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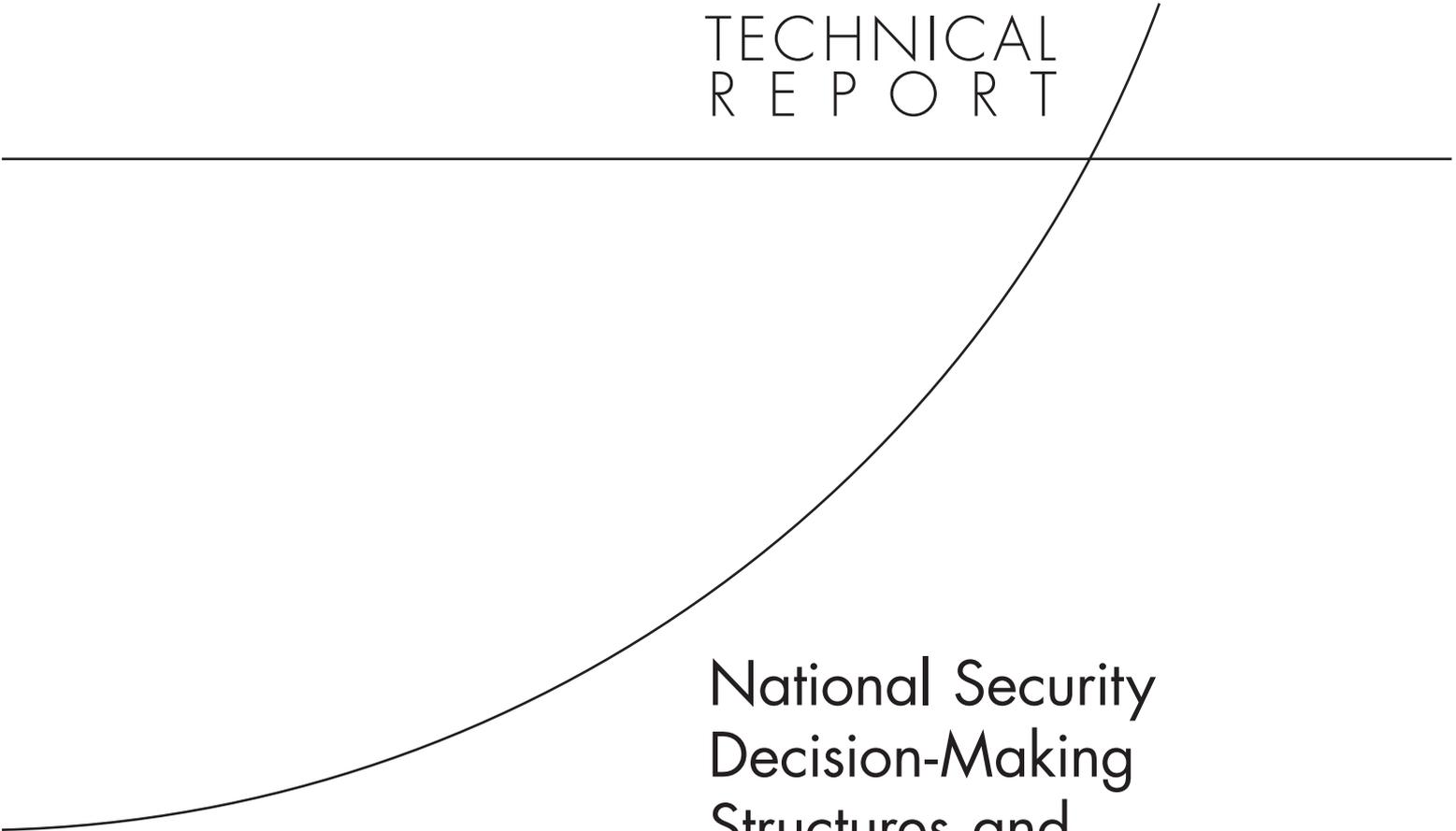
National Security Decision-Making Structures and Security Sector Reform

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RAND EUROPE

The research described in this report was prepared for the United Kingdom's Security Sector Development Advisory Team.

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Preface

This report was prepared for the UK's Security Sector Development Advisory Team. It aims to provide a basis for discussion and to provide an opportunity to learn from the successes and failures of national security decision-making structures in various countries. The report outlines the choices that need to be made when creating or reforming a national security decision-making system. The report will be of interest to policy-makers in countries seeking to reform their security sectors and to practitioners in the international aid community supporting security sector reform.

The information in this report is drawn from a number of published and unpublished studies, updated and informed by the knowledge of RAND staff in this domain. No original fieldwork was undertaken for this study.

This document does not necessarily reflect the views of the SSDAT or the British Government.

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Executive Summary

This study was undertaken on behalf of the United Kingdom's Security Sector Development Advisory Team. Its aim is to act as a basis for discussion and to provide an opportunity to learn from the successes and failures of national security architectures and agencies in various countries. Drawing on the body of academic work in this field and the knowledge of RAND staff, this report: provides a definition of security sector reform (SSR); outlines the roles of national security decision-making structures; examines a number of key case-studies for their national security architectures and the experience of developing and using these; examines the lessons identified from the case-studies to support the Basis, Legitimacy, Function, Organisation, and Composition of the National Security Decision-Making Structures examined; and, finally, closes with a discussion of some of the key questions surrounding national decision-making structures:

- Centralisation of National Security Functions
- Options for Security Functions—Consolidated or Disseminated
- Joint Security Assessments vs. Individual Departmental Assessments
- Role of National Security Councils in Security Sector Reform

in order to draw out a number of key lessons to be considered in any future security sector reform activity involving national security decision-making structures.

Security sector reform

Security sector reform (SSR) is a complex process. Narrowly defined, it can encompass institutions and organisations established to deal with external or internal threats to the security of the State and its citizens. At a minimum, therefore, the security sector includes military and paramilitary forces, the intelligence services, national and local police services, border, customs and coast guards. However, it is increasingly understood that SSR is broader than these institutions.

Security sector reform more broadly defined has political, military, economic, policing, juridical, communications, financial, foreign policy, and intelligence components, all of which are interrelated. Developing countries need sufficient stability to foster growth – and they need effective and sustainable economic growth to support continued security and stability. Moreover, in developing countries particularly, NGOs, human rights organisations and international bodies may also play significant roles in the development of the security sector.

The Need for National Security Decision-Making Structures

One solution to this challenge is the creation of overarching (or centralised) structures that consolidate and co-ordinate various aspects of national security decision-making; effective security sector reform demands co-ordinated action and the integration of a wide range of security-related policy, legislative, structural and oversight issues. These centralised structures may be called upon to co-ordinate policy, to implement policy, or simply to assess and advise – high-level political commitment and awareness are crucial to this process – but *their role is always to bring the disparate parts of the security agenda together.* They are, thus, a crucial component of security sector transformations, both as the target of change (or creation) and the drivers of change. Moreover,

given the interdependence of security and economic factors, the way in which a country structures its national decision-making can have a direct impact not only on what are traditionally thought of as security concerns, but also on the broader, but no less crucial, socio-economic development of a country.

Roles of National Security Decision-Making Structures

National security decision-making structures[1] can perform a variety of roles.

- **Joint Assessment** on which to base policy and decision-making
- **Resource Allocation** to deal with national security threats
- **Oversight** responsible for managing national security is an important function within all democratic systems
- **Security Priorities** reflecting the varying national security needs of individual countries
- **Emergency Co-ordination** among bodies responsible for responding to emergencies, natural or otherwise

This study examines five case-studies – Canada, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States – that describe how various countries have chosen to structure their national security decision-making, and how these choices reflect their national security needs.

Some general conclusions regarding the options available for structuring national security decision-making are included below.

Basis for the National Security Decision-Making Structure

Increasingly, developed countries such as the UK or the US view the most immediate threats to their national security in terms centred around the national well-being and stability of society – against both externally-originating threats such as international terrorism and the proliferation of WMD, and internally-originating ones such as natural disasters or radical violence against society (including domestic terrorism). Developing and – in particular – post-conflict countries are typically far more concerned with socio-economic issues such as poverty and food scarcity, and the potential these have to lead to social tensions and widespread instability. Given this link between security and development, in many developing countries, therefore, the role of the NSC is superseded by other institutions, which focus on development, security, and security sector reform, but not on overall co-ordination of security policy at the head-of-government level.

Legitimacy of the National Security Decision-Making Structure

For an NSC to have legitimacy, it should have a legislative basis and high-level support. It should also be both transparent and accountable.

