipline is needed when developing tasks to ensure appropriate connection to the strategic objectives and proper prioritisation within a limited-resource model. As described in Phase 3 – Operational Methodology, the strategic objectives are separated into supporting LOEs which are further described as operational areas and finally, as individual tasks. AJP-3.16 identifies a number of operational areas of interest, including Security Sector Reform, Stabilisation and Reconstruction, Military Assistance, Counter-Insurgency, Stability Policing and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.[152]

Although a task may make sense when viewed through a strategic lens, either due to expense, the time required or some combination, it may not make sense to prioritise it within the planning process. HN and NATO expectations regarding specific tasks must also be openly discussed and agreed on within the plan. The process of how tasks are developed for each line of effort and linked to strategic objectives must follow a consistent planning method across the entire CBA enterprise. Individual teams assigned planning responsibilities for task development within a specific objective and line of effort must follow the same basic process, regardless of the objective.

This consistency supports appropriate comparison of tasks as they are developed and enables a prioritisation process, ultimately informing resource expenditures.

Graphically, task development could appear as follows:

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[152] AJP-3.16, Allied Joint Force Doctrine For Security Force Assistance (SFA), Edition A Version 1, May 2016, pp. VII-IX, https://www.esercito.difesa.it/en/organisation/The-Chief-of-General-Staff-of-the-Army/Training-Specialisation-and-Doctrine-Command/Infantry-School/Documents/Doctrine-SFA/AJP-3-16-A-Allied-Joint-Doctrine-for-Security-Force-Assistance-SFA-Ed-maggio2016.pdf.

Figure 6: CBA Task Development Process
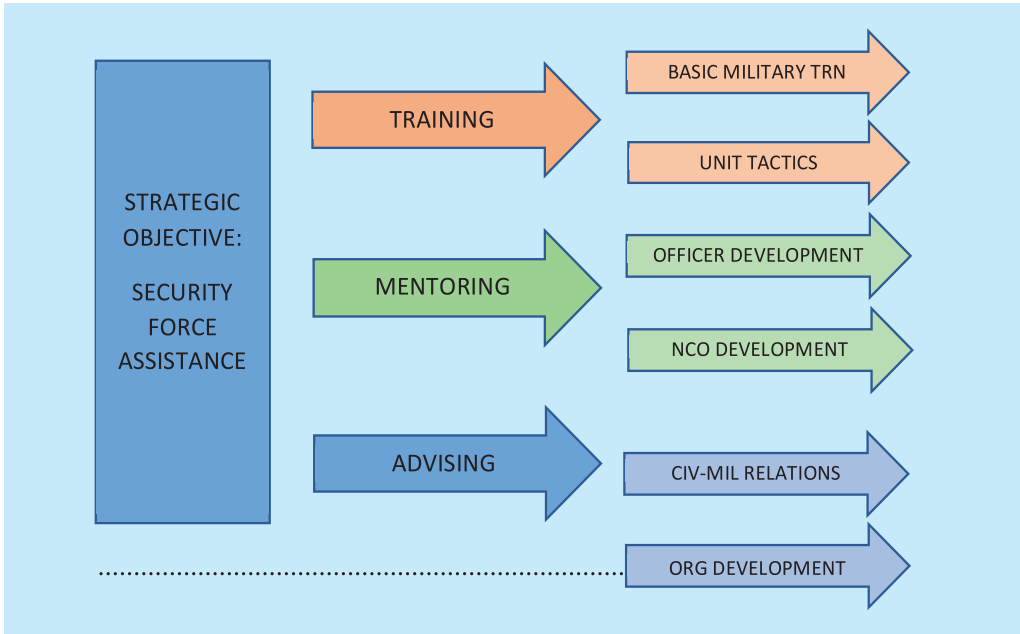
Although a simplistic view of task development, the process is not complicated. The adherence to a structured disciplined planning approach is more of a challenge. As CBA practitioners become immersed in the planning process with HN personnel, focus on the strategic approach is easily lost and individual (perhaps parochial) desires manifest as tasks are developed. To ensure the process does not succumb to this pitfall, a methodical and regimented review of tasks through the lens of the operational methodology is a priority. Before implementing any particular task, each task must be traced back through the planning process to its associated strategic objective, thus validating the task as supportive of strategic outcomes.

Phase 5. Assessments – 'What gets measured, gets valued'.

PHASE 5

Objective
Assessments

'To be successful, SFA must be based on solid, continuing assessment'.[153] Within the operational method, milestones are identified and used as guideposts for these assessments.

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[153] NATO Standard AJP-3.16, Allied Joint Force Doctrine for Security Force Assistance (SFA), Ed. May 2016, pg.1-2, https://www.esercito.difesa.it/en/organiznisation/The-Chief-of-General-Staff-of-the-Army/Training-Specializlisation-and-Doctrine-Command/Infantry-School/Documents/Doctrine-SFA/AJP-3-16-A-Allied-Joint-Doctrine-for-Security-Force-Assistance-SFA-Ed-maggio2016.pdf.

The assessments may take the form of grading criteria, metrics, valuations or subjective evaluations; for example, objective test scores on predefined tasks or a subjective evaluation of participant commitment to individual or group improvement. Regardless of the method used, both the supporting and supported organisations must agree on the method and purpose of assessments during the planning process before activity begins and resources are expended. For many CBA efforts, alignment of the measures of merit can be difficult; however, a clear understanding that senior leader focus inevitably falls on those areas highlighted as part of assessments is crucial to ensuring long-term sustained support by both the supporting and supported leadership.

Foundational to assessment development are baseline evaluations of the HN's status relative to the articulated planning objectives. These baseline measurements are crucial to subsequent appraisals. It is difficult, if not impossible, to properly assess improvement without an understanding of the HN starting position. Within these assessments, culture matters. Applying a blanket NATO (or lead nation) standard to assessments without regard for the HN culture and perception of self may doom the CBA from the outset.

Many NATO member states tend to see 'unrefined honesty' regarding assessments as core to the accomplishment of such assessments. However, many cultures find this type of brutal honesty offensive and may feel some level of animus towards a team taking this approach. That said, the supporting team may require a focused and detailed analysis of HN capabilities, but use an edited version when communicating with HN leadership. Although not the most efficient method of communication and requiring more subtlety, a mixed approach may yield the most successful results across the entire enterprise.

The timing of assessments is also essential to the effect of these evaluations on sustained resource support or the loss thereof. Overlaying assessment timing within the operational methodology provides a strategic view of where assessments fall in relation to other important events and support the alignment of these key events with potential effects. For example, including NATO budget processes or senior leader conferences within the operational method further informs the planning process and the timing of assessments. Additionally, although depicted as a separate phase within the planning process, assessments play a role across all prior phases and may occur at any time. During initial planning, for the sake of structure, emphasising assessments as a separate phase provides a format for that portion of the planning process; however, understanding the role of assessments inherently supports flexibility with respect to timing.

Lastly, assessments integrally designed into the planning process are a critical part of a robust feedback mechanism that informs each phase of the planning process. For example, as assessments occur, evaluation of resource expenditure will inform future activity, potentially driving greater or lesser flexibility. Leadership expectations are also shaped through planned assessments providing markers along the CBA. These markers shape expectations for participants and external leadership alike, management of expectations is a critical role in assessments.

PHASE 6

**Reporting
Plan
Adaptation
Repeat Process**

Phase 6. Reporting – 'No Plan Survives First Contact with the Operational Environment'.

Report design is an important element of the planning process. As each phase of planning begins to mature, creating the core report design supports the planned CBA by emphasising in written form those areas ultimately receiving attention; 'what gets measured, gets valued'. The reporting of those measurements is the venue to communicate ongoing successes, areas in need of improvement and estimates for follow-on activities. As part of an iterative process, the report provides a clear indicator of CBA status at the time of drafting and is direct feedback to all participants on this status, as well as providing expectations for ongoing work.

Each phase is represented in the reporting process, data gathering, resourcing, operational method, task development, assessments and recommendations. These recommendations inform NATO, HN and the national leadership of participating nations. Once begun, sustained support for the CBA is validated through a robust reporting process. The reporting process also continues to inform the iterative planning process, influencing strategic objectives, operational lines of effort and tactical tasks. The operational method, as described in Phase 3, is a good starting point for the basic report format. Through its lens, the strategic objectives describe the overall goals of the CBA, the operational lines of effort, the core method adopted to achieve the CBA objectives and the tactical tasks as the work happens daily.

Given that most CBAs require significant time to achieve lasting results, an expectation of changes in both the HN and NATO leadership is reasonable. Changes in leadership may bring about changes in priorities and desired outcomes for ongoing CBAs. The reporting process provides a historical basis for the original planning efforts, current plan adaptations and status of current tasks and can inform new leaders regarding the 'why and how' of the continuing CBAs. This historical knowledge may help maintain a steady course regarding desires by

leadership to make significant changes to the ongoing work. Thus, a properly planned and implemented reporting process facilitates stability within the CBA enterprise.

2. Security Force Assistance, an Operational Example – Afghanistan 2001 to 2021 – Success or Failure?

Although much has been written and remains to be written regarding NATO and western allies' CBA successes and failures in Afghanistan, a broad analysis of CBA in Afghanistan over the past two decades in light of the described phased approach to CBA is instructive. The purpose of this analysis is not to question political or military decisions or evaluate their efficacy, but more simply to assess decisions made in support of CBA and their relationship to the conditions in Afghanistan as of late 2021.

Before analysing the CBA approach taken by supporting nations, a summary of resources expended in the effort is important for context. Broadly speaking, 'he vast majority of spending in Afghanistan has come for the US'[154] and there is some debate over actual costs as well as any discrepancy between source documents. The summary below provides a sense of scale and scope if not exact numbers.

Expenditures from 2002 – 2020:

- Troop Levels: ranged from under 10,000 to over 110,000 in 2011.

- US annual spending: ranged from $15 billion to over $110 billion in 2011. Estimates range from $1 trillion to over $2 trillion for total expense depending on how the numbers are calculated and what is included in the cost analysis. Interestingly, only $141 billion was dedicated to reconstruction efforts.

- UK and German total spending: 'the largest numbers of troops in Afghanistan after the US - spent an estimated $30bn and $19bn respectively over the course of the war'.

- Cost in lives: 3,500 killed in action and over 21,000 wounded in action.[155]

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[154] BBC Reality Check Team, 'Afghanistan: What has the conflict cost the US and its allies?', *BBC News*, 3 September 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-47391821.

[155] Ibid.

Phase 1. Foundational Planning: From the outset, planning must focus on a common understanding of desired end states, delineations of responsibilities and combined planning activities.

A study commissioned by the U.S. government from the RAND Corporation stated:

> We expected that our research would enable us to identify several different ways in which SFA efforts in Afghanistan have been organised and executed during the past nine years. Unfortunately, given the available data, we found it impossible to identify truly distinct approaches. Although different approaches have been implemented, this has not been done systematically. Units in one part of the country have taken one approach; units in another part a different one—but no one has tracked the results as coalition units rotated in and out of Afghanistan.[156]

Clearly, after nine years of SFA work in Afghanistan by U.S. and coalition forces, Phase 1 work was never properly implemented. Although it may be true senior leadership amongst the coalition forces failed at a higher strategic level with respect to planning, the inevitable poor results within the SFA architecture can be linked back to: (1) a lack of focus or common understanding of desired outcomes; (2) a lack of distinctly outlined roles and responsibilities; and (3) a lack of combined planning activities. This critique can be taken one step further to include the disconnects between coalition members. As the RAND analysis predominantly focused on U.S. activities, an assumption of disconnects between allies is likely a safe one.

Other important elements of Phase 1 include legal mandates, host nation objectives and an analysis of cultural barriers to success, including tribalism. Although in 2001 and for several years thereafter, the United Nations provided security council resolutions (UNSCR) related to Afghanistan and terrorism, the broader legal foundation of 20 years of SFA and CBA is debatable and worthy of discussion. Given the tenuous legal foundation, one might question the broader link to host nation objectives, even if they could be discerned clearly, and existing cultural barriers. For example, how the host nation will perceive the presence of foreign military forces, regardless of their CBA role. There is no evidence this type of analysis was done before the initiation of broad, country-wide CBA activities by multiple nations at great expense over many years.

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[156] Kelly, Terrence, Nora Bensahel and Olga Oliker, 'Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts', *Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation*, 2011, https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1066.html.

Phase 2. Resource Planning – manpower, money and material.

Based on the information provided above, a reasonable argument could be made that there were sufficient resources, if not throughout the period from 2002 to 2020, then certainly during many of the intervening years. If resourcing was sufficient, why were results difficult to measure, non-existent or unsustainable? A U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO) report in January 2021 stated.

> A UN Procurement Task Force in 2008 found instances of fraud, embezzlement, conversion of public funds, conflict of interest and severe mismanagement of USAID-funded United States Agency for International Development UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services projects in Afghanistan, including a $365.8 million Rehabilitation of Secondary Roads project. According to the allegations in the investigation, a UNOPS official diverted reconstruction funds for personal use, including hundreds of thousands of dollars in USAID funds for rent, a home renovation and other luxury items. The investigation found that the UNOPS official repeatedly violated rules and regulations by severely misappropriating project funds and by engaging in fraudulent and unlawful acts.[157]

Fraud, waste and abuse (FWA) of CBA funds can quickly become the locus of failure for CBA activities. The support necessary through participating governments is quickly questioned by those governments when their resources appear to be squandered, wasted or stolen.

Although an easy excuse, singling out FWA as the sole cause of future failure is simplistic at best. Additionally, a lack of *appropriate* personnel and sufficient training are as culpable in a subsequent failure or lack of measurable success. The same GAO report highlighted:

> "An insufficient number of trained acquisition and contract oversight personnel presented a common problem in reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. The lack of trained personnel led to higher costs, schedule delays and unmet goals and increased the potential for fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement."[158]

Phase 3. Operational Methodology & Phase 4. Task Development: The operational methodology (and the tasks it creates) provides the framework for

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[157] U.S. Government Accountability Office, 'AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION: GAO Work since 2002 Shows Systemic Internal Control Weaknesses that Increased the Risk of Waste, Fraud and Abuse', *GAO-21-32R*, 2021, pg. 9, https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-32r.pdf.

[158] Ibid., pg. 15.

translating the strategic objectives outlined at the outset into operational lines of effort and, ultimately, tactical tasks, assessments and feedback loops. Given the disconnects outlined above in Phase 1 and Phase 2, a safe assumption can be made that Phases 3 and 4 did not fare well having neglected the proper foundational work. The same GAO report 'highlighted limited interagency planning related to development efforts in Afghanistan, *including a lack of coordinated plans*, clear roles and responsibilities and common definitions'.[159] The ability to view all of these disparate tasks within a guiding framework is complex, but a necessity for success.

Afghanistan highlights the dictum 'inherent goodness ≠ usefulness'. There is no argument that the individual efforts by CBA practitioners at the lowest level and their Afghan partners created numerous tactical successes, but why did the cumulative effect of these tactical successes not result in strategic success? The answer remains within the phased approach and insufficient implementation of that approach at the strategic level. Certainly, in terms of complexity, successful outcomes from CBA were challenged within Afghanistan from the outset. However, could a comparison be made between efforts in Afghanistan and post-World War II work done by the Marshall Plan in war-torn Europe?

> The Marshall Plan formed the greatest voluntary transfer of resources from one country to another known to history. Technically known as the European Recovery Program, the plan was passed by the U.S. Congress with a decisive majority and was signed by President Truman on April 3, 1948 [...] the Marshall Plan (guided by the European Cooperation Administration, ECA) helped to tide Western Europe over a dangerous period. The plan provided new confidence to Western Europe; the plan furnished money, food, fuel and machinery at a time when the Western European economies were all in disarray.[160]

Certainly, significant differences exist between the times and locations of these historic CBA efforts, but why was one a monumental success and the other significantly less so? There is no intent within these pages to answer this question, but to offer CBA practitioners an opportunity to reflect on the critical process of 'planning for success' in light of both current events and historic precedent.

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[159] Ibid., pg. 24.

[160] Peter J. Duignan, Lewis H. Gann, 'The Marshall Plan', *Hoover Institute*, (October 30, 1997), para. 1-2, https://www.hoover.org/research/marshall-plan.

3. Conclusion

All components of CBA are important to the programme's ultimate success; however, thorough planning ultimately informs each of the important phases and their activities, provides feedback mechanisms and supports an adaptive environment. The ability to properly assess each element of the CBA within an organised, planned structure creates the best chance for sustained success over the life of the CBA. Building a solid foundational plan, including the strategic approach, resource acquisition and use, tactical planning, comprehensive assessments and informed reporting, creates an ecosystem supportive of sustaining positive CBA results. The greatest threat to successful sustained CBA results stems from a lack of thorough planning with all the attendant elements of that plan. NATO's involvement in Afghanistan up to 2021 will be studied for many years and likely with significant divergence in assessments of the success or failure of CBAs undertaken to create sustainable capacity in the Afghan security forces. Regardless of the scorecard, however, an instructive review of the planning processes over two decades provides a mirror in which the methods may be graded.

Finally, participants in and practitioners of CBA external to the HN can never want success more than the HN participants. The HN leaders and implementers of the CBAs hold success or failure in their hands. Challenges abound, but a good plan with a focused effort and a 'no quit' attitude can and should win the day.

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CHAPTER 6

Tracking Success and Failure: Monitoring and Evaluating Security Force Assistance

James Cunningham

Key Points

- Monitoring and evaluation remains a critical weakness for security force assistance (SFA) missions.

- SFA activities can be tactically proficient and still fail to meet long-term strategic goals.

