



Stabilisation Unit

Security Sector Stabilisation

Issues Note

Stabilisation Unit

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Stabilisation Unit:

The Stabilisation Unit is a uniquely integrated civil-military operational unit funded from the Conflict Pool, designed to be agile and responsive and well-equipped to operate in high threat environments. It combines in-house staff expertise with the ability to draw on a larger pool of civilian expertise for specialised, longer term or larger scale taskings. We ensure lessons from practical experience are captured as best practice and used to improve future SU, Conflict Pool and wider delivery in support of the Building Stability Overseas Strategy.

Stabilisation Issues Notes

Stabilisation Issues Notes (SIN) provide thematic guidance to UK government officials and contractors engaged in stabilisation. They cover a range of issues including; SIN Integrated Approach and SIN Analysis, Planning and M&E. They are available [online](#) and from the Stabilisation Unit Lessons team.

The SINs are informed by the UK Concept of Stability and Stabilisation, the Principles of Stabilisation and the UK Approach to Stabilisation. They are supported by a series of technical papers called the What Works series.

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The Stabilisation Unit produces a number of publications in order to inform key stakeholders about a range of topics relating to conflict, stability, security and justice. The publications can be found at our new [Publications web page](#).

A brief introduction to the different series and existing titles is below.

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Feedback and comments on this paper and the other outputs in the series can be sent to the SU Lessons Team can be sent so SULessons@stabilisationunit.gov.uk

List of Acronyms

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
BSOS	Building Stability Overseas Strategy
CPA	Coalition Provision Authority
DDR	Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration
EU	European Union
G8	Group of Eight
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
JACS	Joint Assessment of Conflict and Stability
KFOR	NATO Kosovo Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SIN	Stabilisation Issues Note
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Introduction and Background to Security Sector Stabilisation

What is Security Sector Stabilisation?

Security Sector Stabilisation is a holistic political-security approach, incorporating state and non-state elements to improve security and justice and so to improve confidence, facilitate political dialogue and ultimately enable a political settlement. Making progress requires security activity to be integrated with the political and governance aspects of stabilisation.¹

This SIN examines practice in stabilising the Security and Justice sector in fragile and conflict-affected states. The central challenge is how to enhance the legitimacy of the political authority by improving security and justice where achieving even basic security and political progress can be problematic. Stabilisation environments involve turbulent politics, persistent political violence and weak organisational and institutional capacity. These factors hinder change and it may be too soon for meaningful long-term reform programmes: the pressing need is for an immediate reduction in violence.²

This SIN uses the following definition:

Security Sector Stabilisation seeks to enable essential and minimum security and justice and in doing so protect and promote a legitimate political authority and prepare the foundations for transition to longer-term security sector reform.

The approach to Security Sector Stabilisation is congruent with the principles described in the UK Approach to Stabilisation and Principles of Stabilisation.

Security Sector Stabilisation: the essentials

A Security Sector Stabilisation approach, as a key early element of wider stabilisation efforts, addresses the locus of power through the political-security nexus in a society in order to provide time and space for the political process.

The approach involves pursuing interdependent activities with the aim of:

- Understanding the political and security situation also and the “ripeness” for political progress;
- Addressing political power and conflict together through a tightly coordinated approach to both political and security actors;
- Reducing violence, making people safer and creating political space for dialogue;
- Developing integrated coordination arrangements and a guiding political framework to support political primacy;
- Understanding and engaging as appropriate with local armed actors;
- Achieving politico-security understanding and cooperation;
- Identifying opportunities for local capacity building and ownership;
- Adopting an iterative approach and accepting “good enough” results.

What do we seek to achieve from Security Sector Stabilisation?

