Security and Development Policies: Untangling the Relationship

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A paper prepared for the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) Conference

Bonn, September 2005
Abstract

Only some 15 years ago it was unusual for policy makers to talk of development and security policies in the same breath. Today the reverse is true: national policy makers talk of the 3-Ds (Diplomacy, Development, Defense), the 4-Ds (including Democratization), “joint-up-government approaches’ as if they are in fact inseparable. Similarly, the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union, among others, all profess the necessity for integrated security and development policies. Yet, behind the current security-development nexus proposition, there are multiple layers of confusion, contradictions and policy dilemmas. Based on ongoing research undertaken by the Security-Development Nexus Program at the International Peace Academy, this paper seeks to bring greater clarity to current debates on the interdependence between security and development policies, and to propose more promising ways of analyzing as well as responding to the dual challenges of promoting security and development in an increasingly interdependent but fractured global system.

The paper starts by identifying the multiple levels at which the policy debate takes place: local, national, regional and global. It argues that moving indiscriminately between these levels has created tremendous conceptual as well as policy confusion. Similarly, because both development and security are extremely broad and elusive concepts, the call for integrating them often leads to a policy enigma: What should be integrated with what? Furthermore, it is readily assumed that the security-development linkage applies equally to various conflict contexts and to different conflict phases—albeit in somewhat different configurations. Finally, there is a tendency to make policy recommendations as if the policy community were an apolitical monolith—rather than the diverse mix of national, regional, governmental and non-governmental actors.

Recent research examining the linkages between distinct issue areas such as poverty, demography, globalization, human rights and environment has begun to provide important clues about how these factors combine to exacerbate or reduce risks of violent conflicts as well as political and criminal violence. Similarly, comparative country-level research demonstrates the specificity of each conflict context while assessing the appropriateness of current approaches to linking security and development in essentially distinct policy and political environments. It is anticipated that these research results will contribute to a new generation of policies and programs that go beyond the rhetorical call for integrating security and development policies.
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“In the twenty-first century, all States and their collective institutions must advance the cause of larger freedom—by ensuring freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity. In an increasingly interconnected world, progress in the areas of development, security and human rights must go hand in hand. There will be no development without security and no security without development. And both development and security also depend on respect for human rights and the rule of law.” Report of the Secretary to the United Nations General Assembly, 21 March 2005 [Italics added]

“The Goals [MDGs] not only reflect global justice and human rights—they are also vital to international and national security and stability, as emphasized by the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. . . . Achieving the Millennium Development Goals should therefore be placed centrally in international efforts to end violent conflict, instability and terrorism.” The Millennium Project Report

“Conflict and deprivation are interconnected. Deprivation has many causal links to violence, although these have to be carefully examined. Conversely, wars kill people, destroy trust among them, increase poverty and crime, and slow down the economy. Addressing such insecurities effectively demands an integrated approach.” The Human Security Report

“We recognize that our nations and peoples will not enjoy development without security, nor will they enjoy security without development, and that they will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.” From the draft outcome document for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly of September 2005

INTRODUCTION

The necessity of linking security and development has become a policy mantra. From the United Nations to the African Union, from the US National Security Strategy to Canada’s International Policy Statement, from academic institutions to operational NGOs, there are vigorous calls for integrating security and development perspectives and policies. On one level, this is a welcome development—especially after the deliberate bifurcation of development and security policies during the Cold War. On another level, the ready consensus among policymakers and advocates alike about the interdependence between security and development has served to obscure the difficulties involved in aligning security and development policies.

There are four major impediments to designing security and development policies that are compatible, mutually reinforcing and beneficial. The first is conceptual. The current policy debate is taking place at multiple levels: local, national, regional and global. For example, throughout the 1990s, many who advocated for integrated security and development policies
focused their attention primarily at the human level. Moving away from macro or aggregate conceptions of security and development, they focused on the micro level—calling for an integrated approach to human security, human development and human rights.\textsuperscript{5}

Others had a narrower, more functional approach. Carving out particular policy areas such as peacekeeping or post-conflict peacebuilding, they sought to examine the overlap between the specific security and development challenges and actors in concrete situations with a view to harmonizing their efforts. At the international level, *An Agenda for Peace, An Agenda for Development* and the Brahimi Report identified issue areas where the UN’s security and development roles and responsibilities could be better aligned for peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding.\textsuperscript{6} Similarly, individual donor governments or multilateral institutions such as the OECD DAC began to see the value of coordinated and coherent approaches donor efforts to promote conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and state building in conflict-affected countries.\textsuperscript{7}

Still others adopted a global/systemic view of the linkages between security and development concerns. This approach gained greater currency after 9/11—especially among Western governments. Several recent UN reports have elevated the debate to the highest international level, arguing that there can be no international peace or security without development, and no development without security. These include, the Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility*; the report of the Millennium Project, *Investing in Development: A practical plan to achieve the millennium development goals*; the UN Secretary-General’s March 2005 report, *In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*; and most recently, UN General Assembly President’s Draft Outcome Document for the Millennium Plus 5 Summit in early September 2005.\textsuperscript{8}

While these initiatives all agree that security and development are interlinked and should be promoted simultaneously, their starting points are quite different and thus lead to divergent policy recommendations. The appropriation of the same terminology for distinct goals at very different levels of policy intervention has led to considerable confusion. Human security is a worthwhile policy goal but it does not necessarily lead to national development or international security. Nor is the reverse true. Nonetheless, they are equally desirable and potentially mutually reinforcing goals. The security-development nexus does not apply automatically across policy arenas (prevention, statebuilding, peacebuilding) or across levels of policy implementation (e.g. global, national, human). The current policy debates on security and development move indiscriminately from the local to the global, from conflict prevention to peacebuilding, from humanitarian action to terrorism—creating tremendous conceptual as well as policy confusion.