- Monitoring and evaluation personnel should be empowered and independent to ensure that evaluations are transparent and honest.

- NATO would benefit from instituting monitoring and evaluation best practices.

- The role of SFA operators is to collect data required for the evaluation and to implement any changes to the SFA approach based on the findings of the evaluation.

- NATO would benefit from the creation of a monitoring and evaluation cell within its operations division to assess the progress and the return on investment of NATO SFA operations.

Keywords: monitoring, evaluation, resilience, assessing, continuity, transparency, accountability.

1. Introduction

This chapter will identify current challenges with the international community's approach to the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of Security Force Assistance (SFA) activities, such as the failure to properly assess outcomes, the perverse incentives associated with SFA advisors grading their own work, and the often late and short-term implementation of M&E programmes. This chapter will also discuss best practices for M&E, and end with a proposed framework for improving M&E within the NATO alliance. Over the past two decades, there have been many large- and small-scale SFA missions that have resulted in dismal outcomes. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, following the withdrawal of foreign military forces, the military and police were unable to counter the threat from well-established terrorist and insurgent groups. In Iraq, the Islamic State conquered key population centres, posing a threat to stability in the region and a security risk to the rest of the world. In Afghanistan, despite a two-decade international effort which included U.S. investment of more than $88 billion alone, the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces collapsed, allowing the Taliban-led insurgency to take control of the nation.

It is time for NATO and others to examine these outcomes to determine how we failed to predict what happened when international forces left. A key mechanism to do so is through a review of the challenges SFA operators have experienced implementing M&E systems designed to assess the progress of SFA activities. NATO uses SFA to help stabilise fragile states, improve a host country's military and local forces capabilities, extend NATO's security bubble beyond Europe, and provide vulnerable nations access to NATO equipment and professional training, all in the service of achieving vital security, governance and humanitarian goals. Every year, NATO and its member states participate in thousands of SFA activities, investing millions of dollars in their success. Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, the U.S. alone has spent $406 billion on security assistance programmes.[161] Having a rigorous M&E capability for SFA is critically important in determining the international community's return on investment, ensuring accountability and transparency, evaluating progress on important performance indicators and identifying which specific SFA activities are actually contributing to NATO's long-term goals. Yet an institutionalised M&E process remains largely absent within the NATO alliance.

What passes for M&E now usually refers to practitioners grading their own work and determining progress largely based on the measurement of inputs such as the

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[161] Elias Yousif and Laurent Woods, 'The Expanding Scope of U.S. Security Assistance since 9/11,' *Security Assistance Monitor*, September 2021, pg. 2, https://securityassistance.org/publications/the-expanding-scope-of-u-s-security-assistance-since-9-11/.

number of training courses provided, and outputs such as the number of personnel trained.[162] Neither addresses the basic issue of *outcomes*; the progress made toward a specific goal, such as reducing a threat to NATO member states or stabilising a host nation. When describing the outcomes of SFA activities, senior officials responsible for the oversight and management of the programmes will often use vague terms such as 'making progress,' or say that a security force is 'capable', without providing details that define the level of progress achieved, the types of capabilities developed and if those capabilities will be sustainable once international assistance ends. Allowing SFA advisors to rate their own performance creates a perverse incentive to provide overly optimistic assessments. To improve M&E programmes, assessments would benefit from independent observers assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of SFA activities, with the advisor's role limited to providing high-quality data and implementing changes based on the evaluation's results, in cooperation with the host country.

2. Inputs and Outputs, but What About Outcomes?

It is relatively easy to track inputs and outputs. However, the most important aspect of a credible M&E programme is its ability to assess progress toward outcomes. There are many examples of SFA missions that have been successful in tactical and operational tasks, such as providing training and equipment to the host nation's forces, but which have failed to meet strategic goals. In other words, it is likely the SFA mission did the wrong things perfectly.[163] The failure to transform outputs into outcomes is a perennial frustration for donor and host nations alike. Left unaddressed, this failure threatens the longevity of SFA missions and erodes political relationships. One clear example of this issue was the United States' bilateral relationship with Mexico to fight organised crime and associated violence, called the Merida Initiative. Since at least 2008, the U.S. Congress has appropriated $2.5 billion for the Initiative.

The U.S. State Department's overview of the programme identified many input and output indicators: the number of investigators and prosecutors trained in crim-

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162 Rebecca Zimmerman, 'Approaching Security Cooperation through a Monitoring and Evaluation Lens,' *Devtech*, July 21, 2020, https://devtechsys.com/insights/2020/07/21/approaching-security-cooperation-through-a-monitoring-and-evaluation-lens/.

163 For an in-depth evaluation of M&E programming in Afghanistan, see SIGAR, 'The Risk of Doing the Wrong Thing Perfectly: Monitoring and Evaluation of Reconstruction Contracting in Afghanistan,'(August 2021), https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-21-41-LL-Executive-Summary.pdf.

inal and money laundering probes, the number of meetings between senior leaders of the two countries, an inventory of telecommunications equipment, the number of trained canine units established and the number of facilities built.[164] Missing in the State Department's overview was any assessment of how each of these inputs and outputs actually helped the U.S. and Mexico reduce violence by organised criminal groups. Two years later, the State Department again based an assessment of the Merida Initiative's progress on input and output indicators: the number of drug trafficking leaders removed and fugitives extradited, the amount of currency and drugs seized, the number of bilateral engagements between countries and the amount of equipment provided.[165] While all of these efforts can disrupt organised criminal groups, they do not necessarily translate to a reduction in overall violence. The U.S. Department of Justice reported that Mexican drug violence increased by 60 per cent between 2009 and 2010.[166] Ten years later, in July 2021, Mexico's foreign minister declared that the Merida Initiative was 'dead', adding that despite a decade of support, violence had increased and the initiative had failed.[167]

In Afghanistan, the hazard of focusing on outputs instead of outcomes had unintended consequences. One of the reasons SFA failed there was that the U.S. government and NATO undertook SFA activities that ran counter to the long-term goal of creating an independent ANDSF. One example was providing an almost entirely illiterate force with advanced military equipment that they did not have the technical know-how to sustain. Another was providing advanced U.S. combat enablers such as close air support, medical evacuation and logistics to Afghan forces in the field without a plan to ensure the Afghans developed their own capabilities.[168] This led to a crippling dependency on foreign help.

Assessing the development of Afghan warfighting and security governance capabilities was extraordinarily difficult, as noted in a recently published lessons-

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[164] Department of State, 'Merida Initiative,' https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/inl/merida/index.htm, last accessed January 31, 2022.

[165] Department of State, 'United States-Mexico Security Partnership: Progress and Impact,' *Office of the Spokesman*, (March 23, 2010), https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/03/138929.htm.

[166] Department of Justice, 'Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis Through 2010,' (February 2011), https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/drug-violence-mexico-data-and-analysis-through-2010.

[167] Celine Castronuovo, 'Mexico says security initiative with US doesn't work, is 'dead,'' *The Hill*, July 29, 2021,https://thehill.com/policy/international/565439-mexico-says-security-initiative-with-us-doesnt-work-is-dead.

[168] SIGAR, Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Force: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan, (September 2017), https://www.sigar.mil/interactive-reports/reconstructing-the-andsf/index.html. ; SIGAR, 'Divided Responsibility: Lessons from U.S. Security Sector Assistance in Afghanistan,' (June 2019), https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-19-39-LL.pdf.

learned report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). Since 2005, the military's M&E system changed four times (see Figure 1).[169] For the first decade, M&E systems focused solely on inputs and outputs, masking performance-degrading factors such as poor leadership and corruption.[170] In fact, all SFA assessments for Afghanistan were plagued by questions about the reliability and consistency of data and results.

Figure 1. Inconsistent Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

	Capability Milestone (CM) Jul 2005–Apr 2010	Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT) Apr 2010–Jul 2013	Regional Afghan National Security Forces Status Report (RASR) Sep 2013–Jan 2015	Monthly ANDSF Assessment Reports (MAAR) Jan 2015–Present
Highest Rating(s)	**CM1:** Mission capable, may require specified assistance	**(1)** Independent with advisors	**(1)** Fully capable	**(1)** Sustainable
	CM2: Mission capable only with routine assistance **CM3:** Capable of partially conducting missions, reliant on assistance	**(2)** Effective with advisors **(3)** Effective with partners **(4)** Developing with partners	**(2)** Capable **(3)** Partially capable **(4)** Developing	**(2)** Fully capable **(3)** Capable **(4)** Partially capable
Lowest Rating(s)	**CM4:** May be capable of conducting portions of missions, reliant on support	**(5)** Established **(6)** Not assessed	**(5)** Established **(6)** Not assessed **(7)** Awaiting fielding	**(5)** In development

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From 2010 to 2013, during the peak of the U.S. and NATO military surge, the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT) alone changed its performance measurements five times, making long-term tracking of ANDSF progress impossible. Although the U.S., NATO and the Afghan government all agreed that the goal was an independent security force, the highest recorded measurement of performance in April 2010 and August 2011 was 'independent with advisors', a designation that lowered the threshold for success and created a complete disconnect from the agreed-on desired outcome. By October 2010, the lowest allowed level of performance was changed from 'ineffective' to 'established', removing any evaluation metric that would assess the performance as negative. M&E systems in Afghanistan became a tool used by the military to show progress over time, even though some units in Afghanistan were actively contributing to insecurity in their area (see Figure 2). [171]

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[169] SIGAR, 'The Risk of Doing the Wrong Thing Perfectly: Monitoring and Evaluation of Reconstruction Contracting in Afghanistan', (August 2021), pg. 112, https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2021-07-30qr.pdf.

[170] SIGAR, 'Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Force: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan', (September 2017), pg. 51-54, https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2017-10-30qr.pdf .

[171] Ibid.

Figure 2. Evolution of the CUAT Ratings

April 2010	July 2010	September 2010	October 2010	August 2011
Effective with advisors	Independent	Independent	Independent	Independent with advisors
Effective with assistance	Effective with advisors	Effective with advisors	Effective with advisors	Effective with advisors
Dependent on coalition forces for success	Effective with assistance	Effective with assistance	Effective with assistance	Effective with assistance
Barely effective	Dependent on coalition forces for success	Dependent on coalition forces for success	Developing	Developing with partners
Ineffective	Ineffective	Ineffective	Established	Established
Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed

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Even when performance indicators do not change over time and are properly aligned to monitor key SFA indicators, a major challenge for M&E in SFA activities comes when SFA activities are tactically proficient and operationally successful, yet still fail to achieve the desired strategic outcomes. This often happens when desired outcomes go beyond what is possible within the realm of SFA. For example, SFA activities in 'narco states' such as Afghanistan aim to improve the ability of the host nation's local forces – predominately police forces but can include military forces – to respond to drug crimes. That can result in more frequent arrests of drug traffickers and seizures of narcotics. But this alone will not prevent farmers from producing narcotics or drug traffickers from moving drugs within a country and beyond its borders. The continued production and movement is not always evidence of failed SSR programmes; it could simply mean that the desired outcomes require progress on activities unrelated to SSR such as giving farmers incentives to grow alternative crops or other economic alternatives. For example, in Afghanistan interdiction and counterdrug law enforcement were the primary tools used by the U.S. in its drug control efforts. This included destroying drug processing labs, seizing illegal narcotics and arresting drug traffickers. The success of the counternarcotic efforts was typically measured by these short-term effects, but the transition from an opium-dependent livelihood to one that relied on diversified cropping systems and income was a long-term effort left unmeasured by any SFA M&E system. Many of the foundational elements necessary for enduring counternarcotics, such as effective governing institutions and better economic conditions, were beyond SFA objectives and what could affect accomplished by the host nation's security institutions.[172]

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[172] SIGAR, 'Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan', (June 2018), pg.20-26, https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf.

This dilemma can also impact countries with counterterrorism objectives. For instance, in Africa, SFA activities have resulted in better targeting of international terrorist organisations, but the terrorist threat from the continent has not been tangibly reduced. The reasons are those factors that military targeting is not equipped to address. Some of these factors include addressing grievances in governance that contribute to terrorist group recruitment, or the lack of economic opportunities that leads to a vulnerable population engaging in illegal activities. SFA activities are not designed to address these important aspects of a country's society, nor should they be. When these disconnects occur, wider evaluations should be conducted to understand what other factors beyond the scope of SFA operations are contributing to the continued threat. From this wider assessment, the international donor community must change SFA desired outcomes to reflect goals that are within the realm of what SFA activities can realistically be expected to address. The alternative would be to design a larger M&E framework that examines all factors required to achieve the overarching desired outcomes, in which SFA performance metrics would only be one part.

3. Evaluations Need to Be Independent

While it is critically important that the performance metrics being assessed by any M&E programme align with SFA strategy and programme designs, it is equally important that those assigned to perform the evaluations are not implementers of SFA activities.

Performance metrics:

Performance metrics provide data that represents an organization's actions and capabilities to perform specific tasks. Often, SFA operations measure metrics that are easy to collect, such as how many military operations the host nation completed or how many airstrikes were conducted against a known threat. While these metrics are easy to measure, they often fail to provide the data necessary to assess the quality and professionalization of the host nation. Instead of just counting the number of military operations conducted, a better performance metric would be to assess how many of those military operations achieved their stated military objective. Instead of counting airstrikes, a better performance metric would be to assess if the airstrike met its intended purpose. For professional militaries, a lack of action can be a sign of professional growth such as not conducting an airstrike because the intended target was no longer at the location or because of the risk of collateral damage. Good performance metrics provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and efficiencies of SFA's stated objectives and desired outcomes.

Evaluations should be used to identify what is and is not working and provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness of ongoing activities. Independent evaluators are less inclined to provide overly optimistic evaluations and would contribute to a more honest assessment of SFA successes and failures.

In Afghanistan, most SFA evaluations were completed by the SFA operators themselves. First, because the SFA operator's success was viewed through the lens of the level of progress of their partner units, they had perverse incentives to emphasise gains. Essentially asked to grade their own work year after year, SFA operators rotating in and out of Afghanistan published reports concluding that the ANDSF was making progress, yet still fell short of the desired outcomes. The reports could not describe exactly how much progress had been made compared to that of the prior SFA unit, much less how much more was needed to achieve the purported goal.

Under pressure to show progress, SFA operators frequently provided the skills the Afghans did not have. This ranged from drafting policy memos for Afghan officials to sign as their own to providing Afghan army units with ammunition and fuel during partnered operations. These activities, commonly referred to as capacity substitution, masked the limits of the ANDSF's true capabilities.

Employing independent evaluators to produce detailed, factual and comprehensive reports is a step toward mitigating some of these issues. Independent evaluators can also gather additional data such as unfiltered reflections from the host nation and other SFA actors. Their conclusions can then help SFA implementers make real-time reforms that can improve the overall chances for success, or at least a better return on investment.

Although many nations and international organisations including NATO do not have independent inspectors general to oversee government operations, such organisations played an important role in sounding the alarm about the ineffectiveness of SFA operations in Afghanistan. While in the early months of 2021, as some U.S. Department of Defense officials were downplaying the effects of the withdrawal of U.S. advisors and trainers from Afghanistan, SIGAR sounded the alarm about the devastating effects the withdrawal would have on important Afghan security force capabilities. One report written by SIGAR in January 2021 warned that Afghan Air Force was heavily dependent on continued U.S. support and would likely be unable to sustain its capability when con-

tractor support was removed. By August, only nine months later, the Afghan Air Force had dissolved.[173]

4. Evaluations Must Be Long Term

M&E activities must begin during the strategy formulation and programme design phases and remain in effect throughout the entire life cycle of the donor's engagement with the recipient country. For SFA missions that require a transition from donor nation-provided to recipient nation capabilities, M&E systems will likely need to remain in place beyond the final SFA activities to assess the effectiveness of the transition process. This approach should be followed for both long-term SFA operations and those involving less frequent engagements over a longer period.

One of the biggest impediments to long-term M&E is the high level of turnover among evaluators. This often happens because evaluators are either deployed for six- to 12-month tours, or because evaluations are contracted out on a short-term basis. This personnel turnover inhibits evaluators from developing institutional memory and understanding history and context. While government employees may receive political pressure to present a good news story, civilian government employees can examine a single topic long-term and, if organised appropriately, can influence SFA organisations to adopt the necessary reforms. External entities, on the other hand, are by design paid to produce a specific report or provide personnel for a set period, which can also have the negative impact of impeding long-term monitoring and evaluation. Most reports published by private entities are merely a snapshot which prohibits the necessary consistent oversight of SFA programs. External entities, unlike government employees, often have less decision-making authority and as a result less ability to implement or advocate for the necessary reforms.

M&E is often an afterthought created after initial activities fail to meet desired

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[173] Testimony by Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs David Helvey and Deputy Director for the Joint Staff Brig. Gen. Matthew Trollinger, U.S. Senate, Armed Services Committee, 'The transition of all United States and Coalition forces from Afghanistan and its implications,' (May 20, 2021), https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/the-transition-of-all-united-states-and-coalition-forces-from-afghanistan-and-its-implications.
Callie Patterson, 'Watchdog warned of Afghan air forces' collapse months before US pullout: report,' *New York Post*, (January 18, 2022), https://nypost.com/2022/01/18/watchdog-warned-of-afghan-air-forces-collapse-months-before-us-pullout/.

outcomes or when the question belatedly arises of what 'making progress' truly means. Introducing M&E systems into the mission late poses obvious challenges to collecting initial assessments and data. In Afghanistan, formal M&E systems were created in 2005, three years after official SFA activities began which hampered NATO's ability to obtain initial inputs and outputs of SFA activities such as what equipment and training had been provided to which Afghan units. Without baseline information, monitoring progress was impossible.

