Security-sector Transformation in Post-conflict Societies

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Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the attitude of development organisations towards the security sector has changed. Previously shunned as a target for aid, personal security is now recognised as a key concern of the poor in weak states. In addition, repressive or corrupt security structures can undermine the stability crucial to maximising the benefits of aid programmes. Consequently, a number of agencies have engaged with the issue of security-sector reform. This engagement has, however, focused narrowly on disarmament and demobilisation, reform of the uniformed security branches of aid recipients and training for civil servants. Relevant though these aspects are, transforming a security sector also requires attention to the political economy of conflict zones, and to the socio-political dynamics of civil–military relations in war-torn societies.

This paper argues that wider and more innovative reform – security sector ‘transformation’ – is needed if these issues are to be addressed. It delineates the role that transformative strategies can play in preventing conflicts and promoting post-conflict peacebuilding. Such strategies incorporate a range of actors and sectors, and represent a process of demilitarisation that nurtures not just reform in post-conflict societies, but also transformation. This approach is also designed to redress the balance of economic structures and the socio-political environment in a way that diminishes the incentives for extravagant arms acquisition, and bolsters civilian checks on militarism. The transformative agenda elaborated here has the additional advantage of offsetting the tendency to ‘recycle’ violence that is implicit in the use of coercion and enforcement in peacebuilding. It also implies that aid benefactors need to reform their own security institutions, and to address the ‘democratic deficit’ often present in their relationship with aid recipients, particularly where aspects of this relationship intersect with their security or state interests.

This paper begins by outlining the evolution of aid for security sectors in conflict-prone states, and highlights the extent to which ‘security first’ policy has been incorporated into development assistance. It then examines the challenges to current approaches to security-
sector reform. These arise in the shape of: resource manipulation; weapons’ proliferation; the relativity of peace; the emphasis on coercion in international interventions; and the diversity of war-torn societies. The paper then expands upon the concept of transformative security reform by outlining two elements: structural arms control based on economic inducements to limit militarism; and the development of socio-political safeguards against militarism. In our analysis, structural arms control means a set of policy tools, designed and organised from without, to change processes in post-conflict societies. Economic inducements include tightening arms-export credits and licensing rules, taxing defence sales and controlling conflict resources, such as diaspora funds and non-military conflict goods like diamonds. Socio-political safeguards hinge on the transformation of civil–military relations through constitutional and capacity-building provisions to establish the supremacy of civil authorities and the separation of powers. In line with a transformative approach, it is also important to enhance civil society’s engagement in security-sector reform, and embed this engagement in the processes of post-conflict reconstruction.
Chapter 1
The evolution of aid to the security sector

The security sectors of conflict-torn areas have not traditionally received development aid. However, since the end of the Cold War, the policies of donor countries have changed significantly, moving away from narrow conceptions of security towards a broader view.

Military aid in the Cold War

During the Cold War, providing aid to the security sector was conceived by policy-makers essentially as an instrument of power politics (as was development aid in general). Security was defined in very narrow terms: it meant maintaining the state and its borders by military means. Consequently, external aid to the security sector aimed to shore up allies, and to provide them with the capacity to resist overthrow by external invasion or internal insurrection. Crudely put, this was virtually the antithesis of arms control, and implied supplying guns, bombs and military training to Cold War allies in conflict-torn regions.

At the same time, the narrow definition of security used by most states precluded the explicit consideration of the impact that military and police forces had on other security issues, whether economic, social or human. There was little interest in how security sectors could hinder the development of well-functioning political systems able to underpin security across this wider spectrum. In short, the role of the security sector was not explicitly conceived of as a development issue—although it was sometimes argued that the military forces of developing countries could act as important agents of modernisation.

In contrast, for many NGOs and peace researchers the assistance major powers gave the military security sectors of their ‘Third World’ clients was deemed to be aiding and abetting repressive and corrupt regimes—thereby constituting the principal threat to the security of their citizens. The bloated military sectors of such regimes were also judged to have a negative impact on overall economic development.\(^1\) From this perspective, the military

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security sector was part of the problem facing developing countries – not part of the solution. Consequently, NGOs, development theorists and peace researchers engaged with the military sector primarily through general critiques of excessive military expenditure and the distribution of military aid.

**The ‘security first’ philosophy**

With the end of the Cold War, many governments and their advisors have adopted a wider definition of security, which encompasses economic and human security. At the same time, many researchers and practitioners have acknowledged that the military security sector is not only part of the problem facing recipients of development aid, but also part of the solution – particularly for societies in conflict, or emerging from it. Proponents of the new ‘aid paradigm’ accept that a pre-requisite for development, and indeed human rights, is the security and stability that comes through the effective, impartial and humane introduction of law and order, alongside the extension of sound governance to the military sector itself. Thus, consensus has grown among policy-makers, researchers and practitioners that the role of the military security sector is a legitimate development issue in its own right. However, it cannot be addressed just by writing a blank cheque for arms purchases, or by simplistic calls for fewer arms and less defence spending.

This growing consensus was reflected in, and reinforced by, the ‘Security First’ initiative in Mali. In 1992, the government and Tuareg rebels signed a peace accord. Two years later, a UN Advisory Mission to the country concluded that the failure of the security forces to control smuggling and banditry was preventing both the implementation of the accord, and economic and social development. Some $200 million of development assistance committed to northern Mali was blocked because of insecurity in the area. The mission proposed a

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‘Security First’ approach, under which aid for development and the demobilisation of former combatants was integrated with assistance to improve policing and border controls.3

The Mali experiment has been followed by similar initiatives, such as the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Cooperation in West Africa (PCASED). The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have also begun to address the security sector in their programmes. The IMF has increasingly focused on defence expenditures during consultations with recipient governments over economic policies, and in administering its lending programmes.4 For example, in 1999, it suspended a financial rescue package to Zimbabwe because of the spiralling cost of the government’s military adventurism in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The IMF also required reductions in military spending in Sierra Leone after elections in 1996. From the early 1990s, the World Bank began to focus on the problems arising when military expenditure crowded out social and other development spending. This focus was further spurred by legislation requiring the US government to instruct American executive directors of the international financial institutions (IFIs) to take a stricter line on the issue. They were to oppose any aid to countries deemed to lack a functioning system of reporting audited military expenditures to civil authorities. The World Bank has also developed expertise in supporting demobilisation and reintegration programmes, and has established a Post-Conflict Unit to prepare quarterly monitoring reports on countries and regions affected by conflict.

UK initiatives
In line with this new emphasis on the security sector, both as a development issue and as a legitimate object of development aid, the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) intends to use British aid to address ‘security sector reform’. Clare Short, the


Secretary of State for International Development, has defined the security sector as ‘not just the military and the para-militaries, but the police, border guards and customs services, and the civil structures – in government and in parliament – that are responsible for the management of the security sector’. Potential initiatives include:

- supporting the establishment of structures of proper civilian control over the military;
- training members of the military in international humanitarian law and human rights;
- strengthening national parliamentary oversight of the security apparatus;
- supporting civilian organisations that might act as watchdogs over the security sector; and
- supporting the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants.

DFID is also participating in efforts to forge greater policy coherence among the UK government departments involved in the security sector. DFID’s security-sector reform programme complements the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)’s Assistance to Support Stability with In-Service Training (ASSIST) programmes, and the Ministry of Defence (MoD)’s Defence Diplomacy missions. ASSIST is designed to promote respect for civilian democratic government and practices within overseas military and police forces. Defence Diplomacy is intended to ‘assist in the development of democratically accountable armed forces, thereby making a significant contribution to conflict prevention and resolution’. As a mark of this increased cooperation among departments, a new ‘conflict prevention budget’ was announced in 2000. Managed by the MoD, the FCO and DFID, it totals some £500m (mostly taken from existing Departmental budgets), a quarter of which is earmarked for Africa. Two sub-committees of the Ministerial Committee on Defence and Overseas Policy have also been established. One, chaired by Short, focuses on sub-Saharan Africa. The other, chaired by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, deals with the rest of

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the world. As examples of inter-departmental cooperation in this area, ministers point to British policy in Nigeria and Sierra Leone. In the latter case, UK armed forces have provided and training and equipment for the Sierra Leone army, DFID has provided support for a variety of security sector reform initiatives and the FCO has actively promoted a UN ban on the import of rough diamonds other than those certified by the government of Sierra Leone.

**A critique of security-sector reform**

DFID’s conception of the security sector is broadly in line with other definitions in the emerging literature on security-sector reform. The absence of controversy here is testimony to the remarkable speed with which the wider definition of security has become part of the mainstream thinking of academics, NGOs and policy-makers. Yet it can be criticised on a number of grounds.

First, the term ‘security-sector reform’ may be inappropriate. A better label would be ‘security-sector transformation’, because the shortfalls in security-sector governance in countries targeted for action are so substantial that nothing short of a transformation in the relationship between civil authorities, civil society and the security sector is required.

