The Search for Security: Security Sector Reform in Post-Taliban Afghanistan

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Good morning and thank you very much for coming.

Overview

1. Defining Security Sector Reform (SSR)

2. Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan

3. Measuring Success

4. Lessons Learned

- My presentation will feature four sections:

  1. **Defining Security Sector Reform:** For those of you who are not familiar with the Security Sector Reform concept, or SSR as I will refer to it, I will define it and describe its various elements in the first section.

  2. **Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan:** I will then turn to the Afghan security sector reform process, analyzing the state of reforms just over three years after their launch.

  3. **Measuring Success:** For the third section, I will provide an interim assessment of the Afghan SSR process, utilizing a set of five measures of effectiveness.

  4. **Lessons Learned:** Finally, I will draw from the Afghan case six lessons learned or best practices that can be applied to future SSR cases.

For What and For Whom?

The objective of SSR, "is to strengthen the ability of the sector as a whole and each of its individual parts to provide an accountable, equitable, effective, and rights respecting service."

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

• Succinctly speaking, security sector reform is the process to reconstruct the security architecture of a state.

• Over the past decade it has come to be viewed as an indispensable element of the state-building project in post-conflict societies, as it confers one of the core prerequisites for statehood, a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force.

• Over that time, a security sector reform model emerged that features a holistic vision of security.

• The objective of this model, as the United Nations Development Programme has noted, "is to strengthen the ability of the sector as a whole and each of its individual parts to provide an accountable, equitable, effective, and rights respecting service."[1]

• The difference between the contemporary SSR model and Cold War forms of security assistance is that it is anchored to the human security paradigm - it seeks to advance the security of individuals rather than regimes.

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[1] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Security Sector Reform and Transitional Justice: A Crisis Post-Conflict Programmatic Approach*, New York: UNDP, 2003, p. 5.

Deconstructing the SSR Model

- Political Dimension
- Institutional Dimension
- Economic Dimension
- Societal Dimension

The process can be broken down into four interrelated dimensions:

1. Political Dimension
- The political dimension involves the development of mechanisms to manage the security sector.
- It is intended not just to ensure civilian governance of the sector, but democratic civilian control.
- It envisions a robust democratically elected government capable of exercising control and oversight over the sector.

Institutional Dimension
- The institutional dimension focuses upon reform and capacity-building within the security institutions, including the Ministries of Interior and Defence, the armed forces, the intelligence services, the police and the judiciary.
- It is a process of professionalisation aimed at creating operationally effective security forces, rationalizing bureaucratic structures, eliminating corruption, and institutionalising international standards.

Economic Dimension
- The economic dimension is concerned with the consumption of resources and revenue collection mechanisms.
- The provision of clearly accounted defence budgets is a key aspect of SSR, as is the ability to meet the resource demands of an appropriately sized and equipped security sector.
- It stresses the economic sustainability of reforms, to ensure long-term self-sufficiency.

Societal Dimension
- Finally, the societal dimension accords a crucial role to civil society in the security functions of the state.
- Community NGOs, an independent media, and independent research and advocacy institutions are seen as occupying an important role in monitoring the security sector and ensuring transparency and accountability.
- This dimension also seeks to restore public trust in the security forces, crucial for them to function effectively.
- This is particularly important in states where there is a history of security force repression of the citizenry.
- Where the people view the security forces with apprehension and suspicion.

SSR in Afghanistan

The Agenda:
- Military Reform (United States)
- Police Reform (Germany)
- Judicial Reform (Italy)
- Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Former Combatants (Japan)
- Counter-Narcotics (United Kingdom)

• Afghanistan's security sector reform process was launched at a G8 security donors meeting held in Geneva in the spring of 2002.

• The meeting set the agenda for the process and laid the groundwork for a multi-sectoral donor support scheme.

• The process was divided into five pillars, each to be overseen by a lead-donor nation:

> • Military Reform (United States)
>
> • Police Reform (Germany)
>
> • Judicial Reform (Italy)
>
> • The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Former Combatants (Japan)
>
> • Counter-Narcotics (United Kingdom)

• Canada did not assume responsibility for an individual pillar of the process, enabling it to play an important cross-pillar role.