In addition to the confusion resulting from the conflation of human, national and security concerns, there are other impediments to more effective integration of security and development policies. The second obstacle to multi-dimensional and interlinked approaches to security and development derives from the fact that both development and security are extremely broad and elusive concepts. Currently, development encompasses many dimensions from human rights to environmental sustainability, from economic growth to governance. Similarly, security has been expanded to go beyond state-centric conceptions of security to human security and includes a range of military as well as non-military threats that recognize no borders. This naturally leads to a policy enigma: What should be integrated with what? At what level? To what purpose?
Third, it is readily assumed that the security-development linkage applies equally to various contexts and to different phases of conflict—albeit in somewhat different configurations. As a result, the policy prescriptions are more process rather than content driven. Following the relevant exhortation for integrated approaches to security and development, the policy guidelines often revert back to generic imperatives for “coherence”, “coordination”, “harmonization”, “alignment”, “participation”, “ownership”, “sustainability”, etc. However, these are hardly sufficient to formulate overlapping or linked-up policies across a vast policy arena.

Finally, and greatly fueling the conceptual confusion identified above, there is a tendency to make policy recommendations as if the policy community were an apolitical monolith rather than the diverse mix of national, regional, governmental and non-governmental actors. Linking security and development is a profoundly political project—differentially affecting the vital interests of policy making actors as well as the intended policy beneficiaries. In the 1990s when the “security-development nexus” proposition came to the fore, there was growing commitment to multilateral approaches to reducing violent conflicts and promoting peacebuilding in conflict-torn, conflict-prone and post-conflict countries and regions. The integrated policies promoted by the United Nations or the “linked-up” policies by key donor countries applied primarily to conflicts that did not affect the vital interests of powerful external actors. In politically difficult cases like Kashmir, North Korea or Palestine, there was little insistence on integrated policies; in other cases like Bosnia, Kosovo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the sequencing of security and development approaches decidedly reflected the vital interests of key players. After 9/11, and the series of terrorist incidents in Bali, Madrid, Istanbul, London and other venues that followed, it is virtually impossible to consider security concerns in any part of the world without the shadow of global terrorism. Thus, in advocating for effective and integrated security and development policies, it is necessary to ask: Whose security is at stake? Whose development is affected? Whose agenda has precedence?

Despite these fundamental shortcomings, policy discourse and policy development proceeded steadily throughout the 1990s albeit without clear prescriptions on how security and development could to be linked in real time and real places. With the successive publication of the above-cited high-level reports and ongoing negotiations at the United Nations about international priorities in the coming years, the time is ripe to take a critical look at the body of existing knowledge on the security-development nexus with a view to identifying the ingredients for more effective policies at the human, national and international levels. The following section provides a brief overview of the evolution of international policies at the nexus of security and development before turning to an assessment of the effectiveness and relevance of those policies based on new research.

**TAKING STOCK: Evolution of Security-Development Policies**

Like most social phenomena, the security-development nexus is not entirely new. That socio-economic well being and physical security are interdependent is almost a tautology.

At a human level, where the mutual vulnerabilities between physical and socio-economic well being are experienced most directly, the security-development nexus is well understood. However, the term “human security” gained currency only in the early 1990s with the publication of the UNDP *Human Development Report* of 1994. The Report offered a dual
definition of human security: “It means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities.” The report identified seven elements that comprise human security: (1) economic security; (2) food security; (3) health security; (4) environmental security; (5) personal security; (6) community security; and (7) political security.\(^9\) In response to the new human security agenda, several governmental and non-governmental actors championed a range of issues that were neither part of traditional development nor traditional security.\(^10\) The campaigns to ban anti-personnel landmines, to regulate small arms and light weapons, and to establish an international criminal court were part of the emerging international consensus around major issues that threatened human security and militated against human development.\(^11\)

The World Bank’s consultations with 60,000 people in 60 countries at the turn of the Millennium, titled *Voices of the Poor*, provided an existential view from the field. It concluded that 1) the poor view wellbeing holistically; 2) insecurity has increased; violence is on the rise, both domestically and in the society. And the poor feel they have been bypassed by new economic opportunities; 3) gender inequity is widespread, domestic violence pervasive and gender relations stressed.\(^12\)

Surprisingly, the Millennium Development Goals made no reference to conflict or human security—even though the Millennium Declaration explicitly recognized peace, security, human rights as key international objectives alongside development and poverty eradication. More recently, the connections between the Millennium Development Goals and conflict have gained increasing attention.\(^13\) This was greatly facilitated by the impressive work of the Commission on Human Security, which noted:

*People's security around the world is interlinked - as today's global flows of goods, services, finance, people and images highlight. Political liberalization and democratization opens new opportunities but also new fault lines, such as political and economic instabilities and conflicts within states. More than 800,000 people a year lose their lives to violence. About 2.8 billion suffer from poverty, ill health, illiteracy and other maladies. Conflict and deprivation are interconnected. Deprivation has many causal links to violence, although these have to be carefully examined. Conversely, wars kill people, destroy trust among them, increase poverty and crime, and slow down the economy. Addressing such insecurities effectively demands an integrated approach.*

The Commission advocated a two-track approach to promoting human security (protection and empowerment) and urged the following actions: a) protecting people in violent conflict; b) protecting people from the proliferation of arms; c) supporting the security of people on the move; d) establishing human security transition funds for post-conflict situations; e) encouraging fair trade and markets to benefit the extreme poor; f) working to provide minimum living standards everywhere; g) according higher priority to ensuring universal access to basic health care; h) developing an efficient and equitable global system for patent rights; i) empowering all people with universal basic education; j) clarifying the need for a global human identity while respecting the freedom of individuals to have diverse identities and affiliations.\(^14\)

In short, at the human level security and development are intimately related--even though the appropriate policies to address them through international action have been extremely slow in coming since both human security and human development have traditionally been considered as exclusive responsibilities of sovereign states.
Similarly, from a macro perspective, security and development have been closely linked, especially during the 20th century. The collapse of empires after World War II and its profound repercussions throughout the world, the Great Depression, the rise of totalitarian states, World War II and post war de-colonization are compelling evidence of the linkages between socio-economic crises, political instability and inter-state wars at the global level. The United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions were explicitly created in order to address the twin problems of peace and security, on the one hand, and socio-economic development on the other.

However, even before these institutions became fully operational, the Cold War erupted, distorting international priorities. Bypassing the United Nations, the two power blocs created their own separate security institutions to deal with the East-West conflict. As the number of states proliferated following de-colonization, each power bloc began to provide security assistance to countries in its own sphere of influence.

Meanwhile, a parallel bilateral and multilateral system of development assistance was established to promote socio-economic development in the developing and newly emerging countries. International development strategies, policies and instruments quickly became handmaidens of the security policies of dominant powers. Foreign aid in all its forms, including Official Development Assistance (ODA), was designed to support friendly regimes, to prevent others from defecting to the competing Cold War bloc, and to serve as a global mechanism to maintain international order while promoting economic growth in developing and the newly-emerging countries.

Initially focused narrowly on economic growth, international development gradually expanded to embrace other issue areas including the environment, gender, human rights, and governance. Yet, the international aid industry carefully avoided peace, security and conflict issues. Development actors worked in conflict and around conflict but they carefully avoided working on conflicts. Throughout the Cold War, conflict referred primarily to the East-West conflict and inter-state wars—and these were the domain of security actors and institutions. Thus, at the international level, there was a fairly clear divide between development (primarily domestic socio-economic issues) and security (inter-state political and military affairs).

With the end of the Cold War, the artificial divide between these realms gradually disappeared under the weight of globalization, new information and communication technologies, the spill-over of domestic problems such as refugees, pandemics, environmental pressures to the regional and the global arena. Many domestic problems could not be confined within a single country. Regional and global pressures were no longer a one-way street. Thus, the borders between states, issue areas and policy realms began to be blurred.

At the United Nations, the release of Agenda for Peace (1992) and Agenda for Development (1995), set the stage for a more holistic look at the violent conflicts in the developing countries. The OECD Development Assistance Committee followed suit by issuing The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict (1997 and 2001). In 2001, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan released his report on Prevention of Armed Conflict. These documents represented an effort to return to the original vision of the UN’s founders by calling for integrated approaches to socio-economic, human rights, humanitarian, security and developmental strategies and approaches at the international level which had been de-railed by the Cold War. The normative developments at the international level throughout the 1990s were quite impressive. The United Nations became the arena to create international norms, to establish new priorities and to set collective agendas. These were reflected in the various
international summits that took place throughout the 1990s; they also influenced the range of issues brought before the Security Council. Human rights abuses, protection of civilians in war, small arms, gender and peace, children and armed conflict, and HIV/AIDS became legitimate issues for the Council’s consideration.21

Meanwhile, on the ground, humanitarian workers, peacemakers, peacekeepers and development agencies responded to civil wars, ethnic conflicts and failed states with the various tools and instruments at their disposal. The number of United Nations peacekeeping missions increased rapidly throughout the 1990s.22 The new UN peace operations were different from traditional peacekeeping missions in that they were often deployed in contexts where there was little peace to keep; they also involved a combination of military and civilian tasks including civilian policing, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), protection of refugees and internally-displaced people. Significantly, the UN undertook direct administration of Kosovo and East Timor in the absence of a sovereign government in these territories.23