Function of the National Security Decision-Making Structure

National Security Councils can function in either an advisory or executive role. They will also likely play a co-ordinating role within government. It is worth noting that effective co-ordination mechanisms can often exist despite the absence of an effective NSC structure. In some cases, countries may find that structures of this sort meet their needs better than a more centralised approach.

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[1] For the purposes of this report, we shall use the generic term National Security Council (NSC) as a short-hand to refer to national security decision-making structures. This does not imply any preference for the NSC structure over other forms of national security decision-making body.

Organisation of the National Security Decision-Making Structure

In many countries, national security decisions are handled through networks of committees before reaching higher-level decision-making fora such as the NSC or the Cabinet. This hierarchical structure helps to focus resources, ensuring that more minor issues are dealt with at a lower level, without detracting from more significant issues requiring higher-level decisions. The same efforts at integration of intelligence and assessments is also underway. In general, centralising national security decision-making can contribute to more effective response to threats. However, this centralising process can be undermined by a lack of trust in the central structures established for this purpose. This is particularly apparent in developing countries, and is linked to the issues of building public confidence, trust and accountability in authority structures.

Composition of the National Security Decision-Making Structure

It is critical for NSCs to have a balance between military and civilian influence. Intelligence and security services must also be integrated effectively to support effective decision-making.

Predictably, there is no 'one size fits all' approach. However, there are generic aspects of the different models that may provide useful examples or lessons for other countries in the process of developing or reforming an NSC-type system.

1. National Security Decision-Making Structures and Security Sector Reform

Introduction

Reform and restructuring of the security sector is of increasing interest in all parts of the world. This is both as part of wider processes of development, and as result of rethinking national security threats – for example, in response to changed perceptions of the terrorist threat after the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington DC.

Security sector reform (SSR) is a complex process. Depending on a country's specific needs and requirements, it may address any or all of the following:

- Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the security sector to meet the needs of national security or policing policies
- State-building
- Enhancing civilian control or capacity to control in the security sector architecture
- Enhancing democratic control and oversight – especially in transition from military or one-party rule to participatory forms of government
- Enhancing state or security sector legitimacy
- Enhancing transparency and accountability in public affairs
- Right-sizing the security sector to enable resources to be allocated according to societal priorities
- Conflict prevention and / or post-conflict reconstruction, perhaps including implementation of peace agreements.[2]

Security sector reform, narrowly defined, can encompass institutions and organisations established to deal with external or internal threats to the security of the State and its citizens. At a minimum, therefore, the security sector includes military and paramilitary forces, the intelligence services, national and local police services, border, customs and coast guards. However, it is increasingly understood that SSR is broader than these institutions.

Security sector reform more broadly defined has political, military, economic, policing, juridical, communications, financial, foreign policy, and intelligence components, all of which are interrelated. Developing countries need sufficient stability to foster growth – and they need effective and sustainable economic growth to support continued security and stability.[3] Moreover, in developing countries particularly, NGOs, human rights organisations and international bodies may also play significant roles in the development of the security sector.

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[2] O. Greene, "Security Sector Reform, Conflict Prevention and Regional Perspectives: A Discussion Paper for Whitehall Policy Seminar on Security Sector Reform", *Journal of Security Sector Management* (January 2003); Department for International Development, "Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform"; H. Wulf, "Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries", Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management.

[3] See David C. Gompert, Olga Oliker, and Anga Timilsina, *Clean Lean and Able: A Strategy for Defense Development* (RAND, 2004).

In many countries, problems arise because of stove-piping among the various organisations and bodies with responsibility for these sectors. Organisations may not be aware of each other's policies and behaviour, and senior decision-makers may find themselves in the dark about the activities of other branches and agencies of their own government. This can have significant negative repercussions.

The Need for National Security Decision-Making Structures

One solution to this challenge is the creation of overarching (or centralised) structures that consolidate and co-ordinate various aspects of national security decision-making; effective security sector reform demands co-ordinated action and the integration of a wide range of security-related policy, legislative, structural and oversight issues. These centralised structures may be called upon to co-ordinate policy, to implement policy, or simply to assess and advise – high-level political commitment and awareness are crucial to this process – but *their role is always to bring the disparate parts of the security agenda together.* They are, thus, a crucial component of security sector transformations, both as the target of change (or creation) and the drivers of change. Moreover, given the interdependence of security and economic factors, the way in which a country structures its national decision-making can have a direct impact not only on what are traditionally thought of as security concerns, but also on the broader, but no less crucial, socio-economic development of a country.

Different countries have evolved a variety of mechanisms for dealing with the process of high-level national security decision-making; it is imperative that countries now undergoing reform consider the various options available to them for undertaking this function – in order to ensure that they make informed choices regarding the structure and shape of government decision-making on these most crucial of issues. Many governments have established institutions that serve as a central point for national security issues – such as the National Security Council in some countries, the Cabinet Office in the UK, or the Advisory Council on National Security in Canada – which can serve a variety of specific functions, while sharing a general effort to centralise senior-level government thinking about national security issues.

Below we explore some of the roles that a national security decision-making structure can fill. Later, we will compare how different nations use their decision-making structures to fulfil these roles.

Roles of National Security Decision-Making Structures

National security decision-making structures[4] can perform a variety of roles.

- **Joint Assessment**: A major focus of many countries today is on enhancing their ability to make joint assessments on which to base policy and decision-making. The main emphasis is on information-sharing and the integration of intelligence efforts, with a view to producing threat assessments from a wide range of sources, which give a balanced viewpoint to governments. NSCs represent fora in which such assessments may be discussed collectively, courses of action decided upon, and responsibilities agreed.

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[4] For the purposes of this report, we shall use the generic term National Security Council (NSC) as a short-hand to refer to national security decision-making structures. This does not imply any preference for the NSC structure over other forms of national security decision-making body.

- **Resource Allocation**: Decisions on ways to allocate resources to deal with national security threats are crucial for any government. This is a particularly difficult issue for developing countries, which need to balance security sector expenditure with other pressing demands – making hard choices about the priorities that govern public expenditure.

  In developed countries, the focus is more on improving existing mechanisms responsible for dealing with national security related issues. In either case, the NSC, or equivalent, is the designated body with responsibility for advising decision-makers (or, in some cases, actually making decisions) on such issues.

- **Oversight**: Reviewing the bodies and mechanisms responsible for managing national security is an important function within all democratic systems. Oversight functions should ensure that resources are effectively allocated; review the effectiveness of a plan or body; ensure the ability of different bodies to continue operating during emergencies; and oversee expenditure, administration and policies of security agencies.

  In developing countries, there is an increasing focus on promoting accountability, ensuring political control and building confidence or trust in the security sector. This is particularly marked in countries transitioning from conflict that need to strike a balance between the role of the security sector in ensuring order in the transitional phase, and addressing the mistrust that often stems from the role the security sector may have played during the conflict. NSCs may use their oversight responsibility to ensure public transparency that may assist in this process.

- **Security Priorities**: There are a wide range of security priorities discernible globally, reflecting the varying national security needs of individual countries. Priorities may include domestic security aspects such as the integration of intelligence, emergency planning and management, public health emergencies or transportation security; they may alternatively include external security activities such as peace-keeping or defence diplomacy. Bodies such as NSCs can provide security expertise and advice to decision-makers on these issues.

  In developing countries, security priorities are embodied in aims of realising development and democracy, which are seen as key to achieving security and stability. A strong component is often to transform and improve the security forces – both military and police – making them accountable to a democratically-elected civilian Government. A new trend is the bolstering of the role these elements play in regional issues and international peacekeeping.

- **Emergency Co-ordination**: Many governments are focussing their efforts on enhancing co-ordination and integration among bodies responsible for responding to emergencies, natural or otherwise. While the type of emergency may vary from country to country (for instance, SARS in Canada, terrorism in the UK, or food scarcity in Ethiopia), typically the NSC does not play a central role in dealing with such issues. Instead, separate bodies have been created or their responsibilities bolstered to more specifically respond to these domestic emergencies.

- ▪ <u>**Security Sector Reform**</u>: In those countries with active SSR efforts, NSCs can be a crucial player in defining the direction and scope of reform. However, the actual role of the NSC in decision-making of this sort varies greatly from country to country.

This study examines five case-studies – Canada, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States – that describe how various countries have chosen to structure their national security decision-making, and how these choices reflect their national security needs. Drawing on that analysis, this study then presents some general conclusions about the options available for structuring national security decision-making. These nations were chosen because they represent a mix of developed and developing countries, with a variety of political systems and variety of security structures – which show how nations will use their national decision-making structures for a variety of purposes.