A Security Sector Stabilisation approach, whilst challenging to implement, can provide time and space for a political authority to gain legitimacy or acceptance, thus consolidating the process of achieving a political settlement and hence supporting progress towards structural stability. Security Sector Stabilisation is thus intimately connected with, and dependent on, political and governance stabilisation activities. It will help to provide a basis for other stabilisation activities and a bridging activity towards longer-term recovery including Security Sector Reform (SSR). The latter needs a political settlement and sufficient government capacity to undertake holistic reform – conditions that are not usually present in stabilisation environments

When considering engagement the key area of focus is the need to increase the political space and build the confidence required for the negotiation and eventual establishment of an enduring political settlement. This needs to address substantively the conflict drivers, (and may include elements of transitional justice), rather than acting as an interim palliative. In this sense, Security Sector Stabilisation is one element of a range of interventions that the UK government, and wider international community, uses to promote structural stability. This SIN provides a high-level rationale for an evolutionary approach³ which is appropriate where addressing short-term needs must be balanced against long-term (political) outcomes and implications. Here, supporting the primacy of the political process⁴ will help to frame all short-term decisions so that these are connected to a long-term view that sets the conditions for political stability. Difficult short-term compromises, over engaging with undesirable individuals, non-state armed groups or the accountability of security structures may be needed. Yet, these decisions are often necessary in order to preserve fragile stability, power sharing arrangements, protect the political process and help to avoid fuelling disaffection, or worse insurgency, among excluded groups until indigenous structures and processes are viable.

Scope of this SIN

This SIN is situated in the policy context of the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) which identifies the aspiration of HMG approaches in conflict affected contexts as being “structural stability” and on HMGs whole of government approach. The SIN raises awareness of the complexities and challenges inherent in any attempt to stabilise the security sector. The practical context and core ideas are briefly elaborated including guidance on the planning and operating stages as well as considerations for transition to

³ Martin and Wilson, (2008), pp. 87-88.

⁴ Covey, (2005). p.77.

longer-term security and justice activities. The focus is on the strategic and operational levels but with reference to the tactical. The paper does not answer “how to” questions; nor does it address the practice of political negotiation. Further detailed discussion can be found in the What Works Security Sector Stabilisation paper.

Assumptions

This SIN assumes that: the UK will continue to engage directly or through advising other organisations; stabilisation requires a guiding political framework (even if contested) with governing authority (possibly interim) at the international, national, or even potentially sub national level; and political and governance stabilisation will be pursued in parallel, with other stabilisation activities (such as economic) being brought in over time.

Relevance to stabilisation environments

Nature of the stabilisation environment

Stabilisation activities are conducted in politically messy, violent, challenging and potentially non-permissive environments with either no viable political settlement or one that is contested. Local ownership is itself contested so this cannot be developed easily, though attempts should be made to promote local capacity and ownership where practicable. The fundamental characteristic of the stabilisation environment may be the absence of a political settlement and on-going conflict. Examples include parts of Afghanistan, northern Mali, Syria, and south-central Somalia. Conversely, it may be that one or more of the parties to the conflict do not accept the existing political settlement, for example areas of Eastern DRC and various Libyan hotspots, where, despite elections, conflict endures. This situation also includes Iraq, where fundamental elements of the political settlement are disputed. It is also important to understand the likely reality of a “mosaic”⁵ of differing issues, histories of intervention and stages of progress in different localities in the affected territory. Differing approaches may be needed across this mosaic to address the range of needs in a realistic and appropriate manner.

Variety of potential mandates and degree of engagement

Security Sector Stabilisation is deliberately situated at the more difficult end of the stabilisation “spectrum”. There may well be ongoing conflict though activities may continue in to what is broadly termed a “post conflict” context. Whatever the level of violence the environment should demonstrate some form of “ripeness” for progress towards political

⁵ For a similar approach see: US Army, (2006). P. 1-8.

settlement. As a result external stabilisation efforts generally include some form of military engagement as well as civilian. Nevertheless the precepts are also relevant where the environment may be easier yet the underlying problems are no less intractable.

Beyond these structural factors, the mandate and those implementing it will also shape the stabilisation environment: an executive mandate implies significant engagement and control; whereas a non-executive or peacekeeping mandate, or bilateral arrangement will see a less robust posture. UK bilateral engagement could be minor or extensive and may involve Security Sector Stabilisation activities conducted directly by UK political, civilian and police advisers or through outsourced contractual arrangements, or a mixture.

Military involvement could take a number of forms and might see the UK engaged:

- in a bilateral support / advisory role for others' military engagement, perhaps drawing on a regional British Peace Support Team or other Defence Engagement activity (for example UK supported pre-deployment training for AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries deployed in Somalia);
- in a multi-national force under the UN or EU, possibly in peacekeeping activities;
- militarily on the ground as part of a NATO or coalition operation;
- in a lead role in military intervention (as previously in Sierra Leone);
- as part of an unarmed peacekeeping mission.