As normative and operational imperatives broke down traditional boundaries, there were concerted efforts to overcome the compartmentalization of the security and development institutions of the Cold War era. In the 1990s, there were several waves of bureaucratic reforms in the United Nations which included the creation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Although each of these departments continued to have separate mandates and functioned in isolation from the UN’s development agencies, various mechanisms were established to encourage inter-departmental and inter-agency cooperation or collaboration.24

There was a corresponding revision of institutional structures within individual governments and inter-governmental organizations. New units were created to deal with conflict resolution, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. New inter-governmental and non-governmental networks were created. Various countries began to develop ‘joined up’ government approaches, aligning their foreign, security and development policies and programs in order to respond more effectively to intra-state conflicts.25

Coming in the wake of the Cold War, the primary motivation for these policy innovations was recognition of the perverse consequences of that era for many developing countries around the world. These countries had not only failed to benefit from the intricate web of international development assistance over the last fifty years; they were also extremely vulnerable to human insecurity, political instability and violent conflict. Thus, policy integration was seen as an imperative to respond to the needs of a wide range of target countries. The OECD DAC, the EU, the United Nations, donor governments and even the World Bank committed themselves to better harmonization of their policies towards target countries—whether these were transitional states, conflict-affected countries, or politically fragile states facing humanitarian crises or grave developmental challenges. In each case, the policy prescription was the same: integrated, holistic, multi-dimensional policies across the traditional security-development spectrum. With the appropriate injunction to “do no harm,” the prescribed medicine was generally considered as necessary and the dispensing doctors as primarily humanitarian in their motivation. The human or national insecurities afflicting the aid recipients were not considered as serious threats to the security of the aid donors or the global system as a whole. Indeed, throughout the 1990s, the preferred vehicle for international policy interventions was multilateral—and often under the umbrella of the United Nations.

With the re-emergence of threats to the security of Western countries after 9/11, the integrated security-development equation has gained a different dimension. Today, “fragile states”,
“pandemics”, “civil wars”, “terrorism” and “poverty” are seen as direct threats to the well-being and security of Western countries—and by extension to international peace and security. The importance of this change in threat perception cannot be under-estimated for policy actors whose own vital interests (especially security) are at risk. Instead of acting as arms-length policy makers in a multilateral arena, they have become primary stakeholders (and “stickholders”) in the security-development calculus. This shift was evident in the post 9/11 domestic and foreign policies of many Western governments as well as the policies of the collective military, political, economic and security institutions in which they participate. Inevitably, the threat perceptions of powerful members of the international community have come to affect the global security environment. Indeed, the UN Secretary General commissioned the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change precisely because of the growing chasm in the international community about divergent threat perceptions, and the international consequences of member countries pursuing their national interests. The forthcoming Millennium plus 5 summit at the UN will be an important litmus test of international priorities since the Millennium Declaration and the numerous high-minded policy statements that followed in the 1990s.

EMERGING RESEARCH FINDINGS & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

While recognizing the extremely difficult political climate at the international level at the moment, it is still necessary to extract relevant lessons from the important policy innovations that were undertaken in the last 10-15 years. During this same period, an impressive body of academic and policy literature has accumulated which focuses on the interdependence between security and development. This paper draws upon that literature as well as emerging findings from a multi-disciplinary research program undertaken by the International Peace Academy in New York on “The Security-Development Nexus.” That research program has begun to yield empirically grounded insights about how security and development operate across issue areas and within individual countries. Recent research examining the linkages between distinct issue areas such as poverty, demography, globalization, human rights and environment provide important clues about how these factors combine to exacerbate or reduce risks of violent conflicts as well as political and criminal violence. Similarly, comparative country-level research demonstrates the specificity of each conflict context while testing the appropriateness of current approaches to linking security and development in essentially distinct policy and political environments.

To overcome the shortcomings raised at the introduction, this paper takes a focused approach to the security-development nexus. First, its analysis is primarily the country-level since both human and international concerns come together at the national level. Second, it basically targets policies at the international level since this is where policy research might find fertile ground. Lastly, the paper is particularly interested in the linkages between security and development for conflict prevention. Clearly, in contemporary civil conflicts, there is no unilinear continuum from peace to war and then back to peace; thus, there is no sequential way of linking security and development. Nonetheless, there is a wide range of interventions across the security-development spectrum that are more appropriate for distinct phases of the conflict cycle. In the last decade, there has been growing understanding of the security-development nexus in post-conflict peacebuilding. Conflict prevention, however, still remains a largely unexplored terrain.
Setting the Scene: Challenges on the Ground and Policy Interventions

The period since the end of the Cold War brought opportunities as well as new threats for developing countries. Globalization, market liberalization, democratization, and more recently, the global war on terror have greatly impacted domestic conditions in developing countries—alternately creating added pressures or providing potential safety valves. Similarly, the spillover effects of regional developments, including the cross-border movement of trade, people and financial transaction have had far-reaching but mixed impacts. These have played out in very different ways in various countries and regions. Almost one third of all developing countries are considered to be at risk of violent conflict or in a state of chronic instability. In other words, the correlation between security and development conditions in many developing countries is well-established. While researchers can not readily identify the direction of causality, the risk factors and patterns of vulnerability are sufficiently clear: a wide range of externally generated pressures, low levels of economic growth, low human development indicators, chronic political instability, ineffective or illegitimate political institutions, highly conflictual modes of political mobilization, and high incidence of sporadic or regionalized violent conflict.29