For SFA missions that require a transition of security tasks from the donor to the recipient nation, M&E systems should remain active to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the transition and to serve as a potential early warning system to identify areas where key security capabilities are at risk of becoming unsustainable.[174] This is no easy task; as SFA operators stop engaging with the recipient nation, key sources of data may become unavailable. Yet the failure to continue M&E can be disastrous. In Afghanistan, NATO and the U.S. Department of Defense stopped formal M&E of Afghan warfighting capabilities in 2015, even though the U.S. and NATO continued to provide assistance to Afghan forces. Within the first year of the U.S. and NATO troop drawdown, an entire corps of the Afghan National Army had collapsed and major cities were threatened by Taliban offensives.[175] As recently as May 2021, senior officials continued to assess the ANDSF as a 'capable force' and better equipped and funded compared to the Taliban, at least on paper.[176] Yet, over the course of only one week in August 2021, the Taliban swept through the county.[177]

5. Failure to Implement Proven Theories of Change and Results Frameworks

In addition to learning from prior missteps, NATO should also consider important best practices for M&E. Military M&E systems are in their infancy and in-

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[174] Millennium Challenge Corporation, 'Policy for Monitoring and Evaluation,'(March 15, 2017), pg. 14, https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc-pdf/policy-for-monitoring-and-evaluation.

[175] SIGAR, 'Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces', September 2017, pg. 112, https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-17-62-LL.pdf.

[176] Brig. Gen. Matthew Trollinger, deputy director, politico-military affairs (Middle East), J-5, Joint Staff, 'The transition of all United States and Coalition forces from Afghanistan and its implications,' *Senate Armed Services Committee*, May 20, 2021, https://www.dvidshub.net/video/795589/leaders-brief-senate-committee-us-coalition-forces-drawdown-afghanistan-part-1.

[177] Joseph Krauss, 'Explainer: The Taliban takeover, what's next for Afghanistan,' *ABC News*, August 17, 2021, https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/taliban-afghanistan-79476354.
Jon Schroden, 'Afghanistan's Security Forces Versus the Taliban: A Net Assessment,' *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point,* January 2021, https://ctc.usma.edu/afghanistans-security-forces-versus-the-taliban-a-net-assessment/.

stitutional cultures have contributed to the military's delay in implementing them. As U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense for Afghanistan and Pakistan Rebecca Zimmerman wrote in 2020.

> Where USAID (United Nations Office for Project Services) comfortably sees itself as managing programmes and initiatives, military forces are more apt to view their work as conducting operations. The former are continuous and the latter are finite missions. So, where USAID thinks in terms of a programme cycle, the Army, for example, uses the linear military decision-making process (MDMP), in which the final step is to give the order to execute and move on.[178]

An important aspect of an effective M&E system is how integrated M&E is with the decision-making cycle and programming. As Zimmerman noted in her report, this runs counter to the way M&E programmes are implemented in military organisations. Zimmerman noted that the development community views the programme cycles as an ongoing process of planning, implementation and evaluation, with a focus on learning and adaptation. In contrast, the military decision-making process is linear. There is no built-in review to ensure the initial military analysis was accurate or that the orders given resulted in the desired outcome. This may work for tactical and operational military decisions, but is insufficient when used to evaluate how a series of military operations is progressing toward meeting desired outcomes.[179]

There are two essential components to a successful M&E system: understanding the theories of change and developing a results framework. A theory of change 'describes how programme activities lead to larger results and makes explicit both the mechanism by which change occurs and any assumptions made by planners'.[180] M&E programmes that do not have a theory of change framework, including NATO's programme in Afghanistan, will be unable to evaluate whether the constellation of hundreds of SFA activities is resulting in meaningful change for the host nation's security force and institutions. For example, in 2018 NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan was reviewing the status of years of SFA activities because, although thousands of activities were marked as 'completed' in the system, Afghan capabilities had regressed in many areas. In other areas, the command was unable to determine the current status of important security func-

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[178] Zimmerman (2020), 'Approaching Security Cooperation through a Monitoring and Evaluation Lens,' *Devtech*, https://devtechsys.com/insights/2020/07/21/approaching-security-cooperation-through-a-monitoring-and-evaluation-lens/.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid.

tions. Without an explicit theory of change, there was no system in place to monitor this regression over time, or to pinpoint where the underlying theory of change needed to be adjusted.

A commonly applied assessment framework for military organisations – red, amber and green – involves a linear process for developing capabilities over time. Most capabilities will start in the red and amber stages where the host nation's capabilities are weak or non-existent. For SFA operators, their goal is to 'go green' on the assessment tracker. To accomplish this, military advisors will complete a series of defined tasks on the assumption that once a certain task is complete, the capability will remain constant. However, developing military capabilities is not linear. Capabilities can ebb and flow over time for a multitude of reasons. These regressions and progressions must be monitored and regularly reported through the chain of command and SFA approaches be modified to meet the current needs of the host nation.

Another important component of M&E is a results framework which 'translates the theory into a verifiable set of expected results'.[181] A well-defined results framework will help evaluators identify what information needs to be collected and to inform everyone involved in the SFA mission which performance measurements will be used to evaluate the programme. When properly aligned with senior SFA officials and the decision-making cycle, a results framework can ensure that SFA programmes are evaluated based on their alignment with the overarching SFA strategy and specify which steps must be taken to achieve strategic outcomes.

6. Conclusion

In the last decade, NATO has been involved in two large-scale SFA missions in which the recipient nation's security forces collapsed and the international terrorist threat increased after NATO military forces withdrew. To avoid similar outcomes in the future, NATO should consider establishing an independent M&E capability that can provide regular ongoing oversight of SFA activities and produce independent evaluations to determine if current programming is progressing toward intended outcomes. Evaluations should provide senior officials and SFA practitioners with actionable and timely recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future SFA activities.

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[181] Ibid.

Today, NATO remains an important stakeholder in providing SFA across the globe. Despite the drawdown of military forces in Iraq, NATO continues to train and advise its security forces. NATO also continues to be engaged in defence institutional capacity building through NATO's Building Integrity programme.

Developing a rigorous M&E system will not be an easy task for a large international coalition, especially one that operates based on consensus. As a coalition of 30 member states, NATO must lead an effort to create a common M&E framework that can be used by all countries involved in its SFA activities. In Afghanistan, NATO divided SFA responsibilities by region: Germany was responsible for the north, Italy the west, and the U.S. the south and east. Unless similar efforts in the future share a common framework for data collection and analysis, monitoring and evaluating SFA activities will remain piecemeal.

Another challenge within the NATO coalition will be access to data. While NATO has protocols for access to its information, each member country also has its own protocols. A truly independent and empowered M&E capability will need access to all SFA-related data from all member states involved in any component of developing a host nation's military, police or associated institutions. When creating its M&E system, NATO needs to work with all of its members to ensure the evaluations have access to all information required to formulate a proper evaluation.

Lastly, NATO is a political organisation that prioritises internal cohesion. Transparent and independent evaluations are uncomfortable since they can identify deficiencies within the coalition and problems with SFA programming in specific member states. This can create tension among members of the Alliance and it is something NATO must be sensitive to as it develops its capability. Although transparent accountability of what is going right and wrong involves tough discussions, these are required if NATO to ensure that its investment in SFA programming in the future is successful.

Suggested Bibliography for further readings

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SIGAR, 'Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments', June 29, 2010.

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SIGAR, 'The Risk of Doing the Wrong Thing Perfectly: Monitoring and Evaluation of Reconstruction Contracting in Afghanistan', August 2021.

SIGAR, "What we Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction", August 2021.

CHAPTER 7
A U.S. Government approach to building institutional capacity through strategic advising

Julie Chalfin & Brett Sudetic

Key Points

- Donor assistance that aligns goals with those of the recipient nation and considers a partner's security sector governance and institutional capacity is likely to achieve positive results.

- Strong institutional capacity allows partners to effectively address their unique security challenges and sustain tactical and operational support provided through donor assistance.

- Strategic advisory assistance offers a means for engaging with partners to understand their interests, priorities, and capacities, and for strengthening a partner's security sector governance and institutional capacities.

- An important part of the project design is determining the right skills, experiences and approach for an advisor to engage strategically with counterparts.

- Pre-deployment training prepares advisors to embrace their role and tackle the potential challenges of working with a foreign partner.

- Providing tools to facilitate constructive dialogue with partners enables advisors to establish the trust and commitment needed to undertake difficult and complex reforms.

- A jointly drafted action plan provides a useful roadmap for programme implementers and leadership to track progress and manage expectations.

- Patience and collaboration with partner nation stakeholders are essential for advisors to achieve long-term and sustainable effects.

Keywords: donor security assistance, institutional capacity building, security sector governance, strategic advisory assistance, global defense reform.

1. Introduction

The United States government's approach as a donor to delivering security force assistance has evolved over the years. Central to this evolution is the recognition that the partner's will and capacity to absorb and sustain the assistance are critical to success. Strategic advisory support offers an opportunity to approach security force assistance as a partnership between the donor and a foreign country and to undertake a process of constructively engaging with partners to strengthen security sector governance and institutional capacity. Lessons learned through the successes and failures of the U.S. and other donors underscore the importance of monitoring performance, facilitating collaboration, and maintaining partner commitment. Based on the authors' experiences, this chapter offers insights for donors who seek to design advisory missions that draw on good practice and desired outputs, outcomes and effects. The programmes described offer an inside look at the decisions and considerations that contribute to this design. They are intended to showcase examples and share concrete applied reflections and apply to any country that deploys advisors to provide security sector assistance to partners.

2. Background

Following the end of the Cold War and the attacks on 11 September 2001, the U.S. reoriented its foreign and defence policies from containing the Soviet Union to addressing major transnational security challenges such as terrorism, regional instability, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other asymmetric threats to the U.S. and its partners and allies. The two-decades-long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as counterterrorism operations throughout the Middle East, in the Horn of Africa, South Asia and elsewhere, have been at the centre of this strategic shift. While the U.S. has witnessed overwhelming military success in many of these regions, it has faced much greater challenges in stabilising conflict and post-conflict zones and facilitating sustainable peace through local allied and partner forces.[182]

The complexity of modern conflict including recent experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan and a general fatigue among constituents to engage in them has led to a realisation among policymakers of the limits of military power and the importance of local actors taking responsibility for the provision of security. Political, social, cultural and linguistic dynamics have made unconventional U.S. military interven-

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[182] Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 'Stabilization: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan,', (May 2018), https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-48-LL.pdf.

tions extremely difficult, particularly in regions of the world that differ from the U.S., such as Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. A near consensus has emerged that local forces should take a leading role in providing security and stability for their populations and regions.[183]

The U.S. provides security assistance, administered through the Departments of State and Defense, to develop the capacity and capabilities of partner nations to address security challenges. U.S. security assistance comes primarily in the form of training, equipment, small arms, vehicles, professional military education and advisory support. This U.S. investment in security assistance is significant. For example, in 2019/20, the U.S. government committed approximately $18 billion in security assistance to partner and allied nations around the world.[184] The impact of this investment and whether it achieved intended and sustained effects have, however, increasingly come under scrutiny. While this assistance has undoubtedly helped partners develop new capabilities and strengthen existing ones, it has too often been futile, succumbing to the inefficient institutions, corruption and overall poor governance of the security sector.

In many low- and middle-income countries and fragile states, the U.S. has, for years, failed to thoughtfully consider partner institutional capacities and resources, leading to a mismatch between assistance delivered and the ability for it to be effectively absorbed and sustained. Countries with poorly governed security sectors lack proper accountability and transparency, which often leads to high levels of corruption, abuse and mismanagement. Weak governance of the security sector makes the delivery of security assistance a riskier investment. In recent years, high-profile U.S. assistance programmes have demonstrated the shortcomings of focusing on building partner capacity primarily through training and equipment. For example, when the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) forces overran the city of Mosul in 2014, Iraqi military and security forces – trained and equipped by the U.S. for years – disintegrated and retreated, allowing ISIL forces to take complete control of the city and much of the northern part of the country. Another clear example of the unintended consequences of primarily focusing on training and equipping was the alarmingly rapid dissolution of Afghanistan's security forces and the Taliban's takeover of the country in August 2021. In less severe cases, partners lacking the requisite logistics, sustainment and planning capacity have strug-

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[183] Sanam Vakil and Neil Quilliam, 'Steps to Enable a Middle East Regional Security Process,' *Chatham House*, (14 April, 2021), https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/04/steps-enable-middle-east-regional-security-process.

[184] Security Assistance Monitor, 'Security Assistance Database,' *Center for International Policy*, Accessed August 20th, 2021, https://securityassistance.org/security-sector-assistance/.

gled to maintain and operate equipment provided by the U.S. or effectively employ individuals with skills acquired through U.S.-provided training due to inefficient human resource management practices and other factors.

3. Institution Capacity Building: Key to Sustainable Security

Like many donors, national or multinational, the U.S. has come to acknowledge the importance of institutional capacity building (ICB) as an essential tool for ensuring a country's security. The Department of Defense's Institute for Security Governance defines ICB as 'security cooperation activities that support partner efforts to establish or improve institutional policies and processes necessary to plan, develop, resource, acquire, staff, employ and sustain capabilities of mutual benefit'.[185] ICB differs from other security assistance approaches in its emphasis on understanding the local contexts of partner nation security institutions and bringing about long-term, deeply rooted and sustainable improvement in these institutions. ICB can be applied to myriad functional areas within security sector institutions, including human resource management, acquisition and logistics management, strategy and planning, education and training, judicial and legal affairs, and interagency coordination and information sharing.

This recognition of the importance of ICB has led to concerted efforts towards developing 'a comprehensive U.S. strategy for building sustainable partner security sector capacity'.[186] Some programmes such as the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) began their planning process by conducting robust consultations with a wide range of partner government - and non - government stakeholders to identify areas of common interest.[187] These consultations created opportuni-

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[185] Institute for Security Governance, 'Institutional Capacity Building: An Essential Component of Full Spectrum Capability Development,' *Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA)*, January 2021 https://instituteforsecuritygovernance.org/documents/113018911/125185574/ICB+Planning+V6.4.pdf/e2 aee637-25af-1f67-86f1-7318bbe8e07b?t=1611090664380.

[186] Alexandra Kerr & Michael Miklaucic, Editors, 'Effective, Legitimate, Secure Insights for Defense Institution Building', Washington DC: Center for Complex Operations, Institute for National Strategic Studies and National Defense University.

[187] In 2014, the Obama Administration launched the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) as a partnership with six African states – Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia – to focus on improving security sector governance and institutional capacity. SGI introduced a process to coordinate U.S. interagency efforts and draw upon the expertise and experience from throughout the U.S. government. SGI's approach was developed based on guidance provided in Presidential Policy Directive (PPD)-23, which was a framework for the U.S. Government to coordinate efforts and ensure transparency and consistency in security assistance delivery. For more details: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/05/fact-sheet-us-security-sector-assistance-policy.

ties to establish partner political will for enhancing security sector governance and institutional capacity to address security challenges. Key features of SGI included an emphasis on information sharing and coordination with partners and other U.S. and non-U.S. stakeholders, and maintaining a senior-level dialogue to keep the partner government in the lead on the planning, implementation and overall vision of the strategic-level institutional reforms undertaken through the partnership.

4. The U.S. Department of State's Global Defense Reform Program

The lessons learned from programmes that privileged consultation and collaboration with partners such as SGI have informed the design and development of new strategic advising programmes. In 2018, the Department of State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) launched the Global Defense Reform Program (GDRP) to improve security sector governance and institutional capacity of partners globally through strategic-level advisory support. GDRP projects provide subject matter experts to assist security sector leadership and staff improve the management, oversight and effectiveness of their institutions. This advisory support complements the Department of Defense Ministry of Defense Advisors, which has deployed advisors globally since 2010 to develop institutional defence capacity. Instrumental to GDRP successes to date has been the process and approach taken to conceptualise, design and implement each project.

4.1. The GDRP Approach as a Model

To share insights widely across the donor community, the GDRP model and approach provide an example of good practice in designing advising missions and projects. GDRP incorporates good practices acquired from the SGI experience and from the international community to deliver a robust approach to strategic advising. The significant time invested in consulting and planning before each advisor's assignment establishes a solid foundation for the advisor to build on. GDRP projects seek to assist in strengthening the resilience of a partner's security sector institutions, enhance their effectiveness and accountability and better align and prepare security sectors to confront the threats, needs and challenges of the nation and its citizens. GDRP partnerships are designed to:

1) support U.S. foreign policy priorities;

2) advance shared interests;

3) reduce threats to the homeland;

4) avert the need for U.S. military intervention through the promotion of the alliances and burden-sharing arrangements needed to succeed in today's competitive geopolitical environment.

GDRP projects seek to develop lasting relationships that complement other diplomatic engagements and security assistance programmes, such as those focused on tactical training and the provision of equipment, and to ensure that security sector reforms are sustained.

4.2. GDRP Project Conceptualisation

Proposals are solicited annually from U.S. embassies around the world to initiate the process of identifying and developing new projects. The solicitation includes clear guidance on programme goals and the types of advisory support available. Embassies submit proposals based on their assessment of partner need, interest and political will to improve the governance and capacity of security institutions. The method of advisory support delivery – embedded or intermittent – is included in the proposal. Due to limited funding, time-intensive management requirements for each project and the expectation that each project requires a multiple-year commitment to achieve long-lasting institutional reforms, only a handful of new projects are selected each year based on merit, feasibility and national security priorities.