Second, even when broadly conceived a focus on the security sector risks overlooking the crucial role that other factors, like the environment or the economy, play in the development and resolution of conflict. This focus risks over-emphasising the security sector as a target for funds and an agent of change, and increases the likelihood that security-sector reform

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will become insulated from the wider political economy. In militarised societies such as Sierra Leone and Kosovo, for example, local military leaders may be involved in international crime, or have access to economic assets that can be traded on the global market. The profits they make from these activities can facilitate their perpetuation of conflicts. In Indonesia, senior officers may be making so much from their trading activities that, for instance, security sector reforms in the pay and conditions of the military are unlikely to provide much of an incentive to cease such operations. Similarly, they are likely to resist attempts to institute effective governance procedures that hinder such trading activities. Thus, the problems of insecurity that arise in weak states need to be dealt with holistically rather than in fragmentary fashion.

Third, there is a risk that security-sector reform will be dominated by actors concerned to promote a ‘traditional’ approach more akin to the client relationships of the Cold War. A case in point is the $10m pledged by the US Department of Defense in 2000 to re-professionalise the Nigerian army. The programme, run by the private security company Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI), includes initiatives appropriate to the broader conception of reform, such as developing a civilian oversight structure. But it also has the stamp of an old-fashioned military aid package. At the extreme, security-sector reform could offer an opportunity for those who wish to reintroduce Cold War notions of the modernising and developmental potential of armed forces.¹¹

The language of security-sector reform can also be used to justify policies that have hampered such reform in the past. For instance, both Short and Dr Lewis Moonie of the MoD addressed the topic of arms exports in speeches to a DFID conference on the management of military expenditure held in February 2000. The difference in emphasis was notable. Short considered that it was ‘important that reformers in developing countries are not undermined by those who wish to sell them arms which are either inappropriate for their needs or beyond their capacity to afford’. For Moonie: ‘we should offer assistance to all

nations who seek to identify [their] security needs and reform their security sector and military expenditure to meet them. Defence exports need to be seen in this context. Developing nations, as much as anyone, need equipment to ensure security against internal as well as external threats’. Thus, whereas Short underlined the negative consequences of excessive arms expenditure Moonie essentially wrapped up a traditional defence of arms sales – the right to self defence - in the language of security sector reform.

Given the kinds of actors that security sector reform involves both as benefactors and targets of reform, the potential for the language being used to legitimise more traditional approaches to the security sector is particularly great. It is thus vitally important that programmes designed to address security sector reform are located firmly within a transformational paradigm which places an emphasis on embedding a process of demilitarisation in societies.

Fourth, in promoting reform within the security sectors of aid recipients, the inter-relationships with regional and global actors can be overlooked. The focus is on deficiencies in weak states, rather than on how the policies and practices of external actors contribute to them. Security-sector reform underplays the need for transformation in both developed and developing states. For instance, in South Africa the UK has sponsored a workshop on light weapons, funded the African Civil–Military Relations (ACMR) Project run by the Institute for Security Studies and provided a military and MoD team to help develop a new defence force. At the same time, however, the UK has also intensively lobbied South Africa to buy British defence goods as part of a R30 billion package of arms acquisitions which have already escalated in price to R44 billion and are mired in accusations of corruption, undue favouritism towards British Aerospace and over-pricing by suppliers. Notwithstanding the UK’s adoption of new arms-export guidelines, its policies in this area seem to have become complicit in a process which appears to have undermined the integrity of the South African security sector.

12 Ibid., Annex 1, pp. 26, 34.

None of this is to suggest that security-sector reform should be rejected. When set against earlier Cold War approaches to military aid, it represents a significant evolution, and the fact that it may have weaknesses in both conception and implementation should not detract from its many strengths. However, reform should be better integrated within a broader process of security-sector transformation. This would engage with the wider political economy of violence and insecurity, and would recognise the need for transformation in the security sectors of ‘benefactors’, as well as those of ‘supplicants’.
Chapter 2

Challenges to security-sector reform in post-conflict societies

Today’s conflicts are driven by factors that present a number of challenges to conflict prevention and resolution. Many weak states in the developing world have essentially become ‘virtual states’. Their autonomy has been undermined by globalisation, aid dependence and structural-adjustment programmes, all of which reduce the state’s authority and legitimacy. This in turn presents a number of challenges to security-sector reform as currently conceptualised and practised. These can be categorised as follows:

- resource manipulation;
- weapons’ proliferation;
- the relativity of peace;
- the structured sources of violence in conflict zones; and
- the diversity of local historical and cultural traditions.

Resource manipulation

One of the defining features of contemporary conflicts is the way that local elites manipulate resources and their formal and informal economic links to extract wealth, generate political support and finance military campaigns. There is a growing literature on the role of economic motivations in generating and sustaining conflicts. For instance, in his World Bank study of civil wars Paul Collier argues that, together with low national income, the extent of a country’s dependence on primary commodity exports is a significant predictor of civil wars, largely because these exports provide guerrilla movements with easy opportunities for wealth creation through taxation or control.\(^\text{14}\) The political economy of today’s conflicts creates both local and global actors with a vested interest in perpetuating instability, lawlessness and even conflict. In addition, the economic damage caused by such actors creates an inauspicious environment in which to demobilise soldiers, tackle crime or promote social cohesion.

Weapons’ proliferation

The ubiquity of light weapons is another challenge. The trade in light weapons has been fuelled by the legacy of Cold War arms supplies to client states, the globalisation of the international defence industry, the increasingly porous nature of national borders and the commercial imperatives created by reduced demand and over-capacity. Consequently the easy availability of such weapons and the proximity of forces creates particularly acute security dilemmas for parties engaging in a post-conflict peace, as well as for the wider society in which cultures of lawlessness and violence may have been fostered. In this context conventional approaches to the problem of weapons proliferation – supply side initiatives to prevent the excessive or inappropriate acquisition of arms by actors in post-conflict states and disarmament and demobilisation agreements between warring parties – face serious challenges to their effectiveness. At their worst, then, peace agreements can become temporary pauses that allow the warring parties to regroup and replenish arms supplies, as in Sierra Leone, or are simply ignored, as in the DRC. In addition, those interested in peacebuilding face the contradictory challenges involved in simultaneously demilitarising armed factions and the wider society, whilst also re-imposing effective and impartial law and order.

The relativity of peace

Transforming the security sectors of conflict-torn societies requires a consideration of peace and war as relative concepts, not Hobbesian absolutes in which security is narrowly conceived as state or quasi-state coercion. Peace is variable in type and quality, and therefore politically contested. It may become a *homicidal peace* in which, as in El Salvador, ‘post-war civil killings’ exceed ‘wartime killings’. It may also be a *pax mafiosa*,

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15 Supply-side initiatives include limitations or embargoes on the provision of particular types of equipment, training and technology to specified states or regions.


in which the ‘spoils of peace’ are distributed between world markets and regional criminals. The transformation of civil–military relations, therefore, has to occur in an environment in which peace itself is being contested and is a relative rather than absolute concept.

**Domestic structures of violence are influenced by international actors and international power relations**

In the peacebuilding norms of external agents, social and political issues are often defined as security issues and security issues are represented as military and policing issues to be met with force. Ironically then, even humanitarian intervention on the part of the ‘international community’ or the process of peacebuilding can become militarised to an extent which is counterproductive to the development of a positive peace. One can argue, for example, that throughout the history of south-east Europe, forcible external intervention has compounded the problems of ethno-nationalism by ensuring that violence lodges intractably into societies. This requires an awareness that structures of violence in conflict zones are influenced by the local practices of international actors and the global power relations that determine them. For instance, it is difficult to deny that the deployment of multinational forces in conflict zones depends upon a coincidence of policy among state authorities with the means and strategic interests for engagement.

Moreover, the political contest over the nature of a post-conflict peace is usually conceived as a tension between stability/law and order/non-violence on the one hand, versus violent restitution/recidivism/revenge on the other. The external agencies are, of course, presented as purveyors of stability, law and order. In practice their presence and their coercive techniques, if privileged over issues of accountability and justice, can foster the erosion of politics, other than the politics of the gun.

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Local historical and cultural factors

The transformation of civil–military relations also has to be rooted in the specific political culture of the society in question. Both analysis and prescription thus needs to address the historical legacies of civil-military relations and the shared culture patterns of militaries and the societies from which they spring and which are regenerated through shared historical experiences. In addition, the urge to engineer on the part of external actors has to be balanced against the need for local ownership of civil-military relations. Unless the external actors develop local stakeholding in security sector reform, their efforts are likely to become part of the problem in the sense that local factions will hold externally-created structures responsible for ills, perhaps the better to drum up support for a return to violence. Local ownership does not necessarily imply, however, that internal developments will take a less transformative direction than the external actors might wish to support. For instance, the overthrow of a regime which uses military and police forces as instruments of oppression can lead to a break with the past. A case in point might be the Aristide government in Haiti which abolished the armed forces in 1995 (against US wishes), though some personnel were transferred into the new National Police. 20 The obvious implication of this contextual challenge, then, is that each case merits *sui generis* consideration.