Civilian engagement could also be applied in a number of ways;

- Bilateral support, possibly including the direct provision of advisors in to key roles in central or local administrations as interim measures;
- Civilian deployments in to multi-national missions under the auspices of the UN, EU, NATO and OSCE. Civilian deployments may be part of civilian-led missions or complement military-led deployments (see list above).

What have we learned while responding to stabilisation needs in these environments?

Lessons identified during recent stabilisation operations suggest that:

“Security can’t wait for Security Sector Reform [there is] an increasingly relevant realisation from fragile and conflict-affected states: that although the establishment of state-wide capable, accountable and responsive security and justice institutions is the only sustainable solution, this requires a stable - but possibly elusive - political settlement as well as substantial long term reform and capacity building. In the meantime, it is critical to respond to security needs now. A two-speed approach is therefore required

which stabilises the security situation in the short term - principally through local actors - whilst creating the conditions for longer term security sector reform.”⁶

Moreover, aspects of peace building and political settlement issues have tended to lag behind. Worse, on occasion forces built to deliver security, and so to help create political space, have themselves undermined the political process, (the Police Commandos in Iraq being a particularly egregious example).⁷ Stark lessons include the need to accept the centrality of politics and that (building and) changing the security sector has to be seen as part of the peace building process - where the potentially negative impact on the state of wayward security forces cannot be ignored and a purely technocratic approach is not enough. Some recent practice has seen approaches that are not holistic. In particular Security Force Assistance operations, impelled by pressing security needs, notably in Iraq and Afghanistan, have sometimes seen a focus on developing low level (para) military capacity in both police and military structures. There was a clear focus, at least initially, on quantitative capacities and less on governance, oversight and sustainability.

Essentials of the Security Sector Stabilisation approach

Core Ideas

The desired outcomes in Security Sector Stabilisation are to help local actors to create enough political space for political negotiation and accommodation, to support existing political agreements and to help a state (or other appropriate authority) to increase its legitimacy through delivery of basic security and justice functions. The interdependent essentials are:

- Addressing political power and conflict together through a tightly coordinated approach to both political and security actors;
- Reducing violence, making people safer and creating space to enable political dialogue;
- Developing integrated coordination arrangements and a guiding political framework to support political primacy;
- Understanding and engaging as appropriate with local armed actors ;
- Achieving politico-security understanding and cooperation;
- Identifying opportunities for local capacity building and local ownership.
- Adopting an iterative approach and accepting “good enough” results.

⁶ Stabilisation Unit, (2010), p.2.

⁷ Rathmell, (2010), p.5.

Addressing political power and conflict together

Security Sector Stabilisation addresses political power and conflict together because these tend to be tightly woven together through both formal state structures and informal or traditional mechanisms. Power will likely be established and protected through force or the threat of force. This demands a carefully choreographed approach to both political and security actors, recognising that action in one domain will impact on the other. Purely political or purely technocratic approaches are not likely to work. Achieving positive political outcomes will mean making early security progress - possibly enabled partly through political accommodations and by employing existing capacities. For external actors, this demands a nuanced understanding of local realities then helping to strengthen political will – and with this the political means - to begin to resolve fundamental issues so as to shift competition more towards debate and less through violence. Achieving progress may also require a shift from a state-centric to a hybrid model of security provision, at least temporarily.

Reducing violence, making people safer and more secure, creating political space to enable dialogue

Providing time and political space for dialogue,⁸ negotiation and change within both formal state structures and other informal or traditional mechanisms is challenging. Fundamentally it requires reduced violence and through this some local confidence in improved security. This will win support and “influence the intentions of the people”.⁹ With this, incremental strengthening of the peace process, potentially to include elements of transitional justice may be possible and beginning to connect security and justice institutions to the people will encourage improved accountability. Here, ensuring local ownership will present real policy and practical challenges given the potential absence of acceptable partners, but ownership must be nurtured and should improve as political space opens and capacity improves. Sustainability is important but external support may be needed where local resources are lacking and where over-sized security structures are needed in the short term.