An important part of the project conceptualisation process includes obtaining an initial commitment from the partner nation to undertake institutional security sector reforms with U.S. advisory assistance. Embassies play an integral role in collaborating and consulting with partner nation stakeholders throughout project conceptualisation. Robust consultations between the U.S. and the partner before the design phase result in projects that are more aligned with shared interests and responsive to partner nation priorities and needs. During these engagements, embassies assess the ability of partners to absorb and willingness to take ownership of sustainable solutions developed through advisory assistance. Expectations must be managed, though, since assistance is not guaranteed for all project concepts. At a minimum, the partner must express an interest in receiving U.S. ad-

visory assistance to tackle security sector governance and institutional challenges.

Following consultations with partners and the alignment of partner and U.S. interests, the advisory support is then tailored to the country's unique challenges and dynamics. Tailoring the support is a key feature of the GDRP approach, with the selection of the specific functional or thematic area for support a main element. Deployed advisors might engage security sector institutions at the national, ministerial or service level depending on the needs identified and the ability and desire of the institution to absorb the support. Advisory support has focused on a wide range of functional areas, including cybersecurity; maritime security; emergency management; interagency planning; national security strategy development; defence acquisition and procurement; human resource management; communication and public affairs; professional military education; civilian-military coordination and communication; and legislative coordination.

Given that the institutional vulnerabilities and the partner's will to address them are key components of the programme approach, the functional areas addressed depend on the gaps experienced by the specific institution and can vary from one country to another due to unique local security or governance challenges, levels of institutional maturity and partner nation priorities. The overall approach of the GDRP programme creates the space for promoting the development of locally driven and owned and highly customised solutions to capacity gaps. For example, GDRP advisory support to a country's national emergency management centre in the Middle East seeks to improve interagency coordination and information sharing on issues related to emergency and crisis management. In South America, advisory support to a ministry of defence supports the development of plans, policies and procedures for cybersecurity and critical infrastructure security, and GDRP support in the Balkans assists in establishing a liaison function between the country's ministry of defence and its parliament, thus enabling effective communication and civilian oversight of the armed forces. These and other GDRP strategic advisory efforts focus on enhancing the security sector governance and institutional capacity needs identified by the partners.[188]

Whether the advisory support is a fully embedded advisor or an intermittent advisor team depends on the partner's requirements and willingness to accommodate a full-time advisor. In some cases, intermittent advisory support is sufficient to achieve institutional capacity-building objectives, particularly in more ma-

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[188] Security sector governance refers to the process by which security institutions provide and manage security via policies and practices.

ture organisations. If this is preferred, an advisor or team of advisors would periodically engage with the partners on a pre-determined schedule. This arrangement works well when counterparts are assigned by partner leadership to work with the advisory team and complete tasks between the advisory team engagements.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, periodic in-person visits were the norm and the most effective way for intermittent advisor teams to develop an understanding of, and relationships with, partners and their needs. However, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions preventing these visits, virtual engagements were primarily used in 2020 and 2021 to allow intermittent advisor teams and partner nation counterparts to maintain relationships and efforts or begin to establish relationships for new projects. In most cases, virtual engagements have enabled projects to remain on the minds of partner counterparts, although the lack of face-to-face interaction precluded advisors from cultivating meaningful relationships and limited progress.

Another model of advisory support which GDRP predominantly applies is embedding an advisor within an organisation such as in a ministry of defence to work with counterparts daily. The decision to embed an advisor first requires a commitment from the partner, preferably in writing, to accommodate the proposed advisor with an appropriate workspace and access to personnel and information. An initial commitment is an indicator that, when the advisor arrives, the partner will likely be open and responsive to the assistance. Commitment in writing also provides a record of the requested assistance if personnel transition to another position or if there is later a question about the original request. A hybrid of embedded advisory support along with intermittent advisor team visits, or following initial intermittent advisor team engagements, is another option for partners that are either not ready to host full-time advisors or desire additional advisory assistance to support the work of the embedded advisor.

4.3. U.S. Stakeholder Consultations to Select GDRP Projects and Advisors

Proposed bi-lateral project concepts go through a rigorous review by stakeholders from across the Departments of State and Defense and other agencies as necessary. Stakeholders evaluate each proposal considering several factors, including: the opportunity to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives; whether the

U.S. has the expertise and experience in the subject area; a partner's political will, absorptive capacity and demonstrated commitment to the proposed reforms; ways the advisory support would complement other existing U.S. government and international donor security forces assistance; and if the theory of change presented promotes international security sector governance and reform standards.[189] All these factors assist in determining the overall feasibility and likelihood of success of the proposed project, as well as whether the project aims to achieve programme goals.

Once project concepts are selected, the managing bureau ascertains the appropriate modality, scope and objectives of the advisory support. An important part of the project design is determining the right skills, experiences and approaches for an advisor to engage strategically with their counterparts. Identifying the required attributes of an advisor is paramount to ensuring that the assistance is embraced while the advisor is there, and sustained after the advisor departs. Throughout the project design process, the bureau consults with embassy representatives and with regional and functional experts in U.S. agencies to determine the necessary qualifications for an advisor to accomplish the project's objectives.

While technical expertise in a functional area is essential, additional skills or experiences might be desirable in certain situations. For example, proficiency in a language might be required for an advisor to engage and communicate effectively with partner stakeholders. In other cases, an advisor's seniority must be considered if the advisor is to gain the respect of host nation counterparts. In some Middle Eastern cultures, for example, an individual's age or years of experience may be viewed as synonymous with ability and level of expertise. After the desired attributes of a specific advisor are determined, a thorough review of candidates must be conducted to select a qualified candidate who will thrive in the intended environment.

4.4. Preparing Advisors for Deployment

Following their selection, managing bureau prepares advisors for their assignments with pre-deployment training and a toolkit. The pre-deployment training

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[189] Nazli Yildirim Schierkolk, 'International Standards and Good Practices in the Governance and Oversight of Security Services,' *Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance*, (1 January, 2018), https://www.dcaf.ch/international-standards-and-good-practices-governance-and-oversight-security-services.

often includes several advisors who are beginning their assignments around the same time. The training presents a tested and proven approach to strategic advising, as described in the book *Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance: A Practical Guide*.[190] The training consists of presentations and individual and small group exercises to reinforce key capacity building and strategic advising principles. These include the concepts of 'nurturing local ownership; emphasizing sustainability; doing no harm; and demonstrating respect, empathy and humility'.[191]

The pre-deployment training exercises provide advisors with an opportunity to consider various scenarios. Exercises allow them to explore ways they might overcome obstacles and enable change when partner stakeholders lack an understanding of certain concepts or are slow to take action. The intense training experience also provides an opportunity for new advisors to establish networks and relationships with other participants. Strong professional relationships between advisors often become an asset, especially when an embedded advisor needs help working through a problem with someone who has experienced a similar challenge in the past.

4.5. GDRP Toolkit to Facilitate Collaborative Approach

A GDRP advisor toolkit is provided to all advisors to facilitate a collaborative approach to security sector governance and institutional capacity-building efforts, and to enable productive interactions with counterparts. The toolkit includes templates for conducting assessments of gaps and challenges, developing an action plan and work plan and gathering and submitting data for monitoring and evaluation. Each of these documents, or tools, serves a different purpose and the toolkit provides a description and guidance for using each. The tools help establish a roadmap and facilitate a process for developing a rapport with ministry officials, promoting the comprehensive assessment of existing systems and gaps, communicating with stakeholders across the advising mission, seeking local ownership and solutions and contributing to sustainable capacity building. In sum, the tools guide the formulation of a joint project between the advisor and partner nation counterparts and, by extension, the partner government and the U.S. government.

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[190] Nadia Gerspacher, 'Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance', (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers), 2016.

[191] Ibid.

4.5.1. The Landscape Assessment and Gap Analysis (LAGA)

The first tool in the toolkit is the template used to assess the partner's security sector governance structures and institutional capacities in the area on which the project is focused. The Landscape Assessment and Gap Analysis (LAGA) is intended to be an information-gathering and mapping exercise. It provides the advisor with the chance to advance the current U.S. Government's understanding of specific institutional gaps and their root causes, and to identify opportunities to assist in building institutional capacity. This mapping exercise is also an opportunity for the advisor to develop strong working relationships and a common understanding with partner nation counterparts of current capacities, capabilities, stakeholders and related efforts. Gathering this baseline data at the onset of the project and determining areas that require development assists with managing expectations, identifying feasible solutions, and measuring progress and the effect of the advisory assistance.

Through the LAGA exercise, the advisor develops an awareness of the environment including relevant laws and policies; human, financial and resource management systems; technical competence and current training; processes for communication and coordination across offices, services and organisations; political willingness for change in particular areas at the institutional and national levels; decision-making processes; and accountability mechanisms. The LAGA also helps recognise cultural, environmental, political and economic factors outside the security realm that may affect the project or impede progress, and actions already taken by the partner nation, U.S. government or other international donors to address the same or related issues.

4.5.2. The Country Action Plan (CAP)

Once the LAGA is complete, the advisor arranges a series of dialogues with counterparts to draft a plan for addressing the project area. The toolkit includes a template and directions for drafting the CAP. The structure and purpose of the CAP are modelled after the SGI Joint Country Action Plans (JCAP). The SGI JCAP drafting process provided an opportunity for U.S. and partner experts to conduct a joint analysis of security sector governance challenges and opportunities[192] and

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[192] 'Effective, Legitimate, Secure. Insights for Defense Institution Building', Eds. Alexandra Kerr & Michael Miklaucic, *Center for Complex Operations Institute for National Strategic Studies*, (National Defense University, Washington DC), https://cco.ndu.edu/News/Article/1385447/effective-legitimate-secure-insights-for-defense-institution-building/.

to articulate the actions required to meet desired end states and expectations for the partnership. U.S. assistance programmes were designed to meet JCAP objectives and end states. Given its joint nature, the JCAP called for both the U.S. government and the partner government to make efforts to achieve shared goals.

The SGI JCAPs proved to be a valuable document for action officers and senior representatives to monitor progress and identify obstacles such as bureaucratic inertia, political barriers, or the inability to undertake reforms without additional assistance, to name but a few.[193] Periodic meetings between U.S. and partner government leadership would provide each side with a chance to reaffirm their commitment to the JCAP partnership and objectives or suggest modifications to the objectives if priorities or conditions had changed. These meetings would also provide an opportunity for the leadership to hold each other accountable if required actions were delayed or stymied. In some countries, even several years later, the JCAPs are still used as a framework to review U.S. government assistance and the partnership launched through SGI.

The GDRP CAP similarly establishes a strategic-level plan for tackling complex issues, including improving security sector governance and institutional capacity. Building on the LAGA exercise, the CAP is also a means for advisors – both intermittent and embedded – to engage in a meaningful dialogue with partners to understand challenges, opportunities and priorities from their perspectives. Obtaining partner input throughout the CAP drafting process strengthens partner commitment to achieving CAP objectives and results. Ideally, the drafting process allows the advisor or team of advisors to build relationships with a range of stakeholders, and to begin their role as an advisor by sharing experiences and expertise during the dialogues. Final approval of the CAP by senior leadership, such as a minister of defence, is pursued to demonstrate the political will to undertake the reforms and objectives presented in the CAP. The approval by a senior official also sends a mandate to the organisation's rank and file and signals to the U.S. government a commitment to the partnership.

The CAP is also a useful roadmap for programme implementers and leadership to track progress and manage expectations. In collaboration, advisors and partners articulate in the CAPs the focus of the GDRP effort, including the challenges it will address, and present a path to achieving clearly defined

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[193] U.S. Department of State, 'Security Governance Initiative 2015 Review: Enhancing the Transparent, Accountable, and Legitimate Management and Oversight of Security Policy and Practice,' (March 2, 2016) https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/af/rls/2016.

objectives. Annual reviews of the CAP with the partner allow the assumptions and objectives made during the initial drafting process to be revisited and as well as continued relevance despite any changes in the environment, priorities or leadership verified. Modifications to the CAP may be required to account for significant changes. Consultations with stakeholders to determine the validity of the CAP also provide the advisors with an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of counterparts at various levels to the reforms outlined in the CAP. The template that guides advisors to complete CAP is presented here.

Figure 1. Country Action Plan Template

OVERVIEW
Explain the purpose of the document (e.g., The country action plan (CAP) provides a roadmap for the Ministry of Defense (MOD) to build unified planning capacity and processes), the parties involved in its drafting (i.e, both partner nation and USG), and outline the main focus areas/project objectives (e.g., aligning MOD resources to real operational needs; supporting recruitment and human resource management; positioning the MOD to implement a cyber-security strategy, etc.)

ROADMAP TO SUCCESS
Objective 1: (Insert first objective)
Provide an overview of the issue and the reason for the objective. When possible, include any partner activities or milestones that are necessary to accomplish this objective. Describe the sub-objective, including why it is an important element to reaching the objective. When possible, include the necessary stakeholders and resources needed to accomplish the sub-objective.

(Sub-Objectives are Optional)

    Sub-Objective 1.1: (Insert header)

    Sub-Objective 1.2: (Insert header)
    Describe the sub-objective, including why it is an important element to reaching the objective. When possible, include the necessary stakeholders and resources needed to accomplish the sub-objective.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT
Describe the current environment (aka "baseline") related to this objective using information gathered and analyzed in the landscape assessment and gap analysis. However, as much as possible, use the partner's wording for framing the issues. [Note: Reflecting in the document the partner's understanding and framing of the issues/challenges demonstrates that you listened to them and value their perspective.]

EXPECTED OUTCOMES
Describe outcomes expected to be achieved under this objective. For each outcome, note whether it would be completed in short-term (1 year), medium-term (2-3 years), or long-term (3+ years).

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4.6. Learning Through Data, Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring progress and evaluating effect are conducted throughout the GDRP project lifecycle. PM uses programme design and management tools, including

logic models and performance monitoring frameworks, to demonstrate theories of change and measure project effect. These tools allow PM to track project activities and ensure that outputs are aligned with desired outcomes. Using logic models, PM can visually represent theories of change for each GDRP project and outline how planned activities connect to intended outputs, outcomes, impact and goals.

The three main tools used to monitor and evaluate projects include progress reports, the performance monitoring framework and after-action reports. Advisors submit monthly progress reports to document steps towards achieving project objectives and to document any challenges to programme implementation. The performance monitoring framework is used to document and monitor performance indicators that track the achievement, or otherwise, of the outcomes listed in the logic model. In addition to defining success, performance indicators make outcome statements more precise, specific and measurable. PM guides advisors on how to gather and report on data that is accessible, accurate and reliable.[194] The after-action reports are submitted by GDRP advisors following major project activities to assess the quality of programme implementation and to identify recommendations for improvement.

PM also values learning as an essential element of the project lifecycle. Data gathered through monitoring and evaluation provides insight into ongoing progress and results that impact project implementation and future projects. Security sector data, however, is often more difficult to acquire than that from other sectors given the sensitive or classified nature of information, either for political or national security reasons, or simply because quality data does not exist. In addition to formally asking the partner to share data to jointly track the GDRP project progress, data is also derived from other public sources to inform GDRP's overall project management and planning efforts.

The GDRP toolkit also includes a template for advisors to establish a list of tasks to support the achievement of CAP objectives. While the CAP includes actions expected to be undertaken by the partner, the Work Plan details tasks for the advisor to accomplish during the project performance period and describes how the advisor intends to help the partner achieve its objectives. Ideally, partners review the Work Plan and confirm that it aligns with their

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[194] U.S. Department of State, 'Managing for Results: Program Design and Performance Management Toolkit,', 2018, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Program-Design-and-Performance-Management-Toolkit.pdf.

expectations of the advisory assistance. The Work Plan also tracks progress by the advisor and reflects overall progress made towards achieving the CAP objectives.

5. Project Implementation and Support for Advisors to Succeed

U.S. government stakeholders, including bureau and programme staff, embassy teams and representatives from across the Department of State and other agencies, play a role in providing advisors with the support needed to successfully execute projects. Department of State staff maintain contact with advisors throughout their assignments to answer questions, assist with using the advising tools, ensure activities remain aligned with U.S. interests and the intent of the project, track and report progress and help address challenges. The staff also keeps advisors informed of other U.S. government activities or official visits that might affect their work. This reliable and continuous support from Washington not only provides advisors with an assurance that their efforts are valued, but also motivates advisors when progress is slow.

Once an advisor or team of advisors arrives in the country, their first task is to meet with U.S. embassy representatives. Embassy representatives are the advisor's main U.S government points of contact in that country and are frequently consulted with and informed by the advisor. Early consultations with other international donors are also encouraged for the advisor to establish contacts to coordinate and deconflict overlapping or similar efforts.

Soon after arrival, the embassy facilitates formal introductions between the advisor and senior- and working-level partner country counterparts. The advisor then settles into the office provided by the partner and commences work on the LAGA, CAP and Work Plan.

These documents are tools to cultivate relationships with counterparts and a means of becoming familiar with the environment, stakeholders and challenges the advisor is there to tackle. Following approval of the CAP by multiple U.S. stakeholders and partner government senior leaders, which defines the strategies, policies, processes, structures and other actions required to achieve strategic security sector reform objectives, the advisor begins to work side-by-side with partner representatives to advise them on the development and completion of these requirements.

