

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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It is more than two years since the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) emerged from almost a decade of war and a three year Transition. The elections held in 2006, in this vast country, represented a quantum leap for the country, the region and the continent. Given the magnitude of *the First African World War* the successful conclusion of the Congolese Transition will stand as a historic point of reference for African politics. But the challenge of consolidating the peace remains considerable. Central to the restoration of state authority lies the task of promoting effective, root and branch reform of the security sector.

THE CONTEXT FOR SSR IN DRC

SSR is being attempted in the DRC in a political context where no one won the war followed by an uneasy peace compounded by a humanitarian tragedy despite the presence of the biggest (and smallest) PKO in the history of the UN.

None of the various belligerents – domestic or regional – was able to win an outright military victory and when peace slowly came, the political structure agreed at Sun City to guide the Transition represented a fragile attempt to forge a unity government out of the principal adversaries. This was the so-called “1+4”. This model of sharing of power and positions was replicated at multiple levels of state structures, including in the composition of the armed forces and the police. However even after the elections, the proliferation of active armed groups and militias, mainly in the Eastern part of the country continued. These armed groups operate alongside, in collusion and/or conflict with a number of foreign armed groups, such as the Rwandan ex-FAR/Interahamwe, the Ugandan ADF/NALU and LRA.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian crisis that continuously unfolded in the DRC represents one of the most grave in the world. A study by the International Rescue Committee has established that since the beginning of the DRC conflict in 1996, more than 5.4 million Congolese have lost their lives; even now, some 1,500 per day are still dying. There are more than 1.2 million IDPs, nearly 400,000 refugees in neighbouring countries, and amongst the population as a whole, an estimated 17 million are food insecure, 1.3 million HIV positive.

To assist in the enormous challenge of restoring security, consolidating peace, turning around the dire humanitarian situation and building the foundations for a return to sustainable development, the UN Security Council to build the largest peacekeeping operation in the history of the UN. Boasting more than 17,000 uniformed personnel and a further 5,000 civilians, an airfleet (at its height) of 100 aircraft, and a budget of a billion dollars a year, MONUC breaks many records. And yet, measured by other yardsticks, MONUC remains also one of the smallest missions ever just 17,000 troops in a country the size of Western Europe, with nine neighbouring states and almost 11,000 Km of

borders, just 68 aircraft in a country which lacks any other viable means of travelling the 2,000Km from east to west, and so on.

In such a context, the security sector is a political by-product of the war and the Peace. The paradox is, of course, that attempting to start towards reforming the security sector in the aftermath of a conflict will always be as crucial as it is difficult.

At Sun City, those negotiating peace together opted for '*brassage*': initially forming the new armed forces through a direct mixing of all armed elements choosing to participate, be they members of the old army, the large rebel movements, or the smaller and highly fragmented Mayi-Mayi militias. Through the *brassage* process, former armed elements willing to integrate into the new armed forces – the FARDC – were pooled together and provided with a basic level of training (team-building) and very limited equipment, resulting in the formation of the new 'Integrated Brigades'. The process remains incomplete, nor has it been fully successful in forging effective fighting units – a failure most recently witnessed in the reverses suffered by the FARDC fighting armed groups in the eastern DRC in late 2007 and 2008. Moreover the new army has emerged as the main perpetrator of human rights violations in the DRC, with its elements involved in a considerable number of human rights violations: killings, arbitrary arrests, detentions, crimes of sexual violence as well as looting of civilian property. In some parts of the country, the FARDC are also accused of involvement in the illegal traffic of mineral resources and other goods. This is not the most fertile ground on which to hope that SSR will blossom, then. But the imperative to go ahead with *brassage* was, at base a political, not a technical one, one focused on dealing with a present danger – an enormous, heterogenous, and largely un-commanded mass of armed elements from a large number of different factions – than on building towards a 'new model army' for the future.

Meanwhile, for its part, the Congolese national police, for its part, is composed of an estimated 50,000 uniformed personnel, for which no accurate police census exists and for which only limited training and re-equipment has been provided. The Justice sector, meanwhile, had been atrophied and discredited not just through the war, but through the several decades of dictatorship under Mobutu that preceded it.