• I will now give a brief summary of the status of reforms in each of these pillars.

Military Reform (United States)

Achievements:
- Standing-up the Afghan National Army (ANA)
- Defence Ministry Reforms

Challenges:
- Disproportionate focus on combat capacity
- Desertion rate
- Corruption and Clientalism

• The Military Reform pillar is coming to be viewed as one of the success stories of the SSR process.

Achievements

• The cornerstone of the pillar has been the establishment of a new Afghan National Army (ANA).

• By June 2005, 31,000 Afghan National Army recruits had graduated from the training program overseen by the United States.

• Under the current plan, the ANA is scheduled to reach full operational capability, with a force ceiling of 70,000 troops, by 2007.

• ANA troops have proven to be highly disciplined and professional and have performed very well in their initial operations.

• Importantly, there is ethnic balance in the force due to a rigidly enforced quota system.

• Recruitment has been extremely successful.

• In fact, so many have volunteered, that qualified recruits have had to be turned away.

• In terms of the Defence Ministry, some important reforms and personnel reshuffling have been carried out at the upper levels of the Ministry, but have yet to adequately trickle down to the lower levels.

Challenges

• Many challenges remain.

• In forming the ANA, there has been an emphasis on standing-up combat forces to meet existing security threats and ease the burden on international forces.

• The intent was to give the ANA a regional presence as quickly as possible.

• But the focus on developing combat capacity has drawn attention away from supporting structures, such as communications and logistics.

• The force still cannot operate independently without Coalition support.

• The high desertion rate has been another problem of the force.

• Soldiers continue to leave the ranks in large numbers due to problems with pay, living conditions, and the increasing risks associated to the job.

• Although the starting salary of $70 per month that ANA troops receive far outstrips the average starting wage for the Afghan civil service, the absence of a modern banking system prevents soldiers while on deployments from delivering money to their families.

• Finally, the Defence Ministry continues to be beleaguered by high levels of corruption and clientalism and is still heavily factionalized.

Police Reform (Germany)

Achievements:
- Training
- New Pay and Rank System

Challenges:
- Corruption/Clientalism
- Organizationally top heavy
- Salaries
- Shortfalls in equipment
- Militarization and factionalization

• Although Germany is the lead donor of the police reform pillar, the United States has become heavily engaged in an effort to accelerate the process.

• The pace of police and Interior Ministry reforms has been slower than expected.

Achievements

• As of June 2005, roughly 32,000 police had received some form of training.

• However, almost one third of those trained graduated only from a 2-week Transition Integration Program, covering basic policing skills.

• The remainder entered either a 4-week course for illiterate officers or an 8-week course for literate officers.

• Plans are in place to discount the 4-week course for illiterate officers and extend the 8-week course to 11 weeks, all in an effort to enhance the quality of graduates.

• Importantly, a new pay and rank system will soon be implemented that will raise police salaries to an adequate level, downsize the police and Interior Ministry staff, and rationalize organizational structures.

Challenges

• However, imposing challenges continue to obstruct progress:

• Corruption is endemic at all levels in the police and ministry.

• It is a top heavy organization - There is roughly one officer for every two patrolmen.

• Salaries are inadequate - The average salary of a patrolman is $25 per month, well below the standard of living for most urban centers. This only encourages corruption and criminality within the police.

• Police infrastructure across the country is in a decrepit state and equipment shortages are widespread.

• For example, at one police district in Kabul, there are only 10 - 20 firearms for 378 officers. And this is in a police district receiving direct international support.

• The police are heavily militarized and factionalized - This is very visible in the streets, where some police patrol with rocket propelled grenade launchers or high-powered assault rifles.

• Former *mujahidin* commanders have assumed the bulk of the positions in the police, bringing a military mentality to the job.

• They also bring their patronage networks into police structures, ensuring a high degree of factionalization.

Judicial Reform (Italy)

Achievements:
- Law drafting and collection
- Training of jurists
- Infrastructure rehabilitation
- Institutional reforms in the permanent justice institutions

Challenges:
- Overlapping legal norms
- Problems of coordination - "many hands in the pie"
- Lack of attention to corrections reform.
- Lack of resources

• The judicial reform process has lagged far behind the other pillars of the SSR agenda.