5.1. Building a Community of Strategic Advisors

In addition to the pre-deployment training, GDRP advisors are periodically invited to participate in roundtable discussions and invited to join a social networking platform that facilitates interaction between advisors. Virtual platforms allow for advisors on assignments around the world to come together in a large forum or in smaller groups to share documents, lessons learned and potential solutions to shared challenges. In some cases, advisors that connected during the pre-deployment training or during one of the roundtables establish separate working groups to exchange information and ideas on a specific subject, such as cybersecurity. Building a community for strategic advisors who often face similar challenges and celebrate similar successes helps to enrich the advising experience and enable advisors to deliver the highest quality of support. It also helps them feel less isolated, which can occur when there is only one GDRP advisor working in a country. Creating working groups with other international advisors operating within the same country also provides a valuable network to better understand parallel efforts and for comparing experiences.

5.2. Maintaining Partner Engagement

The most important task of the strategic advisor is to develop trusted relationships with partner country counterparts. The tools and suggested approaches for meaningful engagement are meaningless if the partners do not value the advisor or make time to engage. Advisors are encouraged to draw from the tips and techniques for effective strategic advising presented during the pre-deployment training. Patience is required, especially when an advisor first arrives, as well as a recognition that not all counterparts will be ready to accept the advisor at the same pace. Initially, the advisor can leverage U.S. embassy relationships to become acquainted with key stakeholders, but eventually they must establish their own working relationships and maintain an open dialogue with a range of stakeholders.

The LAGA and the CAP drafting and review processes provide opportunities for the advisor to identify key decision-makers, change agents and action officers and a means to nurture relationships and maintain engagements with those partners. It is inevitable that, throughout the advisor's assignment, the counterparts' focus on the institutional reform objectives set out in the GDRP project will ebb and flow due to competing priorities or frustration from the lack

of demonstrable results. To keep counterparts motivated and committed to the GDRP objectives, the advisor might regularly highlight incremental progress and remind partners that their investments are contributing to long-term and sustainable improvements in security. However, if priorities change and partners are no longer interested in the GDRP advisory support, the project should be postponed or cancelled. Ultimately, the support will only succeed if the advisor is considered a resource for the partner and sought out to assist in the pursuit of their strategic security objectives.

6. Conclusion

Fostering strong partnerships and enabling sustainable security sector investments are key goals for the delivery of U.S. security sector assistance. As the Security Governance Initiative and Global Defense Reform Program illustrate, the U.S. government continues to evolve its approach to security sector assistance to better meet its goals. Strategic advisory support such as the assistance provided through GDRP offers a means for engaging with partners and considering their strategic interests, priorities and capacities. This assistance is not intended to replace other capacity-building assistance such as training or equipment transfers, but rather to complement it. GDRP advisory support assists partners in developing the governance and institutional capacities to better sustain the tactical and operational assistance provided through other forms of security assistance, thereby enabling them to address their unique security challenges more effectively.

The GDRP approach devotes significant time to consulting with partners and other stakeholders before and throughout each project. These consultations help ensure that the assistance provided is consistent with partner needs and interests and, therefore, more likely to be embraced and sustained by the partner. The tools and resources provided to GDRP advisors, including pre-deployment training, templates to facilitate productive and strategic engagements with partners, and networking opportunities are intended to enhance the advisor experience and the assistance that they deliver. The tools also allow for careful monitoring of projects to track whether the assistance is achieving expected outcomes or if adjustments are required.

In sum, strategic advisory support offers a valuable opportunity to advance shared donor and partner security objectives. Investing the time and resources

to plan, implement, monitor and learn from the advisory support, as well as actively receiving partner input, strengthens the delivery and results of the assistance. With the right approach and under the right conditions, one advisor can have a lasting impact on the governance, institutional capacity and security of a partner country.

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CHAPTER 8

Going further: Challenges not yet addressed from the field

Will Bennett

> ### **Key Points**
>
> - Many stabilisation practices have been criticised as elite-centric or state-centric and exclusive of local populations and hybrid governance approaches.
>
> - Providing advice that turns stabilisation work into a conservative exercise of maintaining control rather than something emancipatory can contribute to a dangerous focus on securing a negative peace.
>
> - Where military engagement in peacebuilding is necessary, advising the use of force in ways that contribute to a positive, inclusive peace and do not undermine the principle of impartiality is too often under-prioritised.
>
> - Only advising and supporting actors and elites that demonstrate the political will to end violence is an essential precondition for realistic stabilisation prospects.
>
> - During operations, long term orientation and coherent frameworks are needed to address the underlying structural drivers of instability and prevent the reversal of any tactical gains.
>
> - Good strategic advice requires tempering expectations, dissuading rushed actions (especially kinetic actions), thinking long-term and preparing actors for the likely disappointment when progress is not immediate.
>
> - Tactically, it appears more productive to advise starting stabilisation work in areas that are teetering on the edge of instability. Reinforcing their resilience allows actors to work out from there towards the more problematic areas.
>
> - Despite so much talk about civ-mil coordination, without really understanding the benefits of listening to civilian actors, security forces will continue to view it as a chore.
>
> - Exit strategies must be considered before any entry into an unstable area. Knowing what peace conditions are necessary for international actors to safely leave can help design an exit in advance, and provide a framework for interventions.

Keywords: donor state, monitoring, trust, use of force, inclusion, positive peace.

1. Introduction

In the last twenty years, stabilisation missions have perhaps become the dominant international approach to reducing conflict and building peace in fragile areas. 'However, despite being mandated to improve the stability and peace of communities experiencing active armed conflict',[195] these missions have struggled, quickly finding the sources of instability highly complicated and difficult to remedy. In response, and especially in recent years, there have been multiple operational and political attempts to grapple with this complexity in search of more effective stabilisation work. Several issues have hampered progress. In Afghanistan, intervening governments and multi-lateral actors failed to develop a coherent strategy, appreciate just how long the reconstruction mission would take, correctly staff the mission, account for the multiple challenges posed by different sources of insecurity, tailor efforts to context or understand the effect of its own stabilisation activities and programmes. Failure to learn from this, not to mention failing to reflect on the appropriateness of intervention at all, will likely result in similar negative consequences in the future.[196]

These and other challenges yet unaddressed must be tackled sooner rather than later. Most notably, the definition of what 'stabilisation' constitutes remains ambiguous, resulting in poorly coordinated efforts that vary enormously in ambition and application. Many stabilisation practices have also been criticised as elite-centric and exclusive of local populations, leaving people on the outside of decisions concerning their own security and the governance of their daily lives. And connected to this, significant and justified critique has been levelled at the growing use of overly militarised or securitised stabilisation responses to what are in reality social and political drivers of conflict and instability. The collective result is that stabilisation is in something of a definitional and operational limbo, whereby 'despite their stated purpose of reducing violence and laying the structural foundations for longer-term security, stabilisation efforts have too often not only failed, but made conflict environments worse'.[197]

At its core, 'questions remain about which interests are really being "stabilised" and whether current operations are ultimately enabling local and national actors to

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[195] Interpeace, "Shaping Future Peacebuilding Annual Report", 2020, https://www.interpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AR_2020_.

[196] Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, "What we need to learn: lessons from twenty years of Afghanistan reconstruction", (August 2021), https://www.sigar.mil/interactive-reports/what-we-need-to-learn/index.html.

[197] Interpeace,"Shaping Future Peacebuilding", 2020, pg. 47.

manage their own security challenges'[198] so that international missions can safely leave – which is of course the ultimate objective of stabilisation work. The recent speed and collapse of the Ashraf Ghani administration in Afghanistan provides a worrisome case in point. Despite twenty years of sustained international stabilisation efforts, replete with an estimated $2.3 trillion spent by U.S. forces alone on, amongst other things, advising, training and equipping a national military and police force, the whole country fell in a matter of weeks to a resurgent Taliban.[199]

Several stark lessons ought to be drawn from this collapse to inform future stabilisation efforts elsewhere and, in particular, the kind of advice SFA advisers provide. The first is that securitising one set of elites and turning national capitals into fortresses is neither a recipe for stability nor nation-building. Exploitative elites, corrupt bureaucracies and poorly functioning institutions have all been propped up in the interests of immediate stability, only to emerge as some of the most significant obstacles to reform and longer-term stability later on. It is a version of 'stability' that is only feasible with continued international military support and is far removed from the kind of inclusive, self-sustaining stability that is needed for mid- to long-term peace and security. Indeed, this sort of stabilisation approach merely risks locking in conflict drivers instead of providing the space for vital social and political transformations. As attention shifts away from Afghanistan to ongoing missions in western, central and eastern Africa, one can only hope that this obvious failure in Afghanistan acts as a wake-up call for the shortcomings of the preferred use of hard security approaches that have seeped across the field in recent years.

The second lesson is that stabilisation efforts must build viable, inclusive and responsive political structures through which conflict-affected populations can redress their grievances and shape the future direction of their country. Given the multiple voices, needs and political persuasions across a society, it is easy for the international community, local civilians and military officials, civil society and NGOs charged with reducing conflict and stabilising contested communities to

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[198] Ibid.

[199] "Since invading Afghanistan in 2001, the United States has spent $2.313 trillion on the war, which includes operations in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Note that this total does not include funds that the United States government is obligated to spend on lifetime care for American veterans of this war, nor does it include future interest payments on money borrowed to fund the war" (Anthony Codersman, "Learning the Right Lessons from the Afghan War", *CSIS*, 2021, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/210907_Cordesman_Right_Lessons.pdf?). See Neta C. Crawford, "United States Budgetary Costs and Obligations of Post-9/11 Wars through FY2020: $6.4 Trillion," *Costs of War Research Series*, Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs, Brown University, 2019 and also "US costs to date of the War in Afghanistan, 2001-2022", *Costs of War Research Series*, Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs, Brown University, 2022. See for details: https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/human-and-budgetary-costs-date-us-war-afghanistan-2001-2022.

be overwhelmed and perhaps privilege one group over another. However, to fail to listen, understand and include is to construct political systems that are exclusive and risk lacking popular support. This opens the door for non-state actors to provide services and security that undermine not only the appeal and legitimacy of central authorities, but of stabilisation efforts writ large.

Third is that using a sequenced stabilisation approach of security, followed by development and then peacebuilding is not working. This is merely a reframing of the 'clear, hold, build' mantra behind military incursions which has also fallen short. SFAs must discover how security, development and peacebuilding can be used in coordination, at the right time and in ways that explicitly build the conditions for immediate and medium-term stability and peace. This is the kind of integrated approach and advice host governments at both central and regional levels need.

And finally, if international stabilisation interventions are to contribute to genuine stability that can last, they need to be more principled about whom they work with. Nowhere is this truer than when providing security assistance. It is anathema to support state security actors that are themselves perpetrators of violence against civilians in the interests of short-term cease-fires or reductions in violence. This is not conducive to genuine stability. Humanitarian, legal and human rights obligations aside, a perceived lack of consideration for the wellbeing of civilians can drive individuals towards non-state armed groups, who leverage the hypocrisy of stabilising actors as recruitment material. This is self-defeating for stabilisation efforts and advisors would do well to advise against it at all times. Only advising and supporting actors and elites that demonstrate the political will to end violence is an essential precondition for realistic stabilisation prospects. External advisors cannot want sustainable, inclusive peace more than local political actors.

In addition to these problems, new challenges are emerging that will further test the capacities of stabilisation missions. Climate change is driving forced migration and contributing to resource scarcity. Population growth is putting additional pressure on weak economies and governance systems, causing growing inequality. The legacy of years of pursuing hard security approaches has led to increasingly militarised societies and elites who maintain their positions through strength rather than inclusion. And this is all before we confront the full extent of the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, which will of course not be the last we face.

What these unaddressed challenges demonstrate is that people's well-being – their

human security in the absolute fullest sense – needs to be at the centre of any international assistance efforts. State security has become the organising principle around which interventions are conceived, rationalised and executed. This has opened the door to a raft of military responses in the protection of central government that have often been disproportionate and exchange the prospects of long-term positive in favour of a short-term negative one – a strategy that backfires and ultimately loses, as Afghanistan shows. Exaggerating the threat of insecurity must be seen for the strategic danger it really is. Far from inducing peace conditions needed for stability to take root, it has done little except breathing life into security responses that have in turn set off cycles of violence still reverberating in many places today. Highly conditional use of force or elite bargains may be necessary to secure cessations of violence, but people's diverse voices and human security needs cannot be put on hold or exchanged away as part of the process. Stability should be synonymous with peace, but this is impossible where civilians are not protected or where they are excluded from the governmental processes that shape their lives. Unless a population can believe in the political plans laid out by its leaders, it will not support the direction in which it is taken, especially if that direction is then securitised. Appreciating this challenges the existing logic behind the purpose of SFA. If, instead of resolutely supporting a fixed group of political elites, advice was designed from the outset to reinforce social contracts so that the fortunes of those elites are inextricably connected to those of the general public, a whole new set of approaches would emerge. It would encourage advisors to step back, listen and reconcile the tensions within their own SFA hierarchies and mandates with the actual stability needs of people affected by conflict.

Addressing these problems and thus bridging the known gap between short-term stabilisation and much deeper, lasting peacebuilding, is notoriously tough but ultimately it is where gains have to be made to build genuine stability. For advisors, doing so can be helped by asking the right sort of questions. These questions need to be honest and trigger a process of self-reflection about our work in this important field that, for the most part, comes from a good place but has not yet found how to fulfil its stabilising potential. In pursuit of that, this chapter will expand upon some of the challenges summarised above and pose some questions that still appear outstanding.

2. Challenges not yet addressed from the field

The current global landscape is as difficult as it has been for security and peace-

building actors for many years. The world is already at its most violent since the end of the Cold War, in part due to relatively new conflicts in places such as Ukraine but also owing to sustained conflicts across the Sahel, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. Conflicts both within and between states have increased, whilst the COVID-19 and climate crises threaten to exacerbate existing conflict dynamics and spark new ones, stoking further insecurity, instability and violence. And as both a cause and consequence of states becoming more fragile, the influence of non-state armed groups and organised crime has also risen. Further, competition between major powers has grown, resulting in an increased intensity of proxy conflicts involving more actors and in more places than before.

The operational know-how of effectively and collectively dealing with these significant challenges in fragile environments is often flawed. Despite growing budgets and spiralling interventions, it remains to be understood how, where and through what operational mechanisms and modalities security and peacebuilding actors can best collaborate to prevent conflict and build long-term peace and stability. The limits of the current toolbox of approaches and interventions are evident not just from the defeat in Afghanistan, but also from Mali, Libya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and elsewhere, where despite years of force assistance instability persists. Getting it wrong is clearly becoming increasingly costly, miring international actors, destabilising the lives of those living in fragile areas and undermining the likelihood of orderly, peaceful and timely exit strategies that contribute to rather than undermine stability.

Whilst many of these challenges are increasingly well recognised and certainly since the collapse of stabilisation efforts in Afghanistan that has triggered a sudden wave of self-reflection, the ways to overcome them are perhaps not. The next sections turn to this, first expanding on the most pressing challenges before suggesting how to approach them.

2.1. Competing, Vague Definitions

It is perhaps little wonder SFA advisors face difficulty when offering insights on stabilisation given that it is definitionally amorphous, politically charged and technically complex. Donors who jointly stabilise a country seldom have shared understandings, aims or processes, whilst the UN itself even lacks a

definition despite spending approximately $3 billion annually on stabilisation missions [200] .

For the UN and other international stabilisation actors, this conceptual imprecision has led to frequent misalignment between the missions' strategies, timelines, methods and resources, with definitions and implied expectations of stabilisation varying enormously from merely instigating a ceasefire up to a full state-building agenda. This conceptual ambiguity results in competing operational priorities between humanitarian, development, peace and security actors, where despite numerous efforts to overcome professional silos and improve civil-military cooperation, results remain elusive.

Still, for an SFA advisor, there is some common definitional ground on which to build. Most donor governments and multi-lateral organisations share the underlying assumption that communities in conflict or subject to violent contestation need support to become more secure. There is also agreement that, in practice, missions should try to secure inclusive political agreements among warring parties so that the country can chart a new and peaceful path. There is also consensus that, to complement those often-prolonged efforts, helping host governments provide support directly to communities in need, including physical security, schools, health clinics and other social services, can both improve human security and help foment a social contract.

The devil, of course, is in the detail. With multiple competing definitions of what constitutes stabilisation, there is very often an absence of a grand, clear and agreed strategic aim around which advisors can tailor their advice. The central question of why are we intervening and for whom are we providing stability essentially floats, answered in different ways by different stabilisation actors. This ambiguity has led to a number of costly lessons learned that advisors ought to take heed of.

First, advisors often operate without an adequate understanding of the needs, interests and experiences of people living in unstable areas. Successful stabilisation efforts require a level of knowledge of contested communities that few donors or advisors possess but must acquire fast if their advice is to be useful and, more importantly, conflict-sensitive. Without this level of context specificity, stabilisa-

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[200] For 2021-2022 the approved budgets are as follows: MINUSCA (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic) $1.12 billion; MONUSCO (Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) $1.12 billion; MINUSMA (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) $1.26 billion. See "Fifth Committee Approves $6.37 Billion Budget for 12 Peacekeeping Missions from July 2021 to June 2022", https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/gaab4368.doc.htm.

tion efforts risk operating in information vacuums that usually react to developments, improvising as they go rather than charting a clear course and in doing so rely on short-term approaches that increase the risk of corruption, clientelism and conflict and severely reduce the quality of the work taking place.

Second, donors are often in a rush to act and stabilise contested communities due to the urgency of the problem. But because policymakers generally do not appreciate how long stabilisation processes take, good strategic advice requires tempering expectations, dissuading rushed actions and preparing actors for the likely disappointment when progress is not immediate. Without this, donors can become frustrated and more prone to either double down on their actions or else withdraw prematurely, both of which can have highly destabilising repercussions.