In short, in considering the political context and the reality of the so-called security sector in the DRC, one is obliged to ask to what extent it would be correct to speak of 'reform' at all, in a context where the security sector has lacked coherence or structure more or less from the beginning. The reality is that in the post-Transition period, the challenge facing the DRC is a complex one. On the one hand, it must design an almost entirely new security apparatus; on the other, it is obliged to do so by drawing on a very heterodox mix of former adversaries, many of whom had limited training prior to mobilizing with the multiple militias and armed groups during the years of war.

II. THE CONTEXT HAD FAVOURED A SECTORAL APPROACH OF SSR

Three principal pillars of the security sector in the DRC form the focus of most national and international efforts: defence, the police, and the justice sector. This ‘sectoral approach’ stands in rather strong distinction to the kinds of holistic approach” which is the mantra of SSR specialists. The reforms being attempted in the DRC do not represent the full, systemic kind of reform that is dreamed of in, say, the Guidelines set forward by the OECD/DAC. The Government, in particular has made clear its strong preference for working at the sectoral level. A number of international actors have repeatedly tried to press for a more systemic approach, driven by some form of national security planning process and an overarching coordination mechanism, but this has, so far, found no place on the national agenda.

Overall, progress at the sectoral level has been predictably uneven. Crudely put, while police and justice reforms are progressing moderately well, defence reform is lagging behind. The challenging parameters presented by Transition politics and the *brassage* process are one reason: but the lack of a common vision amongst key local actors as well as between those actors and the international community has been another.

To trace the different overall approaches to SSR, and the role of international partners within these, it is important to notice that the paradox is that the challenge and opportunity of the Transition might be summarized as a weakness of political will on the part of a still shaky Transition Government. By contrast, the challenge and opportunity of the present moment represents perhaps too much political will on the part of a Government that is understandably sensitive about the degree to which attempts to promote SSR transgress against its sovereignty...

During the transition, the SSR was coordinated by the CIAT, the International Committee to Accompany the Transition. This was the overall coordinating body that brought together key Member States, including the Permanent Five, and MONUC, to bring coherence to international engagement with the DRC during its Transition period. The CIAT played a crucial role throughout the transition. Underneath the CIAT, a number of more specialist structures were created to provide fora in which international and national actors could work together on Transition priorities. These included three Joint Commissions, of which, the most pertinent was clearly the Joint Commission on SSR. This body was mandated with the coordination of activities related to “*the integration of national defence and internal security forces with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and in particular, the training and monitoring of the police, while ensuring that they are democratic and fully respect human rights and fundamental freedoms...*”. Later on an international **SSR Contact Group** was also created to support and ensure coherence within the international partners involved in DRC. At the more operational level, the World Bank/MDRP created a **Coordinated Joint Operations Centre (CCOC)** to direct the DDR/ army integration process, ensuring coordination among the various parties, including information-sharing and analysis. Meanwhile, to prepare the security plan for the planned elections, a **Comité de Pilotage pour la sécurisation du processus Electoral (CPSPE)** was established.

The establishment of these various strategic and operational coordination mechanisms was certainly an early indicator of international recognition that reform in the security sector would be the key for the Congo's return to stability, peace, and development. But their effectiveness was undercut by the absence of united action and direction from the Transition Government, the more so as elections approached in 2006. Decision-making was erratic, parallel chains of command persisted, and political will was fragmented and, often, indecisive.

These weaknesses explain, at least in part, why individual partners sought to exert a more direct influence on the reform process. Hence, for example, the creation EUSEC and EUPOL, multi-task "counsel and assistance missions" in country. The pressure exerted during this period on the GoDRC by the donors to implement the 'strategic plan' in accordance with the principles set and agreed in the national program met with some success. In particular, the presence of EUSEC, and the collaboration between South Africa, the Netherlands and Angola, helped accelerate defence reform.

But equally, the leading role exerted by particular international players – the UN included, perhaps – may have led at times to a kind of international schizophrenia, a flip-flopping between truly multilateral versus bilateral approaches.

THE UN ROLE

All recognized that progress in SSR was critical to cementing a return to peace; but perhaps the UN, and its peacekeeping operation, MONUC, may be said to have had a particular appreciation of this point, mounting peace operations towards the remaining armed groups at the 'bleeding edge'. This was all the more so since successive mandates for MONUC, particularly in the aftermath of the Transition, called on MONUC to engaged in joint operations with the FARDC against both domestic and foreign armed groups.