Developing integrated coordination arrangements and a guiding political framework to support political primacy

Overall civilian leadership and clear political primacy are vital and the behaviour of external actors, particularly the police and military, will provide an important influence on local actors. It will be particularly important to develop integrated coordination arrangements

⁸ Downes and Muggah, (2010), p. 148.

⁹ Smith, (2005), p. 277.

and a guiding political framework for stabilisation activities and interaction with host country actors; albeit such arrangements can be difficult to achieve. The art of the possible and likely time frame will be determined by: the operating conditions and degree of conflict; the degree of external political-military engagement; the resources available; as well as local and international agreement in terms of a mandate. Stabilisation activities also cannot be seen in isolation given the significant destabilising effect of external political issues, particularly any effort to deal with legacy issues through the international courts.

Understanding and Engaging as appropriate with local armed actors

Given that armed actors, both in the formal sector and others such as militia leaders or warlords, are inevitably bound up with both politics and security provision they will need to be dealt with in both the security and political domains. This will be a key area of engagement. External military commanders, given the nature of their role access and position, sometimes can provide entry points to the parties to the conflict. Hence they may be in a position to assist aspects of negotiations; albeit political primacy (for the interveners at least) remains paramount. Over time, some non-state armed actors (and it is hard to choose which) may need to be brought into the political arena to play a part in ending conflict. Others will need to be removed, ideally through the justice system, but may have to be contained until this is possible both physically and in terms of the political process.

Example: Libya 2011-13

Political violence has characterised Libya's transition after its civil war in late 2011. The combination of empowered and effective militia, weak and poorly resourced state security and justice sectors, and the lack of a lasting political settlement in Libya has two significant effects: insecurity is wide-spread, with citizens often turning to militias for support and protection, undermining already ineffective state provision of security and justice services; and this insecurity reinforces political turmoil, undermining efforts to tackle insecurity and wider governance and resource issues.

The UK's Security, Justice and Defence programme and Security Compact (the latter endorsed by the G8 in mid-2013) explicitly aim to encourage, support and protect political transition in Libya. Through focussing on the defence, justice and security sectors, they: (a) provide support to the political process; (b) enhance the capacity of government institutions to improve services, accountability and consequently their local legitimacy; and (c) improve the operational effectiveness and sustainability of Libyan security, justice and defence providers to tackle insecurity, enhance rule of law, increase their legitimacy and reduce the space within which armed opposition groups can operate. These programmes bring together different UK departments and capacities within a common framework and with a unified management structure and commit to medium term funding support in recognition of the time that will be required for Libya to conclude its political settlement process.

Achieving politico-security understanding and cooperation

Nurturing political progress and improved security, in tandem, demands tight politico-security understanding and cooperation between external and local actors. If this understanding is not achieved and either political or security decisions are taken in isolation, then each will impact negatively on the other. (For example the deteriorating security situation leading to insurgency and potential civil war in Iraq in 2003-4 under CPA administration demonstrated how this can go wrong; however later in 2007-8 political and military efforts, approached together, created a more positive outcome). Primacy of the political or peace process is the driver for politico-security decision-making and coordination of both military and police activity. Relationships between local security actors are also important. A shift in responsibility for internal security from the military towards the police may be one of the key elements of the transition from open conflict to structural stability and as part of the stabilisation process. The approach will depend on levels of violence and the previous history of policing.

Identifying opportunities for local capacity building and local ownership

As well as providing needed capacity in the short to medium term, positive efforts to identify opportunities to build local capacity and achieve local ownership will help to maximise the likelihood of a successful transition from SSS to SSR or other Security and Justice programming in the event of a legitimate political settlement. An example of the international community's approach here was the concerted effort by UNMIK, KFOR and OSCE to establish a police training college in Kosovo within weeks of the 1999 intervention. Although challenging, this created nascent local police capacity, delivered viable employment for suitable former KLA members and others (with concomitant security and political benefits) as well as facilitating eventual transfer to local ownership. Although, in the event, the latter and a political settlement would be long in coming, these early moves helped to create conditions for change.