2. Case-Studies of Approaches to National Security Structures

Canada

Canada's security strategy broadly emphasises emergency response alongside a wide array of potential threats to Canada's well-being. Canada's "National Security Policy" is a strategic framework and action plan designed to ensure that Canada is prepared for and can respond to current and future threats. Its NSC equivalent structure – the Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health and Emergency Preparedness (SPHEP) – provides centralised decision-making on national security issues (whether man-made or naturally-occurring). It is supported by the Advisory Council on National Security, which exists to provide advice to the government on security-related issues, particularly supporting the government process of building a more integrated security system.

Within the Canadian Government, the main focus is on the Minister and Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, and the aforementioned Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health and Emergency Preparedness.

Structure

The Government of Canada, as part of its National Security Policy, is currently building a fully integrated security system, geared towards enabling Canada to respond more effectively to existing and emerging threats to its national security. To this end, the Prime Minister (PM) introduced a series of organizational changes in 2003.

- The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC) was appointed and a corresponding new department created, covering the core functions of public safety, security and intelligence, policing and enforcement, corrections and crime prevention, border services, immigration enforcement, and emergency management.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health and Emergency Preparedness (SPHEP) was created to provide political leadership during emergencies, co-ordinating (federal level) government-wide responses, as well as managing national security and intelligence issues.
- A National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister was also created to improve co-ordination and integration of security efforts among government departments. The National Security Advisor is located in the Privy Council Office (PCO); his main function is to support the SPHEP, co-ordinating integrated threat assessment and inter-agency co-operation among security organisations – he also briefs the PM and his deputy on national security from an integrated, government-wide perspective. He, therefore, plays the central co-ordinating role, centralising decision-making and advice that until now has been distributed across different departments.

In 2004, the Advisory Council on National Security was established. It is (at the time of writing) to be composed of security experts external to the government. This diverse membership is designed to reflect a variety of perspectives by including individuals with expertise in a range of areas, such as: intelligence, law and policy, human rights and civil liberties, emergency planning and management, public health emergencies, public safety, transportation security, border

security and international security. By extension, these areas reflect the issues for discussion within the Advisory Council.

The Council will meet at least twice a year and no more than four times a year at the discretion of the Chair and the government; ministers and senior government officials only attend meetings of the Council as appropriate. The Council provides confidential advice on issues related to national security, as well as strategies, mechanisms and activities required to develop, implement, evaluate and improve a fully integrated security system. This advice will be provided to the SPHEP and the PM through the National Security Advisor. The Council will play a purely advisory role and has no decision-making or implementation authority.

Decision Making

Joint assessment

The Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC) has been operational since October 2004. It enhances information-sharing and integrated intelligence analysis by bringing together all threat-related information from different departments and agencies, assessing it and sharing it in a timely and effective manner. Its comprehensive threat assessments provide policy-makers and first responders with the information they need to make decisions and take actions in the interests of national security.

ITAC works closely with the National Security Advisor, who also plays a key role in establishing threat assessment priorities. ITAC brings together individuals from organisations such as the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, the Department of National Defence, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Canadian Border Services Agency, Transport Canada, the RCMP and the provincial police services. Other groups can also be called upon when required.

Oversight

The PSEPC also has responsibility for testing and auditing the key capabilities of other departments. This includes a review of the plans of federal departments to ensure their ability to continue operating during emergencies. The Government will also enhance its live-testing of federal security systems to assess their effectiveness.

Certain mechanisms are already in place to review security and intelligence activities. These include the independent Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), the Inspector General for CSIS, the Commissioner of the Communications Security Establishment, and the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP.

Security priorities

Canada's national security plans focus wholly on the necessity of having an integrated national security system to confront the complexity of threats to Canada. Of specific concern are any risks—malicious or naturally occurring—with the potential to undermine the safely, health, and well-being of Canadian society, especially those requiring a national response. Moreover, Canada's stated national security interests also include ensuring that Canada is not a base for dangers that may threaten its allies. Its security standards reflect these views – priorities include:

intelligence integration, emergency planning and management, public health emergencies, transportation security, border security and international security.

Emergency co-ordination

Emergency response, whether it is to a natural occurrence such as SARS or to terrorist attacks like 9/11, dominates Canadian security rhetoric. The main organisational changes introduced by the PM in 2003 and 2004 reflect the attempt by the Government to eliminate what had been a highly decentralised and distributed division of responsibilities among first-line responders, provinces and territories, and lead departments at the federal level – and to build in its stead an integrated national support-system for first-line responders.

A new Government Operations Centre was created within PSEPC to provide strategic level co-ordination and direction on behalf of the Government in the event of national emergencies. Similar possibilities at provincial or territorial levels are also under consideration.

Concluding Remarks

Canada is seeking to build a more integrated security system, bringing under one roof – that of the PSEPC – all relevant issues, so that response to all types of threat is better co-ordinated and more effective. Within this system, the National Security Advisor – acting in concert with the PSEPC and SPHEP, and supported by the Advisory Council on National Security – works to guide the Prime Minister and Cabinet on national security-related decisions. For Canada, this is the ultimate embodiment of the effort to centralise decision-making, and integrate the national security system.

It is also worth noting that Canada is a world leader in developing and promoting security sector reform activities itself, throughout the world. This has included being intimately involved in the work of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), including in recent initiatives such as the 1997 "Conflict, Peace and Development on the Threshold of the 21st Century" guideline and its 2001 supplement "Helping Prevent Violent Conflict". Canada's historical experience with all aspects of peacekeeping – combined with its strong record in overseas aid and development work – have combined, over the last few years, to contribute strongly to a robust SSR programme.

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Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's most pressing national security concerns are those of poverty and development.

Structure

The National Security Council nominally manages Sierra Leone's security. It is headed by the President and represents the highest forum for matters relating to the security of Sierra Leone. It defines and implements the National Security Policy supported by the Office of National Security (ONS), established in 2002, which is a non-political structure that serves as the NSC Secretariat. The ONS plays an important role in the co-ordination of security matters and policy initiatives.

The NSC receives advice from the National Security Council Co-ordinating Group (NSCCG), which comprises senior representatives from the police, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) through the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the security agencies and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) – currently supporting the peace process in Sierra Leone. This ensures the collation of information from a wide-range of sources, allowing the departments and agencies of government to co-operate more effectively in matters of national security.

The NSC is one of a number of committees that form the architecture of Sierra Leone's national security decision-making structure, which also includes the National Security Council Co-ordinating Group (NSCCG); the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC); the Provincial Security Committees (PROSECs North, South, East and West); and the District Security Committees (DISECs).

The Provincial and District Security committees have a role to play in Joint Border Security and Confidence-Building Units within the Mano River Union Security Institutional Framework, which comprises Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Both committees are designed to provide early-warning to the government, via the ONS, of the existence or likelihood of any security threat. The DISECs meet more regularly than the PROSECs, and forward their security reports to the ONS through the latter. The ONS is currently posting officers to act as secretariat staff to the PROSECs and DISECs, in order to facilitate communication and ensure that ONS activities are informed by local-level concerns.

Decision Making

Joint assessment

The ONS and a Central Intelligence and Security Unit (CISU) are two non-political bodies set up in 2002 with remits for intelligence collection. The ONS is the central co-ordinating body for all security and intelligence organs of state at policy level. It collects and analyses intelligence from the different security agencies, and provides the government with balanced intelligence assessments on which to base policy-decisions. The CISU is responsible for the collection of classified intelligence both within and outside Sierra Leone.

The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) is tasked to translate certain policy decisions of the NSC into formal intelligence requirements for the intelligence and security services. It is supported by the Joint Assessment Team (JAT), which collates and assesses intelligence on subjects of national security concern. The PROSECs also feed into ONS and JAT Assessments.

Resource allocation

In 2002, the budget process involved civil society participation in budget formulation and execution. Outcomes of consultative workshops and sector discussions fed into the decision-making process in relation to expenditure priorities and resource allocation. The government also adopted the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) budgetary methodology to prepare its plans and estimates for a 3-year period, a methodology which helps to identify priorities and channel public expenditure.

From 2003, ministries and departments have been required to publish a Public Service Agreement (PSA) which specifies the exact outcomes that each ministry and department will deliver with the resources provided, both from the domestic budget and project loans and grants.

External bodies have been involved in this process; for instance, the World Bank and DFID have been involved in financial accountability processes.

Oversight

The government is concentrating on developing an oversight mechanism for all elements of government business. An early step in this process will be an independent Security Sector Committee tasked with monitoring decisions taken on behalf of and endorsed by the government. It will be made up of representatives from across the political spectrum and public institutions; the findings will be made public and open to debate.