But it is important to note that joint operations aside, for some time during the Transition and beyond, there were two schools of thought (within the UN and amongst international partners) regarding MONUC's mandate for involvement in SSR.

According to the first school, MONUC had, in reality, no mandate to involve itself in SSR, which remained the responsibility and prerogative of the DRC Government, in conjunction with any bilateral donors who wished to involve themselves. While several SC resolutions urged the Government to "promote all possible means to facilitate and expedite cooperation" towards SSR, it was argued that none of these provisions was necessarily directed towards MONUC. Crucially, this reading of the mandate debate led to there being no direct budget allocation or responsible unit within MONUC charged with providing support to SSR.

According to the second school of thought, the more general SC resolution provisions which mandated MONUC to "provide assistance to the transitional Government and authorities" ought to be read as encompassing the repeated priority that the same

resolutions attached to the GoDRC's progressing with SSR – and particularly with DDR/integration. It was this pragmatic approach that prompted some MONUC military units in the Kivus to provide urgent and ongoing assistance to the *brassage* centres there, for example.

Whatever was the right way to interpret the mandate – mandate interpretation is a rather Delphic art, after all! – there is an important lesson to be drawn here: the ambiguity negatively influenced the emergence of an integrated UN approach to SSR. Moreover, it left room for unfortunate misunderstandings between the United Nations and other international partners on the questions of leadership and coordination. If, in the future, peacekeeping operations of the UN are to have a role in SSR, they must be clearly and unambiguously mandated to do so.

POST-TRANSITION REFORM: THE TANGO BETWEEN REBALANCING, RE-EMERGENCE AND THE MULTIPLICATION OF DIVERGENCES

Rebalancing relations with international partners after the Elections

After the historic 2006 elections, the new and democratically legitimate Government was understandably eager to rebalance its relationships with international partners, reasserting a sovereignty which some political leaders believed to have been impaired, or even lost during the Transition. Again, with matters of security at the heart of sovereignty, it is unsurprising that SSR became, and has remained, a strong focus of this reflex to rebalance.

On SSR, a significant piece of 'collateral damage' resulting from this reflex was, however, the reinforcement of a sectoral, 'Three Pillars' approach at the expense of an overarching mechanism such as the SSR Joint Commission. Against the arguments being made by many international partners that SSR could only progress coherently if coordinated through an overall national mechanism, Congolese officials made negative comparisons with the unpopular CIAT, the international community's coordinating body during the Transition, often seen, rightly or wrongly, as an unacceptable incursion on Congolese sovereignty.

At the time, many international actors – parts of the UN included – were advocating that the Government should adopt a 'Whole of Government' approach to progressing with SSR. While this may have been the technical best practice, in line with received international wisdom on SSR, in sovereign terms, in the DRC it was perceived as politically unpalatable.

The Re-Emergence of a Bilateral Approach

In parallel, the absence of an overarching mechanism has favoured the emergence of a much more bilateral approach to international support: China for Defence reforms, Japan for Police reform and Canada for Justice Reform, to list just a few of the major (and in

some cases, new) bilateral partners currently playing leading roles. European nations, too, have tended to revert to a bilateral approach, as have neighbouring African powers, such as South Africa and Angola.

At this juncture, it may be useful to reflect on the trade-off that has resulted from this proliferation of bilateral arrangements: advances have, arguably, been achieved at the expense of coherence – coherence not just in policy terms (differing training standards, uneven doctrine) but even in material, or rather materiel terms (the provision of incompatible weaponry and ammunition). And, of course, the ability of the multilateral UN to exert influence in such a bilateralised environment was, correspondingly, reduced.

A further and less obvious factor that has limited the emergence of international coherence relates to differing standards and definitions amongst bilateral actors about how aid can be applied to the Security Sector. SSR sits uncomfortably on a faultline between what is considered ‘ODA’ and ‘non-ODA’. Worse, it seems that this distinction is differently understood by different donors, further complicating matters.

Growing divergences between the GoDRC and international partners in SSR

Divergences between the GoDRC and certain partners have also increased against this backdrop of an increasingly bilateral approach. For example, growing differences between the World Bank/MDRP and the Ministry of Defence unhappily coincided with the urgent need to progress with DDR in Ituri in order to capitalise on breakthrough peace agreements with residual armed groups there. With MDRP support temporarily in hiatus, the GoDRC, in tandem with the UN, proceeded to construct a separate DDR programme there, outside the scope of the PNDDR – and taking the opportunity to reorient the reintegration activities of the new programme to community-based approaches.

