



DEVELOPING A TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

KEY ISSUES FOR SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN ZIMBABWE

Compiled by

Dr Martin Rupiya

Director of Research, Africa, Cranfield University

January 2008

This report is part of a series entitled Developing a Transformation Agenda for Zimbabwe, a project that is a collaboration between SITO (Idasa) and the Zimbabwe Institute.

SITO States In Transition Observatory
Political Governance Programme

www.statesintransition.org



**ZIMBABWE
INSTITUTE**
*Innovative Thinking for
a Sustainable Future*

As part of a States in Transition Observatory (SITO) project with a focus on identifying appropriate policy options in relation to peace and security as key elements of sustainable democracy, an initiative was launched on the Zimbabwe Crisis and the role of the Security Sector. Military, intelligence, police and paramilitary elements have effectively negated ordinary instruments of political transition such as the electoral process and other civil structures, such as the courts, through which citizens and political parties challenge political authority. These democratic mechanisms have been set aside in an environment that has abandoned the rule of law while presenting little evidence of democratic stability. The suffering of the ordinary person has become acute. The crisis has shown and continues to demonstrate that the use and abuse of the military (Security Sector) as a policy response to governance challenges has assumed pre-eminence and therefore needs to be studied if appropriate action to reverse this militarization is to be taken in future.

This report is a summary of a Round Table discussion held in November 2008. The discussion was held under Chatham House rules in order to encourage open engagement by academics and practitioners which would be non-attributable. International security experts, regional security practitioners, interested Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), academics and other policy and practitioner stakeholders, including representatives on defence and security issues from the four political parties were invited to participate in the meeting. [All parties responded except the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front, ZANU (PF)]. Each of the representative delegations was provided with an opportunity to present their own point of view on a) how they perceive the SSR challenges and b) how they propose to address them and c) what role they envisage playing if a comprehensive SSR process is launched?

Aim (s) of the dialogue

The round table discussion sought to:

- Develop an understanding of the motivations that drove the changes in relation to security policy, role and function as well as composition of the Zimbabwean security sector after June 2000?
- Attempt to put forward appropriate policy options that contribute towards relocating the Sector in a functioning democracy whilst restoring the ruptured civil military relations in Zimbabwe.

There are regional precedents to this - lessons can be learnt from the Tanzanian recommendations contained in the Nyalali Commission that effectively sought to separate the party from the state, including the control of the Armed Forces. In the latter institution, the process also sought to remove the commissariat structure located in the president's office.

- Identify which arms of the Security Sector should receive turn around attention and why? Current anecdotal evidence suggest attention be placed on policing issues but the rationale for this still needs to be interrogated.
- Finally, the process hopes to develop specific options within the SSR realms that relate to the broader poverty reduction, stability and development agenda of the new state as has been the hallmark of all UN SSR strategy which holds that:

UN SSR processes are about assisting national authorities in restoring and reforming the security sector for purposes of peace, security, poverty reduction, economic and social development, restoring human rights, rule of law and democratization.¹

Contextualisation

One of the unique features of the political crisis in Zimbabwe is the militarisation of politics against the background of a redefined role of and function for the Security Sector and the Executive [dominated by the military and hence hereafter simply referred to as the military] which can be cited as the politicisation of the military. This development occurred in the context of, in retrospect, a narrowly redefined national security strategy after the elections in June 2000.

Comments by the military on the eve of that election, through the then spokesperson Major Diye, asserted their “apolitical nature” and readiness to recognize the outcome of that political process and preserve their independence. However, soon afterwards, there appears to have been direct intervention by the executive, which succeeded in changing the non-interference posture of the Security Sector in a context of the declining mass popularity of the ruling party, the ZANU (PF). Furthermore, the country and ruling party were preparing for the then forthcoming presidential elections scheduled for March 2002.

¹ See preface: Heiner Hanggi & Vincenza Scherer (eds) *Security Sector Reform and UN Integrated Missions: Experience from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti and Kosovo* (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed forces (DCAF), 2008

Based on this redefined national security strategy, the military changed its tune on 9 January 2002. All the service chiefs: the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Commanders of the Army, Air-force, Intelligence, Police, Prison Service, and National Parks and Wildlife appeared on national television and declared that they would not salute or recognize any leader who did not have 'liberation credentials'. This was in clear violation of the country's constitution which allows the registration of all citizens as candidates. In addition, from that moment onwards, the Security Sector in Zimbabwe, led by the military has been at the forefront of politics in support of ZANU (PF).