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Chapter 3
Towards transformative security-sector reform

The challenges outlined in the previous chapter require transformative approaches to post-conflict demilitarisation and security-sector governance. Such approaches would aim to reform economic structures so as to reduce the incentives for militarisation. In particular, the objective would be to discourage inappropriate arms expenditures, and curb the illicit income-generation that sustains military rebellion and autonomy. This approach would also aim to influence the socio-political environment so as to increase the incentives and capacity to promote a more balanced approach to a society’s various security needs. A transformative approach addresses many of the same issues as orthodox security-sector reform. However, it also encapsulates a broader range of actors and issues, as well as a greater sensitivity to the linkages between security sectors (military, economic and societal).

The constraints on a transformative approach
A number of ‘external’ factors inhibit the implementation of a transformative approach. First, the ‘exit strategy mentality’ that dominates international intervention in conflicts results in arbitrary targets and deadlines being set for the completion of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. But achieving ceasefires or holding elections is not the same as creating sufficient stability to allow positive peace processes to develop. This is inevitably a long-term process calling for flexibility and commitment. The very act of promulgating an exit strategy can actually incite protagonists to hasten the exit date or to play a waiting game. External actors can thus become ‘lame ducks’, making little impact on the perceptions of the adversaries who regard the external involvement as a temporary measure to be exploited for gain. Exit strategies need to be replaced with engagement strategies that conceive peacebuilding as a long-term endeavour, constantly reworked and redefined in the light of new challenges.21

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Second, Western societies do not tolerate the loss of even a few peacekeepers, particularly where no direct national interests appear to be at stake. Consequently, the developed world is opting out of peacekeeping operations, particularly where they are undertaken under UN auspices. The Brahimi Report on UN peace operations of August 2000 notes that 77% of the troops deployed in recent missions were provided by developing countries. This has undermined the status and effectiveness of UN peace operations, as in Sierra Leone. However, as Mary Kaldor and others have noted with respect to peace enforcement, ‘the lives of peace-keepers cannot be privileged over the lives of ordinary foreign civilians’. Policy-makers, academics and NGOs need to challenge current assumptions, and encourage Western militaries and publics to see peacekeepers as representing the citizens of an emerging global community.

Structural Arms Control Inducements

The concept of ‘structural arms control’ has been used by Stephanie Neuman to describe how changes in economic or political structures restrict defence spending. Similarly, the term ‘structural disarmament’ is sometimes used to describe how the rising cost of defence equipment has forced reductions in the absolute number of weapons systems acquired by armed forces.

‘Structural arms control’ as used by Neuman is a passive concept, in which decisions about the allocation of resources to defence are influenced by the autonomous operation of the international system. However, interventionist strategies could influence the economic incentives and disincentives affecting arms purchases. Many of these initiatives may be


24 Ibid.

undertaken by external actors with a view to influencing the general conditions of the global arms market, or to encourage demilitarisation in post-conflict societies. On the issue of weapons’ proliferation, for example, the British government has signed international agreements against the use of bribery to secure contracts, and is committed to not providing export credits for defence sales to a number of low-income developing countries. DFID has also provided political and financial support for regional initiatives to address light-weapons’ proliferation, assist in demilitarisation and promote civilian oversight of military budgets.

The aim in this section therefore is to outline and evaluate current initiatives which can be placed under the rubric of structural arms control, and to suggest ways in which this might be further promoted either through UK domestic policy or through the promotion of initiatives at the multilateral level.

**Export credits**

Export credits are a key mechanism for facilitating arms exports. In the UK, the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) provides insurance cover to compensate exporters when buyers default. It also gives unconditional guarantees to British banks covering exports, allowing banks to make loans and charge interest at levels below normal market rates. The defence trade accounted for an average of 27% of ECGD business in the five years from 1994-5 to 1989-9. In contrast, defence sales account for just 2% of UK exports. According to the calculations of the Oxford Research Group, the ECGD’s annual subsidy for defence exports is effectively £66m.  

In September 1997, Chancellor Gordon Brown committed the UK not to provide export credits for non-productive expenditure (which includes defence imports) to all highly-indebted poor countries (HIPCs). This has been extended to cover a further 22 countries only eligible for highly concessional International Development Association (IDA) loans from the World Bank. The government is also pressing for an agreement among the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries that would limit export credits for non-productive expenditure. While these are useful reforms, their practical impact

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should not be overestimated. Many HIPC and IDA countries are likely to have poor credit ratings anyway, thus reducing their chances of receiving such credit. Between 1990 and 1997, the UK extended export credits for defence-related business to just three HIPCs, accounting for only 0.15% of all export credits. Similarly, no defence-export credits were extended to IDAs in the five years to 2000. In addition, government statements have noted that this initiative does not preclude export credits for defence or dual-use equipment deemed essential for national security, or when improved security can be shown to have a positive impact on development. Past history – for instance on the application of the UK’s restrictions on defence sales to Iraq in the eighties – suggests such careful phrasing may provide loopholes through which the apparent intention of the initiative could be undermined. At the very least then, a more detailed definition is needed of the criteria governing exceptions to the general policy of withholding export credits. Better still, where credits are furnished for security-related exports to countries covered by the initiative, this should be recorded in the government’s Annual Report on Strategic Exports, and the reasons given. There is also a need to increase the number of states covered by the prohibition on export credits. For instance, of the top five countries in 2000 where claims were paid on defence contracts but not recovered – Indonesia (£131m), Jordan (£253m), Algeria (£98m), Egypt (£46m) and Kenya (£16m) – only Kenya is covered by the new initiative.

**Taxing defence sales to fund disarmament and demobilisation**

Commentators and institutions such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP) have called for a global tax on defence sales. A range of levels has been proposed, from 5% to 50%. Even at relatively low levels, the returns would be substantial. Allowing for the

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administrative costs of collection, a 7% tax would generate an estimated annual revenue of $1.3 billion.\footnote{Deen, ‘Mission Impossible’, p. 22.} This is equivalent to the whole of the UN’s peacekeeping budget for 1999. Moreover, the increased cost of weapons resulting from the tax would also reduce the volume of the global arms trade.

The UK could, on a unilateral basis, operate a modified version of this proposal. The MoD places an export levy on the sale of arms which have been developed with government funds. Although this is often waived or reduced, it still brings in roughly £50m a year.\footnote{UK House of Commons, \textit{Hansard}, 22 June 1998, WA, col. 375.} If the export levy were raised and consistently applied, and if the receipts were hypothecated to fund demilitarisation initiatives or a rigorous end-use inspection regime, the UK could at least argue that it was putting the receipts from arms sales to a use consistent with the ‘polluter pays’ principle.

Currently, defence companies have little incentive to observe embargoes rigorously, and every incentive to breach them – the chances of detection are small and, given the close relationship between governments and defence companies, breaches of formal policy are often overlooked. An alternative approach might be to work for an international agreement allowing the \textit{victims} of illegitimate arms supplies to sue for compensation. Where companies or states have knowingly broken a UN arms embargo, the government or citizens of the state to which arms have been supplied should be able to sue the firm or state responsible, and to claim reparations. These could be put towards the costs of demilitarisation and peacebuilding.

It could be argued that this is unrealistic given that weapons often change hands a number of times before ending up in a particular conflict. However, as recent UN reports on the breaching of sanctions on Angola and Sierra Leone have shown, where the political will exists it is possible to track the complex arrangements by which arms are illegally shipped from place to place. Tagging arms and improving end-use monitoring would make it easier
to track the flow of weapons. Moreover, other sectors of industry are fined for failing to implement government policy, even where they are not directly at fault. In the UK, for instance, ferry companies, airlines and road hauliers face fines of £2,000 for every illegal immigrant they bring into the country, even if they do so unwittingly.³⁴ Compare the treatment of the Luton-based company Air Foyle, which was involved in shipping arms to rebels in Sierra Leone in breach of the UN embargo. In March 1999, the company flew 68 tons of weapons, including 3,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles, from Ukraine to Burkina Faso, from where they were transported on to Sierra Leone. The company denied any knowledge of their final destination. When asked about Air Foyle’s activities, Foreign Office minister Peter Hain asserted that ‘any Briton or any British company, any British group which is involved or could be involved in open breach of UN sanctions, will have us coming down on them like a ton of bricks’.³⁵ Yet no action was taken against the company, and the plane which delivered the weapons has been contracted by the MoD to supply the UK’s peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone. Air Foyle was also used in March 2000 to deliver Royal Air Force helicopters to South Africa.³⁶ It was being considered for a further MoD contract well after the government had been informed of its activities in Burkina Faso.³⁷

**Tightening interpretations of defence-export rules**

Both the European Union (EU) Code and UK export criteria include commitments not to export defence equipment where this would affect the recipient’s economy. The British government has interpreted this in a way that only allows consideration of the impact of each individual export licence, as opposed to the cumulative impact of arms sales. As the report of the joint Parliamentary Committees on UK arms-sales policy has noted: ‘except in rare


cases of a single licence application – such as for a number of aircraft – which on its own could skew an economy, this seems to imply that the criteria are a dead letter'.

No licence has yet been refused on the grounds of the effect on the economic development of the recipient country. This is not only problematic in itself, but has also led to anomalies in policy. DFID, for instance, has cut long-term development aid to Ethiopia because of its spending on arms as a consequence of the war with Eritrea, to which the government had previously allowed defence exports. Although DFID objected, the economic impact of individual sales was not deemed sufficient to breach the criteria as currently interpreted.