And third, donors make the error of frequently trying to stabilise the most dangerous parts of a country first. While intuitive, winning the hearts and minds of contested communities with social services and infrastructure is exceedingly difficult if residents are in constant danger. It is far more productive to start in areas that are teetering on the edge of instability, reinforce their resilience and work out from there towards the more problematic areas. There are usually more peaceful areas than violent ones, even in a conflict zone, and donors must be dissuaded from being in too much of a rush to make sustainable gains, too uninformed to tailor their approaches and too eager to prioritise communities that are not ready to be won over; in Mali, intense security operations in the north of the country did not quell the violence, but merely displaced it to the centre and south,[201] where previously stable communities whose capacity for resilience could have been boosted have now slipped into conflict.

The collective lesson is that no intervention should take place without clearly articulated just cause, definitional clarity, mission purpose and a strategic plan designed squarely around the local situation and needs that explicitly work towards achieving the conditions necessary for a peaceful exit.

2.2. Upstream Political, Structural and Staffing Challenges

Some challenges to achieving this emerge upstream and concern how stabilisa-

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[201] International Crisis Group, "Reversing Central Mali's Descent into Communal Violence", *Africa Report,* no. *293 (2020),* https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/293-enrayer-la-communautarisation-de-la-violence-au-centre-du-mali.

tion missions are conceived and structured. UN stabilisation operations have exceedingly broad aims, usually involving a combination of helping states in crisis restore order through force, political means and development activities, as well as enforcing the law, protecting civilians and engaging in the even larger process of seeking a lasting political solution to the conflict.[202] Operations are therefore working to repair deep structural drivers of conflict and instability that will likely take years, perhaps even decades, involving multiple iterations of stabilisation, peacekeeping and political missions.[203] And yet stabilisation operations often have short-term mandates (even just one year) that result in a serious mismatch between what is needed and what can be planned and provided. The multiple expectations contained within these short-term mandates can also pull missions in too many competing directions, ultimately undermining overall coherence and performance, as the current experiences in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mali demonstrate.

These large efforts typically demand large coalitions. These can become unwieldy, where donors pursuing different mandates and with different resources manifest in convoluted divisions of labour, especially regarding security assistance. The result is patchwork operations that rely on ad hoc coordination instead of benefiting from more structured mechanisms. Coordination between civilian and military actors can be particularly troublesome. Even though civilian actors are better suited to determine which areas are ready for politically sensitive stabilisation efforts, it is military officials that more often make the critical decisions because they are more numerous, can travel to less accessible places and, because the overall logic of stabilisation is built around security, have the resources and political support to act more decisively.

For institutional SFA advisors, the challenge remains for how to push back on this imbalance, because relying on security activities at the expense of the softer peacebuilding, development and humanitarian approaches that are more attuned to address the sources of people's instability appears to offer little hope of being sustainable. Ways must be found for civ-mil integration, including the requirement that diplomats and military officials work side by side and understand each other's perspectives, interests and biases – as well as their own. Development professionals have long known that their work is instrumental in building people's

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[202] See for example, Arthur Boutellis, "MINUSMA's 2021 mandate renewal in uncertain times", (*EPON*, 4 June 2021), https://trainingforpeace.org/publications/minusmas-2021-mandate-renewal-in-uncertain-times/.

[203] Cedric H. de Coning, "Implications of stabilisation mandates for the use of force in UN peace operations", The *Use of Force in UN Peacekeeping*, (NUPI, 16 February 2018).

sense of security and therefore central to achieving security objectives writ large. And yet their efforts are too often relegated, with human security needs considered a distant priority in comparison to physical security aims. In the moments when softer peacebuilding and development approaches are given prominence, the civ-mil division of labour can still undermine their delivery. For example, it is not uncommon for international and host nation troops, having been trained to engage the enemy in armed combat, to be suddenly expected to help win over wary communities that do not trust them. Indeed, as former US Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl Eikenberry, once observed whilst there, these troops would be 'hard-pressed to win the heart and mind of his mother-in-law'.[204]

Thus, in addition to mission structure, providing the right advice on how missions are staffed remains an unresolved challenge. Staffing stabilisation missions is difficult because it demands skills and experience that few donors recruit and train for, certainly not in the numbers required for large or simultaneous missions. Despite the cost and complication of these missions, some donors take an improvised approach to recruitment and training, even in something as sensitive as security force assistance. As such they struggle 'to get the right people into the right jobs at the right times'.[205] This challenge only becomes more acute as stabilisation efforts scale up. Even when talent is available, fragile contexts have a way of exacerbating bureaucratic gridlock among donors, whereby personnel systems cannot compete with fast-moving conflicts, hamstringing missions just at the time well-staffed, high-quality activities are needed the most.

2.3. Operational Challenges

Well below the structural and strategic levels are several important operational best practices that have emerged. These should serve as a guide for implementing stabilisation programmes.

First, a contested community needs formal or informal leaders representative of local populations who can take credit for any local progress: local politicians, religious figures, elders, women's group representatives, youth leaders, union leaders, etc. If those leaders are not in place and recognised for their role, improvements will

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[204] Karl W. Eikenberry, "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, (September/October, 2013): https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2013-09-01/limits-counterinsurgency-doctrine-afghanistan.

[205] SIGAR, "What We Need to Learn: Lessons From Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction", 2021, https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-21-46-LL-Executive-Summary.pdf.

be considered exogenous and episodic, and any stabilisation funds spent in that community will likely be wasted. It is these hyper-local service delivery networks that can make or break the resilience of a community and provide the ongoing structures through which to scale up support as needed.

Secondly, and similarly, when a contested community receives something under a stabilisation project, let's say a new school, for example, it is usually not the school itself that generates improved stability but rather the improved relationships that the lifecycle of the project engenders. The critical ingredient is providing a safe space to convene community members to understand each other's interests in good faith and make collective decisions about, in this instance, the school, including where it would go, where the teachers would come from and other factors that increase the sensitivity and relevance of an intervention.

Third, there is often plenty of stabilisation resources put into employment schemes, with the 'theoretical underpinnings of the relationship between employment programmes and peace well-established'.[206] The theory of change tends to be that if people are working, then stabilisation is more likely owing to a sense of purpose and steady wages that will dissuade people from joining non-state armed groups or seeking illegal incomes. However, there is little empirical evidence that this theory of change or short-term employment on its own reduces violence in contested communities, with scant systematic valid data on selection into pre-violent behaviour, let alone on which type of programme designs maximise the effect.[207] An impact evaluation study in Afghanistan found that employment outcomes had no effect on stability outcomes, with youths in work no less likely to support the Taliban than those who are unemployed.[208] Some studies have even found a positive correlation between employment and support for political violence.[209] Social status and the opportunity to contribute to a community were far stronger indicators of supporting peace than employment, whilst

[206] Tilman Brück, Neil T. N. Ferguson, Valeria Izzi and Wolfgang Stojetz, "A Review of the Theory and Practice of the Impact of Employment Programmes on Peace in Fragile and Conflict-affected Countries", ISDC, http://isd-center.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Employment-Interventions-and-Peace-Final-Report-Final-Version-2016-09-16.pdf pg. 19.

[207] Tilman Brück et al., " Jobs Aid Peace: A Review of the Theory and Practice of the Impact of Employment Programmes on Peace in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries: Semantic Scholar," *ISDC*, January 1, 2016, https://isdc.org/publications/jobs-aid-peace-review-of-the-theory-and-practice-of-the-impact-of-employment-programmes-on-peace-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-countries/.

[208] Mercy Corps, "Does Youth Employment Build Stability?", January 2015, https://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/youth-employment-stability.

[209] Mercy Corps, "Examining the Links between Youth Economic Opportunity, Civic Engagement and Conflict: Evidence from Mercy Corps", *Somali Youth Leaders Initiative*, January 2013, https://www.dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/somaliabrief_2_13_13.pdf.

experiences of injustice were a more robust predictor of violence. So, whilst there may be a link between employment programmes and stability, far more thinking needs to go into what type of employment is provided, by whom, to whom and for what wider purpose.[210] This is of particular relevance to schemes within the security sector. Too many employment schemes also focus on young men of fighting age. Again, the logic of trying to dissuade those 'most likely' to use violence holds, but the approach is amiss. It overlooks the deep political grievances at the core of conflicts and tries to plaster over them with economic solutions.[211] It also unfairly assumes that those young men are somehow predisposed to be violent, rather than considering them first and foremost as the positive agents for change they typically are.

This can be especially true for young men recruited into national service, a quite standard approach on stabilisation missions to increase national security capacity and encourage young men and women to support and securitise the nascent state-building project. Many young men and women accept these roles willingly and even with pride, but for others, this is a job best seen as a last resort and, as we are seeing in Afghanistan but knew from elsewhere, becoming a security actor is a highly political choice that carries significant risk. The challenge of improving employment at the same time as improving the prospects of stabilisation thus remains, but it is clear that beefing up security is no guarantee of either. Without extensive community consultation and deeper thinking about the types of jobs that people need that can really contribute to upholding the peace conditions necessary for stability, cookie-cutter employment schemes and mass recruitments should be avoided.[212]

And fourth, whilst stabilisation operations and activities must have built-in flexibility and a willingness to experiment and fail, it remains to be seen whether we have discovered how to do this in practice. More accustomed to development work outside areas of active conflict, most donors are unwilling or unable to permit their staff and programmes to be this agile, reflecting an assumption that programmes should go as planned or not at all. This is wholly incompatible with work in unstable environments where circumstances shift and actors emerge on and exit the main stage. The growth of 'small-footprint' security force assistance

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[210] Will Bennett, "Driving in the Fog: Do employment programmes reduce instability?", Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law, (The Hague Institute, 18 November 2017), https://www.kpsrl.org/publication/driving-in-the-fog-do-employment-programs-reduce-instability.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Caroline Holmqvist, "Policing Wars: On Military Intervention in the Twenty-First Century", *Rethinking political Violence*, (Palgrave, 2016), pp. 91-94.

limited to training, advising and equipping allied militaries was put forward as an alternative to large ground-force commitments to stabilise weak states,[213] and one that was considered better able to deploy and build local capacities more rapidly. Smaller-scale SFA, however, usually means smaller payoffs where, despite flexibility, limited scope leaves advisers with limited capacity to improve their allied partners' effectiveness.[214]

As an advisor in these contexts, working through this complexity can be helped by committing to more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of stabilisation activities. This is vital in order to track progress and make sure work is as efficient, accountable and relevant as possible. But doing this well is also a challenge. Deciding what changes you want to see, designing indicators and measuring improvements is not straightforward in an active conflict zone where traditional approaches are logistically impossible or methodologically fraught and where staff tasked with leading monitoring and evaluation processes may also be confined to a base or Green Zone. Thinking around these constraints is vital if efforts are to remain high quality and conflict-sensitive.

Despite these very real practical challenges to collecting adequate data, advisors must also avoid the temptation to resort to measuring outputs (the number and type of activities that took place) instead of outcomes (the changes that resulted from these activities). For example, it is common for donors to measure improvement through rudimentary metrics like the number of projects implemented or new military units recruited and trained, when we know that numerical outputs such as these are no guarantee of the qualitative improvements on which stability rests. Far more meaningful and analytical questions should be pursued when monitoring and evaluating. These include whether those recruits are helping to build community resilience or trust in the government and how,[215] and whether the SFA projects are actually contributing to resolving conflict drivers, such as improving the quality of mechanisms that help address grievances.

Too much conflict analysis only looks at what is broken instead of what is functioning at the local level and how to leverage it. Here, peacebuilders are far ahead

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213 Hendrik Spruyt ,"Civil Wars & Global Disorder: Threats & Opportunities", *Dedalus*, https://www.amacad.org/sites/default/files/daedalus/downloads/Fa2017_Civil-Wars-and-Global-Disorder.pdf.

214 Stephen Biddle et al., "Small Footprint, Small Payoff: The Military Effectiveness of Security Force Assistance," *Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol. 41(2018): https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01402390.2017.1307745.

215 See the OECD, "Guidelines on Measuring Trust", (November 23, 2017),, 9789264278219-en.pdf (oecd-ilibrary.org).

and have long sought to map peace and resilience dynamics, acknowledging that even in very violent places, peace is more common than violence. As before, the answers to these important, qualitative questions lie with the people in communities directly experiencing the consequences of SFA. It can be time-consuming and expensive, but to measure the quality of SFA activities the people concerned need to be consulted and their answers taken on board in a meaningful way. This is not something that can be short-cut, nor should it be, seeing as the process of engaging and listening to communities is as important in creating peace conditions as the results and strategic amendments that emerge from it.[216]

Finally, a widely accepted prerequisite for stabilisation efforts concerns the provision of physical security by military and police forces. However, it is the job of the advisor to problematise the nature of this provision. The assumption that if a community simply experiences the presence of security forces then physical security will follow is too narrow and does not stand up to scrutiny. Not only may security forces in these environments prove unable or unwilling to provide reliable security, but their presence can also become a lightning rod for more violence. Worse, there have been numerous episodes of security forces preying on the populations they are meant to serve: putting people in earshot of each other does not automatically build trust between them. As is exactly the case between warring communities, special consideration must be given to the political and relational problem of how to repair the trust deficit between security forces and the communities they should be protecting. Simply training and deploying more forces never has been and never will be sufficient for anything approaching inclusive peace and lasting stability.[217]

This leads to perhaps the most persistent challenge facing SFA advisors: how to better integrate and leverage the softer peacebuilding and humanitarian skills of specialist organisations more attuned to solving the deep relational and socio-political problems driving instability. These actors are adept at building trust between and within communities and are well suited to bridging the divide between contested communities and the security forces responsible for them. However, security forces and peacebuilding organisations rarely work together for several reasons. First, security forces often believe that working closely with civilians will compromise their operational security. So instead of developing strong rela-

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[216] See the UN, "United Nations Community Engagement Guidelines On Peacebuilding And Sustaining Peace"(August,2020),https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/un_community-engagement_guidelines.august_2020.pdf .

[217] Maryl J. Williams, "(Un)Sustainable Peacebuilding: NATO's Suitability for Postconflict, Reconstruction in Multi-actor Environments", *Global Governance* Vol. 17, No. 1 (Jan.- Mar. 2011), pp. 115-134.

tionships with communities that can keep them safe by, for example, alerting them to threats and preventing new ones from emerging, they keep an unhealthy distance that becomes more unbridgeable as time progresses. Second, and intrinsically connected to this issue of distance, peacebuilding actors often believe that working with security forces will damage their reputation with the communities critical of their work.[218] However, creating a peacebuilding process in which security forces, peacebuilders and communities are all considered as stakeholders acknowledges the reality that each is a constituent part of the solution to the problem. Getting to this relational point has not been sufficiently done and as a result (and with much justification, it should be added), security forces are often considered both by local communities and actors from other parts of the nexus as simply best avoided.

3. Considerations for Better Responses

The rationale for this chapter was not just to lay out unmet challenges but to begin thinking through how to respond to them. This section will attempt to do this by expanding on some of the challenges listed above and then setting out some important considerations and questions across a number of critical stabilisation domains that SFA advisors will need to reckon with. It is hoped that the framing of these questions and the answers they solicit will spark discussions and encourage us to revisit the assumptions currently underpinning stabilisation work, so that the quality of both SFA advice and the stabilisation activities that result are better able to meet the needs of people living in areas affected by crises and conflict.

3.1. Purpose and Exit Strategies

The lack of an agreed definition of stabilisation means that its purpose can be difficult to immediately discern. Nowhere in UN policy is the term formally defined.[219] In practice, the UN's approach has crystalised around state-level institution-building, with the intent of reintroducing or extending state authority into areas where it has either been weak or absent. This theory of change is that a strong state is the solution to instability, underpinned by the Weberian notion of

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[218] See GPPAC, "Local Ownership in Security: Case Studies of Peacebuilding Approaches", (7 January,2019),https://gppac.net/resources/local-ownership-security-case-studies-peacebuilding-approaches.

[219] Gorur, Aditi, "Defining the Boundaries of UN Stabilisation Missions", *Stimson Center* (December 2016), https://www.stimson.org/2016/defining-boundaries-un-stabilization-missions/.

the state as having a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.[220] However, the unresolved challenge is that state-centrism can be ruinous in countries with a predatory or corrupt elite. And so, for an advisor, the purpose necessarily becomes less about improving de facto state security through SFA and more about acting in ways that more explicitly improve the overall human security of the general public despite exclusive or abusive elites.

This takes the purpose of SFA and the type of advice that is offered into the realm of the political. It also changes its point of reference through which it defines the success of its work. As opposed to state-centric, often national capital-focused and quantitative measures of progress, SFA can be judged against its qualitative ability to contribute to political stability according to the people it is supposed to serve.

This is a long way off from happening, of course. There is often too much SFA focus on input coordination and outputs and little on the processes that will lead to change at the outcome or impact level in a participatory and inclusive way. The link between the analysis of the conflict and the theories of change that are put forward to address its drivers can be particularly weak. Similarly, any clear grand 'strategic how' as to the ultimate objective of stabilisation support and the explicit steps needed to achieve it with regards to the SFA component are usually a little light.

Having a clear purpose is vital when it comes to the use of force. Advisers, donors and implementers all seem to struggle with ensuring that kinetic activities:

1. put the protection of civilians at the centre of all operations and hold those responsible for any breaches accountable[221];

2. provide immediate security so that other integrated nexus activities don't just 'follow', but can operate in conditions where they can flourish and help build genuine stability;

3. improve state-society relations and 'bring the state back' legitimately and sensitively;

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[220] Adam C. Day, Charles T. Hunt, "UN Stabilisation Operations and the Problem of Non-Linear Change: A Relational Approach to Intervening in Governance Ecosystems," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 9(1), p.2., 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339923451_UN_Stabilisation_Operations_and_the_Problem_of_Non-Linear_Change_A_Relational_Approach_to_Intervening_in_Governance_Ecosystems.