A second factor of divergence related to the Arms Embargo placed on the DRC by the UN Security Council. This was initially created in the aftermath of the work of the various UN Panels of Experts looking at both the ‘war economy’ around the DRC’s mineral wealth and also that looking at weapons flows to the country. The Embargo always contained an exception clause which allowed the GoDRC to provision the newly created Integrated Brigades with materiel, but there remained much misunderstanding of the Embargo as a whole and a growing resentment on the part of the Government about the limits under which it felt it was being made to operate.

A third factor relates to the emergence of two separate and competing army reform plans. The plan drafted by the FARDC CoS, with the support of 58 international experts, many of them provided by the EU’s EUSEC, favoured a more classical approach to ‘whole system’ SSR. The Minister of Defence’s plan, however, envisioned a more developmental and political vision of the army centred on the consolidation of the army integration process and stabilization of the eastern part of DRC. Behind this standoff was, again, a growing perception within some quarters of government that SSR was “the Trojan Horse” for some partners within the international community to impose their

personal model of reform on the DRC. The disagreement over the two plans – happily now resolved – was unfortunate and led to a (further) loss of momentum in reform. In this regard, a particular lesson that the UN has learned is the important role it can play as a ‘neutral party’, having no sovereign interests of its own acting as a critical friend to the host government, explaining with dispassion the costs and benefits of contrasting approaches.

In the end, it has been the more pragmatic plan advanced by the Minister of Defence that has carried the day – at the long-delayed SSR Round Table and international partners have, willy nilly, been obliged to get behind it.

The GoDRC strongly rejected the creation of a cross-government structure to support SSR activities. Instead, institutional divisions of labour between different components of Government remain intact. As a result, success in SSR overall will have to rely on reaching a ‘bottom up’, shared understanding of the different mandates and objectives of the different Government stakeholders. This places an extra onus on international partners to advocate strongly for policy coherence from the Congolese side, but also to model that coherence themselves – something which we have not always proven able to do.

Earlier in 2007, the Government, through the leadership of its Minister of Planning, created a structure of Theme Groups which bring together key ministries along with multilateral and bilateral actors to coordinate work on the five priority pillars of its PRSP (governance, pro-poor growth, essential social services, community dynamics, and HIV/AIDS). Based on that, the SSR was supposed to be driven forward by three Thematic Subgroups – one for each of defence, police and justice – within the overall Theme Group on Governance. There is a further thematic subgroup on sexual violence, reflecting the close and regrettable present association between instances of SGBV and the security forces.

LESSONS LEARNED ON COORDINATION

What, collectively, might have done differently? If, sincerely, the collective international wisdom on good SSR is that a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to reform is necessary, a number of lessons follow. First, a serious lesson was learned regarding sequencing, specifically that the reform of all three elements of SSR must commence simultaneously as early as possible. A crucial and early opportunity was probably missed to advocate for this approach during the Transition in the formation of the SSR Joint Commission. While it included both Police and Military sub-commissions, it excluded the Justice sub-sector. This sent an unfortunate message that improving justice was somehow not as important as strengthening the armed elements of the security sector.

Second, the need for a cross-sectoral approach could have been advocated with the incoming President and his government as it was forming. After the elections, there was virtually no serious consultation on SSR and other substantive issues with the yet to be inaugurated President. Worse still, between this inauguration and the installation of the

new Government which lasted for more than 6 months, there was no substantive dialogue with the major partners on key issues related to Governance, SSR and other. Such a dialogue should have opened the door for discussions on the challenges, the ideas on how the new government could engage with the partners on key governance issues including SSR.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE THREE PILLARS APPROACH

Justice and Corrections

Work in the justice sector is sometimes considered the orphan child of SSR, perhaps because of its less immediately direct connection in the mind to direct matters of security. But the enormous continuing levels of violence, insecurity, human rights abuses and crime in the DRC give this the lie. More particularly, so does the considerably elevated level of incidents of sexual violence being committed daily in the Congo by men in uniform. Progress in the justice sector, in short, remains key to SSR as well as to broader advances in the fight against impunity.

In the DRC, crimes that involve uniformed personnel are considered in the military justice system, whatever their nature. It is thus that a focus on achieving democratically accountable security forces in the DRC will rely on greatly strengthening military justice, an ongoing focus for the UN, as well as for national and international actors.