There is a need, therefore, to tighten up interpretation of both the UK and EU codes so that the cumulative impact of defence sales can be taken into account.

**Imposing embargoes on irresponsible arms exporters**

Multilateral export control arrangements predominantly focus on banning the transfer of arms to pariah regimes or to unstable regions. This requires exporters to exercise a remarkable degree of self-restraint and abjure financially rewarding deals in a context where the only downside is the possibility of rhetorical condemnation from the ‘international community’. There is thus a need for greater consideration to be given to embargoes on the purchase of arms from producer countries which consistently violate multilateral restraints on arms transfers. Indeed, the UN Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone has recommended such an initiative in its report. The effect of this approach would be to impose defence industrial costs on serial sanctions busters making the economics of ethical behaviour more attractive than it is at present.

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39 *Ibid*.

This could be coupled with greater funding to help potential problem states improve security at weapons depots, fund conversion and demobilisation programmes and improve their capacity to patrol national borders. This is of particular relevance to the states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, many of which are sources of sanctions-busting arms.

Initiatives already exist: as part of the Stability Pact for South-east Europe, for instance, the US, Norway and Germany agreed in September 2000 to support the destruction in Albania of some 130,000 small arms and light weapons collected from civilians, along with surplus military stocks of small arms. The EU, OSCE and NATO all have programmes to address the regional problem of small arms.\textsuperscript{41} There is, however, a risk of duplication and lack of coordination. Moreover, many of these initiatives are either under-funded or largely symbolic, or have not been widely taken up. For instance, while a NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) programme on small arms was announced in July 1999, only Lithuania and Romania initially indicated that they would accept assistance.\textsuperscript{42} In terms of funding, the reference-point for such an approach should be the US Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, which provides aid to the nuclear successor-states of the FSU. By 1999 the programme had provided $2.7 billion worth of assistance.

\textit{Aid conditionality}

A number of governments, including the UK, have undertaken to make aid conditional upon low levels of defence expenditure. However, applying automatic conditionalities may not be the best way forward. To ensure reductions in inappropriate military spending, local political will is needed. As Ball notes, cuts imposed from outside may simply encourage local authorities to hide military expenditure in other budget headings.\textsuperscript{43} Nevertheless, there is

\textsuperscript{41} Greene, ‘Tackling Illicit Arms Trafficking’.


clearly a requirement for external actors to decide what exactly constitutes excessive military expenditure, so that this can inform negotiations with local actors, and domestic policy on, for example, whether to permit arms sales to a country or region. Attempts to do this, in the UK and elsewhere, have been hampered by difficulties in establishing what constitutes a reasonable level of defence expenditure, and the criteria to be used in making this assessment. For instance, simply using the percentage of gross domestic product devoted to defence can be criticised on the grounds that this represents a very crude measure of militarisation, and ignores factors such as the proportion of the population in the armed forces. Policy here would be aided by the development of a more sophisticated index of militarisation. Like the UNDP’s Human Development Index, this would use a mathematical formula to synthesise a variety of data on the defence commitments of states so as to rank them according to their degree of militarisation.

Such indices are never perfect and, particularly in post-conflict societies, there may be good reasons for some items of defence expenditure to rise. Increasing the pay of military and police forces, for example, can be justified on the grounds that it reduces the incentive for corruption. Similarly, the need to release resources for economic development has to be balanced against the demands of external defence and internal security. Nevertheless, such indices can provide an important guide for policy-makers. They might, for instance, be used to trigger a more thorough consideration of the merits of arms transfers or military aid programmes to particular regimes. The publication of such indices would also provide a more sophisticated and standardised set of criteria, which could trigger investigations of government policy by parliaments or NGOs.

**Curbing the provision of arms as military aid to governments in conflict zones**

This issue is of particular relevance to the UK given its recent experience in Sierra Leone. In October 1999, the British government announced that it would supply the country with 132 light machine guns, with two million rounds of ammunition; 7,500 rifles; 800,000 rounds of ‘training’ ammunition; and 24 81mm mortars, with 2,000 rounds. In May 2000, 10,000 self-loading rifles were provided. In June, the government added five million rounds of
ammunition and 4,000 mortars and, in July, another shipment of five million rounds was announced. The UK is now the largest arms supplier to the Sierra Leonean government.

This raises difficult issues in contemporary conflicts. On the one hand, it can be argued that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)’s failure to abide by the peace agreement and its terror campaign against civilians necessitated supplying arms so as to shore up a legitimate government. During the war in Bosnia–Herzegovina, imposing an arms embargo against all parties to the conflict was criticised because it gave the better-equipped Serbs, who were viewed as the aggressors, a military advantage. But at the same time, however, there is a long history of small arms supplies to one party either being diverted to regional neighbours or ending up in the hands of enemies and thus fuelling wars. This concern underlies the moratorium on the export, import and manufacture of small arms agreed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1998. The UK has provided £300,000 to the UNDP-administered PCASED, which is aimed at implementing the moratorium.

Whilst short-term necessity may appear to demand the provision of military aid to a weak but legitimate state, prevailing conditions are likely to lead to leakage, often on a large scale. In Sierra Leone, UK-supplied arms have already ‘leaked’. The West Side Boys, a faction with a reputation for human-rights abuse, have acquired British arms. The West Side Boys were initially part of the pro-government forces, and some members were reportedly accepted for training by the British as part of a new Sierra Leone army. In September 2000, however, they abducted a number of British troops.

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In the long term, these supplies simply increase the number of arms in circulation once a conflict has ceased. The threats facing such states thus need to be addressed in other ways – ‘security first’ policies should not be pursued in a manner that simply leads to insecurity later.

**Controlling ‘conflict goods’**

The trade in non-military goods (‘conflict goods’) is important in sustaining conflicts. This has been given particular prominence by the debate over conflict diamonds, the sale of which has funded arms acquisitions by parties to the conflicts in, for example, Sierra Leone and Angola. However, the role of conflict goods is both broader, and more complex.

- In Colombia, British Petroleum pays the government a ‘war tax’ of $1.25 a barrel, and has reportedly signed an agreement to provide an additional £39m to establish a new military squad. Meanwhile, guerrillas fighting the government levy taxes on the production of cocaine.

- During the conflict in Liberia, warlord Charles Taylor plundered the country to fund his military campaign, exporting timber, diamonds and rubber. In the early 1990s, Taylor was France’s third-largest supplier of tropical hardwoods. These activities were estimated to have netted him an income of between $400m and $450m a year.47

- Despite a UN embargo on the supply of petroleum products to UNITA rebels in Angola, the group acquired 2.3m litres of fuel for its administration and military activities between January 1996 and December 1998.48


• Post-conflict Bosnia has become a major centre for the smuggling of illegal migrants into Europe. The International Organisation for Migration estimates that the trade, which is protected by corrupt local officials, is worth £70m a year to Bosnia’s economy.\textsuperscript{49}

Both conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding may be better served by targeting the war economies of military factions, with a view to raising the economic costs of conflict. The British government has been in the forefront of efforts to address this issue. In particular, it has played a leading role in initiatives aimed at controlling the supply of conflict diamonds, and hosted a 1999 conference on the issue in London.

However, international action on conflict goods has tended to address trade by guerrilla forces, and has avoided limiting the activities of governments. Diamond company de Beers, for example, has self-imposed restrictions on the purchase of conflict diamonds, but it defines such goods as ‘those which originate from areas in Africa controlled by forces fighting the legitimate and internationally recognised government of the relevant country’.\textsuperscript{50} Similarly, UN sanctions on conflict diamonds from Angola and Sierra Leone exempt the governments of these countries, which both have records of human-rights abuse and corruption, and which have also mortgaged the natural resources of their countries to prosecute conflict. Of course, the specific targeting of both UNITA and the RUF can equally be justified as part of a broader range of punishments for grave and recidivist violations of human rights. Nevertheless, when coupled with the way in which Plan Colombia ignores the complicity of the army and right wing militias in the Colombian drug trade, there is a clear risk that actual policy on conflict goods is, and will be, skewed towards a ‘drugs and thugs’ agenda (much as it has been on the issue of small arms).\textsuperscript{51} This implicitly legitimises state sanctioned trade in conflict goods as a prerogative of sovereignty.