[221] For further readings about POC see: NATO SFA COE, *Promoting the Rule of Law and Good Governance. SFA Implications in international Initiatives* (NATO SFA COE Publications, 2021), LIBRO Promoting the Rule of Law 17X24 232 PAG.pdf (nsfacoe.org).

4. cooperate with all the actors necessary for long-term inclusive political stability, including Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) where necessary; and where mandates permit;

5. respect sovereignty at the same time as supporting people's genuine and justifiable need for emancipatory change.

Whilst demanding, security actions lacking this level of political thinking dilute the clarity of purpose and undermine the overall quality of stabilisation efforts. Thus, advisors need to do better at articulating the qualitative parameters and political strategies defining what type of security ought to be provided, why, how and by whom.

This directly links to exit strategies. Despite finer definitional vagueness, there is at least loose agreement in the field that the stabilisation efforts should at some point leave in an orderly manner with the host state able to resolve its own domestic conflicts peacefully. However, the length of stabilisation missions in DRC, Libya and, with each passing year, Mali demonstrate that this does not happen in practice. Exit strategies tend to be an afterthought, unfortunately. But for an SFA adviser, even where grand strategies may be absent, having a clear operational vision of the changes necessary to write yourself out of a role and leave knowing that the structures you have helped create will be able to provide stability is vital. An exit strategy must articulate the peace conditions necessary for a safe departure by international actors. It must also be clear on local capacities that will be required to maintain these peace and stabilisation conditions after the departure – a kind of 'after exit strategy.' And crucially, these exit strategies should be built into the very first mandates and operational plans so that they provide a clear end state that all stabilisation actors, including SFA advisors, can work towards from the outset. Every piece of advice ought to be made with the idea of steering towards that exit, with anything that undermines it carefully considered and avoided.

One salient example comes from DDR programmes. DDR efforts have long been considered a necessary prerequisite to stabilisation and longer-term security.[222] However, being a political activity means it is fraught with risk, with the relatively transactional Disarmament and Demobilisation typically proving easier to implement than the highly sensitive and long-term task of Reintegration. For example, stipends and training are regularly offered to ex-combatants as part of a

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[222] UK Department for International Development, "Stabilisation Issues Note: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration", (2010), https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39047-doc-37._sin_2010_stabilisation_issues_note_ddr.pdf.

reintegration package. However well-intended, these can create new tensions in communities where many do not have access to those things despite having lived peaceful lives. The message inadvertently sent to communities then risks becoming that the best route to opportunity is to join a non-state armed group and then become 'reintegrated'.[223]

This is merely given as a quick example of the sort of unanswered challenges facing exit strategies, notably that some SFA programmes themselves can rapidly become drivers of instability instead of positively contributing towards a viable exit for stabilisation actors. The wider take-away is that the as-yet unmet challenge of wedding mission purpose to an exit strategy will persist as long as projects are funded that are conflict blind and designed with pre-defined temporal and financial bounds; for example, x million provided over y years. These bounds offer no guarantee that the purpose of the mission will be met or that SFA contributions will support the emergence of the peace conditions necessary to take the mission closer to a safe exit point.

REFLEXIVE QUESTIONS:

1. What is the purpose of your stabilisation efforts and who or what is actually being stabilised?
2. Are current efforts genuinely enabling local and national actors to manage their own security challenges[1] to the point where a peaceful exit strategy is imaginable?
3. How can exit strategies be built in from the beginning so that missions do not become intractable?
4. And connected to this, how can we ensure missions have the necessary indicators, instruments and staff time needed to provide robust data able to suggest when the time is ripe to implement a peaceful and safe exit strategy?

[1] Interpeace, "Shaping Future Peacebuilding Annual Report", 2020.

3.2. Contextual Understanding and Local Ownership

People living in unstable areas or fragile states deserve the space to collectively reimagine the future identity of their own countries and the type of security they need. An international presence is not benign – it can crowd out the civic space

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[223] Rens C. Willems, "Security and Hybridity after Armed Conflict: The Dynamics of Security", (Routledge, 2015).

for locals to define their own social contract and hinder the emergence of bottom-up, organic visions for the future of a country, without which, it is very difficult for people to unite around a common belief in what comes next.

This matters because, where an inclusive nation-building exercise is absent, stabilisation efforts risk being tied to one set of elites in the interests of a short-term negative peace. This contributes to a disconnect between people at their governments that then drives more instability. Preferential elitism can also reinforce the strength of some of the actors and systems responsible for instability in the first instance, locking in conflict drivers instead of supporting more inclusive processes that afford the space for positive political transformations. Exclusive political administrations directly affect the perceived impartiality of the security apparatus that serves it. For SFA advisers the question remains as to how their advice can elide these risks and more accurately reflect the needs, capacities and knowledge of the communities they are meant to serve?

Lessons from Afghanistan and elsewhere suggest that it means moving away from the current predominance of military-driven responses in the realm of stabilisation.[224] The needs and interests of security and non-security actors can often be portrayed as irreconcilable, but the series of systematic failures that stabilisation missions have experienced should force anyone working in this field to rethink this assumption and identify both commonalities and complementary aims and approaches. Working on security, governance and development are political endeavours at the centre of which are people. Stabilisation can do more harm than good unless its responses are equally political and built on deep contextual analyses, includes people in decision-making processes that they eventually own, and is geared towards resolving their specific needs. Again, if we only glance at what happened in Afghanistan, it is clear how ludicrous the premise of stabilisation was that they expected to convince fiercely contested communities that they could be protected by increasingly militarised but consistently exclusive and unaccountable governments. Remembering that the ultimate point of a stabilisation mission is to support the state and communities to manage their own conflicts peacefully so that internationals can exit, this sort of approach will never hold. Indeed, the core lesson from numerous evaluations in other stabilisation contexts like Afghanistan, the DRC and Mali is that quick impact projects that are externally driven do not work and often create more violence. Short-term efforts or SFA advice that is purely fragility focused, with very little appreciation or un-

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[224] Finn S. Pedersen et al., "Literature Review – Stabilization-development nexus", *Global Affairs Canada*, (April 28, 2019), https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/stabilization-development-nexus_low.pdf.

derstanding of the sources of resilience in communities that preserve peace despite conflict drivers, will not be able to positively leverage them for stabilisation.

Beyond understanding the context, a major unresolved challenge is to respect and adapt to it. Progress has been made in this regard in the justice field, for example, where there has been steadily more and more sensitive incorporation of customary justice institutions in justice sector reform programmes. This work adapted because it was realised that where justice mechanisms were absent or more attuned with implanted donor notions of justice and judicial procedure or where they were considered to be in the service of unpopular elites, the likelihood of violence grew.[225] The same is true of the security sector, where similar lateral contextual thinking and inclusivity are needed. This was absent in Afghanistan, where the U.S. government spent $4.7 billion on stabilisation programmes from 2002 to 2017 and only one programme (with a $40 million budget) commissioned third-party research to better understand the political context in communities that would soon become beneficiaries. In other words, only 0.8 per cent of U.S. stabilisation funds were insured to avoid making the problem worse.[226]

Therefore, devoting adequate resources to undertake a thorough contextual analysis ahead of programming should be deemed a vital insurance policy both for stabilisation missions and the people experiencing conflict first-hand. Local participatory consultation needs to be scaled up. Understanding this helps to explain why the stabilisation best practices that have emerged out of multiple failures have been increasingly driving the field toward peacebuilding, with its heavier focus on relationships, listening to popular grievances, local ownership and resilience. But donors are realising that implementing this shift in doctrine comes with two principal challenges, both of which are relevant for SFA advisers. First, building relationships requires extensive knowledge of contested communities, which takes time, requires perhaps a softer set of skills than security personnel typically offer and depends on considerable preparation by thoughtful partners. And second, relationships require access, which is particularly difficult when donors continue to prioritise working in the most dangerous parts of a fragile country. Concentrating on building the networks, relationships and resilience of more stable communities and working out from there can help build islands of lo-

[225] For arguably the highwater mark of mainstream acceptance of this, see "Why People Fight: Inequality, Exclusion and a Sense of Injustice", in *World Bank, UN, "Pathways For Peace: Inclusive Approaches To Preventing Violent Conflict"*, (2018), https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/978-1-4648-1162-3_ch4.

[226] The "The Community Cohesion Initiative." See, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, "Stabilization: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan," (May 2018), p. 84, https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-48-LL.pdf.

cally supported, owned and appropriate stabilisation activities. Being this contextual and devolving some elements of operational design can be challenging. What you discover may well challenge your pre-existing plans, and perhaps even your conception of what stabilisation is and what it should be doing. Without it, you cannot know the local context and cannot begin to support the kind of local ownership necessary for longer-term stability. Without that transition to local buy-in and ownership, you cannot reasonably plan to exit.

> **REFLEXIVE QUESTIONS:**
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> 1. How can SFA advisers ensure assistance is not just cognisant of the conflict's context, but adapts to it? What resources, protocols and feedback loops would be needed?
> 2. If advisers are helping national security forces build relationships with communities, increase accountability and reduce predation and abuse, how is the quality of this assistance being measured and how are local needs being included in future plans?
> 3. Reflecting on SFA positionality, what are they well-positioned to do or not do, and how can advisors work with local actors to root their capacity-building efforts in local needs and priorities as a foundation for oversight and ownership?

3.3. Civil-Military Cooperation

The question of how to improve civil-military cooperation is often asked but inadequately answered. The value of better cooperation is irrefutable. Both stabilisation and peacebuilding actors rely on secure environments to carry out their work. Without proper civil-military collaboration, security forces have no hope of reducing the danger they face whenever they venture outside their bases. This means that SFA advisors have scant choice but to work with even the most terrible security forces if short-term security is to be secured and a longer-term peacebuilding process that includes security forces as actual participants is to be put in place. Security forces ought to make it common practice to engage the most important groups of civilian actors so that improved civilian-military relations become a key approach through which the prospects for stabilisation itself increase. For an SFA advisor, realigning the relationship between civilian and military actors must be viewed as a critical problem to be solved rather than an ongoing hindrance to be managed.

This necessarily involves addressing a number of outstanding challenges. As a

starting point, it is vital to encourage security forces to build staffing structures able to facilitate genuine civil-military coordination, both with donors and in host nation governments. This might entail creating joint civil-military decision-making processes in host capitals and regional hubs where civilian officials have veto authority over military decisions. This is critical because it forces co-location, interdependent staffing and a culture of consultation.[227] The ideal outcome is that civilian officials in charge of social service delivery or softer stabilisation efforts are embedded in typically 'harder' decisions about the strategy, tactics and geographic distribution of security forces. This way, civilian officials can provide guidance and expertise on what areas are worth prioritising based on their local knowledge of how accessible and amenable those communities are.

Whilst this sounds good in theory, in practice this structure is difficult to build and operate smoothly. For all their cooperation, competing strategic priorities mean that a balanced civil-military approach is difficult to forge. The two sets of actors have different expectations, incentives, routines, metrics of success and, of course, budgets. Take the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan, where ambassadors worked side-by-side with the international military commander, required host nation civilian and military officials to mirror this model and parties replicated it all the way down to the brigade and sometimes battalion level. Despite all this, an imbalance in numbers prevented intent from becoming reality. The State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) could never compete with the U.S. military's budget, meaning a brigade of 10,000 troops might have a single civilian State Department official at its headquarters, entirely dependent on the military for everything from food and housing to travel and communications.[228] So when a critical decision had to be made, the State official rarely had genuine veto power in the way the military commander did. Rather than partners, these imbalances made civilian officials look more like advisors to the military than valued stabilisation partners.

Time proved this to be a missed opportunity and a costly one at that. Military actors alone cannot hope to address the political drivers of instability and too often become strategically and operationally subsumed working on its securitised symptoms. Instead, it is at the community interface where stabilisation is built or lost. Therefore, because stabilisation is a political endeavour so entwined with

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227 Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, "What we need to learn: lessons from twenty years of Afghanistan reconstruction", (August 2021), https://www.sigar.mil/interactive-reports/what-we-need-to-learn/index.html .

228 Young, D., Will Bennett, "Rethinking Stability: Challenges and Opportunities in the Current Stabilisation Landscape", *Interpeace*, 2022, p. 20.

people's socio-economic needs, its implementation needs to be controlled by civilians skilled in such matters. Civilians should be taking the lead in determining not only when to initiate stabilisation programmes in a given area, but more importantly, whether that area should have been prioritised to begin with. Instead, the least resources seem to be apportioned to civilian-led peacebuilding and reconciliation work at the local level. In most fragile states, there is a tendency for military officials to make decisions without meaningful consultation with their civilian counterparts who actually bring the most expertise on the topic of stabilisation, development and peacebuilding.

NATO and others have gone some way to recognising this imbalance and in 2015, noted that stabilisation 'is primarily the responsibility of non-military actors, [so] the military contribution will generally enable or support other groups' end-states'.[229] Similarly, the U.S. Department of Defense agreed in 2018 that it should take on a supporting role to State and USAID and defer to civilian institutions as they made the critical campaign decisions for future stabilisation campaigns.[230] Likewise, the 2019 UK Stabilisation Guide calls for 'clear civilian direction and leadership'.[231] Still, these civilian-led principles tend to be ignored in practice for the main reason that, if donors always prioritise stabilising the worst places first, the military will always be in the lead by virtue of its combat expertise and mandate to protect the mission. For this reason, a complete rethinking of our stabilisation practice is in order. Far more openness to civilian oversight of security forces is required. More resources for civil-military training, too, so that security personnel understand that exchanging information with civilian advisors as well as civilians themselves can actually protect them and improve the likelihood of mission success. The structural nature of these challenges means that they may go beyond the purview of mission-embedded advisors but the long-held worry is that, unless security actors fully understand the benefits of listening to civilian actors, they will continue to view civil-military coordination as a chore.[232] Indeed

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[229] NATO, "Allied Joint Doctrine for the Military Contribution to Stabilization and Reconstruction", December,2015,pg.1-11, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625763/doctrine_nato_stabilization_reconstruction_ajp_3_4_5.pdf.

[230] USAID, DoD, "Stabilization Assistance Review: A Framework for Maximizing the Effectiveness of U.S. Government Efforts to Stabilize Conflict-Affected Areas", 2018, p. 11.

[231] UK Stabilisation Unit, "The UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation: A Guide for Policymakers and Practitioners," (March 2019), p. 27, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-governments-approach-to-stabilisation-a-guide-for-policy-makers-and-practitioners.

[232] Andrea Baumann, "Silver Bullet or Time Suck? Revisiting the Role of Interagency Coordination in Complex Operations", *A Journal Of The Center For Complex Operations*, PRISM 3, no. 3 (2012), https://www.academia.edu/1773022/Silver_Bullet_Or_Time_Suck_Revisiting_the_Role_of_Interagency_Coordination_in_Complex_Operations.

as I was told by one former UN SRSG and General, 'everyone wants coordination but no one wants to be coordinated'.

Civilian-military relations are of course two-sided. Communities and NGOs also need to be encouraged to see the benefits of seeking out security forces where needed and appropriate so that peacebuilding and development processes do not happen in isolation from the security provision required for their success. This may entail ensuring that local military or police units have regular meetings with the communities they protect to focus on practical but fundamentally important matters like accountability mechanisms, reporting security incidents, the behaviour of security forces, how to stay safe during security operations or anticipating hazards and misunderstandings. These meetings may act as peacebuilding mechanisms in their own right, providing the space to elicit trusting relationships between civilian and military actors.[233] With this trust, meetings may expand to include broader discussions of shared stabilisation goals or work through security dilemmas that both actor groups regularly experience.

The final word here is reserved for the use of counter-terror or counterinsurgency approaches. Evaluations in the Sahel and elsewhere have made it clear that relying on Counter Terrorism tactics is an underlying cause of conflict that more usually contributes to further instability instead of resolving it. Failing to protect civilians, securitising already vulnerable areas and ruining livelihoods in the name of security are just a few common examples.[234] The result is a lack of local trust in international responses, with all downstream international work subsequently impaired. It is recommended that international actors should be the enablers rather than 'doers' wherever possible. Linked to this, there is scant analysis on the positionality and role of international security actors, especially those with a peace enforcement mandate. Their presence is often not benign, but what specific steps different SFA stabilisation facilities will take to address this and deal with the legacy and influence of CT is never explained. More robust civilian oversight and direction of CT and security personnel are certainly required to the extent that they have the authority to dissuade the use of securitised responses to what are more often than not socio-economic drivers of conflict.

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[233] Bennett, W., (2014), "Community Security Handbook", Saferworld, p.15 See also Grundy and Zingg, (2018) "Community stabilisation and operationalising the nexus: lessons from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Somalia", Humanitarian Practice Network.

[234] John Karlsrud, "From Liberal Peacebuilding to Stabilization and Counterterrorism", *International Peacekeeping*,26:1,1-21(2019): https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13533312.2018.1502040.

> **REFLEXIVE QUESTIONS:**
>
> 1. What staffing set-up and in particular what balance of civilian and military components in a stabilisation mission can help SFA work address the political drivers of instability rather than merely its securitised symptoms?
> 2. Given stabilisation's increased militarisation and its turn towards counterinsurgency, how can SFA advisors defer to civilian institutions to make critical decisions for future stabilisation campaigns?
> 3. How can SFA advisors incorporate civilians in ways that avoid increasing the risk that civilian workers and agencies become seen as associated with the military effort?
> 4. How can advisors better understand how operations are undermining trust in their more civilian-led operations, given that the average person may not distinguish between different pillars of international action?