Adopting an iterative approach and accepting “good enough” results

An iterative “stepping stone” approach to achieving specific security and political objectives and the variety of potentially overwhelming needs is required. It is better to address absolute priorities relating directly to the political process, than to expect to address everything. However the longer-term must constantly be borne in mind otherwise a short-term focus risks undermining long term goals.¹⁰ It follows that pragmatic acceptance of

¹⁰ Dahl Thruelsen, (2010), p. 4.

“good enough”, results is necessary when assessing progress in the uncertain stabilisation environment.

Planning Security Sector Stabilisation: should we intervene and if so how?

Understanding the prospects for success and inherent risks

It is important to be able to speak authoritatively (“truth to power”) about the real difficulties of engagement and prospects for success, which will involve risk and potentially long term engagement. This will help to establish the degree of domestic political will and to decide whether to engage and an appropriate UK strategic level of ambition. The decision making process needs to be fed by clear advice on potential strategic level stabilisation objectives (ends), the approach to achieving these across thematic stabilisation areas (ways) and the resources required, particularly civilian capacity (means), as well as the strategic risks involved and exit conditions. It is vital that the ends ways and means are kept in balance.

Understanding Complexity

There may be a “values versus interests”¹¹ conundrum which will also be tempered by (resource) realism. This may be acute when decisions are needed under pressure. However, understanding complexity invariably takes time. It will be particularly important to understand - throughout the mosaic of affected localities - the political situation and prospects for improvement together with local security conditions and institutional capabilities and how these all relate to each other. Here analysis of the political economy including as a minimum, the relationship between power and the distribution of resources and how these are contested across the mosaic, will be needed. The Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) process brings departments together to understand and agree a single HMG view of what is driving violent conflict in countries. This analysis is likely to suggest difficult trade-offs, particularly over entry points. In addition HMG Human Rights guidance is clear in terms of the decision-making process (if potentially challenging, in terms of planning delivery).¹²

¹¹ Values include our commitment to Human Rights and poverty reduction; interests include imperatives such as securing regional stability, trade and energy flows as well as prevention of terrorism.

¹² HMG, (2011).

Overarching Planning Questions

- What is our strategic intent? What is our exit strategy? Contain and deter? Or Engage and develop?
- What is our appetite for risk and what resources are available?
- To what extent is there “ripeness” for a peace process?
- Is this planning underpinned by cross-Whitehall analysis? Does this include analysis of the political economy?
- What is the overarching International Community / Regional / Local political framework? What coordination structures exist?
- How do other International / Regional / Local actors see potential intervention? Can our needs be harmonised with theirs?
- Who will take the lead in supporting political dialogue and opening the political space?
- Who will take the political lead in coordinating specific sectoral stabilisation activities so that these actively support the political process?
- To what extent are political, military, and police and civilian actors joined up?

Understanding the wider international context

The wider context must be kept in mind and specific UK stabilisation efforts should not be assumed to provide “the answer” in isolation,¹³ particularly where the UK contribution is modest. Moreover it may be impractical for the UK to engage directly in stabilisation activity. Thus some stabilisation policy objectives may need to be addressed through third parties, (the case of AMISOM is an example). It will be important to seek conceptual clarity and unity of purpose with international interlocutors to the greatest extent possible. This should avoid both duplication and confusing local interlocutors. Where others’ capacity is limited, establishing how we can help will be another important consideration. Throughout this process it must be made clear to Ministers that progress on the ground in achieving Security Sector Stabilisation will be achieved iteratively and that continual review and flexible decision-making - managing risks against rewards - will be needed.

Iterative Planning and Delivery

¹³ Cavanagh, (2011), p. 48.

Stabilisation activities are planned and delivered iteratively, seeking out opportunities and entry points,¹⁴ given the evolving political-security situation. Often this involves negotiation and facilitating other actors to improve security and the rule of law, or even doing it ourselves initially. Security Sector Stabilisation differs from Security Sector Reform and is often more likely to see pursuit of on-going priorities for change than programme