The MoD is also building mechanisms and putting in place procedures and practices to ensure political control and build confidence in the system. Financial control and accountability play an important part in the overall control and accountability of the RSLAF. The Government recognises that the RSLAF will not enjoy the confidence and trust of the population at large unless its use of the public's money is transparent and wholly accountable.

There are 26 committees in the Sierra Leone parliament that have oversight functions – such as the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, the Finance Committee, the Committee on Presidential Affairs and Defence, the Committee on Internal Affairs, the Committee on Local Government and Community Development, the Transparency Committee, and the Public Accounts Committee. These include the power to investigate or enquire into the activities or administration of Ministries and Departments.

A Security Sector Review was to be completed by early-2005, which would include agreeing effective mechanisms to enable appropriate oversight and governance of the security sector.

Security priorities

In the post-conflict environment, the Sierra Leone government is seeking to restructure the security forces with a view to safeguarding the country's future security and stability. The goal is to create loyal, strong, capable, well-motivated and well-equipped armed forces, accountable to a democratically-elected civilian Government.

The security strategy emphasises the link between security and development. Security is considered paramount in order to secure external aid and prolong support from international agencies and specific countries until Sierra Leone is in a position to continue their functions itself.

Security sector reform

SSR in Sierra Leone was initially driven by external actors as part of a major international intervention, but local ownership is increasing. Specifically, long-term security sector commitment was promised by the UK, and has been led by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). British military personnel continue to occupy a number of the military posts in the MoD, including in the chain-of-command. However, once sufficient

trained and experienced Sierra Leone officers are available, these British personnel are expected to revert to a purely advisory role. The heads of the ONS and CISU have always been local people who have played a significant role in reform, advised by mentors provided by the UK.

The MoD is at the heart of this reform programme. A restructured professional RSLAF is seen as key to protecting the country from external threats to security, and can be called upon to support civil authorities such as the police with internal control.

In 2004, SSR continued to focus on developing a well-trained, appropriately-sized and affordable RSLAF, as well as sustainable institutional and legal frameworks, enshrining the principles of civilian control, accountability and transparency for the country's defence and national security. SSR continues to be handicapped, however, by a continued public mistrust in national forces, many of whom participated in the worst abuses of the war.

Concluding Remarks

As a Ministerial level council, the NSC initially found it difficult to find time to meet. Many of its functions were, therefore, delegated to the executive-level NSC Co-ordinating Group which has proved to be an effective body. The Office of National Security has played an important role in channelling grassroots "human security" concerns into national level decision-making, through its conduct of the security sector review and its support to PROSECs and DISECs.

A key aim of the reform process has been to balance the power of the Armed Forces with strengthened civilian decision making bodies and an enhanced role for the police. Donors have aimed to make a transition from the "operational" mode required for the initial peacemaking intervention to a "mentoring" mode required for local capability building. Such a transition has at times proved difficult, but the trend is in the right direction.

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South Africa

The NSC in South Africa is high-level forum in which high-impact security decisions are made. It is currently concentrating on efforts to improve integration and co-ordination within the security sector as a whole.

Much of the government's focus on security is on external issues, especially the involvement of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in peacekeeping and conflict resolution in other regions in Africa. Major threats to South Africa's internal stability include poverty, hunger, corruption, economic crime, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic – generally speaking, South Africa does not perceive any 'hard-security threats' (such as military aggression) to its national security.

Structure

Since the end of *apartheid*, efforts to enhance the co-ordinated management of security and political decision-making have largely been centralised in the Office of the President.

On becoming the leader of the country in 1999, Thabo Mbeki introduced an integrated system of governance, which grouped the programmes of government's departments into new 'clusters' centring on key Cabinet Committees and Ministers; the five clusters, dealing with individual sectoral challenges, include: Social Sector; Economy, Investment and Employment; International Relations, Peace and Security (IRPS); Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS); and Governance and Administration. There is some overlap of membership. Within each cluster, departments collaborate on the specific issues they are responsible for.

A National Security Council was established in 2000; an inter-ministerial committee, it aims to deal with a wide range of threats to national security and stability – whether malicious or naturally-occurring. Acting at a strategic level – and overseeing bodies and programmes such as the National Disaster Management System and the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence –it would support South African-led activities not only domestically but also throughout sub-Saharan Africa. It includes senior ministers and officials; however, members only meet irregularly to deal with specific crises, rather than impinging on the normal processes of government. From all appearances, decision-making on national security issues – as with a number of other leading policy issues – resides within the Office of the President, rather than in the NSC or other more consultative fora.

Finally, the Ministry for the Intelligence Services – created at the end of last century – is currently leading the JCPS cluster in the review of South Africa's National Security Strategy; proposals on national security will be presented to the government in July 2005.

Decision Making

Joint assessment

The National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee (NICOC) oversees co-ordination of intelligence activities. NICOC analyses and interprets intelligence from the National Intelligence Agency (NIA—domestic intelligence), the South African Secret Service (SASS – foreign intelligence), the SANDF Intelligence Division (defence and foreign military intelligence). NICOC reports to the President through the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence.

Resource allocation

In line with the Department of Defence strategy, the current focus of resource allocation by the South African government is on reducing SANDF responsibilities so that they can uphold the government's regional obligations in supporting peace, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. Funding for the military – as well as for all other security bodies and departments – is allocated in the government's annual budget, delivered in Parliament.

Oversight

A civilian Secretariat for Safety and Security was established in 1994 to deal with policy, budgeting and political accountability issues. Its power and influence declined, however, as it failed to bridge the divide between civilians and uniformed members, leading to an imbalance of opinion at the policy development level.

The constitution also provides for a powerful Joint Standing Committee on Defence (JSCD) that involves both the National Assembly and the Council of Provinces. Parliament has also set up

other committees for defence and security oversight. The Portfolio Committee on Defence in the National Assembly has now taken on much of the work of the JSCD.

In addition, a Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI) carries out legislative, oversight and monitoring activities of the intelligence and security community, while an Inspector-General for Intelligence is authorised with wide powers of oversight. The Auditor General provides additional controls.

All the security functions (including intelligence, although with some limitations) are subject to normal government auditing procedures and to scrutiny by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA). In addition, they are subject to oversight by human rights monitoring agencies, as on ongoing reflection of South Africa's close involvement of civilian bodies in its development.

To this point, this is an area – security, safety and intelligence writ large – that South Africa continues to grapple with. Outside of the immediate national security arena, South Africa has also encountered serious problems in law enforcement and criminal investigation – especially important areas if the country is to successfully root-out both economically-motivated crime (the single greatest source of violent instability to the country) and corruption across the government.

The intelligence oversight portfolio has seen, perhaps, some of the greatest problems encountered in establishing transparent and independent intelligence functions within the post-*apartheid* government – including an inability to fill permanently the Inspector-General's post for almost the first decade after *apartheid*. The JSCI has also encountered numerous problems in terms of politicisation and concerns over the integrity of the Committee's members of various political hues.

Security sector reform

Post-*apartheid* South Africa has undergone a deep structural transformation of the security sector. This reform involved a process of integrating South Africa's various security sector actors – the integration: of the *apartheid*-era military with those of the liberation movements; of the *apartheid*-era intelligence services with those of the liberation movements; and of the *apartheid*-era police with other statutory law enforcement bodies across South Africa and from the liberation movements. While this effort was largely completed in the late-1990s, one can certainly not say that it has been completely successful. The cohesion and abilities of the South African National Defence Force have been called into question in each of the many missions that they have carried-out over the last decade – whether intervening in Lesotho, conducting peacekeeping exercises across Southern Africa, or supporting peacemaking missions in the Congo. In addition, the South African government moved to establish firm control over the police, which had been at the front line of repression under *apartheid*. This amalgamation of nominally separate police forces into the South African Police Service (SAPS), accountable to the Minister of Safety and Security, has seen similar problems to that of the military: the levels of demoralisation and suicide within the police service is virtually unprecedented. Finally, some of the internal stability duties of the *apartheid*-era military were subsequently given to the SAPS instead, as part of the government focus on reducing SANDF involvement in internal security issues, and bolstering the role they play in external regional issues and peacekeeping missions.

In the third pillar of the security establishment – that of the intelligence community – similar attempts to amalgamation and rationalisation occurred. The *apartheid*-era intelligence services were amalgamated with the liberation movements' (particularly ANC) intelligence functions, and separated between domestic (NIA) and foreign (SASS) intelligence concerns. As with the military and police, serious problems have remained – including factionalism and corruption. Until South Africa's security players are able to function as transparent, motivated, and properly-supported actors, the security function in South Africa will remain one of the biggest – and yet, intentionally it would seem, officially unacknowledged – problems the new country must deal with.