The Security Sector in Zimbabwe is represented by the following: Intelligence Services, the Army, Police, Prisons, War Veterans, National Service, Party Militia and the civil service that is involved in the decision making, financing and management of this sector. A trend has emerged in Zimbabwe as to the nature of internal reform of the Security Sector adopted by the executive: first there was a change in policy as to what constitutes loyal forces; secondly, at least in the earlier phases, there were clear cases in which individuals perceived as less loyal were removed; third, there new units were formed, sometimes outside the formal control of the military. All this occurred in an environment of disregard for the rule of law and encouragement of impunity. Currently, the military has organized and deployed itself as the Joint Operational Command (JOC), a structure that is a throw back to the Rhodesian liberation war defensive mechanism and operates in an illegitimate political context.

Security Sector Reform (SSR)

Before analysing the subjective Zimbabwean challenges to the reform of the security sector, there is a need to briefly restate what this process is normatively understood to entail. SSR is actually an old notion that should, ideally, continuously take place within states in terms of reforming the military for different political, economic and geo-strategic reasons such as the associated democratization process of Samuel Huntington's *Third Wave of Democratization*. The purpose of SSR is to create institutions that are responsible for policy formulation, instruments and implementation of activities that comprehensively address the security interests of a state and its society.

One can ask, does Africa have apolitical forces or militaries? According to numerous writers on the question of military withdrawal from politics as the continent marched towards multi-party democracy there is no military that can be cited as truly non-partisan. However, to the extent that each supports and

reinforces, as an institution, the pillars of the state, outside the actual political party poll hustling, the notion of an apolitical military is found relevant. In cases where the military takes an active political role that is designed to bring about the electoral victory of a particular party against another, and where the military may even define the country's national security and economic policies, then the military as an institution is seen to have lost its preferred apolitical nature. This was evident in the Tanzanian multiparty review process during the 1990s. The late Justice Francis Nyalali [*hereafter simply referred to as the Nyalali Commission*] recommended reform of the highly politicized and integrated military, the Tanzanian Peoples Defence Force (TPDF). The re-emergence of SSR on the African continent is associated with events in the 1990s when international donors linked SSR to political deregulation and support conditionalities. As a result, the idea has drawn more critics and resistance than would have been the case elsewhere.

SSR is today guided by new notions of Security included in policies such as the African Union's (AU's) Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) that has recognized the centrality of state security while paying equal attention to notions of human security as articulated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994. It is, in fact, a political process, concerned with changing power relations in the field of security policy, management and institutional support structures. Conducted in a post-conflict situation, SSR has winners and losers and therefore some who welcome the process and others who resist it. Furthermore, SSR generally includes, either in its genesis or as challenges to its implementation, the realities of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR).

Key *SSR* issues

While this process is not prescriptive, we are however, convinced that we must emerge from the discussions with concrete policy options that are likely to be fed into the arenas of policy in the event that an agreement is reached. To this end, the following points were identified as key issues for special attention during the dialogue.

1. What sort of National Security Strategy (NSS) should form the basis of responding to the new political dispensation? This refers not only to the Governance component, concerned with policy formulation and implementing agencies but also to identifying the preferred actors. Precedents include

the transformation in South Africa after 1994 as well as the earlier events in Malawi after the departure of former President Hastings Banda. In both cases, reform of the national security strategy included constitutional review of the Defence and Police Acts as part of the wider consultative renewal. While this can restore the civil-military relations balance and give legitimacy to the new institutions, it can also provide clear demarcation of when and where the military may be used in response to both internal and external security situations.

2. What is the composition of the Security Sector in the country and does this engender confidence and legitimacy amongst the local community and external stakeholders? What changes have occurred in the sector since June 2000 and have these complemented or detracted from the national security plan under the Coalition Agreement of 1980? To this end, it is important to examine the nature of recruitment for the National Service in August 2002 and the extent to which the same practice should be used in future.

3. What is the Parliamentary Oversight role within the new state? This is important given the gradual marginalisation of observations made, for example, by Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Shumba and MP Mrs Hokoyo as leading members of the Defence and Security Portfolios whose findings may prove useful to return to though at the time were simply ignored. Furthermore, Parliament ordinarily authorises the decisions by the executive, approves the appointment of senior officers, and represents the authority that declares war, raises armies, approves funds, and creates instruments regulating the conditions of service and other related interactions with foreign or neighbouring state militaries. What roles have been stripped from Parliament in Zimbabwe? How can these be restored and strengthened?