If one prominent feature of the contemporary scene is the vulnerability of many developing countries to socio-economic crises, political instability, physical insecurity and violent conflict, another important feature is the far-reaching intervention of external actors in the domestic concerns of sovereign states. From poverty alleviation to human rights protection, from security sector reform to democracy promotion, external actors are playing important roles across a range of policy areas.30 The multiplicity of foreign actors engaged in the development and security problems of developing countries is remarkable. There are private sector subcontractors implementing police reform in Jamaica; international non-governmental organizations involved in prison reform in Malawi; a joint national/international special criminal court in Sierra Leone, peacekeepers providing basic services in Liberia, and the United Nations administering the entire territory of Kosovo. What do these activities add up to and what are their impacts in terms of addressing the combined security and development concerns of various developing countries?

Findings from ongoing research can be grouped into five different categories: insights related to the actual mix of sectoral policies and their relevance for different types of conflict contexts; institutional challenges; operational issues; funding issues and role of donors; and the political dimensions of policy coherence across the security-development spectrum.

a) Policy Mix

Research on discrete issue areas such as poverty, globalization, demography, environment, human rights amply demonstrate the cross-cutting nature of the pressures faced by developing countries.31 The vicissitudes of the global market place, slow or negative economic growth in particularly marginalized regions of the world, high levels of unemployment, urbanization, the youth bulge, poverty and pandemics, the easy transport of drugs, arms and finances across borders, poor governance, and weak institutions of rule of law tend to reinforce each other and provide a fertile ground for conflict. What is evident from these thematic studies is that the patterns of vulnerability (or “risk factors”) are not country specific and are the outcome of broader social-economic-political forces beyond the control of governments and states that are particularly at risk. Yet, at the macro policy level, each of these problems is still dealt with in a compartmentalized and fragmented way.
On the big policy issues (trade, migration, employment, international financial flows, global social justice, direct foreign investment, energy, global warming, or disarmament) there is little evidence of a radical transformation of the security-development linkages or a corresponding re-allocation of resources or policy priorities. Even in the most prominent area of policy intervention--poverty alleviation--the current focus on implementing the MDGs basically rests upon strengthening and expanding earlier commitments. Thus, the security-development linkage seems to operate safely within the established parameters of the current international system. The incremental, but ultimately limited, policy adjustments in official development assistance, humanitarian aid, poverty alleviation, debt relief, disease control, sanctions and peacekeeping fall far short of addressing structural risk factors that lie at the source of the physical insecurity, societal vulnerability and violent conflicts in the developing countries. In short, there is continued disconnect between the policy rhetoric for integrated security-development approaches at the international level and policy realities at the sectoral level. The major exception to this trend is, of course, international policies toward terrorism—which in turn have begun to penetrate other policy areas. As noted previously, the impact of 9/11 on the evolution of international security and development policies merits special attention which is only beginning to be understood.

Turning to policy integration at the country-level: Notwithstanding claims of enhanced policy coherence across issue areas, comparative research from the field demonstrates that international policy interventions also fall short of integrated approaches to addressing the range of security and development problems in concrete contexts. This is equally true for national policies. Instead, research from country case studies consistently reveals serious tensions and inconsistencies resulting from multiple agendas. These are rarely acknowledged or effectively managed by national governments or their external supporters. For example, at the country level, achieving the Millennium Development Goals, promoting economic development, enhancing social cohesion, executing an anti-terrorism campaign and ensuring regime stability are often identified as policy priorities although these are not necessarily mutually compatible goals. Meanwhile, socio-economic policies dealing with discrete issue areas remain segregated and fragmented, with unemployment, population growth, health, internal or external migration, diaspora remittances, food security, criminality and economic development proceeding on basically separate tracks—and often supported by external agencies through sector-specific assistance programs.

If development policies at the country level are far from integrated, their integration with security policies appears to be even more problematic. The evidence from country-case studies reveals that national security approaches focus narrowly on traditional threats to state security rather than the wider range of threats covered under human security. Despite claims to the contrary, there are few examples of proactive or preventive strategies to deal with structural or proximate sources of conflict and violence through linked-up socio-economic-environmental policies. It is only recently that selected governments and key development donors have started to view standard tools like the MDGs or national Poverty Reduction Strategy Program (PRSPs) from a security perspective. Similarly, notwithstanding growing external pressure to include human rights and democratization criteria into aid packages, their implementation on the ground is shaped by national security interests of either the donor or the recipient governments. In this context, 9/11 offers an important benchmark for assessing the relative significance of security vs. development policies for both internal and external actors. Research from several geo-strategically vital countries like Yemen, Somalia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan reveals significant policy reversals in pre and post 9/11 environments.
Evidence from both sectoral and country case studies suggest that policy coherence is still at a high level of abstraction and seems to occur primarily at the rhetorical level at donor capitals or the headquarters of regional or international organizations rather than in the national policies of the developing countries themselves or the country-specific programming of donor countries. Instead, with development assistance playing an expanding role in conflict contexts, there are growing calls for conflict-sensitive approaches to development. Even then, however, it is difficult to demonstrate that conflict sensitivity has been mainstreamed into development assistance. More often than not, development actors tend to focus either on acute problem areas—such as child soldiers, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants and the return of displaced populations—or on new programming areas such as security sector reform or rule of law which are not part of traditional development or security assistance programs.