Use of academics, media / consultation of civil society

The transition following the end of *apartheid* and immediate post-election period involved a democratic process in which the executive, parliament, the security institutions and the Department of Defence partnered with civil society, the public generally, as well as NGOs to transform security as part of larger changes across the country. A key aspect of this was the collaboration of all these bodies to formulate and revise the Defence White Paper of 1996.

This consultation with elements of civil society stemmed from both an acknowledged lack of expertise within the government with regards to certain areas, as well as the perceived need to legitimise the security architecture that was associated with repression and *apartheid*. Consultation with civil society seems to have largely declined, however, over the last few years. This is perhaps a reflection of wider governance trends and increased institutional capacity within government. Nonetheless, research capabilities have grown and a few NGOs specialising in defence and security issues – notably the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) – have grown substantially in terms of their policy-research capacity.

Concluding Remarks

The committee system has proved very effective in centralising governance of the country for the Presidency, thanks in part to strong leadership. At the same time – while parliament has adopted a proactive and interventionist role in relation to crafting defence policy and legislation, all the while attempting to hold the government to account for performance and the implementation of policy – numerous scandals of corruption, of overstretch, and of failures to deliver to the people have wracked the governance structures since 1994. Despite the fact that the majority of these would appear to have centred on the security community and its leadership, South Africa has – somehow – continued to move forward in developing and refining what is, at heart, a democratic, accountable system.

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United Kingdom

The UK does not have a formal "national security council" but has a network of committees around the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers that serve this function. These committees are serviced by official staffs in the Cabinet Office and the Prime Minister's Office.

Given the absence of a written constitution in the United Kingdom, the legal basis for the various institutions and actors involved in national security strategy is precedent, authority from Parliament and civil service codes of conduct. National Security has never been defined in UK legislation; instead, indications of an 'accepted' definition of national security may – arguably – be extracted from a variety of published policy and strategy documents, legislation, Parliamentary Committee reports, and such.

The main threats to the country, broadly speaking, are terrorism, espionage, the impact of weak states on global stability, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). For the UK, the focus of national security is on the integration of prevention and contingency (planning) strategies – involving all instruments at the Government's disposal – against threats, whether malicious or naturally-occurring, at the national and international levels.

Structure

Security decision-making is decentralised among different departments. Of key importance is the role of the Prime Minister (PM) and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Cabinet Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Home Office (HO) and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Department for International Development (DFID) also plays a role in certain aspects of international security policy.[5]

These executive actors are brought together at the working level by a variety of inter-departmental ministerial and secretarial committees focussing on different aspects of national security policy-making. Senior ministers and civil servants come together in Cabinet Committees for decision-making on issues that require strategic direction. The Cabinet Office is responsible for policy co-ordination, promoting standards, building capacity and managing the Cabinet itself. In this sense – and especially when considering national security issues – the Cabinet Office structures are the most like an NSC.

Decision Making

Joint assessment

The intelligence community's main elements report to separate government departments: the Secret Intelligence Service and Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) report to the FCO; the Security Service and the National Criminal Intelligence Service report to the Home Office; and the Defence Intelligence Staff report to the Ministry of Defence. Within the Cabinet Office, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) provides agreed assessments to Ministers and departments; the Cabinet Office Assessments Staff, consisting of staff from various departments, is the heart of that analytic engine.

Overseeing the JIC, the previously-separate roles of the JIC Chairman and the Intelligence Co-ordinator were combined in 2000 in order to promote centralisation. In 2002, the new post of Security and intelligence Co-ordinator – who also serves as Permanent Secretary in the Cabinet

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[5] It is worth noting that, in the field, the UK military adopt a similar approach. In many military operations – particularly peace support operations – local commanders have considerable decision-making authority (which is not the case with the US military, for example). This, therefore, would appear to be a general British government policy, whether intentional or not, and one that permeates both civilian and military sectors.

Office, and to whom the JIC Chairman, as Head of the Intelligence and Security Secretariat (ISS) in the Cabinet Office, reports – was created.

Within the post-9/11 environment, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) was created in June 2003 as the UK's centre for the analysis and assessment of international terrorism. It is a self-standing organisation comprised of representatives from eleven government departments and agencies. The Head of JTAC is responsible to the Director General of the Security Service.

Oversight

Oversight of the UK's security sector is provided, in the first instance, by Ministerial Committees and the Cabinet. As noted above, the security agencies are responsible to their individual Ministers and, ultimately, to the Prime Minister.

Parliamentary Committees provide legislative oversight through a system of Select Committees – such as on Defence or Foreign Affairs – which monitor the activities of individual departments and conduct regular enquiries into their activities. The Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) is the primary parliamentary oversight body for the intelligence services; although not a Select Committee, the ISC does report to Parliament via (in the first instance) the Prime Minister.

In addition to Parliamentary oversight, the National Audit Office (NAO), the UK's supreme audit institution, undertakes regular audits of government departments through the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee. The NAO focuses upon value for money but also on broader issues of management and operational effectiveness. Since 1997, there has been an increasing tendency to set performance targets for government departments, including elements of the security sector, and to tie resourcing to quantitative performance targets.

Finally, a whole range of legislation passed between 1985 and 2000 created the system of authorisation and accountability for the Agencies – including ensuring that national security in the UK conforms with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) – while placing them on a statutory footing.

Emergency co-ordination

The Ministerial Committee on Civil Contingencies is the main body responsible for supporting, planning and co-ordinating response to disasters – whether malicious or naturally-occurring. Part of the Cabinet Office, it is chaired by the Home Secretary and reports to the Prime Minister. It is supported by the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS).

Use of academics, media / consultation of civil society

The UK has an active community of think-tanks, academics, and NGOs. Traditionally, central government policy-making has only selectively brought in advice from "outsiders" but the national security policy-making system has become more inclusive and transparent in recent years.

Security sector reform

The UK is at the forefront of SSR strategy and policy on a global scale, and represents perhaps the major provider of advice and assistance to countries undergoing SSR. SSR activities are undertaken primarily by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Ministry of Defence (MoD), and Department for International Development (DFID). Cross-departmental mechanisms such as the Global and African Conflict Prevention Pools are used to co-ordinate investment in SSR. In addition, the recent establishment of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit – housed within DFID but composed of staff from a variety of departments and agencies – has enhanced the UK's ability to provide assistance to countries emerging from conflict. The UK in general plays a role in supporting the development of the capacity of civil society in transitional countries and regions to advocate, debate and develop SSR policies through supporting regional networks of practitioners and experts.

Concluding Remarks

The Cabinet and Ministerial Committees co-ordinate policy and adjudicate policy differences. The Committees allow all the relevant policy actors to participate in the formulation and development of policy; as a result, many differences are ironed out before they reach the Cabinet for decision. Although there is not a single structure, there is effective centralised decision-making when needed, in a very flexible structure. Nonetheless, the creation of new, inter-departmental units in recent years – such as the CCS and JTAC – reflects a recognition of the need to improve pan-governmental co-ordination and implementation in the face of today's threats to national security and stability.

United States

The US National Security Council (NSC) was established in 1947 to co-ordinate responses to threats to national security. Today, the main threats include the development and proliferation of WMD; the threat to peace from terrorism; the use of missiles against the US; and natural disasters. The NSC co-ordinates national security policy and advises the President, although it does not have an implementation role.

Structure

The NSC was created as part of the National Security Act of 1947 as an integral part of the national security decision-making system. Specifically, its role is to manage and co-ordinate foreign and defence policies, and to reconcile diplomatic and military commitments and requirements. It is a forum in which new policies are initiated and shaped – it seeks to ensure that the President has adequate information on which to make his decisions and that policies, once decided upon, are implemented.

Located in the Office of the President, the NSC is under the chairmanship of the President; its statutory members include the Secretaries of State, Defense, and the Treasury, the Vice-President, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (also known as the National Security Advisor), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Secretaries of State and Defence.

The Secretary of State has primary responsibility for foreign policy and the Secretary of Defense oversees decision-making in relation to US defence policy; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff acts as military advisor to the Council, while the Director of Central Intelligence is its intelligence advisor. Other individuals—such as the President's Chief of Staff—participate on an ad hoc basis.

The National Security Advisor plays two roles in the decision-making process: both as the President's adviser on national security matters and as the senior government official responsible for managing senior-level discussions of national security issues. In these tasks, the Advisor is supported by the NSC staff, comprised of civil servants lent out by other agencies, political appointees, and other personnel.

The NSC structure ensures that most issues are regulated at lower levels of the bureaucracy and that only those issues that require Presidential attention on decision-making reach the President himself.