Few partners in the international community see much romance in providing funds to rebuild prisons. The notion that rebuilding the justice sector (including corrections) is not as urgent as the other elements of SSR continues to baffle, particularly as we know from bitter experience in the DRC, as well as in other contexts (Haiti comes strongly to mind) that rebuilding the police force, does nothing if there is no functioning judicial and correction system to work in tandem with it. In view of the magnitude of violations committed by the uniformed services in the DRC, it should be apparent to all that reinforcing military justice is a *sine qua non* to constructing a disciplined and effective military force.

Police

Work on police reform began earlier in the Transition and has, concomitantly, advanced further by now than army reform. Police reform also has been intensively supported by international partners. To date, 63,089 elements of the new Police Nationale Congolaise (PNC), including 2,428 women, have been trained by MONUC's civilian police component. However due to a lack of funding, this training will certainly slow down in the months ahead, something which concerns me greatly.

During the Transition period, reform and reorganization of PNC was coordinated through the *Groupe Mixte de Reflexion sur la Réforme et la Réorganisation de la Police* (GMRRR). With the end of the Transition, a new structure was designed: the *Comité de Suivi de la Réforme de la Police* (CSRPP). The Ministry of Interior, Decentralization and

Security, as the President of this structure, would oversee the activities of 8 working groups. A particular recommendation during the Transition was to conduct a census of the police. Work on that census has been much delayed, again, because political sensitivities during the Transition made it difficult to probe too deeply into the rival ‘police forces’ that had been established by the different armed factions in the areas they controlled. But it is now underway. Incredibly, even today, there is still no fully accurate figure for the total number of Police in the country. After the census is completed, the still more sensitive matter of vetting and certifying police officers is still to come, allowing, among other things, for the proper budgeting of salaries and the establishment of an effective payment system. I note that is highly likely that in the aftermath of the vetting process, there will be a need to imagine some kind of ‘demobilisation process’ or DDR for former police elements too.

The need to vet and certify remains a vital one, as well as that of working on overall mechanisms of democratic accountability and control. While the PNC continue, overall, to perform well, there remain concerns both about the conduct of individual elements – particularly with regard to sexual violence – and of the force overall. Recent clashes in Bas Congo province have witnessed the unacceptable violence of a local politico-religious movement, the BDK, met with an equally unacceptable use of disproportionate force by PNC units.

A further challenge has arisen because of inconsistencies and incompatibilities in terms of the training provided to the PNC during the Transition and beyond. A number of different international actors generously agreed to provide assistance here – including Angola, France, and the European Union, and with the Japanese Government providing generous funding. However, there has not been a common approach, common curriculum, or the development of common doctrine for police operations, limiting the gains from these separate efforts.

Defence Reform

Turning now to the experience of defence reform, It is important to make a few remarks about the still unfinished task of DDR/Army Integration before closing with some thoughts on the way ahead.

DDR and Army Integration

DDR/army integration, and their close cousin in the DRC, DDRRR – which, importantly adds the two Rs of Rehabilitation and Repatriation to the mix, in order to deal with efforts to return foreign armed elements to their countries of origin – are not properly, to be considered ‘reform’. They are, rather, the absolutely vital precursors to SSR, the foundations without which it is impossible to imagine SSR. Indeed, before one can reform the security forces, at least in the DRC’s context, they have to be formed, and that is what DDR/integration and DDRRR do, effecting a vital triage of armed elements.

There has been considerable progress in realizing the ambitions of comprehensive DDR envisioned at Sun City more than seven years ago. To date, under the national DDR programme (PNDDR), and with the support of international partners, 165,680 former combatants have been registered and processed, 125,345 arms handed in, and 62,929 soldiers incorporated into 17 integrated brigades (the process of selecting military personnel for the 18th integrated brigade has started), 1 commando battalion and one integrated battalion of the republican guards. Some 102,758 combatants have been demobilized and have received their entire financial entitlements and 54,697 demobilized soldiers are currently the targets of reintegration projects. And vitally, in the process of all of this, some 30,000 child soldiers were liberated from the control of these various armed groups and forces and returned to their communities.