\textsuperscript{51} The phrase is borrowed from: Susannah L. Dyer and Geraldine O’Callaghan, One Size
As with other aspects of peacekeeping and conflict resolution, attention to the political economy of conflict goods raises difficult ethical and strategic questions. To what extent should the economic motivations of warlords be recognised by offering them a lucrative stake in the post-conflict economy as a ‘reward’ for their commitment to a peace process? Following his defection from the Khmer Rouge in 1996, for instance, Ieng Sary received a royal pardon and access to lucrative logging and gem-mining operations.\textsuperscript{52} Similarly, despite a history of atrocious human-rights abuses by the RUF in Sierra Leone, the peace accord of 1999 resulted in RUF leader Foday Sankoh gaining control of the country’s diamond trade. Sankoh however, appears to have used his position to raise funds for continued arms acquisitions.\textsuperscript{53} Nevertheless, there are clearly situations where a combination of pragmatism and careful judgement regarding the commitment of parties to a peace process may justify settlements which accommodate their economic interests. As the case of Sankoh and the RUF illustrates though, peace agreements may need to place more emphasis on transparency, not only in governance but also in the operation of key industrial sectors. Peacekeeping forces will also need to assume a much more explicit role in monitoring the trade in ‘post-conflict goods’, not least because any abuse would warn of bad faith. Sierra Leone also demonstrates that armed groups may find relinquishing control of key economic assets as difficult and sensitive as giving up their arms. UN attempts to move into RUF-controlled diamond areas were the immediate cause of the RUF’s military action which threatened the UN operation in May 2000. Peacekeeping forces therefore need to be sensitive to these concerns when addressing the trade in conflict goods.

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To prevent the trade in conflict goods – not only in diamonds, but also in commodities such as oil, timber and gold – a focal-point within the UN is needed to monitor adherence to sanctions regimes. Additionally, the UK government might consider establishing an annual ethical audit of British companies, which would examine their role in supporting war economies, and the steps they have taken to guard against involvement in conflict trade. If this was given the same weight as the Annual Report on Strategic Arms Exports, and led to the same level of scrutiny by the press and parliament, it could provide an important vehicle for debate on the role and control of conflict goods.

_Transforming diasporas_

Remittances from diasporas are important in sustaining war economies. The Albanian diaspora, for instance, provided volunteers for the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), and financed resistance to Serb rule in Kosovo. In the early 1990s, when the Kosovar Albanian parallel government was engaged in passive resistance, overseas Albanians set up a ‘Republic of Kosovo Fund’, with headquarters in Germany. The fund was boosted by a levy on the earnings of overseas Albanians, and a tax on the profits of their businesses. Social events were also used to raise funds, while diaspora newspapers advertised bank accounts to which donations could be made. In 1998, the parallel Albanian administration received DM16.5m.54

The KLA also received money through the Homeland Calling Fund. The head of the fund in Germany claimed that at the height of the KLA’s insurgency he could raise DM3m a month for Kosovo, while in the US donations were claimed to be bringing in $10,000 to $15,000 a month.55 These taxes and donations were supplemented by profits from the black-market trade in prostitution, the smuggling of illegal immigrants, forgery and drugs. Members of the diaspora also arranged arms supplies to Kosovo. In the US, shipments of boots, uniforms,


satellite telephones and arms were organised. Armour-piercing Barrat rifles were exported from the US, supposedly destined for an Albanian hunting club (an export allowed under US law), for transport into Kosovo.\textsuperscript{56} Diasporas can also support the reconstitution of a society after conflict. In ‘post-war’ Kosovo, for instance, remittances have been a vital economic lifeline for returning refugees.

It is important to develop mechanisms by which diasporas are actively engaged, not only during the search for a peace agreement, but also in post-conflict peacebuilding. Such mechanisms could involve including diaspora representatives in peace negotiations, or integrating the funds provided by overseas groups into post-conflict regeneration. This is not to deny that members of a diaspora can often be more radical than their local counterparts, who might have experienced war first-hand. However, drawing them into the process of peacebuilding has the potential to turn them from agents of war into agents of peace. Ironically though, there is a paucity of research on the role of diasporas, particularly in conflicts.\textsuperscript{57} The UK might therefore consider funding research on the role that diasporas play in conflicts generally, and on ways in which they might be drawn into conflict prevention and peacebuilding in particular states or regions.

\textit{The role of the international financial institutions}

The IFIs have shown some awareness of the need to fund demobilisation programmes, so that former fighters have a means of income and employment. In Mozambique, for example, the World Bank called in 1989 for increased social spending to underpin the demobilisation process.\textsuperscript{58} The UK government should promote the targeting of demobilisation aid in this


way, and should encourage the IMF not to insist upon macroeconomic stabilisation at the expense of the economic integration of former combatants. The IFIs have to consider how far to go in pursuing neo-liberal economics in conditions that will actually make the acquisition of weaponry or the resort to lawlessness and violence more, rather than less, attractive. One of the immediate causes of the 1997 coup in Sierra Leone, for example, was an IMF-imposed reduction in a rice subsidy that benefited the military.  

In devastated economies, prescriptions based on neo-liberal economic programmes underestimate the extent to which privatisation and marketisation, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, can foster divisions in society and strengthen local rentiers and warlords. Smuggling, moonlighting and other illegal activities are usually portrayed as deviations from an ideal standard of market behaviour because they are beyond the control of the IFIs. But they clearly perform a service in a welfare vacuum, including providing means of escape, sustenance, employment and the prospect of enrichment. In some communities, Colombia for example, the guerrilla/mafia economy takes a sophisticated form of parallel governance based on consent as well as fear. Therefore IFIs need to modify their macroeconomic dogmas concerning privatisation and marketisation to take into account issues such as social justice and criminality. Indeed, the political economies of wartorn societies are unlikely to provide long term security without the equivalent of statist provisions for employment, welfare and public services that will emancipate the populations from clientism and mafia welfare.

Safeguarding the welfare of the population in general, is as important for security sector transformation as the provision of alternative sources of employment for demobilised militias and military personnel. Neo-liberal economic modelling undermines security when it provides opportunities for violent groups to continue controlling social relations. In this respect, avoiding the lethal mixture of social unrest and violent criminality requires nuanced

60 This is discussed at greater length in Pugh, Protectorates and [the?–NO, as is] Spoils of Peace.

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policy revision on the part of the IFIs and their donors. The resort to conditionality for disbursement of aid and reconstruction funds does not of itself work, because aid has limited influence in the dynamics of local political struggles. Therefore the dominant neo-liberal policies of reconstruction ought to be revisited to incorporate measures to sustain the most vulnerable parts of the population within the legitimate sectors of the economy.

Developing socio-political safeguards against militarism

The second element of a transformative security strategy involves developing socio-political safeguards intended to protect or foster local capacities to meet a society’s various security needs. After a conflict, the strength of militaries and militias relative to civilian groups affects the degree of control they have on the rehabilitation and reform of the security sector. External actors are often placed in the difficult position of having to collaborate with gunmen in order to achieve demilitarisation. Moreover, in internal conflicts a central government’s control of force is weak. Regular militaries confront paramilitary and guerrilla forces that are often ill-disciplined, and motivated by greed as much as politics. It is appropriate, therefore, to speak of problems arising from civil–militia relations; indeed, in modern

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conflicts militias often exert control over populations by formulating and manipulating group identity.\textsuperscript{64}

Where militia groups are disciplined and organise a parallel economy that includes a welfare system, such as the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, external actors need to create a viable substitute in the formal economy. Alternatively, they can engage the militias in negotiations that give priority to issues of humanitarian relief and social justice to safeguard the populations that they claim to be protecting from injustice. Where militias are parasitic and rapacious but depend on the goodwill of civilians to produce taxes for conducting warfare, it may be possible for external actors to wean civilians away from their control by appealing to human rights principles and providing economic benefits.

Where regular armies maintain some semblance of control, as in Sierra Leone, it may be possible to appeal to the concepts of legitimacy and ‘professionalism’ that, according to Samuel Huntington, should keep the military out of politics.\textsuperscript{65} However, ‘professionalism’ is not a guaranteed route to the demilitarisation of societies. It can be interpreted as loyalty to some higher authority, such as ‘the nation’, rather than to a particular government; in many conflict-prone states, nationalism and the need for strong central government have provided gilt-edged invitations for the military to intervene.\textsuperscript{66} Moreover, as Alice Hills has noted with

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respect to policing, standards of professionalism are culturally dependent and often skill- and status-based, rather than linked to moral choices. This can mitigate the impact of external moderating influences on organisation and behaviour. Finally, transformation cannot be achieved by merely professionalising the agencies of law and order. Civilian control may be exercised for narrow personal or party interests and the suppression of political opposition. In Croatia under President Franjo Tudjman, for instance, army staff and the officer class were expected to be members of Tudjman’s Croat Democratic Union, or face dismissal.

In countries where elite political institutions are discredited but civil-society groups are well-supported, the potential for political resistance to military rule and the temptation for the military to supplant civil authorities may both be present. Agitation by civil society may be a spur for the military to check civilian rule. A culture of transformative civil–military relations thus requires credible and respected political institutions, including political parties that do not rely on coercion. In turn, institutionalised civilian supremacy depends upon political elements that are usually absent from societies emerging from conflict. These elements are: consensus about where legitimate sovereignty lies; consensus about processes for making policy decisions including procedures for political succession; and a capacity in the civilian sector to defend its rights through legal means.

By themselves, professionalism and civilian control are insufficient to manage security-sector reform. The separation of powers, political pluralism and the engagement of civil society

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70 Ibid., p. 226.
seem to be indispensable conditions for a non-politicised military, and a non-militarised society.