4. Is there a role for civil society organizations, including media and policy research institutes, with specialization in issues of peace and security within the SSR process? Where these have been deliberately dispersed, as is the evidence from SAPES, what recommendations can be made for the SSR process to include independent bodies with a mandate to monitor and evaluate progress in the new era?

5. What needs to be done in terms of legal and institutional civic education to restore credibility to the Police and establish a new approach to Prisons in the country? Stated differently, is there or do we see a correctional or punishment based prison system?

6. Has gender been a dimension that requires attention in the make up of the new force in the future?
7. What have been the levels of military expenditure since June 2000? Has it been a priority in relation to other sectors and can this be examined with a view to creating institutions that are appropriate, affordable and adequate? Is there value in re-thinking former Minister Bernard Chidzero location of military camps in the remote rural areas as economic agents or have these camps been compromised?
8. What are the key challenges to repairing regional security arrangements that have been disrupted by the protracted crisis in Zimbabwe? This may include the repositioning of the Regional Peacekeeping and Training Centre based at King George the 6th Barracks (KG VI). The second issue at a regional level is the extent to which the new national security strategy contains elements of common and collaborative security, directly addressing the question of the supremacy of the sovereign state?
9. What is the current (security) decision making process that, from the outside at least, appears dominated by ruling party, Central Committee and Politburo structures rather than state organs?
10. Is there a role for military professionalism in the new era and if this is the case, how can this be effected? To this end, military leadership is key to nuanced professionalism. What would be the recommended background, education, ethnic and regional balance for the new officer corps?
11. Finally, what elements of the Security Sector can provide what is known as “low-hanging-fruit” in order to bring about maximum effect from a comprehensive process? In other words, would attention to reforming the Police be the correct priority?

In Zimbabwe, the transformation of the Security Sector to serve a political purpose for a party that has been unable to draw popular support has left the country divided and polarised. Not only has this undermined the previous balance in civil military relations but it has also had serious implications for legitimacy and regional integration, as well as a negative budgetary impact. If this argument is correct, then the country represents a clear case study for root and branch SSR in the event that there is a political agreement in the near future.

Dialogue

The procedure followed was to offer the political parties the floor, followed by (Southern Africa) regional defence and security practitioners, regional players, academics and other interested parties. Because this was a small and select group, everyone present was availed the opportunity to say something. What follows below is not a verbatim report of the proceedings but rather a summarised version highlighting significant points, decisions, and recommendations that emerged from the discussion.

The core Zimbabwean Security forces under consideration are comprised of approximately 60 000 (mainly men and a few women) organised as the Army (35 000), Police (30 000), the Air Force (5 000) and the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). On paper, the CIO is comprised of only 3 000 people but in practice the numbers are estimated to be closer to 15 000. There are also quasi-civilian and party establishments, difficult to quantify in numbers, working with the security sector, such as the National Service, Party Militia and War Veterans. Where in the past the sector had strong regional security linkages, these have recently shrunk and the military are shunned in open engagement by other regional security sector institutions that are uncomfortable with the overt political role adopted by the Zimbabwean military. The last major political involvement of the military occurred between 29th March and 27th June 2008. During this period, the military spread themselves country-wide, addressed rallies and argued for the re-election of ZANU (PF) and its candidates.

Demonstrating an acute sense of the structure we were dealing with, the house was informed that the CIO was the most feared, operating openly as the vanguard to ZANU (PF) and responsible for the day-to-day operations of the ruling party. This was organized around 5 elements of the Military Intelligence structure, the Police Intelligence & Security (PISI), the ZANU (PF) intelligence structure under Minister Nicholas Goche but operating as indivisible with the formal CIO, a presidential intelligence arm and an Air Force intelligence component. Secondly, it emerged that the different forces of the Police, the Army, Prisons and the National Service do not have a cohesive central structure; with some being more equal than others. The military, for example, are better remunerated than the police. For the state, creating these different and competing sources of intelligence has created a sense of uncertainty amongst the ranks. As a result, one can still ask, “who-guards-the-guards?”