Each President has set up his own structure for national security decision-making, which reflected his own management style and interests. Many Presidents have initially sought to reduce the size of the NSC and the staff. But most concluded that they needed a sizeable NSC staff to co-ordinate policy.

While the exact role of the NSC has largely depended on the President in office, there are certain features that remain consistent. For instance, the NSC exists to advise the President on the integration of domestic, foreign and military policies relating to national security. It also serves as a forum for discussion for the President, advisers and cabinet officials; and from which to co-ordinate executive departments and agencies in policy development and implementation.

More recently, the NSC has been responsible for restructuring governmental bodies involved in national security, including setting up new homeland security structures and reforming the intelligence services.

There are three discernible levels at which national security policy is considered within the NSC. First, that of the Principals Committee, the most senior interagency forum; second, the Deputies Committee, which is a senior sub-Cabinet interagency forum which prescribes and reviews the work of interagency groups, while ensuring that NSC issues have been properly analysed and prepared for discussion; and, finally, policy co-ordination committees which represent a day-to-day forum for interagency co-ordination of national security policy while providing policy analysis for the senior committees.

The NSC Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations is one of the most active subcommittees. It focuses on terrorism and has now assumed oversight responsibility for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), created following 9/11. Since then, the structure of the NSC has been replicated in the creation of the Homeland Security Council and the White House Office of Homeland Security. Like the NSC, the Office of Homeland Security has three layers (Principals Committee, Deputies Committee, and Policy Co-ordination Committees with responsibilities for specific areas).

The main difference is that while the NSC has statutory responsibility for co-ordinating national security issues, the Homeland Security Council lacks this. Its role is, therefore, to improve efficiency and information-sharing on this crucial family of national security issues, and to advise the President on those issues. Thus, to overcome clashes, the Office of Homeland Security serves, in part, as a mechanism to co-ordinate the activities of the DHS, the DoD and the State Department. As DHS was being stood-up and the various agencies that now comprise it merged under its umbrella, this role was particularly important. The intent was that once DHS was stood up, the Office and Council would retain a crucial role in co-ordinating its work with that of other agencies and in continuing to advise the President.

Decision Making

Oversight

The US Congress has oversight of national security issues. The Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations has now assumed oversight responsibility for the newly-created Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Government Accountability Office (GAO) supports Congress in overseeing federal programs and operations to ensure accountability to the American people.

Emergency co-ordination

The Deputy National security advisor is responsible for crisis management on the part of the NSC. Since the establishment of DHS, its Directorate of Emergency Preparedness and Response (EP&R) is responsible for overseeing domestic disaster preparedness training and co-ordinating government disaster relief. It is responsible for co-ordinating first-line responders, and overseeing the federal government's national response and recovery strategy. To achieve this, DHS is consolidating:

- the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which has a long and solid track record of supporting communities after natural disasters and emergency situations;
- the Strategic National Stockpile and the National Disaster Medical System (of the Department of Health and Human Services);
- the Department of Energy's Nuclear Incident Response Team;
- the Department of Justice's Domestic Emergency Support Teams; and
- the FBI's National Domestic Preparedness office

under EP&R authority.

Use of academics, media / consultation of civil society

The United States enjoys a vibrant 'think tank' community comprising thousands of highly-trained and experienced professionals (from academia, government, and elsewhere), engaged in discussions on national security issues. While some groups represent particular political leanings, others are independent.

Concluding Remarks

The NSC is stipulated as a statutory body in US legislation, and is sanctioned by an Act of Congress. Such legislative safeguards support the NSC role as the advisory body to the President and the co-ordinating body for national security policy as a whole.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that principle NSC staff are appointed by the President—this is not an independent institution. Staff members are a mix of government personnel (civil service, military, foreign service) with political appointees in the most senior roles. As the NSC staff is comprised differently under various national security advisors, the staff may be selected and run to favour independence, loyalty, or some combination of the two, based on the desire of the President and National Security Advisor at that time. Indeed, the functioning of the NSC changes with each new President and fluctuates depending on interpersonal relationships between the President, his principal advisers and department heads.

It is worth noting that – over the last few years – many of the previous efforts of various US Government entities have started to come together to formalise the US's role in providing SSR- and related activities to countries overseas emerging from conflict. This was recently formalised with the establishment of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in the Department of State. A variety of federal departments and agencies – such as State, DoD, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of the Treasury (DoTr), Department of Justice (DoJ), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) – will provide personnel with which to staff the office. In "lead[ing] and coordinat[ing] the USG efforts toward stabilization and reconstruction of countries or regions entrenched in conflict and civil strife, [and] help[ing] them establish a path toward democratic and market oriented states", the Office will:

- Operationalise Lessons Learned
- Focus efforts to deliberate planning with two areas of emphasis:
    - i. Avert and mitigate potential crises
    - ii. Achieve objectives when a crisis occurs
- Create a basic foundation of skills and resources within the USG by identifying qualified individuals available for short and long term deployments
- Coordinate interagency responses in post-conflict situations
- Improve the USG's ability to integrate international capabilities

It is hoped that this will further formalise and extend existing US SSR programmes, to take into account effectively the full resources and interests across the US Government.

3. Case Study Overview

As the case-studies have shown, a variety of models exist for centralised (and less centralised) functions. The Matrix below captures some of the generic aspects.

Country	Body	SECURITY SECTOR MANAGEMENT	INTERACTION WITH DECISION-MAKERS	LEGISLATIVE BASIS	OVERSIGHT	DECISION-MAKING	COORDINATION	ADVICE	INTEGRATION	IMPLEMENTATION	ASSESSMENT	EMERGENCY PLANNING
CANADA	Advisory Council		X	X				X	X		X	X
	Department for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	X		X	X							X
	Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health and Emergencies	X		X								
	National Security Advisor		X	X			X	X	X		X	
	Integrated Threat Assessment Centre										X	
SIERRA LEONE	NSC	X										
	Office of National Security (Intelligence)						X				X	
	National Security Council Coordinating Group							X				
	MoD		X		X	X						
SOUTH AFRICA	NSC					X	X		X			
	Office of the President					X						
	National Intelligence Coordinating Committee						X				X	
	Secretariat for Safety and Security				X							
	Parliamentary Committees on Defense and Intelligence(Parliament)				X							
UNITED KINGDOM	Cabinet Office	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
	Security and Intelligence Coordinator		X		X		X	X			X	
	Committee on Civil Contingencies											X
	Intelligence and Security Committee			X								
UNITED STATES	NSC	X	X	X			X	X	X			
	NSA	X	X					X				
	Deputy NSA											X
	Secretary of State	X		X		X						
	Secretary of Defense	X		X	X	X						
	Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations				X							

Conclusions

The following preliminary observations emerge from a comparison of the roles, functions and realities of national security decision-making structures in different contexts. These observations are made in the following areas:

- Basis for the national security decision-making structure
- Legitimacy of the national security decision-making structure
- Function of the national security decision-making structure
- Organisation of the national security decision-making structure
- Composition of the national security decision-making structure

Basis for the National Security Decision-Making Structure

Implications of Threat Perception

Increasingly, developed countries such as the UK or the US view the most immediate threats to their national security in terms centred around the national well-being and stability of society – against both externally-originating threats such as international terrorism and the proliferation of WMD, and internally-originating ones such as natural disasters or radical violence against society (including domestic terrorism). Developing and – in particular – post-conflict countries are typically far more concerned with socio-economic issues such as poverty and food scarcity, and the potential these have to lead to social tensions and widespread instability. In addition, governments in post-conflict countries are concerned with ensuring transparency and accountability within governance structures , as well as bolstering public confidence in the security apparatus.

Developing countries find it difficult to fully empower NSC structures – and the roles of such organisations, even if they exist, tend to be minimal. Developing-country national security decision-making generally focuses on *near-term security and development needs, and, as relevant, post-conflict reconstruction*. Security sector reform efforts focus on establishing oversight and accountability mechanisms.

In developed countries, attention focuses upon the effectiveness of the decision-making architecture, improving co-ordination, ensuring transparency of the security community, and adapting security architectures to new threats. This is particularly the case after 9/11, which fundamentally changed the perception of threat in many developed countries. Vulnerability assessments were performed, and efforts were made to better integrate the structures of the governing machinery. Examples of such centralised leadership today include the NSC in the US, the Cabinet Office in the UK, and the National Security Advisor's Office and Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health and Emergency Preparedness in Canada, which play key roles in national security decision-making.