Example: Sudan / South Sudan 2005

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement contained explicit reference to a wide range of security building efforts. These were deemed critical both to protecting the settlement process and to providing the framework within which two (essentially) politico-military actors could communicate and manage the settlement process. These confidence and security building mechanisms included the deployment of Joint Integrated Units to patrol border areas and DDR and SALW control programmes. In this case, the ideas underpinning the SSS concept were (arguably) wired into the CPA from an early stage albeit they were not achieved in practice. Despite real failures in terms of moving the settlement process on from the initial CPA (which was never intended as the settlement, rather its framing) the CPA was instrumental in providing the framework within which South Sudan was eventually ceded by Sudan. The fact that for instance the DDR programme subsequently failed to demobilise any serious quantities of combatants is perhaps secondary to the important role that the governance mechanisms played in framing and managing communications between the two sides. This will remain important in the next phase. As demonstrated by recent events, political shifts at a central level can have a significantly destabilising effect leading to widespread violence in the context of incomplete and incoherent security sector transitions.

management. In complex circumstances, an experimental style - probing, sensing impact and then responding is a realistic means of establishing patterns and possibilities.¹⁵ The risk of unintended consequences must be borne in mind and programmes must be adaptive.

Adopting a conditions based approach to planning and assessment

The nature of the Security Sector Stabilisation challenge suggests that a conditions based approach to planning and assessing progress using broad benchmarks is appropriate. To facilitate discussion some potential desired outcomes are suggested at Annex A. This indicates the possible scope and scale of the task and the likely resource implications. While

¹⁴ Hughes, (2012).

¹⁵ Snowden and Boone, (2007), pp. 4-6.

relatively short intervention timescales may be politically attractive, they may be ultimately unhelpful given the complexity of the challenge, the requirement for a long term view and the difficulty of establishing durable political settlements in the short term. The gap that Security sector stabilisation fills; between immediate security requirements and the identification of longer term reform process could be considered to be over a 12-24 month period, but may take longer.

Operating: what does a focus on the political-security nexus entail?

Leadership

Security Sector Stabilisation requires unity of purpose and effective leadership at all levels (this is consistent with the UK Principles of Stabilisation). Leadership is particularly important where understanding and responding flexibly to complexity are vital. Many of the decisions to be made will be hard judgement calls. Thus it is important to deploy people with the right levels of political experience. They should understand the different elements of security and justice and the overall conflict context, as well as the relationship between stabilisation and longer-term programming. First efforts may fail or become inappropriate as the situation evolves; this means that leaders must monitor not only their interventions but the emerging political and security situation and be prepared to respond flexibly. The key question remains: is this action moving things in the direction of sustainable peace?

Dealing with a mosaic of different challenges requiring appropriate responses

Stabilisation is not a neat, linear process and is likely to proceed at different speeds throughout the mosaic. Progress at the centre will be different to the periphery and outlying areas will stabilise in different phases and may require different incentives. Across the mosaic there may need to be different approaches to solving security (and governance) problems. It will, therefore, be important to establish at what level, or levels, and localities the stabilisation strategy should be working and how the different elements should interact with each other. Actions at one level or locality must not undermine those at the centre or in another area.

Striking a balance between state and non-state security and justice providers

Building or re-building and reforming security and justice systems is a massive and lengthy task. In the early stages the greatest opportunities for improvement may lie in work with, and support to, the informal or non-state sector. In many countries, the state remains a minority provider of services, including public safety, security and justice, especially in rural areas. Also state forces may be viewed as predatory and corrupt perpetrators of violent crime and human rights abuses; particularly where there has been long-term conflict. It is thus necessary to work with the grain and with those people and institutions that can

provide security on a day-to-day basis and hybrid models may need to be applied. However there are dangers here and appropriate protection of human rights and measures to avoid collusion regarding violence are essential.

Developing accountability

Early effort to develop accountability is critical to ensuring that Security Sector Stabilisation supports a transition to long-term security and justice programming. These do not necessarily have to be western style systems. Continually appraising and analysing changes in the local context is key to identifying the right approaches and activities to support. Improving accountability might be seen as helping the locals to create a “web of accountability” which supports more effective security and justice, across the formal and informal sectors. Each strand of the web having an influence on a security actor may be relatively weak, but the combined effect of the strands can contribute to a satisfactory level of accountability in terms of local perceptions. This in turn can improve perceptions of legitimacy.

