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### **A Diagnostic Tool for Conditioning the Environment for Stabilisation and Sustainable Security Sector Development**

#### **Aim**

The aim of this short case study is to underscore the importance of ‘stabilisation interventions’ and the knowledge, skill-sets and ongoing analysis which should support the concept. In this context, the keynote outlines a diagnostic tool which could be used to support effective analysis during stabilisation operations leading to longer-term development.

#### **Background**

The concept of ‘stabilisation’ and ‘stabilisation operations’ has taken on renewed international importance over the past two years, particularly with the spotlight on the recovery and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan where, despite international commitment, conflict and insurgency activity continues.

Such renewed importance has resulted in efforts across the donor community to further develop policy and operational capacities to address stabilisation. The United Kingdom (UK) Government’s ‘Stabilisation Unit’, the Canadian Government’s Stabilisation and Reconstruction Team (START) and the United States Government’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability (OCRS) serve as three examples. The UK Government’s Stabilisation Unit describes ‘stabilisation’ as “support to places emerging from violent conflict in:

- Preventing or reducing violence;
- Protecting people and key institutions;
- Promoting political processes which lead to greater stability; and
- Preparing for longer term non-violent politics and development.”<sup>1</sup>

Stabilisation strategies must be considered in relation to both context and a wider range of security policy instruments. Until now most of these have been designed around benign

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<sup>1</sup> See UK Government Stabilisation Unit’s website:  
<http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/resources/Stabilisation%20explanation%2020071206.doc>

environments. Not surprisingly, these traditional instruments are picked up and used inappropriately by organisations with the remit to intervene in unstable environments.

Parallel efforts to develop policy guidelines and frameworks to support traditional types of security policy instruments on the one hand - and the need to stimulate a debate and develop appropriate operational responses supporting stabilisation on the other – should be undertaken to inform practitioners who find themselves at the ‘sharp end’ of stabilisation; predominantly the military. For example, a national government may be called upon to assist in a reconstruction effort immediately following the cessation of violence perhaps around a national capital – or critical centres of gravity – but not throughout a country due to a sustained level of violence. Such has been the case in Afghanistan, where the security climate differs vastly across provinces and districts.

Under post-conflict conditions in Iraq, it is difficult to even contemplate ideas and principles which support the more traditional security sector approaches (such as those principles embraced by the SSR debate<sup>2</sup>). For example, and particularly in circumstances where governments providing post-conflict assistance may have played a direct role in the actual conflict (e.g. Iraq), there may be fierce resistance towards the idea of a ‘locally-owned’ process behind rebuilding security structures – not to mention an invitation from the host Government to request assistance. Expedient decisions by way of retaining certain political leaders responsible for perpetrating violence may also be required to facilitate an immediate political process. This point can also illuminate the absence of democratic norms and principles (including good governance, transparency and accountability) underpinning new post-conflict institutions.

The examples outlined above represent a few areas which support the argument that traditional SSR approaches in benign environments cannot be transplanted into post-conflict stabilisation environments. Depending on the type of post-conflict engagement - and the role played by the interventionists – it also highlights the fact that security sector issues at the ‘sharp end’ of stabilisation could account for a range of possible activities. At one end of the spectrum, where violence is still prolific and interventionist forces operate in a non-functioning state prior to any electoral process, the provision of basic services such as water, health, electricity, pensions – i.e. basic Maslow’s hierarchical needs - may be a priority. At the other end of the spectrum - where state institutions can continue functioning and where there may be a more permissive environment for initial interventionists to operate - security sector priorities may involve such activities as rebuilding an adequate and appropriate army and police force, but may also include a range of parallel interim provisions which seek to prevent the re-opening of any short-term security vacuums. Under this latter type of environment, it may be necessary to address immediate security needs (such as the operational capacity of the uniformed security officials) in the short term. However, a more development-orientated approach centred on wider governance and conflict prevention efforts must certainly lead the agenda in the medium to longer term in order to help promote a sustainable solution.