Civil society is a contested concept. The World Bank, for example, identifies it with the market and with capitalist individualism.\(^71\) By contrast, civil society can be construed as an emancipatory political alternative to authoritarianism: ‘where progressive values and political practices can be articulated counter-hegemonic institutions can be created’.\(^72\) Not all non-state associations are ‘progressive’, of course; some may be dedicated to racism and violence or, like the mafia, may be illegal, or declared so. It is not the existence of civic associations that strengthens civil society, but their purpose and the extent of their freedom to operate.\(^73\) In the context of security-sector reform, civil groups can be singled out for support if they further bottom-up democratic processes for building trust, cooperation, compromise, inclusion and pluralism. For framing a transformative approach to civil–military relations, it is also important to note a difference of emphasis between:

- civilian control and management, which is constitutionally established through law and formal decision-making processes; and
- civil-society engagement, which is largely a matter of political and social mobilisation.

These are not hard-and-fast categories because the engagement of civil society can also be formalised in ways that safeguard rights legally and constitutionally. For example, since


\(^{73}\) Peter Uvin, Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda (Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998), pp. 164–79.
Slovenia’s mini-war with the Yugoslav army, tribunals that hear claims for conscientious-objector status have a statutory obligation to include NGO representatives, such as peace activists, on their panels.\footnote{Discussions with Marjan Malesic, Social Science Faculty, University of Ljubljana, 7 October 1998.}

**Civilian control, the separation of powers and civilian management capacity**

It is a defining attribute of democratic societies that armed forces – the military, intelligence services, civil guards, customs and police – are under civilian control. Civilian managers claim key powers:

- approving and supervising military budgets and programmes;
- appointing military commanders;
- approving and supervising the configuration of forces, and weapons’ acquisition and decommissioning;
- deciding military deployments, and approving terms and rules of engagement; and
- restricting the political activities of military officers, and setting rules governing their role in public life.

The nature and extent of this control and management varies from state to state. In democracies with conscription and a tradition of the ‘citizen-in-arms’, military forces may have a surprising degree of autonomy.\footnote{In France, for example, the commanders-in-chief of the three naval commands have the power to coordinate all assets connected with ‘actions of the state at sea’ for civilian activities as diverse as controlling pollution and protecting fisheries. They are, of course, answerable to civilian leaders. Secretary-General for the Sea, *State’s Action at Sea* (Paris, Ministry of Marine, n.d., 1998?).} Nevertheless, as a general rule the separation of powers should extend to the exclusion or removal of military forces from the judicial system and government departments, including defence ministries (as specified for El Salvador in the...
1992 peace accords, for example). But the gap should not be so wide that the military develops an autonomous political existence. Legitimate channels for the military to pursue its interests, such as lobbying law-makers and bureaucrats, may be conceded, where this is hedged by constitutional procedures and monitored for transparency.

DFID has given notice that the UK regards attention to the civil–military structures of government as important, including training civil servants and political leaders with defence roles. Areas that might be covered include human rights, defence and threat analysis, conflict resolution, budget planning and control, stock control and procurement probity. The FCO and MoD have military-training assistance programmes in law and civilian control. In South Africa, a British Military Training Team (BMATT) has supported the creation of the South African National Defence Force in place of the apartheid-era military system. Other examples include assistance from the US and EU countries for police reform in Albania, Palestine, Latin America and Africa. Several studies suggest that policing assistance is generally under-funded, and that more needs to be done.

Military aid to the civil authorities

Military aid to the civil authorities (MACA) is often neglected, but programmes for dealing with disasters and non-political civil emergencies have considerable transformation


The widespread criticism of the Turkish military’s performance following the earthquake of August 1999 demonstrates that failure to participate effectively in MACA can damage the reputation and credibility of military institutions. Institutionalising MACA would make a significant contribution to the restructuring of the security-sector, as long as the use of the military in civil emergencies was closely regulated to inhibit its potential to develop an autonomous political role.

The UK is a leader in developing the MACA concept, albeit through the accumulation of constitutional measures, rather than a single statute. In the UK, MACA entails special organisational arrangements, but its distinctive feature is the primacy of civilian control. It comprises three elements:

(a) supporting civilian agencies when they are unable to maintain law and order;
(b) search and rescue in emergencies; and
(c) maintaining essential movement and supplies in a crisis.

Military assistance has occasionally been controversial, notably when troops have been used to respond to industrial disputes, and for law enforcement.

In war-torn societies, the provisions under (a) and (c) are critical because of the potential for political masters to use security forces for repression. In terms of security-sector reform, it may be advisable to remove these ‘political’ functions from military and quasi-military civil emergency forces, as has happened in Haiti and Kosovo. It would also be helpful to develop local civil-sector capacity to steer and monitor MACA arrangements. It is not clear whether this is happening in Kosovo. The Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC)’s prime

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function is, in theory, to respond to disasters. However, many Albanian Kosovars view it as the nucleus of a future army. Although currently overseen by the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the UN Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), there is a need for capacity-building to enable local civilians to replace these international supervisors.

Enhancing the engagement of civil society


> It is vital that poor people should have a say over government spending decisions.... We also support reforms to police and criminal justice systems, that make them more accessible and responsive to the needs of the poor.... The voices of the poor can be strengthened by supporting those parts of civil society that help poor people organise to influence decision makers.... Promoting effective and inclusive systems of government, including an accountable security sector, is an essential investment in the prevention of violent conflict.  

These intentions imply increasing the capacity of post-conflict societies to engage in, for example, the effective and accountable monitoring of demilitarisation and military expenditure, and the institutionalisation of cooperative civil–military relations. However, a higher importance is generally given to training military personnel and helping military conversion or reform than to assisting in the development of civil society. The few instances in which funding has been given to civil-society movements to monitor security sectors include:

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• a Netherlands–Mali initiative that has involved civil-society organisations in the formulation of a code of conduct on the role of the security sector in society;
• UK funding for the provision of legal materials and training to NGOs and professional organisations to underpin reform of, and wider access to, justice systems in Rwanda;
• Finnish and Swedish support to NGO projects for education and policy-making access on a range of democracy and rights-based programmes in Africa; and
• Norwegian and British funding for seminars and training on democratisation for defence researchers in South Africa and Zimbabwe.  

Projects to assist in the transformation of civil–military relations can be incorporated into general school education and basic rights programmes. There is also a case for more specific projects on civil–military issues because of the level of secrecy and expertise with which military and other security services protect themselves. Engaging civil society may mean funding training, workshops and conferences and the provision of legal materials. It may also mean subsidising broadcasting or publications, such as special issues of journals, that incorporate the views of non-uniformed commentators. It can also mean helping local NGOs to put forward their views on issues like child soldiers, demobilisation schemes, conscientious objection and freedom of information legislation.

Civil-society groups need to be integrated into negotiations over peace and disarmament right from the start, not least because they may have a moderating influence on military actors. If this is not done, security-sector reform can become an afterthought, considered only once the essential parameters of post-war security structures have been established in agreements with warlords or militaries whose main concern is often maintaining their influence, rather than transforming the status quo.

The record is, however, mixed. In Northern Ireland, the Good Friday negotiations were underpinned by substantial British government support for NGOs from both sides of the religious divide and a women’s peace group was included in the negotiations, albeit on the

81 Chalmers, Security Sector Reform in Developing Countries.
margins. But in Kosovo and East Timor, civil actors have often been excluded. Although the passive resistance of Kosovo’s Albanians went unrewarded at Dayton and subsequently, the KLA, the most militaristic section of Kosovar society, was rapidly transformed in western perceptions from a terrorist organisation into the political voice of the Kosovars, despite its initially limited following. Before and during the Rambouillet talks of February 1999, Ibrahim Rugova’s League for a Democratic Kosovo (LDK) was relegated to the role of subsidiary partner, despite being the elected government of the Kosovar Albanians. The Undertaking on Demilitarisation that followed the Kosovo conflict was agreed exclusively between NATO forces and the KLA. Even in subsequent negotiations over the creation of the KPC, only KFOR, UNMIK and the KLA were directly involved. The Undertaking on Demilitarisation set up a Joint Implementation Commission (JIC) solely comprised of representatives of KFOR, the KLA and UNMIK. Partly as a consequence of the structures created by the Undertaking, former KLA personnel have a disproportionate influence in the local police force being created in Kosovo, and in the KPC. Given the regular reports of ex-KLA personnel intimidating and murdering Serb and Albanian political opponents, this is likely to present problems in the future, whatever the region’s ultimate constitutional status.

In the context of poverty alleviation, the UK has noted that, where governments are not committed to human rights, alternative channels will be explored, namely ‘the institutions of civil society, voluntary agencies and local government’. This principle might be adopted in modified form – including in cases where conditions for security-sector reform are


favourable. Adopting it would mean fostering such channels to enhance transformative processes at the same time as other, state-based reforms are devised. It could also be modified to treat the civil channels of opinion formation not as alternatives, but as complements, to formal constitutional provisions.