Set against these successes, a remaining 47,300 demobilized combatants are still not supported by a funded reintegration programme. Further, according to the GoDRC, the number of combatants still remaining to be processed through the PNDDR is almost 100,000, including elements from the remaining armed groups active in Ituri, Katanga, Maniema and the Kivus. Amongst these, there are thought to be a further 6,000 child soldiers – and their recruitment continues by armed group commanders, perversely eager to swell their numbers before entering *brassage*/integration in order to maximize the army ranks they may be offered.

The costs of all this effort have been, frankly, staggering. DDR alone in the DRC has so far cost something in the region of \$240m, and it may cost a further \$70m to conclude. That is without adding the necessary costs of a full, meaningful, community-based effort at reintegration of ex-combatants in their host communities!

Meanwhile, on the *brassage*/integration side, the already considerable costs of that effort neglected an important cultural reality with its own financial implications, one that, with the benefit hindsight, seems rather obvious. This was, simply, that former combatants choosing to integrate into the new armed forces and moving across the country to join their new units would bring their families with them. This was never acknowledged in our collective planning for *brassage*, and as a result, no provision was made. In my view, the living conditions that ordinary army families continue to endure are amongst the worst of those for any Congolese.

This helps, perhaps, in part to explain the persistence of criminal activity by uniformed men. Even when those combatants choosing to integrate in the new armed forces have progressed through the entire cycle through to enlistment in the new brigades, alas, all too frequently they have remained unpaid, due to ongoing defects in the chain-of-payments system. EUSEC and other partners continue to do valiant work with the GoDRC to improve the situation, but all too frequently, we have witnessed violent demonstrations – often directed towards the ‘easy target’ of UN installations and staff – by unpaid men in uniform around the country. And I note that even when paid, salaries are basis – from \$25 a month, often unpaid, these have recently been raised to \$40/month. Even at this minimal level, of course, this amounts to nearly \$8m/mth in salaries that the Government

must pay, together with a further \$6m to feed the armies, all this against a total state budget that in 2007 amounted to just \$2bn.

This prompts to note an important trade-off in the economics of post-conflict SSR with strong relevance to other contexts. As underlined, the strong political imperative in the DRC had to be, in the short term, to bring all armed elements in under one ‘giant tent’ through *brassage* (we have seen recently in other contexts, such as Iraq, what happens if one simply disbands armed forces, leaving armed men roving the country without livelihoods). On the other hand, the DRC was at the same time obliged to try to adhere as closely as possible to IMF austerity measures in order to meet targets on budgetary and macroeconomic performance, meet the HIPIC completion point and unlock debt relief. One budgetary area in which there was strong downward pressure was on the army wage bill. In short, politically, the DRC needed, initially, a large ‘army’ composed of all armed group remnants that economically it could ill afford... Attention to the post-conflict public expenditure dimensions of SSR must become a major focus.

The implementation of DDR was also, regrettably, dogged by difficulties between the Government and the international community concerning both operational effectiveness and financial accountability. Following protracted negotiations, the MDRP/World Bank and the ADB have now agreed to disburse \$50 and \$22 million, respectively, on the basis that conditionalities laid down are now being met by the Government, including replacing the previous implementing agency, CONADER. Despite the resumption in mid 2008 of the financial support is urgently, the final completion of the national demobilization programme, particular with regard to the Kivus is still to be started.

During the period when MDRP support was suspended, the GoDRC also implemented two *ad hoc* programmes in Ituri and Katanga, with UN support. Both drew lessons from the experience of the PNDDR, particularly concerning the vital importance that attaches to reintegration of former combatants at the community level. This strikes me as a key lesson: that DDR all too frequently stops short of cementing the reintegration – socially and economically – of demobilisees in their home community. Programmes that focus solely on meeting the individual needs of demobilized combatants, ignoring the needs of the communities themselves, fail, not least because they privilege one category of the population over another.

Stabilization

Despite the progress made through DDR, a number of armed groups have continued to operate with impunity across much of the eastern part of the country, most notoriously, and with the most severe humanitarian and political consequences, in the Kivus.