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<sup>2</sup> In this context, the paper refers to principles driving an SSR engagement such as local ownership, long-term strategic planning, holistic approaches, transparency, accountability, etc. For more information see the OECD-DAC Implementation Framework for SSR (IF-SSR) at [http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34567\\_37417926\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3343,en_2649_34567_37417926_1_1_1_1,00.html)

In this context, an effective environmental analysis, which underpins actions taken to address security sector issues at each of these critical stages of intervention, becomes critical. Not only must it be undertaken in a well-informed, ongoing manner, but the authority leading on the analysis must also usefully inform all enabling partners who – in their separate institutional identities – will interpret ‘stabilisation’ in different ways. As donor governments continue pursuing ‘joined-up’ approaches, and supporting a more ‘comprehensive approach’ to security-related issues, it is important to remind oneself that, depending on the enabler partner or lead authority, interventionists will tend to ‘skew’ themselves towards certain lines of activity within a more comprehensive approach which reflects their own institutional core competencies and cultures. Such ‘skewing’ becomes further compounded when other bilateral and multilateral partners become involved. For this reason, informed advice on the risk, sequencing and resourcing implications of small and large-scale efforts to support security sector issues is essential for linking early activities to longer-term requirements.

### **A Diagnostic Tool for Conditioning the Environment for Stabilisation and Sustainable Security Sector Development**

In linking ways in which practitioners initially deal with the security sector challenges in stabilisation operations with the longer-term requirements for SSR, it is necessary to establish some minimum baseline requirements for SSR to progress in support of wider sustainable development. Feedback offered from both SSR and stabilisation practitioners broadly agreed that the following ‘strategic focus areas’ (SFAs) must be addressed and supported before traditional SSR can be taken forward:

- Safety and security
- Basic service delivery
- Institution-building
- Access to justice
- Finance and resources
- Political process
- Civil society
- National strategy
- Critical Infrastructure

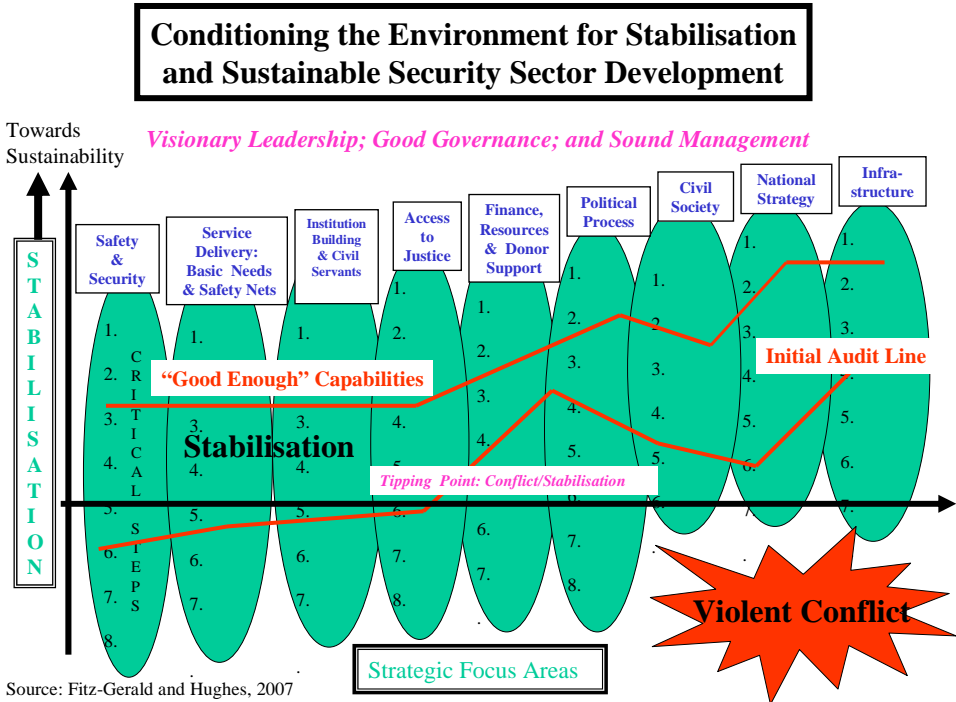
Depending on the point at which a donor government enters into a post-conflict effort, different situations and requirements will be present across the SFAs outlined above. It will therefore be necessary to undertake some sort of ‘initial audit’ in order to establish the present situation. It will also be important to establish the capability levels across the SFAs which planners deem to be ‘good enough’ for more traditional SSR to take place and to offer some planning benchmarks for stabilisation practitioners. In establishing the benchmarks, one could then identify the critical steps within each SFA and analyze these objectives collectively in order to determine priorities, levels of risk, sequencing and resourcing implications. This process will not be straightforward, particularly if a number of other international partners are involved in the effort. This underscores the importance of leadership, authority and sound management supporting post-conflict stabilisation analysis, advice and implementation.