The gaps, contradictions and dilemmas that exist across policy areas at the macro-level are replicated even within a single policy areas. For example, research on rule of law programs reveals that there are distinct tensions between law enforcement and human rights agendas. Similarly, there are tensions between rule of law approaches supporting a market liberalization vs. equitable development. Yet, there are few mechanisms through which such tensions can be resolved at the country level. More often than not, policies are translated into discrete projects and programs with their own objectives—quite divorced from a broader security or development strategy.

Paradoxically, despite the heightened pressure on donor agencies to apply well-established ODA criteria for aid effectiveness in “good performers”, donors are increasingly supporting conflict countries through a range of aid instruments. The current euphemisms for such engagement include “Low Income Countries under Stress (LICUS),” “difficult partnerships,” and “fragile states.” On one level, these labels represent a serious effort to group countries into similar categories for more appropriate policy interventions. On the other hand, these categories themselves tend to create their own policy blinders. For example, “state-building” in fragile states has now become a mini policy industry with various donors designing and implementing programs on constitution making, support to multi-party politics, rule of law, transparency and anti-corruption programs as well as anti-crime and anti-terrorism measures. A closer examination of selected programs, however, reveals that they are quite narrowly conceived and are often shaped by donor capacities rather than recipient country needs.

In short, the evidence emerging from thematic, program level and country case studies is the absence of strategic, integrated national or international policies to address complex and interlocking socio-economic, environmental, political and security problems. Instead, international actors who are now providing a multitude of discrete programs, projects and aid packages across the vast security-development spectrum but without a coherent policy framework. In the last few years, this conclusion was amply demonstrated in post-conflict contexts. With the growing policy interest in conflict prevention, emerging research findings in countries at risk of conflict reinforce the magnitude of the gap between policy rhetoric and reality.

b) Institutional Issues

One of the most persistent findings from policy research is the absence of effective institutional interface between external and domestic actors across a range of policy areas. Traditionally, both development actors and security actors dealt directly with national governments and authorities—although in their own sectoral areas. As the range of sectors and issue areas for collaboration have expanded and new external actors, including international NGOs have become involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the multiplicity of
national and international actors has led to fragmentation and dissipation of effort. This has led to two contradictory problems: On the one hand, national governments clearly lack the capacity or the appropriate systems to deal effectively with a range of external actors, each with their own mandates and requirements.\textsuperscript{45} On the other hand, there is understandable resistance to highly coordinated multi-donor approaches. As an observer from a conflict-torn country has noted, the prospect of a “donor cartel” poses a serious concern to national governments.\textsuperscript{46}

Another important conclusion from thematic as well as country research is the continued disconnect between various international agencies with different mandates. Although the linkages between health, environment, poverty, population, environment, housing, crime is increasingly better understood at both the policy and operational levels, international institutions that deal with these problems are still extremely fragmented and often operate in isolation from each other. There have been some efforts by “vanguard professionals” in each sector to reach out to other sectoral areas. For example, UN agencies working on property, land and housing now find their issues of growing interest to agencies working on rule of law.\textsuperscript{47} Similarly, demographers and security experts are beginning to work together on demographic and security trends while civilian policing is now linked to peacekeeping; however, the institutional linkages across issue areas is at best informal. A decade after Alvaro de Soto and del Castillo’s incisive critique of the disconnect between the operations of the UN and the IFIs in El Salvador, there are only a few macro level mechanisms for better coordination among external actors such as the multi-donor trust funds and consultative mechanisms at the country level.\textsuperscript{48}

c) Operational and Implementation Issues

Although shortcomings at the policy and institutional levels are highly important, research at the nexus of security and development consistently draws attention to policy implementation issues. There seems to be a huge gap between policy makers and policy implementors—and between headquarters and field operations. This is particularly evident in issue areas like security sector reform. The carefully-defined and packaged policies and programs rarely translate into effective programs on the ground.\textsuperscript{49}

Sectoral and country-based research confirms that there is extremely weak knowledge management within organizations, inadequate mechanisms to incorporate lesson learned, and little institutional memory in terms of the range of new programs and projects that are implemented in various countries. As donors have become involved in hands-on programming (sometimes through private sector consulting firms) on such sensitive issue areas as the security sector, human rights, democratization, civil society promotion, the absence of consistent and rigorous planning methodology and management capacity have become more apparent.\textsuperscript{50}

At the country or field level, there is little provision for interaction between program implementers, national authorities and donors. As a result, there are a multitude of unconnected programs and projects in such different sectors as gender equity, human rights training, police reform, election monitoring, poverty alleviation. Multi-disciplinary task forces across projects or programs (e.g. with expertise in conflict, legal affairs, management, financing, budgeting and human resources) or a common understanding of the linkages among program areas (e.g. justice, security sector, public finance) are simply not part of the design of externally-supported initiatives. The complicated relationship between project implementers, their external funders, national governments and beneficiaries has exacerbated the perennial challenges of transparency and accountability between donors and recipients.
d) Donor Roles and Funding