3.4. Integration over Coordination

Stabilisation writ large typically refers to a broader campaign to reduce violence in contested communities and help create the conditions necessary for people to resolve their own conflict issues peacefully. This process includes many groups of actors, one of which, confusingly, is often called 'stabilisation actors' who implement 'proper' stabilisation programmes. However, stabilisation actors are as amorphous as the concept of stabilisation itself. Most stabilisation literature has categorised at least five key groups together, sometimes for ease of discussion and sometimes because the taxonomisation process is too arduous. These groups of actors typically come from the security, humanitarian, governance, peacebuilding and development fields.

This nexus of stakeholders involved in stabilisation efforts are not always natural collaborators. When each actor group looks at the same conflict they see different challenges, interests, priorities and opportunities. They may also see their own tools and approaches as the most appropriate for the given moment and are typically bound by different norms and laws governing their rules of engagement. All of this can generate tension and undermine their collective efforts, presenting SFA advisors with stark coordination challenges.

Similarly, the often presumed traditional sequenced approach of security fol-

lowed by development, peacebuilding and diplomacy is proving ineffective time and again. Instead of operating in silos, a large-scale SFA stabilisation approach must discover how each can be used in coordination, at the right time and in ways that explicitly build the conditions for peace. There are some precedents. In Burkina Faso, UNDP and Interpeace have put together a nexus platform that could be replicated elsewhere, for example.[235] A key confusion from other lessons learned processes on stabilisation is that while it is often said that security is the bedrock of stabilisation, short-term singular pursuit of security or negative peace can undermine the prospects for the positive peace needed for more sustainable stability.

Recent years have seen international actors establish a host of new initiatives in the Sahel, including the Coalition for the Sahel, The G5 Sahel, the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel and The Sahel Alliance. However, in practice, these actors and initiatives struggle to cooperate and coordinate, with competing priorities undermining their collective efforts to bring peace to the region. Different actors have their own strategies, political aims, operational tools and reticence toward cooperation. Furthermore, these entities do not seem to adequately interface with other key parts of the international stabilisation response. Without such clarity, there is the potential for ever-growing operational gaps and with it, the likelihood of poorer results, wasted money and a retreat to familiar securitised approaches that are conflict drivers in their own right.

So coordination is not working and nor is it sufficient. Instead, for SFA advisors, the emphasis must be on articulating how integration, with one strategy built around the needs of those living in conflict, would look in practice. The key here is for SFA advisors to understand and internalise their own incentives versus those of others and be self-reflective about how those incentives may be at odds with the other requirements of 'true stabilisation'. This will likely require advisors to bend rules at times, challenge the status quo and be internal change agents. This will help with the integration and alignment of existing programmes, coordinating mechanisms and regional bodies. Security, humanitarian, diplomatic, peacebuilding and development actors do not always mix well, but they need to if SFA is going to be complementary to each of their unique activities and objectives that, collectively, make up the constituent components of stabilisation efforts.

REFLEXIVE QUESTIONS:

1. How can advisers ensure SFA efforts are integrated across different international and regional actors?
2. And how can advisers ensure SFA efforts are integrated with local conflict resolution and reconciliation mechanisms?
3. If advisors are advising on where to deploy national forces, what criteria is being used and is there any attempt to coordinate their deployment with national civilian officials to complement or integrate each other's efforts?

4. Conclusion

Taken together, these unanswered challenges may appear daunting. For SFA advisors, their situation is made more difficult by the fact that many of these challenges exist at the structural level and are likely beyond their operational purview. Indeed stabilisation efforts are regularly undermined by upstream political developments such as how peace processes and mandates are designed. These are typically elite-centric, technical and short-term, promising much but unable to deliver owing to the absence of long-standing, well-financed and process-driven local approaches focused on rebuilding social contracts. The way stabilisation efforts are then staffed and funded, for example, results in operations that regularly suffer from strategic myopia and financial lop-sidedness, with vast resources subsumed by ineffective Counter Terror, Countering Violent Extremism or military assistance work and diverted away from approaches more attuned to the fundamental objective of building trust and addressing the underlying structural drivers of instability. This can result in top-down, securitised stabilisation approaches distrusted by local populations and exclusive of the voices of those they purport to help. Far from building peace or stability, these approaches risk reinforcing experiences of political, social and economic exclusion that contribute to cycles of violence.

Getting the scale of ambition is also a challenge for both SFA and stabilisation more generally. If a full state-building agenda has proved largely impossible, narrow aims are also problematic. Where only elite settlements are pursued, for example, unless that settlement is inclusive and operates beyond the agreement towards working through its actual implementation, these types of 'stabilisation' activities risk being a precursor to a sterile, negative peace that might stymie im-

mediate violence but only at the cost of creating new conflict risks. Sadly, this search for immediate stability can prevent much-needed social change from taking place and risks merely institutionalising and securitising conflict drivers. Indeed, stabilisation has perhaps, over the years, suffered from elite capture. It has become a gravy train for elites in capitals who draw their power not from their relationship with the public, but from donors and their connections to the ever-growing security sector. The conflict insensitivity of this approach is evident from what has been seen in a number of countries where elites, protected domestically by an expanded military and police force and internationally by donors and multilaterals, may act in the name of stability but only really in ways that are detrimental to it in the long-run. But there is another trend emerging as the consistent expansion and empowerment of the security sector in fragile areas reaches its logical fruition – military and security elites claiming to act 'on behalf of the people' and contesting central authority. Guinea and Mali are merely the latest examples.

These are significant problems for a field that appears perhaps slightly lost. The defeat in Afghanistan has fuelled worries that other missions may be going the same way. As such, these challenges demand critical attention if SFA advisors, already under great strain, are going to be able to deliver on their mandates. And this is before we even consider the new threats emerging. How prepared are stabilisation missions to address conflict drivers emanating from changing climates in already unstable areas? How prepared are they to address multidimensional crises where unequal vaccine distribution and unequal access to services may fuel grievances and prompt mass migrations, for instance? How equipped are they to address acute demographic trends? These are significant questions in places such as the Central African Republic where youth constitute approximately 60% of the population or in Mali where over half the population is under 18.

For SFA advisors who will have to grapple with these issues for the next 20 years, the answers cannot be framed around the same logic of securitisation that has defined the previous twenty. Their role must be to grapple with the overriding challenge of how to ensure that stabilisation activities are politically inclusive processes designed to improve governance and build systems, networks and institutions able to recognise and respond to the real grievances behind people's insecurity. There should be clearly defined goals and robust monitoring underpinning an exit strategy framed around the realisation of locally appropriate peace conditions. Advice must explicitly steer stabilisation work away from being conflict blind, overly reliant on hard security approaches, dislocated from local con-

texts, systems and needs, and unable to harness the locally embedded and trust enhancing approaches of peacebuilders, humanitarians and development actors. At the same time, advice needs to be less directive and more akin to collective reflection and learning. Afghanistan, Mali, Iraq and Libya have all demonstrated that internationals can never have all the answers. The essence of good advice is to listen first and, where appropriate, gradually build each other's capacity so that the decisions for which you are both responsible bear fruit. And in that spirit, I wish you the very best of luck.

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ment of current and future command activities in support of SACT directed strategic engagement, ensuring coherence of effects. Before that, she worked for the Operations Division at NATO HQ in Brussels. She joined the International Staff after completing her military career as a Lieutenant Colonel in 2017. As an infantry and military police officer, she held numerous command and staff positions, including several deployments to operational theatres. After obtaining her PhD in international relations and national security, she served at the Allied Command Transformation, Strategic Plans and Policy Division, where she led the interoperation of high-level political guidance and developed policy papers, strategies and inputs for NATO military authorities. This work led to a posting as the Deputy Head of the Strategic Assessment Element of the Emergency Security Challenges and, in this capacity, she worked on initiating, developing and drafting strategic assessments aimed at identifying emerging crises, enhancing situational awareness and providing early warning for use by the Secretary General and the Chairman of Military Committee.

Bettina Kircher is an independent consultant for Conflict and Development Management and a guest lecturer at the Helmut Schmidt University and at the NATO SFA Center of Excellence (COE) in Rome. Between 2019 and 2022, she was seconded to the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels as a training expert. Bettina has 9 years of field experience in conflict and war zones in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and worked as a delegate for the International Red Cross (ICRC) in Colombia, Ivory Coast and the North Kivu (DRC). After several years in DDR/SSR peacekeeping operations in the Ivory Coast with the United Nations, Bettina was seconded to civilian CSDP missions with the European Union in South Sudan and Djibouti. Bettina is a member of the expert rosters of the UN Security Council Advisory Division (SCAD); the International Security Sector Advisory Team (DCAF/ISSAT); Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF); UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (SSR), expert reviewer for GIZ (German International Cooperation) and the German Armed Forces (Civic Education). She holds a master's degree in Regional Science and a post-graduate Diploma in Conflict and Development Management.

Nadia Gerspacher has been contributing to security assistance for over 15 years by conducting academic and applied research, publishing practical tools and guidance, developing and delivering training curricula and facilitating working groups. She pioneered an education and training programme of instruction on advising foreign counterparts and partnered with various advising

programmes across the USG to integrate the curriculum into their pre-deployment training, including the Ministry of Defense Advisor (MoDA) programme. She has published widely on how to improve advising missions and mandates and has extensive experience training military and civilian personnel in engaging foreign counterparts for capacity building and has contributed to reflection on strengthening defence and other security institutions by focusing on legitimacy and service orientation. Gerspacher has contributed to various doctrine development processes including Building Partner Capacity (BPC), and Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) at both the national and multinational levels (NATO and UN). She created a programme of instruction and collection of tools for police from Jordan, Pakistan, Northern Ireland, Iraq, Tunisia, Somalia and others to contribute more effectively to their country's CVE capacity.

Major General (Ret.) **David P. San Clemente** served as the Air National Guard Assistant to the Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command. General San Clemente earned his commission and Bachelor of Science degree in Human Factors Engineering at the United States Air Force Academy in 1988. He has served as a Chief of Safety and Chief of Standards and Evaluations at the Squadron, Group, Wing and Numbered Air Force. General San Clemente has also served as the Air National Guard Advisor to the Commander Air Force Special Operations Command and Africa Command. He has deployed in support of numerous operations including Operations Southern Watch, Joint Endeavor, Allied Force, Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Odyssey Dawn. Before his final assignment, General San Clemente served as Senior Defense Official – Defense Attaché – Chief-Office of Military Cooperation, United States Embassy in Kuwait.

James M. Cunningham is SIGAR's resident expert for security sector assistance and is the primary author of SIGAR's reports, *Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan* and*, Divided Responsibility: Lessons from U.S. Security Sector Assistance Efforts in Afghanistan, and Collapse of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: An Assessment of the Factors that Led to its Demise.* He has been working on Afghanistan-related issues since 2005. From 2008 to 2015, he served as a senior intelligence analyst and subject matter expert contracted to the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency's Afghanistan-Pakistan Task Force (APTF) where he provided input to several National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) and multiple Presidential

Daily Briefs (PDBs) focused on security-related issues including the Taliban-led insurgency. From 2007 to 2008, he was a senior intelligence analyst contracted to the Defense Intelligence Agency's Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA). From 2005 to 2007, he worked as an intelligence analyst and data manager contracted to DOD's Criminal Investigative Task Force supporting law enforcement investigations, criminal trials and military tribunals against suspected Al Qaida terrorists in U.S., Afghan, and Iraqi custody.

Julie Chalfin is the Deputy Director and Chief of the Security Forces Capacity Building Division in the U.S. Department of State's Political-Military Bureau's Office of Global Programs and Initiatives (PM/GPI) in Washington. She oversees the mission to improve security sector governance and institutional capacity through foreign assistance and partnerships. Before joining PM/GPI, Dr Chalfin was the Chief of Staff for the interagency Security Governance Initiative housed in State's Africa Bureau where she coordinated efforts to align partner nation security priorities with U.S. national interests, resources and expertise and focused on enhancing the governance of security and justice sectors. She previously worked with African security forces to develop strategies and policies to reform security institutions in post-conflict environments. Before the Africa Bureau, she was an American Association for the Advancement of Science diplomacy fellow in State's Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization. Before coming to the Department of State, Dr Chalfin worked for several international non-governmental organizations, including Save the Children, the Carter Center and the International Rescue Committee. She earned her PhD in Social Psychology from Claremont Graduate University where she researched international conflict management. She is also a graduate of the National Defense University's Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy where she earned a master's degree in National Resource Strategy.

Brett Sudetic is a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State. He was formerly a Portfolio Manager with the Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, where he oversaw and coordinated security sector institutional capacity-building projects as part of the Global Defense Reform Program and Security Force Professionalization programme, with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa region. Previously, Brett worked as a consultant in the Middle East supporting defence, national security and other public sector clients in the Gulf region. Brett is also an analyst of Middle East strategic and security issues and has published articles with institutions such as the Middle

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Will Bennett leads the Rethinking Stability initiative at Interpeace. Previously he worked as a Senior Conflict Adviser for the UN and EU, was Head of Security and Justice at Saferworld, Head of Global Policy at The Life & Peace Institute and a Senior Advisor at the Dutch Department of Stabilisation and Humanitarian Affairs. He has led research and programmes in multiple conflict affected states attempting to address the drivers of instability and violence. His writing has featured in books, journals and The Guardian. Will has a BA in History from Bristol, an MA in War Studies from King's College London and is writing a DPhil in Political Geography at Oxford looking at how national identities are constructed and leveraged to justify war.

Peer Reviewers

Nadja Milanova is a Building Integrity (BI) Officer at NATO HQ where she contributes to providing strategic advice and capacity building in anti-corruption and governance in the defence and security sector. She has extensive experience in international affairs, security, public diplomacy and defence policy and reform. Previously, she worked in NATO's Public Diplomacy Division and for the Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as head of the Prague office. At the national level, Nadja has served as a diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as Head of the Bilateral and Regional Cooperation Department at the Ministry of Defence in Bulgaria. She also has experience in the field of human rights with advocacy work at the UN and the EU. She holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Exeter.

Daniël Prins is currently the Chief of Security Sector Reform in the Department of Peace Operations at the UN. He has more than 20 years of experience in national governmental and parliamentary affairs, ranging from trade policy to human rights, from international security to cultural affairs, and from development to environmental policies. His deep experience with NATO, OSCE, and over a decade of leadership at the United Nations has made him an expert in working in culturally diverse and gender-sensitive environments. In 2019, he published *Creating from Chaos: practitioner reflections on multilateral treaty-making* for the Oxford Handbook of United Nations Treaties.

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Col. **Franco Merlino** is an Italian Army Officer and currently serves as Defense Attaché at the Italian Embassy in Niger. He was the first NATO SFA COE Director from 2018 to 2020. After having served as an instructor for new cadets in the Military Academy, he undertook in the 'FOLGORE' Brigade all the periods of command up to regimental level. While in command of the 183rd Regiment 'NEMBO', he was deployed in Afghanistan as Commander of the Transition Support Unit in Shindand. He was also the Commander of the Parachute Training Centre in Pisa. He served on the Army General Staff where he worked on long-term planning for the Italian Army available to NATO and European Union. He has also worked as a Staff Officer on the Italian Defence General Staff, where he was in charge of policy on the high-level education of Italian officers. In his assignments abroad he attended the high-level joint course at the military school of the French Armed Forces and served as Assistance Military Attaché at the Italian Embassy in Cairo from 2009 until 2012.

Margherita Zuin is a senior international affairs expert with extensive experience serving in various capacities in different field locations around the world, as well as at United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ). She is currently working with DCAF, the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, as Deputy Head of the Sub-Saharan Africa Division where she provides strategic guidance and supervises the design and implementation of programmes in the Sahel. Her previous roles include being Head of the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Senegal, Chief of the Integrated Strategic Planning Unit of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and Deputy Chief of the DDR Section in the UN Stabilisation Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA). In her different capacities at UN Headquarters and in UN peace operations in Somalia and South Sudan (UNSOM and UN-

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Jeffrey King is a military analyst (lessons learned) in the U.S. Joint Center for Security Force Assistance (JCISFA). Before his current assignment, he served as a protection and maneuver support military analyst (lessons learned) at the Center for (U.S.) Army Lessons Learned (CALL) and worked and authored multi-national interoperability (MNI) products with the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) and with Women, Peace and Security (WPS) issues in Australia. He previously deployed as the NATO Disaster Relief Team Engineer in Pakistan, and served with various units in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Portugal and the ROK. He holds a master's degree in public administration from Central Michigan University, a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Kansas University, and graduated from the U.S. Army War College's pilot Joint Stability Studies Course. He authors SFA, stability and related articles and products with JCISFA, CALL, and the U.S. Maneuver Support Center of Excellence (MSCOE).

Security Force Assistance (SFA) has become a key focus of NATO efforts in recent years. As a result of this enhanced significance, the NATO SFA COE has swiftly gained a prominent role in the development of the strategic advisory sector. Through its collaboration with a group of international experts, the Centre has addressed the role of SFA activities within both complex and dynamic contexts, contributing to the discussion of the genesis of a new generation of advisers. Building on the primary assumption that the key element for the success of any SFA operation is the sharing of best practices, the Centre has collated and analysed data on extant capacities and gaps with a view to advising missions aimed at promoting greater effectiveness and stability. From this perspective, this publication provides practical tools to elaborate on new models and programmes, thereby assisting SFA advisers when facing complex environments via an interdisciplinary approach.

Ambassador Stefano Pontecorvo
Former NATO Senior Civilian Representative for Afghanistan