Achievements

• It has, nonetheless, achieved some modest gains, such as :
- • the ratification of an Interim Criminal Procedure Code and Juvenile Code;
- • the drafting of a Penitentiary Law;
- • the completion of law collection, assembling the country's vast number of laws;
- • the training of over 500 judges and prosecutors;
- • the rehabilitation of 33 court facilities at key locations; and
- • the advancement of institutional reforms in the permanent justice institutions.

Challenges

• However, the challenges, overshadow the achievements:

• One of the foremost challenges is the overlapping legal norms in Afghanistan – there are four*:*
- • Secular Law, based on French Civil Code;
- • Shari'a Law;
- • Customary or Informal law; and
- •International conventions

• A mix of Shari'a and customary law dominates, accounting for roughly 80% of adjudications.

• Accordingly, the nature and application of the law varies across the country, making the application of uniform standards exceedingly difficult.

• There are severe problems of coordination in the implementation of reforms.

• In Afghanistan, there are many hands in the judicial reform pie, complicating the development of a coherent strategy. These actors include:
- • the Afghan Judicial Institutions - the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, and the Attorney General;
- • the Judicial Reform Commission, created by the Bonn Agreement;
- • numerous donors, including Italy, the U.S., Canada, and the European Commission; and
- • a bevy of UN agencies and NGOs, such as UNDP, UNODC, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), and the Afghan Justice Project.

• Judicial infrastructure is crumbling and equipment is scarce.

• In many areas, courts can be found in makeshift tents or dilapidated buildings.

• Inadequate attention has been paid to Corrections

• The majority of the country's prisons, including those in Kabul, do not come close to meeting basic international standards.

• Yet international investment in the corrections system has been meager and slow.

• The final, and perhaps most pressing challenge is funding. From 2002-2004 the justice sector received a fraction of the funding provided to the other pillars of the SSR agenda - roughly 2-4%.This is beginning to change, with donors such as Canada, the United States, and the European Commission investing in the area, but much more donor attention is needed to jumpstart the process.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (Japan)

Afghan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP)

- Focuses only on the Afghan Military Force (AMF), the assemblage of militias that previously formed the Northern Alliance.
- Disarmament and demobilisation phase ended in July 2005.
- Reintegration phase continues until June 2006.

• The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants program, dubbed the Afghan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) has become the poster-child for SSR.

• The ANBP focuses only on the Afghan Military Force (AMF), the assemblage of militias that previously formed the Northern Alliance.

• It was launched in October 2003.

• Despite a slow start, the disarmament and demobilisation phase of the process ended in July of 2005, successfully demobilising 61,000 soldiers and collecting 36,000 light weapons.

• The reintegration phase, however, will continue until June 2006.

• While the numbers are surely impressive, it is premature to refer to the program as a success.

• Like any DDR program, the real test is reintegration.

• That is, ensuring that ex-combatants fully immerse themselves into the civilian economy and do not fall back into previous patterns of mobilization.

• With the unemployment rate hovering in the vicinity of 30% and the economy still struggling, the sustainability of this transition to civilian life remains uncertain.

Achievements of Demilitarization

- **Soldiers Demobilized**: 61,000
- **Weapons Collected:** 36,000
- **Heavy Weapons Cantonment Program:** 10,888 weapons cantoned.
- **Ammunition Survey:** 400 tons destroyed.

• Beyond DDR, a number of important steps have been taken to demilitarize the country.

• Demilitarization Statistics:

• The statistics here demonstrate the great strides made in this area.

• Perhaps more than any other pillar, Canada has played an instrumental role in the demilitarization process.

• Canada has been one of the funders of the ANBP, spearheaded the establishment of a successful Heavy Weapons Cantonment program, and served as the lead nation for the countrywide ammunition survey, which has already destroyed 400 tons of ammunition.

• However, much still has to be done.

• The government and the Afghan New Beginnings Programme have estimated that there are approximately 1,870 illegally armed groups in the country outside the mandate of the ANBP—including tribal militias, community defence forces, warlord militias, and criminal gangs—comprising 129,000 militiamen.