**Civil society and the formulation and monitoring of policy**

The level of civilian expertise or interest in defence and security policy may be extremely low.\(^{85}\) However, rights-based women’s groups, experts in the media, researchers and professionals such as health workers can make important contributions to the formulation and implementation of policy. The role of such groups in institutionalising the peace process in Mali, for example, has been well-documented.\(^{86}\) Consequently, greater investment might be directed towards introducing processes that reduce both the militarisation of societies, and the alienation of the military from civil society. Such investment would be used to gain the widest possible support for the definition of new military functions and security doctrines. For example, public-service workers and Red Cross/Crescent organisations might be involved in formulating rules governing the use of the military in civil disasters and emergency relief. Rights-based women’s groups and peace groups might be engaged in discussions concerning rules on conscientious objection, recruitment policies, demobilisation compensation and the welfare rights of military personnel. Civil organisations can also monitor the functioning of security forces; DFID has signalled its support for ‘integrity checks including the watchdog and representational role of civil society’.\(^{87}\)

Various types of organisation can become channels of policy debate, though there is no inherent predisposition for them to adopt transformative approaches. Indeed, political

\(^{85}\) See Biljana Vankovska-Cvetkovska, ‘Between the Past and the Future: Civil–Military Relations in the Balkans’, *Sudost-europa*, vol. 48, nos 1–2, 1999, p. 36.


\(^{87}\) DFID, *Poverty and the Security Sector*, p. 4.
parties and veterans’ organisations are not necessarily interested in depoliticising the military, or in curbing any praetorian political aspirations it might have.

**Political parties.** The level of interest in military security policy seems to depend on whether political elites seek to represent particular issues as security problems. This ‘securitisation’ may depend on the construction of threats (‘enemies of the state’, for example). It may stem from the need for politicians to gain an advantage over their opponents. Or it might be employed to safeguard special interests, like the security of an ethnic group or defence-related employment.

**Veterans’ organisations.** These groups might be expected to take a keen interest in military affairs, but they vary widely in their goals and objectives. Some are simply military coups or paramilitary units in waiting. Others are committed to civilian primacy, but are highly partisan and foster a culture of coercive peace. Others are driven more by welfare needs, including employment for ex-soldiers, and they can be highly critical of secrecy and intransigence in military establishments. Nevertheless, their potential should be explored. A good case in point is the Centre for Civil–Military Relations in Belgrade, which was established in 1995 by critics of the Milosevic regime and its military leaders. Many members were forced into early retirement after 20 or 30 years of service in the Yugoslav National Army. Since 1997, the Centre has promoted the idea of transparency in civil–military relations, and democratic control over the armed forces. One of its main objectives has been ‘to animate [the] professional and political interest of citizens, their associations, political parties, parliamentary and state organs for a modern arrangement of civil–military relations’. It has raised funds and charged for consultancy work. What might be described as ‘foreign carpetbaggers’ arriving in the aftermath of Milosevic’s downfall, to educate the Yugoslav

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political elite in the ways of civilian control, have either ignored the Centre, or failed to accord it due respect.89

**Educational and intellectual groups.** Within the academic/educational sector, courses and research programmes on issues ranging from military history to disaster response are a significant source of debate and contesting theories. They may appear in unlikely settings; the University of Ilorin in Nigeria, for example, has a Conflict Resolution Centre, and produces a journal that carries reflective articles on Nigeria’s military policy. Institutes studying military policy, strategy and defence are a recognised feature of most Western societies. They may be close to the prevailing military culture, overwhelmingly realist in outlook and dependent on cultivating state interests. But they will also often take a provocative line. NGOs engaged in campaigning and/or consultancy can also present clear alternatives to existing military policy. An interesting and successful experiment in South Africa from the mid-1990s saw NGOs involved in the drafting of the country’s White Paper on Peace Missions (1999).90

**Functional associations and voluntary groups.** Groups that have an indirect role in forming public opinion on military issues include:

- trade unions and employers affected by changes in military expenditure and industrialisation;
- women’s groups affected by the mobilisation and demobilisation of soldiers;
- church and welfare groups with interests in humanitarian, moral and philosophical aspects of security policy;
- environmental groups interested in protecting or managing areas affected by military despoliation or training;

89 Brochure of the Centar za Civilno-vojne Odnose, Belgrade, 1997; and other information supplied by Dr Miroslav Hadzic (President).

media organisations and journalists’ associations that have a commitment to investigative reporting; and
• rights-based groups, such as branches of Amnesty International, local citizens forums and local Helsinki Citizens Assemblies.

To take just one of these examples, rights-based women’s groups and prominent women’s leaders have been particularly active in demanding justice against repressive and brutal military regimes, from protests over the ‘disappeared’ in Chile and Argentina to Aung San Suu Kyi’s activism in Burma. Of course, women have also encouraged or participated in violence in Sri Lanka, Rwanda and elsewhere. But women’s peace groups have also worked through education and protest to shape public opinion. They have demonstrated against warlords in Somalia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. The National Coordination of Guatemalan Widows has campaigned against the conscription of young men, partly to resist military socialisation and partly to keep sons economically active at home. Women’s organisations have demanded, and participated in, tribunals and truth commissions to campaign for justice, compensation and reconciliation. In October 2000, the UN Security Council, in discussing women and conflict, endorsed such demands, including support for women’s peace initiatives and their involvement in the implementation of peace agreements. Women are often marginalised themselves and, as Birgitte Sørensen points out, are particularly effective in reaching other marginalised groups and counteracting the creation of hostile stereotypes. Women have also been involved in peace processes, notably as part of Palestinian delegations and in negotiations over the Good Friday

94 Sørensen, Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction, pp. 13–16.
agreement in Northern Ireland. These are, however, exceptions, and in general women are seldom present in formal peace processes, either as individuals or as group representatives. As Sørensen notes, women may be given a voice for particular purposes (to testify against war criminals, for example), but are then re-marginalised.\textsuperscript{95} Even if there is no repressive authority exerting control over information, cultural norms may limit participation.

The extent to which civil-society groups are present or can be encouraged in conflict-torn societies will vary considerably from situation to situation. For instance, the ability of intellectual groups to generate widespread debate will depend on levels of literacy. The absence of an education infrastructure in weak states may mean that there is little role for civil society in governance generally, and security governance in particular. In conflict zones, the Western conception of civil society as having a ‘watchdog’ role is often alien.

Furthermore, the access to policy-making processes of civil society is likely to be a contested and contentious issue – even where ‘demilitarisation’, with its implied transparency, is a primary goal of peace enforcement. Ideally, security-sector reform is a transparent and open process. Indeed, demilitarisation may only be possible as a consequence of publicity and verification because, in politically-tense circumstances where engendering trust between adversaries is an incremental process, highly visible activities are necessary to preclude subterfuge and accusations of cheating. In Zimbabwe, the demobilisation of guerrilla forces and their integration into a new security force was largely transparent.\textsuperscript{96} The transparent decommissioning of Irish Republican Army (IRA) weapons has been a litmus test of the viability of the Good Friday agreement. But generally, people and organisations daring to shed light on security sectors or on human-rights abuse and corruption are liable to be repressed and eliminated – even in the shadow of a large international presence. Journalists in Bosnia who have exposed corruption have received

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., p. 20.

death threats, or have been the target of assassination attempts. In some circumstances, it would be irresponsible for external actors to increase the risks of abuse by sanctioning or subsidising the work of rights groups.

**‘Democratic deficits’ in external institutions**

When external actors fail to abide by the standards they attempt to impose on others, resistance to this imposition is likely to increase. The democratic foundations of any project imposed from outside will lack credibility if the security sectors of intervening states are themselves devoid of transparency and accountability.

The directors of international security organisations, including the UN, are not always promoted to their positions on merit, nor are they always accountable to elected bodies. UN administrations in Kosovo and East Timor have resembled the weak states they are supposed to reform. They are staffed by foreigners who may live secluded from the general population, earn significantly higher salaries, and are on short-term contracts, with similarly short planning horizons. In addition, the organisations they work for are over-centralised, and often seem to expend as much energy on ‘turf battles’ with other organisations as they do on addressing the problems of the country itself. In East Timor for instance, the UN administration (UNTAET) strongly opposed a World Bank project intended to facilitate the establishment of elected village and sub-district councils composed of equal numbers of men and women. UNTAET even went so far as to argue that it could not approve gender equality, that international staff needed to control community involvement and that the Timorese would confuse elections for local officials with national elections. In reality, this opposition was motivated by the fact that UN staff would have no influence over the councils, nor would they control their expenditures.

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States contributing to peace-enforcement operations, such as Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey, have limited civilian controls over their militaries. In others, police forces abide by only minimum standards of accountability and openness. Even states that pride themselves on domestic models that they expect others to adopt are prone to offend. They may not tolerate civil-society debate on security policy, cite *raisons d’état* to strangle healthy discussion of security issues or maintain the apparatus of a security state that fosters secrecy, restricts information and recites propaganda. The Dutch government has criticised the lack of transparency and accountability in the EU’s acquisition of a military security role, for instance. In 1999, the committee advising the Swedish Foreign Ministry on the funding of civil-society organisations flouted its own rules by withdrawing funding from an organisation critical of NATO policy. In addressing public disquiet over the possible health risks posed by depleted uranium shells and missiles, the UK MoD refused a full investigation – allowing only veterans from the Balkans conflict, not the Gulf War, to be screened – and initially dismissed its own leaked reports warning of the hazard. The draft Freedom of Information Act developed for Bosnia in June 2000 appears to be more open than the proposed legislation in the UK.