Other examples of new thinking can be found in developed countries. In Canada, the Advisory Council on National Security now provides formal advice to the government which originates with players from outside of government. In the UK, the creation of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat was one of the first moves towards centralising an all-risk/all-threats assessments and planning capability within central government. Even the creation of the Department of Homeland Security in the US, problematic as it has been, was a major step towards attempting to ensure better co-ordination and – crucially – information-sharing across those government players central to protecting national security.

Developing v. Developed Countries

In developing countries, the link between security and development is key to understanding issues of national security. Poverty, food scarcity, health pandemics, conflict in neighbouring

countries or regions, and broader socio-economic problems are often the most significant security threats—and they exacerbate other dangers, external and internal. In many developing countries, therefore, the role of the NSC is superseded by other institutions, which focus on development, security, and security sector reform, but not on overall co-ordination of security policy at the head-of-government level. In more developed countries, there is more focus on developing a focal point within the security architecture to respond to the complexity of threats facing any one country. The emphasis is on improving mechanisms for co-ordination, information-sharing, and decision-making, particularly in relation to countering today's terrorism. Whether developing countries feel less of a need for such structures, or face more difficulty creating and institutionalising them, is a question worthy of further consideration.

Legitimacy of the National Security Decision-Making Structure

For an NSC to have legitimacy, it should have a legislative basis and high-level support. It should also be both transparent and accountable.

Legislative Basis

The argument for having the NSC established by a country's legislation has merit. The legal underpinnings for the US NSC help ensure that structure's role vis-à-vis both the President and the rest of the Executive Branch. Although NSC staffers are selected by the President and the President's advisors, and although NSC influence and role has varied by administration, the legal framework ensures its continued operation.

However, a legal framework is not, in and of itself, sufficient. A legislative underpinning must be supported by effective institutionalisation and use of the structures in question. This, in turn, requires commitment at the highest levels to provide resourcing, and empowerment. In short, the senior leadership must choose to make this sort of co-ordination and the structures it requires a priority, else they will languish regardless of the legislation that creates them.

Transparency and Accountability

Democratic decision-making requires transparency and accountability. It is important that there is clear independent evaluation of decisions and options to enhance the legitimacy of political decision-making at any level.

In developing countries, transparency and accountability are particularly challenging issues. The existence of a capable, responsible and accountable security sector is often seen as critical, in order to reduce the risk of conflict or ensure sustainable peace, provide security for citizens, and create the right environment for sustainable development. Thus, for example, the focus of the Sierra Leone government is on bolstering public confidence, credibility, transparency and accountability in relation to the security forces, which play a key role in the future development of the country.

The creation and use of centralised national security decision-making structures do not, in and of themselves, support transparency and accountability. However, the creation of structures of this sort that are themselves open to oversight, and that operate in a transparent manner, can be helpful. The very process of co-ordination can bring to light the functioning of various government agencies. No less critical to this effort is clear civilian control (discussed below), parliamentary oversight, and the involvement in decision-making of non-governmental

specialists. Foreign donors to developing countries can also support transparency, both by encouraging it and by demanding that they themselves have a clear view of structures and processes.

Finally, an additional reason supporting an independent, non-implementing role for an NSC structure or body is that it helps that body maintain its integrity if it is not involved in implementation. A purely coordinating, normative or advisory role allows the NSC to be perceived (in general) as impartial and objective, which can be extremely important when navigating the difficult terrain of security and intelligence concerns, between agencies competing for resources and high-level attention.

Function of the National Security Decision-Making Structure

National Security Councils can function in either an advisory or executive role. They will also likely play a co-ordinating role within government.

Advisory Role versus Executive Role

The advisory, co-ordination, decision-making, and implementation functions of an NSC-type structure are found in various combinations in different countries.

The US NSC is arguably among the most powerful models for an NSC. It is a forum in which new policies can be initiated and shaped, and the President, advisers and Cabinet officials discuss domestic, foreign and defence policies relating to national security. The NSC staff's role is to co-ordinate the executive departments and agencies in policy development and implementation, although the NSC staff itself does not engage in implementation – this is the role of the organisations whose leaders sit on the Council. The NSC staff also provides advice to the President on national security issues.

In Canada, the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health, and Emergency Preparedness – supported by the National Security Advisor and the Advisory Council on National Security – ensure the development and implementation of policy. In South Africa, the National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee works in close co-operation with the National Security Council and the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence to ensure national and local co-ordination of and information-sharing on threats to national security and stability. In the UK, this role is largely filled by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat acting in co-operation with various Cabinet Committees and bodies to meet national security concerns. In virtually every case, these bodies are ultimately responsible to the head of government.

Although there is an argument that NSCs lacking an implementation role may be weaker institutionally than those that have such a function, this is not always the case. The US NSC is an example of a strong NSC without an implementation role, for example. In contrast, the Cabinet Office in the UK is a strong example of a national security decision-making forum that is constantly gaining power in relation to seeing that decisions are carried out, a place where advice and implementation functions are combined.

Co-ordination

In many countries, security issues cut across a number of bodies and departments. This can lead to confusion, stove-piping and poor information exchange among government officials, who may be unaware of the actions and policies of their colleagues. Thus, countries often establish centralised structures in large part to help support and ensure policy co-ordination takes place.

In the US, such co-ordination is clearly centralised in the NSC, and overseeing that co-ordination is a crucial and primary function of the NSC staff. The various governmental departments remain responsible for formulating and carrying out policy, but the NSC helps make sure that this policy is not developed and implemented in a vacuum.

In Canada, the advice of the Advisory Council is channelled through the National Security Advisor to the Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health and Emergencies and the Prime Minister. The new role of the Advisor since April 2004 is presented as a pivotal co-ordination one between the main bodies responsible for national security, albeit without decision-making or implementation authority – it remains to be seen how effective this role is in the long term.

In the UK, the Joint Intelligence Committee is designed to take into account the assessments provided by a range of intelligence bodies, and then to provide these assessments and warnings to government. The Cabinet and its Committee-structure provide a forum in which to co-ordinate policy and decision-making. This structure allows policy-relevant actors to have input at all levels, and ensures that policy differences are often ironed out before they reach the Cabinet.

In most countries, co-ordination of security and intelligence organs is a priority for the government, although responsibility for this may lie with different bodies. Much of the co-ordination occurs – or is designed to occur – both formally and informally, at lower levels. This ensures that many issues get resolved before they ever reach the NSC. However, in countries where the NSC does have a co-ordinating role, issues involving these agencies can often be resolved at that level.

It is worth noting that effective co-ordination mechanisms can often exist despite the absence of an effective NSC structure. In some cases, countries may find that structures of this sort meet their needs better than a more centralised approach.

Organisation of the National Security Decision-Making Structure

Integration

In Canada, the US and the UK, national security decisions are handled through networks of committees before reaching higher-level decision-making fora such as the NSC or the Cabinet. This hierarchical structure helps to focus resources, ensuring that more minor issues are dealt with at a lower level, without detracting from more significant issues requiring higher-level decisions.

Many countries, including Canada and the UK, are seeking to improve their integration of intelligence and assessments. Implementation of policy, however, is decentralised and the responsibility of various departments. While decision-making at high levels on issues affecting multiple agencies is integrated – and there may be centrally-led implementation in issue areas where there is overlap – there is also considerable independent action.

In yet another example, post-*apartheid* South Africa – as part of its overall security sector transformation – had to integrate former adversaries into the new military, police and intelligence structures. However, South Africa is also a useful example of macro-level integration. While the Presidency established an integrated system of governance over the last decade to oversee not only the national security architecture but also – perhaps most importantly – the linkages between development and security across the country, the outcome of both of the above processes has not been as successful as would have been hoped. Corruption and factionalism remain rife across the security forces, while central decisions are taken inside the Office of the President rather than through more consultative and transparent bodies within the government. It remains to be seen how South Africa's efforts towards multiparty, transparent and effective governance will play out over the coming years – and the impact that all of this will have on security and development in that country, as well as on South Africa's wider hemispheric role.

Centralised National Security Decision-Making

The UK and the US are good examples of the effective centralisation of decision-making. In the UK, the Cabinet represents the main centralised authority with responsibility in relation to national security. The committee system ensures not only that many actors have had the opportunity to present their views on national security along the way, but also that many policy debates are resolved at a lower level, and only really important issues go to the higher level, arguably contributing to increased efficiency in the decision-making process.

This is also the case in the US, where a multitude of actors are involved in national security-related committees and working-groups, but the number of individuals is continually reduced as issues approach the level of the President. The different levels of committees that are managed in part by the NSC ensure that national security issues have been thoroughly prepared before being introduced at a higher level.