• To address this problem a program was launched in June 2005 to Disband Illegally Armed Groups.

• This will be far more difficult than the formal DDR process, as many of the groups being targeted are engaged in the profitable criminal economy and will likely resist forcefully.

Counter-Narcotics (United Kingdom)

Key Facts - 2004
- The trade involved 10 percent of all households in the country.
- The income from the trade was estimated at US$2.8 billion, equivalent to roughly 60% of the country's legal GDP.
- Afghan opiate production accounted for more than 87% of the world's heroin.
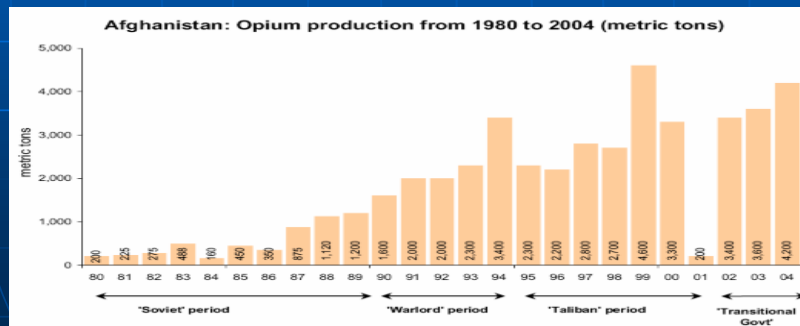
Afghanistan: Opium production from 1980 to 2004 (metric tons)

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004*, UNODC, Kabul, November 2004.

• The drug trade is currently viewed as one of the greatest threats to Afghan stability.

• The statistics above demonstrate how monolithic the problem is in Afghanistan.

• As you can see from the graphic, except for a sharp dip in production in 2001 due to a Taliban ban, the trade has steadily increased over the past two decades.

• Many have predicted that opium production in 2005 will surpass the record of 4,600 metric tons set in 1999.

• As former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani has memorably stated, if the growth of the drug trade is not arrested, the country will degenerate into a "narco-mafia state".

A New Counter-Narcotics Strategy

1. Building Institutions
2. Information Campaign
3. Alternative Livelihoods
4. Interdiction and Law Enforcement
5. Criminal Justice
6. Eradication
7. Demand Reduction and Treatment of Addicts
8. Regional Cooperation

Photo source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004*, UNODC, Kabul, November 2004.

- The Afghan government in conjunction with the United Kingdom and the United States has developed a new Counter-Narcotics strategy with 8 pillars.
- It reflects the realization that to address such a complex problem, a multi-dimensional solution is needed.

1. Building Institutions
- The first pillar focuses on building institutions.
- The cornerstone of this pillar has been the establishment of the Counter Narcotics Ministry in December 2004.
- The Ministry develops government policy and coordinates the multiplicity of government agencies and donors involved in counter-narcotics activities.

2. Information Campaign
- The second pillar involves the launch of an information campaign.
- The government aims to raise awareness of the adverse impact that the narcotics trade can have on Afghanistan's security, public health, and international standing.
- It seeks to emphasize the immoral and un-Islamic character of the trade.
- For example, the government has mobilized Afghanistan's National Council of Ulema to issue a Fatwa against the drug trade.

3. Alternative Livelihoods
- The third pillar is the provision of alternative livelihoods.
- This is viewed by many as the lynchpin for the process.
- It entails comprehensive rural development, ranging from the provision of alternative crops to irrigation and road infrastructure projects.

4. Interdiction and Law Enforcement
- The fourth pillar is the expansion of interdiction and law enforcement capacity.
- A number of agencies have been created to combat the drug trade, including:
    - The Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF) – A British trained paramilitary group reporting directly to the President; and
    - The Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) – Under the authority of the Ministry of Interior.

5. Criminal Justice
- The fifth pillar is the advancement of specialized criminal justice structures.
- As of June 2005, not a single major drug trafficker had been convicted in an Afghan court.
- The Counter-Narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force was created to address this problem.
- Supported by the United Kingdom and the United States, one of its main achievements, thus far, has been to establish a Counter-Narcotics Justice Center.
- It is a 'one-stop-shop' to try traffickers and other drug offenders, containing courtrooms, office space for specially trained judges and prosecutors, and prison facilities.