The security goals of the major external powers may themselves encourage or dictate complicity in secrecy and corruption. This is particularly the case with arms deals, as a succession of scandals have shown: arms to Iraq, the Pergau Dam, the Jonathan Aitken and

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Sandline affairs as well as the various scandals surrounding former French President François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl in Germany.\footnote{102 ‘French Arms Scandal Implicates Politicians’, \textit{The Guardian}, 10 January 2001. See also Transparency International, www.transparency.de.}

In these circumstances, the prospects for civil control and civil-society debate and oversight of the security sector may be limited by the attitude of external actors. There is unlikely to be a strong push for transparency and democratisation by outside powers if this draws attention to the absence of healing among the physicians themselves. Outside actors may even be predisposed to collude with local strongmen. There may be a coincidence of interest between peace-implementation forces and emerging local security forces in protecting themselves from investigation. A transformative approach to security sectors would give greater consideration than has traditionally been the case to the civil society dimension of civil-military relations. To re-phrase Georges Clemenceau’s famous dictum: ‘Security sector reform is too serious a business to be left to soldiers’.

\textit{Embedding socio-political safeguards in post-conflict reconstruction}

A ‘security first’ philosophy should be embedded not only in programmes that have an obvious impact on security – e.g. police reform - but also into post-conflict reconstruction projects and funding criteria on programmes that may not initially appear to have much to do with security protection for the civil population, but which may have lateral benefits. Whilst post-conflict security for local populations may often involve ‘hard’ security measures, such as protection by local or UN forces, there are also a range of ‘soft’ measures that can reduce risk to local populations. Repairing the infrastructure is one straightforward example. When electricity supplies were restored in Pristina, for example, street lighting reappeared and the murder rate dropped.\footnote{103 Interview with KFOR Press Officer, Pristina, September 1999.} Other reconstruction measures would be designed to provide employment and welfare, reducing the dependence of the poor on crime and the ‘welfare safety nets’ provided by criminal networks. Accordingly, socio-economic security
would underpin military security by reducing the power of, and popular support for, warlords whose primary motives are greed.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion and recommendations

Security-sector reform represents a significant modification in thinking about the role of development aid, and its relationship to the security sector. To some extent, this reflects a more general post-Cold War recognition that the provision of security does not simply equate to clientist military aid designed to protect government elites. It also reflects a recognition of the complexity of contemporary conflicts, and the ways in which corruption, deficiencies in governance and legitimacy and arms proliferation combine to heighten both state and individual insecurity. Equally, however, focusing on the security sector per se risks separating both analysis and practice from wider issues, like the political economy of conflicts and the ways in which the economic and security policies of developed states can perpetuate local war economies. Unless these broader issues are addressed, initiatives to promote civilian oversight of the military or the provision of a few weeks’ human-rights training will not be effective in the long term. While the governance of the security sector is now being addressed, the resources provided to enhance civilian oversight are often outweighed by those devoted to boosting military capacity and ‘professionalism’. There is no substitute for knowledge of the local security dynamics of war-torn societies, and the diverse roles that weaponry plays in different cultures. External actors need to tailor their efforts to the social and political circumstances of each society, and to balance the urge to engineer with the need for local ownership.

In developed states, including the UK, foreign policy is still heavily influenced by practitioners with a broadly neo-realist outlook, and by military-industrial actors whose interests may not always coincide with meaningful reform in target states, notably where arms sales are concerned. This often results in incoherent, or at worst contradictory, policies. Finally, the emphasis on ‘reform’ underplays the extent of the shortfalls in security-sector governance and policies, particularly in weak states.

There is thus a need to locate security-sector reform within a broader transformative approach. As a pre-requisite, the exit strategies that hobble the development of effective policy towards post-conflict societies need to be replaced by engagement strategies which conceive peacebuilding as a long-term process. Specifically, security-sector transformation
aims to rebalance economic structures and the socio-political environment so as to reduce
the incentives for militarisation, and encourage a more nuanced approach to the varied
security needs of societies. Security-sector transformation encompasses reform, but also
addresses the broader political economy of conflicts; it engages with a wider set of actors,
issues and security concerns; and it questions the role that developed states’ security policies
play in fostering instability.

This paper sets out the following recommendations. Those of particular pertinence to the
UK government are italicised.

1. Security-sector reform should not become a proxy for the backdoor introduction of Cold
War notions of the military as a modernising agency, re-legitimising clientist military aid and
inappropriate arms exports.

2. Policy-makers, academics and NGOs need to challenge the idea that the lives of
peacekeepers should be privileged over those of ‘ordinary’ foreign civilians.

3. The UK government needs to provide a more detailed definition of the criteria used
to decide on exceptions to the principle of withholding export credits to HIPC/IDA
states for unproductive expenditure.

4. Where export credits are furnished for security-related expenditure, this
information should be provided in the government’s Annual Report on Strategic
Exports, particularly when recipients are countries covered by the HIPC/IDA
initiative.

5. There is a need to broaden the group of states covered by the prohibition on export
credits for unproductive expenditure.

6. A global tax on defence sales could be adopted to raise money for conflict prevention or
peacekeeping. In raising the cost of arms, the tax would also reduce the volume of arms in
circulation.

7. A modified version of proposal six could be operated unilaterally by the UK if the
defence-export levy was raised, consistently applied and hypothecated to fund
conflict-prevention initiatives.

8. Where companies or states are found to have knowingly breached a UN arms embargo,
the government or citizens of the state to which arms have been supplied should be able to
sue the firm or state responsible, and to claim reparations. These could be put towards the costs of demilitarisation and peacebuilding.

9. Greater consideration needs to be given to embargoes on the purchase of weapons from producer countries which consistently violate international agreements on arms sales.

10. **There is a need to ensure that the economic criteria in both the UK and the EU arms-export codes are interpreted in a way that allows the cumulative impact of defence sales to be taken into account.**

11. Military aid in the form of arms supplies to even legitimate governments is generally counter-productive in the long term as it is nearly always subject to leakage and abuse, often on a large scale. Security-first policies should not be pursued in a way that simply leads to insecurity later.

12. The temptation to implicitly legitimise state-sanctioned trade in conflict goods should be avoided.

13. Continued and illegitimate trade in conflict goods can serve as an early warning of bad faith by parties to a peace agreement. Peace agreements should emphasise the need for transparency, not only in governance, but also in the operation of key economic sectors. In addition, peacekeeping forces should be given a more explicit role in monitoring the trade in ‘post-conflict’ goods.

14. Creating a focal-point within the UN to monitor adherence to sanctions regimes would help in the monitoring and prevention of the trade in conflict goods.

15. **The UK government might consider establishing an annual ethical audit of British companies. This would examine their role in supporting the war economies of contemporary conflicts, and the steps they have taken to guard against complicity in conflict trade.**

16. Diasporas should be engaged by international actors, for example by including representatives in peace negotiations, or by integrating diaspora funds into post-conflict regeneration strategies.

17. **The UK government could consider funding research on the role played by diasporas in conflicts generally and on the ways in which they might be drawn into conflict prevention and peacebuilding in particular states or regions.**
18. The IFIs have to consider how far to go in pursuing neo-liberal economic strategies that indirectly make acquiring weapons and/or resuming violence more, instead of less, attractive.

19. As a rule, the separation of powers should extend to the removal of the military from control of the judicial system and government departments, including defence ministries, albeit with the proviso that appropriate channels need to be in place for the military to pursue its legitimate interests.

20. It is essential to regulate the use of reconstructed armed forces in civil emergencies in order to limit their potential for an autonomous political role.

21. *Given its experience of MACA, the UK could develop local civil-sector capacity to steer and monitor MACA arrangements.*

22. There is a need for more projects to promote civil society’s engagement with the security sector, and its monitoring capacity. This may include building awareness of security-sector issues in schools; funding for training, workshops, conferences and legal materials; subsidising publications on security-sector issues; and funding local NGOs.

23. Transformation processes and groups need to be integrated into peacebuilding from the outset. This implies including civil-society groups in negotiations over peace and disarmament right from the start. If this is not done, security-sector reform can become an afterthought, considered only once the shape of post-war security structures has been settled by agreement between foreign diplomats and warlords.

24. In some circumstances, it may be irresponsible for external actors to subsidise the work of groups who might be exposed to intimidation and even assassination by the military. But external actors should explore the potential for supporting a wide variety of organisations that could become channels for debate on security-sector issues. They include political parties, veterans’ organisations, education and intellectual groups, functional associations like trade unions and employers affected by security-sector policies and voluntary groups (women’s groups, environmental groups and religious groups).

25. The democratic foundations of any project involving external actors will lack credibility if they or their agencies are themselves devoid of transparency and accountability. A ‘democratic deficit’ among external actors may predispose them to collude with local military and militia leaders.
26. A ‘security first’ philosophy should be embedded not only in programmes that have an obvious impact on security – e.g. police reform - but also into funding criteria for post-conflict programmes more generally, as even programmes not directly related to the provision of security (e.g. job creation) may provide lateral improvements in the security environment.