In general, centralising national security decision-making can contribute to more effective response to threats. However, this centralising process can be undermined by a lack of trust in the central structures established for this purpose. This is particularly apparent in developing countries, and is linked to the issues of building public confidence, trust and accountability in authority structures.

The Role Of Individual Actors

In most countries, it is the head of government whose decision on national security issues is final. However, the importance of having a full-time advisor on national security issues seems to have been recognised by most governments. The role of the national security advisor is a critical element of the decision-making system of many Western and, increasingly, developing countries.

The role that national security advisors play, and the level of their involvement in bodies such as NSCs, can have a vital impact on co-ordination and effectiveness within the security structure as a whole. Depending on the context and country, they may play a key role in centralising decision-making, the development of threat assessments, giving advice on national security issues, implementation of policy decisions and oversight.

In the US, the National Security Advisor acts as a policy co-ordinator and not (in theory, at least) as a policy advocate. As a formal member of the NSC, supported by the NSC staff, he plays two roles: as both the President's advisor on national security matters and as a mediator of discussions relating to national security. Ultimately, he plays a critical role co-ordinating the results of the work of the NSC staff, and ensuring that this gets to the President and other relevant bodies in a timely and effective manner.

In Canada, the National Security Advisor also plays a pivotal role, co-ordinating the main bodies responsible for national security and supporting the development of integrated threat assessments. Positioned between the political leadership and the country's security architecture, he briefs the PM on national security from a government-wide perspective, centralising advice that had previously been distributed across different departments. Despite the centrality of his role, he remains without actual decision-making or implementation authority.

It should be noted that structures where the national security advisor plays a critical role have the potential to invest significant power in that office. This highlights the need for effective oversight and transparency over national security structures, as well as the importance of ensuring that the national security advisor has access to as wide and varied a set of sources of information and analysis as possible.

Composition of the National Security Decision-Making Structure

It is critical for NSCs to have a balance between military and civilian influence. Intelligence and security services must also be integrated effectively to support effective decision-making.

Civil-Military Balance

The balance between military and civilian elements in national decision-making structures is critical, particularly for post-conflict and developing countries that are in the process of rebuilding their security sector. Striking this balance is crucial, since history shows that a predominantly-internal security role – often involving repression or countering popular dissent against the political leadership of the day – for the military apparatus can increase the danger of military intervention in domestic affairs.

Effective civilian control over security forces and structures is one critical component. Civilian control not only helps ensure transparency and policy oversight, it can help restore the legitimacy of security institutions among the public. However, it is also important that military viewpoints be effectively represented in decision-making structures. The mechanisms by which the US NSC incorporates senior military (and intelligence) advisors is one model for how this can be carried out while maintaining effective civilian control.

Intelligence Services

Effective integration of information-sharing and intelligence is critical to supporting national security tasks. So are measures to develop fora in which to bring together all threat-related information from different departments and agencies, so that it can be jointly assessed and effectively distributed.

In developing countries, there has been increasing emphasis placed on the co-ordination of the intelligence function – good examples of this were the creation of the National Intelligence Co-

ordinating Committee in South Africa, and the key role played by the Office of National Security in Sierra Leone. However, the stove-piping of various intelligence agencies and structures remains a real problem in both developing countries and more developed ones.

One of the problems this has raised historically has been a failure to take advantage of all the sources available to the analyst, ensuring an all-source assessment is conducted. While the importance of such joint assessments is often recognised, problems that confront this issue seem to stem from a lack of open discussion or willingness to consider alternative analytical sources on which to base such assessments. Far more effort is now being made in many countries to integrate the wide array of intelligence sources that feed into national security decision-making processes.

The creation and bolstering of the roles of bodies such as JTAC in the UK, the ITAC in Canada, the National Intelligence Estimates Board (established in 1995) of the NICOC in South Africa and the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (established in 2004) in the US all highlight the importance now being placed on the existence of effective national systems of assessment to counter threats.

Ultimately, the challenge of providing mechanisms appropriate to support information-sharing amongst secretive agencies and structures, while ensuring the centrality and co-ordination of assessments across government, must be met in all countries in order to support the provision of effective intelligence to the government, crucial to the security of every state.

Concluding Thoughts

There is a wide range of national security decision-making models available. Developing and developed countries face some similar, some dissimilar challenges – but in every individual state, national security decision-making systems are established to correspond to that specific country's threat perception and domestic governance arrangements. Most countries have, to varying degrees, implemented centralised decision-making in this area, supported by systems that have input at various levels from different areas of expertise.

There is a marked emphasis on integrating the bodies and processes involved in national security decision-making. In some countries, this level of integration is apparent at the highest level, in fora such as an NSC; in others, the process of integration is less advanced, leading to disarray and confusion. This is more likely in developing countries, where governments are focusing heavily on rebuilding confidence in, transparency of and accountability for decision-making. Whether this is a necessary first step before integration can be undertaken effectively, or whether this is an inefficiency that could be ameliorated with better integration, is a subject for further discussion (and may, indeed, vary from country to country).

One crucial area of integration, however, is intelligence co-ordination. Almost invariably, both in the case-studies examined here and in other countries around the world, tremendous efforts have been undertaken to create or reinforce agencies responsible for preparing intelligence assessments to address threats to national security, and for bringing together the intelligence efforts of various branches and structures of government to do so.

To end this report, we close with a discussion of some of the key questions surrounding national decision-making structures:

- Centralisation of National Security Functions
- Options for Security Functions—Consolidated or Disseminated
- Joint Security Assessments vs. Individual Departmental Assessments
- Role of National Security Councils in Security Sector Reform

Centralisation of National Security Functions

Countries will continue to wrestle with the question of just what national security functions are better performed by a central authority rather than by individual agencies. Central authorities are effective mechanisms for co-ordinating and integrating the activities of different bodies involved in national security decision-making, and overseeing how these function in the national security process. They also provide an important forum in which policy-makers, decision-makers and government officials can come together, and where a wide range of perspectives and insights can be represented. Historically, in countries with a more long-standing tradition of centralising national security authority, such bodies are more effective when their role is more advisory, and they are largely removed from implementing policies or decisions made. In relation to NSCs themselves, it is apparent that these tend to support even smaller centralised bodies, with a reduced number of individuals involved in actual decision-making. However, it is worth noting that the recent trend in the area of emergency co-ordination and response has been towards establishing or reinforcing specifically-designated bodies with particular responsibilities in this area, thus creating a central function (but not always within the NSC structure).

Options for Security Functions—Consolidated or Disseminated?

There are also a number of different examples from different countries of the ways in which functions can be either combined in individual bodies or distributed among the agencies of government. Broadly speaking, it seems that most governments organise national security functions in a hierarchical fashion. Typically, higher central decision-making fora – such as the Cabinet in the UK – are supported by a series of committees and subcommittees that deal autonomously with the issues under their responsibility. Viewpoints from all interested parties can, therefore, be represented at lower levels, disagreements ironed out, and only specific matters of immediate relevance and importance funnelled-up to the decision-making body. This seems to be the most effective mechanism in place, especially where the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and – where relevant – outlined in legislation.

Joint Security Assessments vs. Competing Departmental Security Assessments

With regard to the advantages of joint assessment over competing departmental assessments, joint assessments bring together the views of all interested parties. They also allow the introduction of very subject-specific views with concise recommendations or planning suggestions. The trend towards the development of integrated or joint threat-assessment bodies in various countries reinforces this view. However, there is concern that independent viewpoints may be lost in the development of a joint assessment, creating a requirement that safeguards be created to ensure a mechanism for the expression of dissenting views—and perhaps even for encouraging these.

Moreover, there exists the danger that the creation of a range of new bodies specifically dealing with a single threat – terrorism, for example – may result in an imbalanced approach to national security. Models such as that of Canada may represent one way of avoiding bias and ensuring all threats to national security are addressed as effectively as possible.

Role of NSCs in Security Sector Reform

Finally, it is worth noting the important role that centralised structures can play in the development and implementation of security sector reform. NSCs serve as fora in which those responsible for SSR can discuss and decide upon policy and resource allocation issues, and can co-ordinate the activities of those involved in carrying out and implementing these decisions. However, it is apparent that in developing countries particularly, where SSR is a more pressing issue, NSCs often lack the political clout required to facilitate SSR and national security decision-making. By reinforcing these bodies, it may well be that reform and stability will follow. Currently, though, the role of NSCs in these contexts remains limited.

This report has sought to outline the roles a NSC body may play in these processes of integration, co-ordination and responding to national security threats in specific contexts. Predictably, there is no 'one size fits all' approach. However, there are generic aspects of the different models that may provide useful examples or lessons for other countries in the process of developing or reforming an NSC-type system.

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