6. Eradication
- The sixth pillar is the eradication of poppy.
- A number of institutions have been established to oversee the physical eradication of poppy crops, most notably:
    - The Central Poppy Eradication Force (CPEF), a U.S. trained body.

7. Demand Reduction and Treatment of Addicts
- The seventh pillar is demand reduction and treatment of addicts within Afghanistan
- Drug addiction is growing sharply across Afghanistan.
- It is estimated that there are 60,000 addicts in Kabul alone.
- Plans are being implemented to establish drug treatment centers in every province of the country.

8. Regional Cooperation
- The final pillar is the promotion of regional cooperation.
- There is ongoing negotiation with regional actors—Iran, Pakistan, and the Central Asian Republics—to develop joint strategies and approaches to combat opium trafficking.
- As a land-locked country, drugs must inevitably pass through neighbouring states on the way to market.
- Increased cooperation between security and customs agencies is crucial for the success of the counter-narcotics campaign.

Measuring Success

Indicators:

- Security
- Politicization/Factionalization
- Economic Sustainability
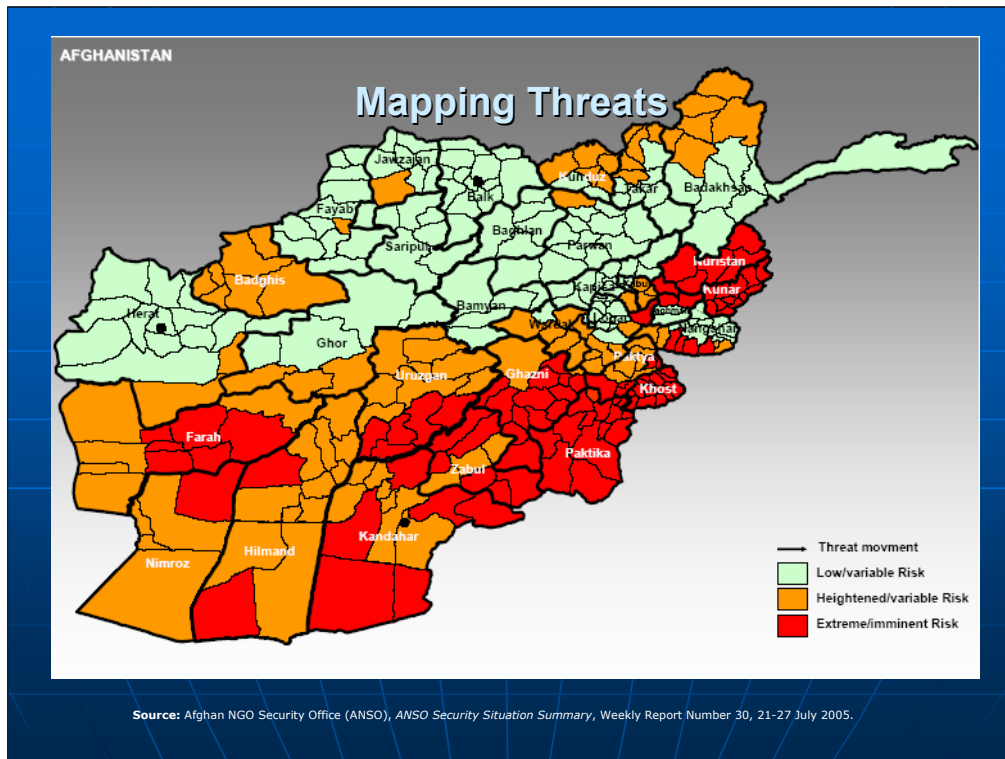- Rule of Law
- Local Ownership

- Now that we have thoroughly examined the state of security sector reforms in Afghanistan, we must ask the question:
  - *How do we measure the success of the process?*
- Every case will have individualized or context-specific performance indicators; however, some universal measures of effectiveness can be identified. I will utilize five:

  1. Security
  2. Politicization/Factionalization
  3. Economic Sustainability
  4. The Rule of Law
  5. Local Ownership

- It is still early in Afghanistan to judge the success or failure of the SSR process, but, by utilizing these measures, I think it is possible to make an interim assessment.