Key Outcomes

The meeting agreed that the following points represented the core areas that need to be addressed in terms of a Security Sector Reform process in the event that a political arrangement is reached in Zimbabwe.

- a) Reconsider the unsustainable number of the current combined forces. This will involve the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) into society of thousands of soldiers. However, the country currently neither has the political will nor the resources to do this.
- b) Seek to identify and engage with “low-hanging-fruit” which are units or elements, such as the Police, likely to offer maximum benefit with minimum cost implications in reform. This would be in the context of taking this as a vanguard to more sustained, comprehensive SSR.
- c) Revisit the role of parliament and its oversight functions in terms of the allocation of resources, mediation between the Executive and the Security Sector and, monitoring of the extent to which the Security Sector operates under the provisions of the constitution.
- d) Investigate and determine the levels of security sector expenditure for the purpose of linking future allocations to wider national economic recovery.
- e) Reconsider the question of re-professionalization in light of the politicisation that has created a gap between society and the security institutions. In doing this, it was suggested that an appropriate National Defence Act emerge from a National Security Strategy Review (NSSR) that draws its inspiration from a broader Constitutional review process.
- f) It also emerged that the Zimbabwean forces have lost the confidence and respect of regional security structures, denting the role that the Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC) had been set up to play.

Entry Points Identified

First, concerted contact must be made with parliamentarians, who are ready and willing to play a role in addressing the role and function of the Security Sector. It was revealed that there was cross-party consensus on this issue in parliament that includes ZANU (PF) parliamentarians. Although recently,

ZANU MPs appear to have been ordered not to interact with others on issues related to the Security Sector.

Second, it emerged that the Security Sector is divided and a baseline study should be conducted to determine precisely which sectors provide opportunities for engagement. Such a study would identify potential openings for and catalysts in a reform process.

Third, a comprehensive SSR process would need to factor in mechanisms designed to revive the role of a cowed and abused civil society community. Previously, civil society was engaged in matters of research and commentary focusing on peace and security issues. The expectation is that not only would this restore vibrant organisations such as the Southern African Regional Policy & Research Trust (SAPES) but it would also reform private media houses now directly owned by the CIO and other state Security Sector organisations.

Fourth, the debate suggested that in the future a focus on who and what institutions represent the security sector needed to be seriously considered as the current institutions had allowed themselves to be appropriated in a partisan agenda at the expense of their national mandate.

Fifth, was and continues to be the question of the relation between perceived levels of expenditure and prioritisation of the security question over and above other economic and social demands? There is a need to assess security expenditure in relation to broader national security concerns.

Sixth, restoring damaged regional security cooperation emerged as an urgent issue to be addressed by actors, including those that sit on the parliamentary defence and security committee.

Seventh, the composition of a reformed Security Sector needs to respond to gender, racial, regional and ethnic dimensions in terms of the equitable sharing of posts and responsibility in order for the sector to act as a necessary foundation to future recovery and stability.

Finally, there is a need to review the current security policy as well as the decision making process. State security policy was perceived to have been collapsed with the personal security of the political elite and ruling party rather than more holistic and national security dimensions. In addition, decisions about security matters – in particular, defining what constitutes a national threat - have been compromised by personal and partisan positions and perceptions. As a result, there needs to be a review of the constitutionally mandated functions of government, the civil-service and the executive branch.

Furthermore, the role perceived to be played by certain key party structures at present, illustrates that Security Sector policy remains the preserve of the politburo, central committee and related party channels rather than being subject to oversight by the national government.

Conclusion

The Zimbabwe Crisis is characterized by significant military involvement in politics and this has militarized the political context. The Security Sector in Zimbabwe has been transformed. It has become divisive and as a result, certain actors treat particular units with preference. This has created tensions and divisions. In the event that a political agreement is reached, the security sector will require robust intervention. The cost of expenditure on maintaining and sustaining the Security Sector needs to be quantified. It is unsustainable and has come at the expense of other demands related to social, welfare, industry and investment.

Parliament, in particular, has had its oversight of the Security Sector reduced. Even so, the discussion suggested that this will be the first important area for engagement if future progress is to be made.

Finally, although ZANU (PF) MPs and representatives did not attend the dialogue, their deliberations with their colleagues in parliament suggest that they are aware of the military challenge, especially the cost to the fiscus and are awaiting an appropriate moment to engage with the issue of Security Sector Reform.