Establishing local ownership

Establishing a satisfactory degree of local ownership is one of the most difficult judgements in early stabilisation. While at the central level there is always likely to be some form of authority (even if only interim) with which the strategy ought to be discussed, at the local level it is often hard to pick suitable interlocutors. Yet a strategy without local ownership will not endure. International forces may be vital to establishing physical security but the local people, through their governance structures, need to be part of discussion on how to move security provision in to the host nations hands.

While the degree of local ownership may be limited at the beginning it should increase in line with: increased political space and confidence; increased capacity of local security forces; and increased service provision and community projects, which in turn will encourage a belief in the possibility of lasting change.

A difficult question is managing local strongmen, who may have committed human rights abuses but are part of the political landscape. While some should be dealt with through national or international courts, it is impractical to refuse to deal with all wrongdoers. Here drawing a line under the past but being clear about bottom lines in the future can be a useful approach.

Balancing short-term imperatives and long term needs

Short term imperatives may demand that we undertake potentially unsustainable activities, yet there needs to be a constant awareness of how such compromises can undermine long term goals. Particular issues can arise around:

- Building forces to deliver security without developing appropriate governance structures;
- Developing local police/community police without appropriate governance arrangements;
- Building large forces (police or military) to deliver security that a future government cannot afford and will thus have to downsize;
- Absorbing armed groups into security forces as the least damaging (or only) way of managing fighters, but leading to later unsustainability, capability imbalance or politicising elements of the security forces;
- Creating local private security companies for providing security to foreign NGOs or embassies that can easily turn into well-armed rent seeking militias and spur the conflict economy;
- Working with local militia may be the only viable short-term option. However it is likely to require sustainable funding and will confer status and credibility on those who may not subsequently be integrated.

Transitioning: driving factors and trade-offs

Security transition as a process

There is no predetermined period for stabilisation - it can range from months to years. However, for transition, the point is to avoid a collapse in security and justice delivery with the possibility of abusive, rapacious and unaffordable security structures. Transition to security and justice programming and eventually SSR will be a process rather than an event, and is unlikely to progress uniformly across the mosaic of sectors and localities. Therefore a systemic overview is needed to ensure an overall framework and so that different elements do not undermine each other.

Timing of Transition

The timing of security sector transition is ultimately a matter of political judgement. It is not a question of absolute standards (rarely achievable) but rather is it 'good enough' and moving in the right direction? Transitions tend not to take place at the ideal time: a variety of push factors often leads to transition before a country is fully ready. These push factors may include: political opposition to foreign forces; political pressure for longer-term programming; and political pressure from donor countries for exit.

There are also three critical practical factors. Firstly, progress with establishing a political settlement and the existence of a broadly representative government with the capacity to engage in policy debates and take critical decisions. Secondly, whether there is sufficient political stability to deal with the inevitable security challenges and pressures caused by reform towards affordable security structures. Thirdly, whether the security sector is

sufficiently effective, stable and governable to perform its basic operational functions and also remain accountable, bearing in mind that local capability may be a key enabler for our own exit strategy.

Negotiating Transition

Transition needs to be negotiated with the host government. This will be a particular issue regarding the withdrawal of foreign forces that have been supporting security. Tensions will likely emerge regarding the scope and vision for transition among local and international actors engaged in transition. This must be carefully negotiated to avoid counter-productive approaches and downstream actions should take place within an agreed multinational and inter-agency framework, including all relevant military and civilian stakeholders.

Example: Kosovo 1999-2000

The classic exercise in international liberal peace building; Kosovo, saw multilateral military action and a UN mandated peace-building and state-building intervention, the largest of its kind and with executive authority. The core problem was that an Albanian majority in Kosovo had long wanted independence from the Republic of Serbia and the resulting political extremism required urgent international political and security action.

Within the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the NATO-led military force (KFOR) UNMIK/KFOR, the “primacy of the peace process”, was used to guide efforts in support of the mission strategy and underlined the principle of political primacy. They had to deal with the practical situation and to erase distinctions between military and civilian objectives.

The international political strategy over the first year was to seek incremental progress towards a situation where competition for power could be conducted through non-violent processes. A key plank of the political and security approach was to manage both the physical reality and the political ambitions of the KLA. Hence the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) was established for security reasons (to prevent outbreaks of violence and initiate DDR), but also with a political effect to manage the KLA and support the initiation of political processes. They needed to be locked into a democratic framework, yet retain some sense of identity.