This conditioning process can mitigate against the efforts of potential spoilers and the way in which necessary short-term gains may still support overall progress. This is important in the consideration given to Quick Impact Projects (QIP) – something which has become known as a useful tool for confidence-building during stabilisation operations. For example, following the fall of the state in Iraq and during the early days of post-conflict efforts, military troops discovered that the cessation of regular supply lines of medication to the population of Basra was posing a significant health risk. A quick decision was taken to supply medication directly from a donor state – a decision which, in the short-to-medium term, cut out the city of Basra from the re-opened medical supply lines from Baghdad due to the belief that Basra was already being supplied by external sources - the latter being unsustainable in the longer term. This example illustrates the interdependencies across the SFAs identified above. More specifically, having secured the space for providing basic services, and having established some local water and electricity authorities to help drive the effort at the local level, one can observe the critical linkages between safety and security, basic service delivery, institution-building and the overall political process – the latter element in terms of the support that local confidence-building measures can gradually open up for a wider national political process.

In situations characterized by uncertainty, instability and limited resources, a range of different trade-offs will have to be considered in order to create a 'path of least resistance' to meeting the consolidated benchmarks during 'sharp end' stabilisation operations. In Bosnia, following a decision to expedite national elections and in failing to hold senior people accountable for their crimes, a number of representatives across the security sector were either given political appointments or allowed to remain in post in order for the political process to go forward. While this initially resulted in a decline in peoples' faith in the international effort, their faith was slowly recovered due to a parallel effort supporting transitional justice which – in due course – brought the perpetrators to account for their crimes and ousted them from their political appointments. In this case, trade-offs were made between access-to-justice and the political process.

Figure 1 illustrates one way to map out the SFAs, the initial audit line (for example, based on a Commander's initial assessment on deployment into a theatre of operations), and a projected set of frontier "targets" showing the 'good enough' capabilities as discussed above. The critical steps which cascade down in each of the SFAs but contained between each of the lines collectively form the 'zone for analysis' in order to determine priorities, risks, sequencing and resource implications. Interdependencies can also be identified which may result in 'clusters' of SFAs coming together. Planners can then work jointly with the relevant experts and past experience to identify options available. An example might be in deciding the way forward with an indigenous police force which could help fill an immediate post-conflict security vacuum but whose reputation might be such that its abusive and corruptive tendencies may only create further dissatisfaction across the local population. Depending on a range of complex issues including the international community's capacity to support internal security challenges; the size and make-up of the police forces; the existence of a functioning Ministry of Interior; the availability of international policing and rule of law experts (who are comfortable advising in the primacy of the relevant national law); the nature of the internal security vacuum (i.e. in Helmand province this is characterized by counter-insurgency – an activity which does not fall under the remit of mainstream police forces); and the interim institutional support which can be offered to the indigenous police forces in order to mitigate against adverse behaviour – certain options can be identified as being better than

others, including a number of basic confidence-building measures which may be required before such options can be realized.