Security

Breaking Down the Threats:

- Spoiler Groups
- Warlordism
- Narcotics Trade/Illicit Economy
- General Criminality

• One of the strongest indicators of the success of a security sector reform process is the security situation.

• Although every society emerging from conflict will inevitably face high levels of residual insecurity in the immediate post-conflict period, it is the trajectory that those levels of violence take in the years that follow that will illustrate the efficacy of reforms.

• Except for a temporary lull in violence during the fall and winter of 2004, which can largely be attributed to an extremely harsh winter, Afghanistan has faced persistently high levels of insecurity since the collapse of the Taliban regime.

• From October 2004 - March 2005, nearly 1,000 people were killed in factional and insurgent violence.

• The primary threats to Afghan security are:

> • *Spoiler Groups* – This includes the Taliban, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami and al-Qaeda.

> • *Warlordism* – Regional commanders or warlords continue to run mini-fiefdoms with impunity.

> • *The Narcotics Trade and other sectors of the Illicit Economy* – It has facilitated the rise of a new narco-mafia and funnelled resources to warlords and spoiler groups.

> • *Criminality* – With a security and legal vacuum in many parts of the country, crime rates have soared.

• The spring of 2005 saw a marked escalation in violence with 43 Afghan security forces, 125 civilians, and more than 30 Coalition troops killed from March - June 2005.

• The situation remains extremely volatile – as the next graphic demonstrates.

Source: Afghan NGO Security Office (ANSO), *ANSO Security Situation Summary*, Weekly Report Number 30, 21-27 July 2005.

• This map is produced by the Afghanistan NGO Security Office or ANSO and is used to advise its NGO members about threat levels across the country.

• As you can see, much of the South and East of the country remains a high threat area, as that is where the bulk of insurgency activity has been concentrated.

• Although some NGOs continue to operate in these areas, far less than in more permissive environments of the country such as the North.

• This has deprived a large section of the population of a peace dividend.

• The violent riots which took place across Afghanistan in the spring of 2005 showed how precarious the security situation is, even in relatively stable areas.

Politicization/Factionalization

- De-politicizing the security sector

- Nurturing a national interest

- Ethnicization

• One of the central goals of security sector reform is to ensure that all state security structures are non-political.

• In a highly factionalized environment such as Afghanistan, this has proven to be an arduous task.

• Political parties and factional groups continue to exploit government offices, particularly in the security sector, to advance their narrow political objectives.

• A non-partisan and professional public service that elevates the national interest above group and individual interests remains an aberration.

• It can be said that there has also been a degree of ethnicization in the security services with certain ethnic factions asserting a disproportionate degree of control over particular agencies and institutions at the national and sub-national levels.

• This has had a particularly corrosive effect on the legitimacy of the security institutions.

Economic Sustainability

- Limited government revenue generating capacity

- Insufficient attention to economic sustainability

- The case of the Afghan National Army (ANA)

• The ultimate goal of the SSR process is to create self-sustainable institutions not external dependencies.

• To do so, it is critical to consider the long-term sustainability of reform initiatives from the very outset of the process.

• This largely did not occur in Afghanistan.

• With the Afghan government's revenue generating capacity highly limited, it is unlikely that it will be able to maintain the current rate of expenditures on its nascent security forces.

• The case of the Afghan National Army (ANA) is particularly instructive.

• The recurrent costs for the ANA in fiscal year 2004/2005 was $171 million.

• This accounted for roughly 25% of the Afghan government's entire operating budget and 57% of the country's domestic revenues for 2004/2005.

• The U.S. currently covers much of the recurrent costs of the force, but the Afghan government is excepted to assume this burden in the years ahead.

• Even if increases in revenues exceed expectations in the coming years, the cost of the force, as it is currently structured, will still be prohibitive

• Similar problems afflict the other security and justice institutions.

The Rule of Law

"Crime and corruption follow swiftly in the footsteps of war, like a deadly virus. And if the rule of law is not established very swiftly, it does not take long before criminality infects every corner of its host, siphoning off the funds for re-construction, obstructing the process of stabilisation and corrupting every attempt to create decent government and a healthy civil society.