Security Transition Risks

A number of significant risks need to be taken into account and suitable mitigation approaches established. The push factors outlined above can lead to transition before local

actors are fully capable. It may be possible to partly mitigate this by shifting from direct stabilisation towards technical assistance. Premature transition can unsettle the political balance leading state structures to fragment and it can reignite conflict dynamics. A lack of host country security capacity can also lead to deterioration in security. Where warring parties have been responsible for large-scale human rights abuse, the risks of retributive violence must be monitored and mitigated to the extent possible.

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Annex A - Indicative Security Sector Stabilisation Desired Outcomes

Possible Desired Immediate Outcomes in Security Sector Stabilisation

Establishing the specific desired outcomes and activities in Security Sector Stabilisation depends on assessment and analysis of the situation in concert with other relevant local and international actors. This will be iterative as our understanding deepens and needs are established. The following list of possible outcomes (in **bold**), with illustrative activities shown where relevant, is not intended to be definitive.

Coordination Achieved. Notwithstanding the difficulties coordination across HMG and with both the international community and indigenous actors is essential.

Mechanisms for conflict resolution and dialogue over security issues established. In parallel with political and governance activity, this might see:

- Analysis of spoilers and development of strategies to turn them into stakeholders.
- Restoration of regular inter-tribal chiefs'/elders' meetings.
- Establishment of Security Committees to solve security problems.
- Dialogue to explain the political process and build consent for change over time.
- Dialogue to consider transitional justice options.

Protection of the Population and Essential Infrastructure. At the least, the security situation needs to be improved and infrastructure protected. This will need either an interim external security presence, or indigenous security providers (police / non-state) need to be enabled, or both. This might involve:

- Operations to remove or deter opposing forces and ensure freedom of movement.
- Mitigating the threat from rebel groups/opposition. This might include incorporation into the armed forces as a means of control prior to eventual downsizing.
- Supporting and improving performance of the indigenous police and army, including where appropriate supporting local security providers.
- Supporting agreements to keep weapons out of public spaces and to reduce the availability of weapons through.
- Providing physical security for the administration and infrastructure, justice personnel and humanitarian relief supplies.
- Monitoring adherence to security agreements.
- Initiating border security operations to the extent possible.

Basic Ministry and Local Capacity to Manage Security Enhanced. The process of enabling a basic capacity for security governance needs to be started, both at state and regional / provincial level in order to foster ownership and accountability.

Access to Justice improved. This will be a long process but initial activities might involve:

- Working to end impunity – although a 'big ask' sending out some signals will help restore confidence.

- Providing practical support to courts (including mobile courts).
- Providing practical support to traditional courts and the traditional justice system.
- Supporting Land tribunals and other land adjudication processes.

Police Performance Improved. This might involve:

- (Re)Establishing basic police service, including structure, role and responsibilities and mechanisms for payment of salaries (and salary support if required).
- Delivery of basic police training.
- Support to transport and communications
- Co-location, co-patrolling and mentoring (or direct patrolling and police duties if executive policing mandate).
- Securing agreements between police and military on respective areas of operation.
- Establishment and support of local policing arrangements, such as village police, chiefs' police.
- Setting up simple complaints procedure (to establish accountability and build confidence).
- Establishment of women and children's unit (especially in areas where sexual violence has been part of conflict).

Army Performance Improved. Similar activities to those described for the police above may be required for the army and other armed services.

Prison Reform. This will take time but achieving reform might involve:

- Rapid action to end the worst human rights abuses, such as torture
- Improving conditions, such as ensuring prisoners are fed.
- Separating women from men and youths from adults.
- Improving security of prison units, so prisoners cannot escape.
- Prison visits.

Development of National Security Architecture Initiated. Early planning and activity (notably on force structures and composition) may need to be based on assumptions but the development of a National Security Architecture will need to be initiated with local actors as soon as capacity improves. Decisions on structures will likely be needed to drive (re)development of security capabilities (which may need considerable external investment).

Robust Communication Strategy implemented. A robust communications strategy will be needed to explain what is being done and counter any misinformation or rumours as a cause of insecurity.