It is in that context that the Security Council asked the UN, through MONUC, to develop its ‘Support Strategy for Security and Stabilisation in the eastern DRC’, which is being implemented as we speak. In follow-up to the recent *Actes d’Engagement* emanating from the Goma Process (as well as in Ituri, Maniema and northern Katanga), the stabilisation strategy aims to make sure that violence doesn’t re-ignite in areas of eastern

DRC where armed groups have previously replaced or pushed aside state authority. The ambition here is to firstly disband any remaining and recalcitrant armed groups by a combination of both political and military pressure and, subsequently, get the armed forces contained back in their barracks (rehabilitated or constructed anew, as necessary) and transfer the regular responsibility for maintaining public order to those to whom it should naturally fall: the police. In the absence of a full vetting procedure as yet, a preliminary vetting mechanism is being designed for the PNC elements to be deployed.

These measures will be accompanied by a support package, delivered through the UN's specialized agencies, to rebuild basic infrastructure, foster the first elements of the return of state authority, and encourage the return and reintegration of IDPs, refugees and ex-combatants in those areas ordinarily of 'high risk' of a resumption of conflict unless otherwise assisted.

The Stabilisation Strategy as critical to the future peace of the eastern DRC and, in parallel, as a necessary precursor to jump start fuller reform of the defence sector. Once again, this gives me the opportunity to recognize the critical support of the Dutch Government in providing critical early support to the Stabilisation Strategy as well as to our plans to support defence reforms in the post-*brassage* phase.

Looking Ahead to Further Defence Reform

As mandated by SC Resolution 1756 (2 July 2007), and capitalising on our wide spread and close contact with FARDC elements on the ground, in 2007, MONUC commenced a programme of short term basic training of eleven integrated brigades of the FARDC deployed in the east of the country, with the objective of raising the minimum required operational capacities and sensitizing elements on concepts of human rights, child protection, prevention of gender based violence and international humanitarian law. Each segment of the program will run for three months. This was a notable, experimental move, the first time, at least to my knowledge, that a UN peacekeeping operation anywhere in the world had become directly engaged in the training of the armed forces. It will be important for all of us to learn the lessons, operationally and in terms of future doctrine, of this pioneering effort.

A much the same time, in July 2007, the GoDRC hosted a meeting of the SSR Contact Group in Kinshasa. At this, the Minister of Defence's 'Defence Reform Master Plan' was unveiled, which centres on four pillars: creating a defence force able to ensure the security and defence of the territory; realizing an ideal of excellence by restoring discipline and promoting positive values through continuous learning programmes; constructing an army that contributes to the reconstruction of the country and the consolidation of peace; and one able to support its own food needs.

This approach implies the simultaneous development of three force components: The first, (to be realized between 2008-2012), are the territorial forces or *forces de couverture*, which will be created in the short term through the completion of DDR/integration and involved in rehabilitating and rebuilding key infrastructure such as roads, schools and hospitals.

The second is the creation of a Rapid Reaction Force (2008-2010) capable of defending the national territory, ensuring general security of the country and replacing MONUC at the end of the latter's mandate. This force should be well trained, well equipped and professional with strong command and control capacities. The creation of the Rapid Reaction Force will be accompanied by the reorganization and the restructuring of the army headquarters.

The third will be the constitution of the overall Main Defence Forces (by 2015), able to secure the perimeters of this vast country.

This strikes me as a basic and pragmatic approach to meeting the twin challenges of finding 'employment' – in the broadest sense of that term – for a huge caseload of former combatants while slowly building towards more compact, modern and professionalized defence forces. It must be admitted again, however, that it stands in marked contrast to a more conventional defence reform approach. And it leaves unexamined the question of reforming army management structures, or, indeed, reform of the Ministry of Defence itself, which has not been restructured in any large-scale fashion since the *Mobutiste* period.

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

In conclusion, it is vital to adapt to the political and operational realities of the context, and not to let the 'ideal' become the enemy of the 'pragmatic and reasonably good'. There are serious and compelling reasons why root-and-branch reform of the security sector is hard to effect in a post-conflict environment.

During the Transition, the fragility of the 1+4 and the absence of a collective vision or will for security sector reform obliged other international partners to try to substitute their leadership: the UN, the EU, and numerous bilateral actors in the region and beyond. While some progress was made, the international community also failed to deliver a common vision, and national actors in the Transition were not always willing or able to put the interests of the state ahead of those of their parties/movements or themselves.

Subsequently, with the election of the new and legitimate government, we have a different but equally challenging context, in which a government still facing serious security challenges on its eastern front understands its priority as acquiring, as rapidly as possible, security forces that can react assertively against internal or external instability, rather than progressing towards the kind of overarching, root-and-branch reform that the international community might wish for it.