This, above all was the mistake we made in Bosnia. We took six years to understand that the rule of law should have been the first thing. We are paying the price for that still."

Paddy Ashdown, 3 March 2004[2]

• As you can see from this telling quote of Paddy Ashdown, the High Representative in Bosnia, the rule of law forms the foundation for the state-building project, upon which everything else must be built.

• Like Bosnia, the rule of law was not prioritized in the initial stages of the Afghan reconstruction process, a mistake which Afghanistan is also paying for.

• A legal vacuum exists in many parts of Afghanistan.

• Judicial and legal reforms have been severely under-resourced, negating progress in the other pillars of the SSR process.

• For example, there is anecdotal evidence that narcotics traffickers in some areas of the country have been arrested by police, but subsequently released because there are no courts to try them and no jails to keep them.

• Informal methods of adjudication, or customary law, enforced by non-statutory security forces remain the norm in most of the country.

• While the preservation of traditional institutions should not, in principle, be discouraged, it can be damaging if they contravene the new constitution or international norms, as is often the case.

• Where such mechanisms conform to the constitution, respect fundamental rights, and possess local legitimacy, they should be codified in the formal legal system.

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[2] *Paddy Ashdown, International Humanitarian Law, Justice and Reconciliation in a Changing World, Speech for the Eighth Hauser Lecture on International Humanitarian Law, New York, 3 March 2004.*

Local Ownership

SSR programs "must be locally designed, locally implemented, and locally evaluated, for what may appear to be productive from the perspective of the international community may have significantly different connotations and effects when judged by domestic actors."

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)[3]

• The efficacy of security sector reform in any context is dependent on the degree of ownership local actors can assert over the process.

• In a country like Afghanistan, with such a deep and omnipresent history of foreign invasion and interference, the mere perception that reforms are being imposed externally can serve to de-legitimize and derail the process.

• The lack of human capacity and endemic corruption within the Afghan security institutions has compelled many donor states to implement reform programs unilaterally with insufficient consultation of local stakeholders.

• When donor agendas have clashed with those of local actors, donors have shown a tendency to 'go it alone'.

• The process to reform the judiciary reflects this problem.

• Donors have implemented projects, such as the drafting of the Interim Criminal Procedure Code and training courses for jurists, with little consultation with the permanent judicial institutions.

• Reforms carried out in this way will not be sustainable in the long-term.

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[3] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Security Sector Reform and Transitional Justice: A Crisis Post-Conflict Programmatic Approach*, New York: UNDP, 2003, p. 15.

Preliminary Assessment

- The 'slide toward expediency'

- Focus on 'hard' rather than 'soft' security elements

Photo: Copyright Martin Middlebrook (2003)

• Despite some impressive achievements, an interim analysis of the SSR process, based on the 5 measures of effectiveness, shows that in many ways it has not lived up to the principles of the SSR model, nor laid a solid foundation for a democratically accountable, rights-respecting, and self-sufficient sector.

• The success of security sector reform is dependent on the presence of a number of specific conditions, notably a minimum degree of security and capacity, which is absent in the Afghan context.

• Donors have manipulated and maneuvered Afghanistan's SSR agenda in an effort to bring it into line with existing conditions, but in so doing, have overridden some of its core principles.

• This trend can be conceptualized as a slide toward expediency that has stripped the SSR model of its holistic vision.

• Programs to advance the transparency and democratic accountability of the sector, while situating it within a clear legal framework, have been superseded by a singular focus on training and equipping the country's fledgling security forces.

• The wide disparity in resources and attention dedicated to what can be understood as the 'soft' and 'hard' security dimensions of the process, has created an imbalance in the SSR agenda.

• While efficient and effective security forces are crucial for the Afghan state's ability to secure a monopoly over the use of force, if not subordinated to civilian authority and situated within clear legal boundaries, they could succumb to political or factional manipulation or revert into previous patterns of behavior, marked by systemic human rights abuses and criminality.