Source: Fitz-Gerald and Hughes, 2007

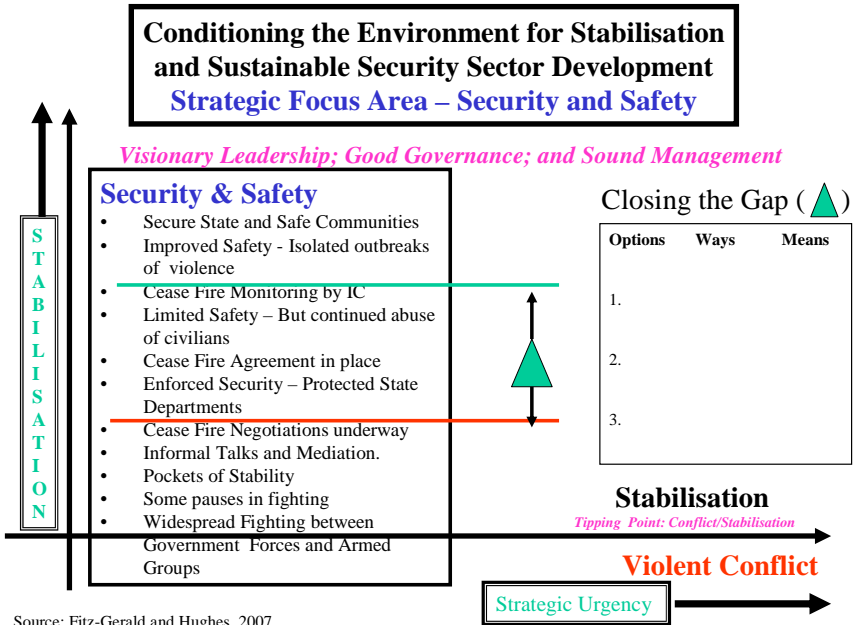
**Figure 1**

These issues must then be analysed according to their impact on other SFAs, particularly those which are directly dependent on the outcomes. For example, in very fragile situations where non-state armed militia groups still hold levers of power, it will be important for the local population to see fairly immediate gains through the use of the police force in order that support for an insurgency effort gradually wanes. Similarly, if supporting penal and justice institutions cannot be established to support the actions taken by the police force, a further wave of dissatisfaction may be felt towards the legitimacy of the state security forces, and thus towards the legitimacy of the state itself. If finances are not available to provide resources such as new uniforms, salaries and a degree of basic infrastructure to support the police effort, unhelpful messages may be sent out to the civilian population and the international effort may stand being accused of not providing a sustainable rule of law. If the consolidated analysis supporting this option renders it unfeasible, other options must be considered. These may include, for example, the immediate re-training and restructuring of the indigenous police forces, or designating an appropriate element of the international military contingent to take on interim policing responsibilities.

The second part of the analysis can then focus on each individual SFA, or 'clusters' of SFAs, depending on the inter-dependencies. Efforts must be made to assess the 'delta' between the 'good enough' status and the current status. At this stage, the smaller (and possibly unsophisticated) steps required to progress from one point to the other will have to identified and assessed in terms of the impact movements across such steps may have on other interdependent SFAs. Such analysis is also useful in informing resource requirements. In this context, within one cluster, if progress in one area will impact favourably on progress in

another related area, it may not be necessary to invest limited funding in the small steps/measures underpinning the second area until the impact of initiatives within the first SFA are observed. This will allow analysts to assess the extent to which progress has been made across the cluster as opposed to progress within one SFA.

An example in Figure 2 can be used to illustrate this follow-on analysis (for the Security and Safety SFA). In between the red initial audit line and the green line which illustrates what is 'good enough' in the Security & Safety SFA for more traditional forms of SSR to take root, a road-map is presented to the analyst to peruse options on how best to progress from a state of enforced security and protected state institutions to a situation where an International Community-monitored ceasefire is in place. Depending on the context, the strategy underpinning this particular programme must be analysed in conjunction with the upward programmes for any other inter-dependent cluster. The programme must identify options, ways and means, which then must be evaluated based on priority, risk, sequencing and resources.



Source: Fitz-Gerald and Hughes, 2007

**Figure 2**

The 'zone of analysis' contained within the initial audit line and the 'good enough' frontier must be reviewed, monitored and analysed on an ongoing basis. Lessons from the past must be used to support this analysis in order to draw on measures which have worked (and measures to avoid) in other operational experiences. Most importantly, a robust civilian capacity - skilled and equipped with the broad range of knowledge reflecting the SFAs outlined above – must lead on this effort. Such capacity must be readily deployable and properly resourced.

## Discussion points:

- Use a specific national perspective to analyse the extent to which capacity to carry out stabilisation operations exists
- Discuss the extent to which the capacity identified above is sufficiently 'comprehensive'
- Identify a range of partners which collectively contribute to stabilisation operations, particularly at – what this keynote describes as – the 'sharp end'
- Using the diagnostic tool outlined in this paper, apply the methodology to one of your own experiences – decide whether or not other basic measures could have been pursued in order to cater to a more broader range of SFAs in the medium term

## Further reading

Jeremy Brickhill, "Protecting civilians through peace agreements: Challenges and Lessons of the Darfur Peace Agreement" ISS Paper No 138, May 2007.

David Law. The Post-Conflict Security Sector, DCAF Paper No 14, Geneva, June 2006.

## Electronic links:

[www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk](http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk)

[http://www.pasols.org/logistic\\_information\\_centre/start\\_brochure\\_ed\\_english\\_dec.pdf](http://www.pasols.org/logistic_information_centre/start_brochure_ed_english_dec.pdf)

<http://www.state.gov/s/crs/>

[http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34567\\_37417926\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3343,en_2649_34567_37417926_1_1_1_1,00.html)