External actors increasingly pay lip service to the importance of “local ownership” although the policy instruments for more effective alignment of donor and recipient strategies, instruments, frameworks, programs lag far behind. Research indicates that many policy and planning instruments promoted by external actors such as the poverty reduction strategy programs (PRSPs), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and Common Country Assessments (UNDAF/CCAs) are not only sectoral in nature; they are rarely the primary policy tools employed by national governments.51

There is increasing policy exhortations for more effective collaboration among donors, more efficient use of international resources and greater accountability. However, it is extremely difficult to trace donor funding within countries, across various sectors, and especially across governments and other international actors. For example, there is currently no repository of external funding for donor countries, particular sectors or recipient countries. Researchers find it difficult to gain a composite picture of who is doing what in which countries with what level of financial support. A concerted search for donor investments in security sector reform over the last 10 years has yielded only fragmented information. This is only partly due to the fact that many security sector reform activities undertaken by donors do not qualify under Official Development Assistance (ODA) criteria and are thus not tracked by OECD DAC. However, even those activities that fall under DAC criteria are dispersed among so many categories that it is not easy to gain an accurate picture.52

Similarly, researchers reviewing external engagement in individual countries were confronted with a multitude of actors, programs, projects without any overall sense of the total international support across the security-development spectrum. It is extremely difficult to map donor activities and donor funding in individual countries—which compounds the absence of any strategic approach to a country’s interlinked problems in such diverse areas as food insecurity, public sector reform, environmental management, communal conflicts—each of which is often supported by one or more external organizations and donors. The expansion of “donor spider-web” is increasingly recognized as a major challenge by local actores.

e) The Political Context

Perhaps the single most important conclusion that emerges from thematic as well as country-based research on the links between security and development policies is the centrality of politics—both for problem identification and policy response. Neither sectoral policies, nor national and international responses can be understood without an accurate understanding of the political dynamics at the country and international levels.

Despite the existence of historical and structural legacies which greatly affect a country’s security and development conditions, policy options as well as policy outcomes are not pre-determined. The key variable between structural problems and policy outcomes in countries at risk of conflict seems to the nature of the country’s political processes, dynamic and institutions. The political “ecology” of security and development is highly context-specific. Increasingly donors programs tend to conflate politics with “statebuilding.” Yet, country case studies challenge the equation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding with statebuilding. There seems to be accumulating evidence from countries like Somalia and Guinea-Bissau that the donor focus on strengthening formal institutions of the state at the central level (constitutions, elections, courts, military, police, parliaments, ministries) might be at the expense of national processes of political accommodation, dialogue and priority setting.53
Similarly, the fact that many contemporary conflicts end in externally-imposed solutions rather than the clear victory of conflicting parties is seen to have far reaching implications for a society’s ability to address its problems through locally-sustainable political processes.\textsuperscript{54} Not surprisingly, as the scope of official development assistance expands to highly sensitive political issue areas (including security sector reform, rule of law, democratization, human rights) the perennial question of sovereignty emerges as a key challenge.

There is no escaping the fact that external engagement in conflict prone, conflict torn and post conflict countries is inevitably political in nature. The absence of any grand international strategy linking the multiple goals pursued in such contexts does not diminish the political role of external bilateral and multilateral actors. In fact, it confirms the limitations of current approaches to conflict prevention, state building and peacebuilding. Not only are current security and development policies beset by serious problems of coherence, coordination and consistency. In reality, it is difficult to speak of the existence of international policies that are equal or appropriate to the multi-faceted security and developmental threats facing many developing countries in the early years of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. The security-development nexus ultimately serves to reveal the great chasm between global vulnerabilities that cut across the human, national and international levels and the structural shortcomings of the current international system that is still shaped by the national interests of its constituent member states.

CONCLUSION

The research findings summarized above provide evidence-based support to the growing dissatisfaction with the policy mantra for integrated security and development strategies for conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict peacebuilding. They also point to three current gaps which need to be addressed: the gap between knowledge and policy; between policy and practice; and between policies and politics. In each of these areas there is considerable room for further work.

Under the research-policy gap, the priority should be for more rigorous, field-based research that tracks the interrelated security and development challenges confronting countries at risk of conflict. This research should be informed by thematic research on structural risk factors while closely tracing the political context in which national and international policies are made. The dynamic interaction between security and development conditions in different contexts cannot be overemphasized. For example, the impact of the global war on terror on the development and security priorities of individual countries and regions requires urgent attention since it has inevitably created a new political environment for policy interventions.

Under the policy-practice gap, there is need for a large body of independent, systematic longitudinal and cumulative evaluation studies that can begin to document and assess the implementation of policies on the ground. Agency-based best practices units, lessons learned exercises, and evaluation studies fall short of providing a sound basis upon which to assess international policies. A consortium of policy research think tanks should lead a concerted effort to undertake evaluation studies across various countries, sectors and issue areas.