Lessons Learned

- Clearly define realistic goals
- Provide a security buffer
- Understand and engage the local context
- Provide durable supplies of resources
- Ensure consensus and coordination
- Adopt a long-term focus

A number of general lessons can be derived from the Afghan experience:

1. Clearly define realistic goals

- First, it is important to clearly define realistic goals.
- Often these processes, and Afghanistan is no different, are expected to forge a sector that is both immediately effective and democratic and law-abiding, all amidst conditions ill-conducive for institutional change.
- We must better mange expectations by setting concise and realistic goals.
- The process should be defined early in the post-conflict phase, preferably in the peace agreement that ends hostilities.
- This did not occur with the Bonn Agreement, which addressed SSR in only a cursory fashion.
- The contours of a strategy should be elaborated in this agreement and imbued with clear benchmarks.
- This will serve to tie all the parties to the agreement to the process.

2. Provide a security buffer

- Second, a base level of security is required for the process to function.
- As internal security capacity is invariably limited in the immediate post-conflict phase, this role must be played by external actors in the form of a robust peace support or stabilization mission.

3. Understand and engage the local context

- Third, we must understand and engage the local context.
- While an overall SSR model exists, the process must be tailored to meet local conditions.
- There are no 'cookie-cutter' solutions to SSR.
- We must indigenize the process, based on a keen understanding of the local context.

4. Provide durable supplies of resources

- Fourth, donors must provide durable supplies of resources.
- Rebuilding security institutions is a costly endeavour.
- We must be prepared to make the long-term financial commitments to see the process through to its fruition.

5. Ensure Consensus and Coordination

- Fifth, a consensus on the agenda and objectives of the process must be achieved among both local and external stakeholders from the beginning of the process.
- Dissent from one or more stakeholders during implementation can cause it to unravel.
- Consensus will facilitate coordination, another prerequisite for success.
- This is particularly important in multi-lateral processes, such as that in Afghanistan.
- A local structure or system is needed to facilitate coordination among the wide array actors involved.

6. Adopt a long-term focus

- Finally, external actors must adopt a long-term focus.
- We must be aware that there are no quick fixes for security sector reform.
- It is a process that could take decades to complete.
- The international community must seek to reconcile our short-term attention spans and funding cycles, with the imperative of long-term engagement.

Conclusion

- Learning the lessons
- "Do no harm"
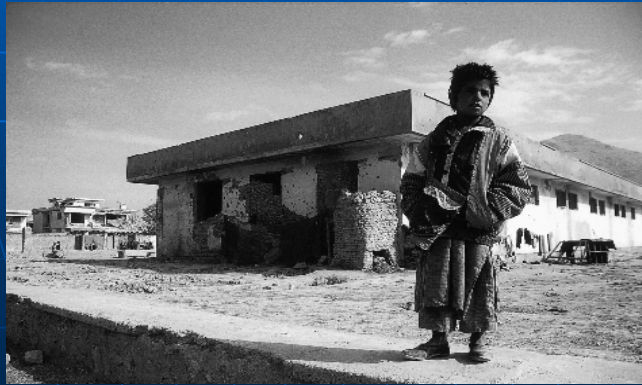- Bridging the 'conceptual-contextual' divide

Photo: Copyright
Martin Middlebrook
(2003)

• These lessons are hardly revolutionary.

• In fact, they have become mantras of the field.

• However, although they are widely accepted, they are not being absorbed or applied.

• It is important that we are able to overcome this inertia, for a badly managed SSR process can not only obstruct transitions to stability and democracy, but lay the seeds for future conflict.

• Just like ill-conceived development aid, ill-conceived reforms can do harm to peace building and stabilization efforts.

• It is my belief that standing bodies such as the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force or START, being established here in Foreign Affairs Canada, by facilitating cross government collaboration, the development of specialized expertise and preserving institutional memory, will help to meet the challenges that exist.

• As I opened this talk, I will emphasize that SSR is a crucial element of the state-building project in post-conflict societies, BUT a contextual-conceptual divide remains.

• The laudable principles and goals that we have ascribed to the model are rarely achieved, abandoned under the banner of pragmatism.

• To realize the vision of the model, one emphasizing human security, we must bridge this divide.

Thank you very much for your time and patience.
I look forward to your questions.