Finally, under the policy-politics gap, the current reactive approaches to conflicts cannot be sustained. For developing countries, structural vulnerabilities are not destiny; there are multiple policy options in many issue areas which are not explored or pursued by governments and international institutions because of overriding political considerations. However, the end of the Cold War and the aftermath of 9/11 have clearly demonstrated that politics are volatile in nature and provide significant opportunities for innovative, radical and
transformational policies. At the nexus of security and development, preventive strategies are imperative to avert structural vulnerabilities from becoming violent conflicts that know no borders.


4 For the draft document, please see the UN website at http://www.un.org/59/59hlpm_rev.2.pdf


9 UNDP Human Development Report, 1994, p.23

10 There is extensive academic and policy literature on the concept of human security. For more information, see the extensive work of the Commission on Human Security under http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/


12 (http://www.worldbank.org/prem/poverty/voices)


For the Report of the Commission on Human Security, see http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were precursors of official development assistance, and had extremely strategic goals. It was not coincidental that the subtitle of W.W. Rostow’s seminal book on development, The Stages of Economic Growth, was A Non-Communist Manifesto.

Jonathan Goodhand,


For a review of these developments, see Necla Tschirgi “Peacebuilding as the Link between Security and Development: Is the Window of Opportunity Closing?” IPA Policy Paper, December 2003. Available online at: http://www.ipacademy.org/Programs/Research/ProgReseSecDev_Pub.htm


For more information on the UN’s peacekeeping operations and other peace and political missions in the 1990s, see the UN’s website http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/index.asp.


I am grateful to Martin Khor of the Third World Forum for this powerful metaphor.

For more information on the program, please see under Research Programs at the IPA website www.ipacademy.org


As Donini argues: “In many ways, it is the intervention itself that should be seen as the new defining element in the post –bipolar world, rather than conflict, which of course existed throughout the previous era whether in the form of wars by proxy or in resistance to superpower hegemony. Thus, recent years have witnessed a kind of double lifting of inhibitions that had been largely suppressed by the Cold War’s rules of the game: the inhibition to wage war and the inhibition to intervene.” P.31 in Duffield, M. Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security (New York: Zed Books, 2001).

These insights are based on a series of commissioned studies on demography, environment, human rights, poverty, globalization and physical insecurity. They will be part of a forthcoming edited volume tentatively entitled “Security and Development: Critical Connections” Lynne Rienner, 2006.


34 These insights are drawn from country case studies on Yemen, Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Guinea-Bissau, Bolivia, Somalia, Tajikistan which will be included in the above-mentioned IPA volume, alongside the thematic studies.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 These insights are drawn from country case studies on Yemen, Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Guinea-Bissau, Bolivia, Somalia, Tajikistan which will be included in the above-mentioned IPA volume, alongside the thematic studies.


Documents prepared for OECD/DAC Senior Level Forum on Development Effectiveness in Fragile States, London, 13-14 January 2005:

39 See the country case studies in the forthcoming IPA edited volume, “Security and Development: Critical Connections” Lynne Riener.

40 For references on conflict-sensitive development, see Necla Tschirgi, “Post Conflict Peacebuilding Revisited”.

41 Research commissioned under the Rule of Law project at IPA’s Security-Nexus Program promises to yield a better understanding of the impact of rule of law programming in conflict prevention, peace operations and post-conflict peacebuilding. These studies will be published in a volume tentatively called “Rule of Law and Conflict Management: Toward Security, Development and Human Rights.”

42 For further discussion of this point, see the paper by Robert Picciotto “The State Fragility Dimension of Development Cooperation” prepared for the First Global International Studies Conference in Istanbul, 24-27 August 2005.

43 Donor approaches to security sector reform are the subject of a parallel IPA research project; its findings of will be collected in an edited volume titled Arresting Insecurity. Also see the paper by Gordon Peake and Kayssie Studdard Brown “Police Building: The International Deployment Group in the Solomon Islands”, International Peacekeeping, (Winter 2005). On Rule of Law programming, see the forthcoming IPA edited volume tentatively called “Rule of Law and Conflict Management: Toward Security, Development and Human Rights” There is a wealth of evaluation studies on other programming areas which confirm the overall conclusion.

44 The “strategy deficit” in post-conflict peacebuilding is well-established in the literature. It was empirically confirmed by the multi-country peacebuilding evaluations undertaken by the Utstein-4 countries, UK, Germany, Norway and the Netherlands. For a summary report see Smith, Dan. “Getting their Act Together: Toward a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding,” synthesis report of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding (Oslo: The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 2003).


46 Presentation by Bernardo Arevalo de Leon at the IPA/WSP Peacebuilding Forum conference, New York City, 7 October 2004
48 Alvaro de Soto and G. Castillo paper
49 The aforementioned IPA edited volumes on Security Sector Reform and Rule of Law will address implementation issues in greater detail.
50 Ibid
51 See the forthcoming IPA volume “Security and Development: Critical Connections”
53 See the country case studies in the forthcoming IPA volume Security and Development: Critical Connections.
54 Stedman, Stephen, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth Cousens, Ending Civil Wars: The implementation of peace agreements, Lynne Rienner 2002