

# International assistance for security sector reform

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the cold war, 69 per cent of the countries with the lowest (HDI) in 2005 have experienced violent conflict and almost a quarter of them have suffered declines in their human development in the period 1990–2005<sup>1</sup>. Due to the impact on human development, countries experiencing conflict are less likely to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>2</sup>. The relationship between

security (i.e., the absence of conflict) and development has encouraged aid donors and recipient countries to examine ways to address this issue.

Since the late 1990s, a rigorous discussion has taken place in the development and security communities regarding the creation of a holistic approach to development. The discussion has centred on the idea of incorporating security issues in the poverty-reduction and development strategies of the donor countries. Since

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\* Fecha de entrega, 18 de julio de 2006. Fecha de aceptación, 25 de agosto de 2006.

<sup>1</sup> The HDI measures the average achievements in three dimensions: life expectancy at birth; adult literacy combined with the gross enrolment ration for primary, secondary and tertiary school; and gross domestic product per capita. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Human Development Report 2005: International Cooperation at a Crossroads—Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World (Oxford University Press: New York, 2005), p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme (note i), p. 154.

mismanagement of the security system often has a negative impact on the security (and also the wealth) of a country and since corrupt or inefficient security-sector agencies weaken democratic institutions and processes, it was concluded that a new agenda of security sector reform (SSR) was required. This posed new challenges for the development community, while both donor and recipient countries have been sceptical of this new approach. Indeed, after more than a decade of discussions of the subject, only a small number of development agencies are openly engaged in the SSR agenda. This paper examines some of the arguments underlying this scepticism, using the cases of the United States' assistance to Colombia and the United Kingdom's assistance to Sierra Leone as illustrations. In doing so, the paper suggests some ways to limit the potential negative impact of supporting SSR.

The security sector is broadly understood as the set of institutions that have the legitimate capacity to exercise coercive power. It includes security management and oversight bodies, justice and law-enforcement institutions and often non-statutory security forces<sup>3</sup>. One of the main tasks of SSR is to create efficient, accountable and transparent security sector institutions that, like the other sectors of the state, follow the democratic norms of

public administration. In this sense, SSR assistance has been framed in the broader concept of governance. The latter concept entails the rules, processes and behaviour through which power is exercised.

Even though SSR has been incorporated conceptually in the development discourse, in practice engagement with SSR assistance is not an uncomplicated matter. In fact, both donor and recipient countries have identified arguments against involvement in SSR. *This paper examines a number of basic arguments against integrating support for SSR in the development agenda and investigates two in particular: (a) that SSR may divert resources from social sectors to the military; and (b) that coordination and coherence are problematic. Through the cases of US assistance to Colombia and British assistance to Sierra Leone this paper investigates the degree of relevance of these negative arguments and examines the possible limitations to the impact of these problems.* Section II of this paper provides the theoretical framework for the discussion, presenting the theoretical background of the relationship between security and development and giving a conceptual description of SSR. Section III reviews the most common arguments against the integration of SSR support in the development agenda. In section IV the cases of Colombia and Sierra Leone are

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<sup>3</sup> Hendrickson, D. and Karkoszka, A., 'The challenges of security sector reform', SIPRI Yearbook 2002: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2002), p. 179.

used to assess the validity of the donors' scepticism towards SSR. The conclusions of this paper are given in section V.

The methodology used for this paper will be to analyse two cases of SSR assistance in developing countries. The objective of using case studies is to facilitate a deep discussion on each of the cases. Extended studies may permit general conclusions to be obtained, but they also limit the capability to investigate deeply particular cases. Two studies are done in order to permit a comparison and attain what extended studies provide: more general conclusions. The theoretical part is based on acknowledged literature about the subject. A compilation of different arguments for not engaging in SSR was also collected. The case studies are based mainly on public documents from the governments, and secondary sources of data are used.

## II. SECURITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The 1994 Human Development Report (HDR) introduced the concept

of 'human security', a broader definition of security that was intended to capture those sources of insecurity in developing countries that had been played down by the cold war confrontation –such as hunger, disease, repression and disruptions in daily life<sup>4</sup>. The 2005 HDR stated that both components of human security –poverty and the daily lives of individuals– are negatively affected by violent conflict. In that sense, security and development were seen as mutually dependent. As the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in the Millennium Declaration in 2000, 'humanity cannot enjoy security without development or development without security, and neither without the respect of human rights', this being a particular concern in developing countries where most conflicts are taking place<sup>5</sup>.

The dynamics of conflict have changed since the end of the cold war, from interstate conflicts to more internal conflicts. Furthermore, today's conflicts occur mainly in developing countries<sup>6</sup>. This means that the burden of the costs of conflict is primarily borne by the poorest

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security (Oxford University Press: New York, 1994), p. 23. There are two different concepts of human security. A broader one as developed by UNDP and the Japanese Government, which includes development dimensions, and a narrower one, developed by the Canadian Government, which is limited to security from violence, but not only violence to the state but also to the individual (via small arms, land mines, etc.). Mack, A., 'The concept of human security', Promoting Security: But How and for Whom?, eds M. Brzoska and P. J. Croll (Bonn International Center for Conversion: Bonn, Oct. 2004), pp. 47–50.

<sup>5</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/55/2, 18 Sep. 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Dwan, R. and Holmqvist, C., 'Major armed conflicts', SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), p. 83–84.

states in the world. The costs of conflict extend beyond the number of battle casualties. Indeed, in many intra-state conflicts a great number of the dead are civilians. Beyond the loss of human life, the costs of conflict include *inter alia* disability, the collapse of basic infrastructure and psychological stress. The measurement of the broad costs of conflict poses several challenges<sup>7</sup>. The potentially most accurate measurement of the long-term costs of conflict is the HDI. According to the tables on HDI from the 2005 HDR, there are 32 countries classed as having low human development, including 22 countries that have experienced violent conflict at some point since 1990. In addition, 5 of these 22 countries experienced declines in their HDI in the period 1990–2005<sup>8</sup>. This relationship between conflict and underdevelopment inspired the debate regarding the promotion of peace and security as a way of supporting development.

One aspect of this debate concerns the question of what role the security sector plays in development. Frequently, many of the problems of countries in conflict stem from dysfunctional and

undemocratic security sector institutions. In other cases, the problem is that a weak and incapable security sector is unable to provide security. In all these cases, while the security sector is part of the problem in conflict countries, at the same time it needs to be part of the solution<sup>9</sup>. Hence, a dysfunctional security sector is an obstacle for development and peace. Some of the donors' attempts at dealing with the security sector in developing countries aim at making it more functional and bound by democratic processes and principles. This section continues by defining the concept that has led this process of reforming the security sector<sup>10</sup>.

### **Security sector governance reform**

Most of the literature that defines SSR points out that it is a contested and changing concept. The lack of a clear definition is a problem since it has meant that the concept has been used very broadly—i.e., covering the rule of law, human rights and civil–military relations<sup>11</sup>. However, SSR is implicitly holistic and aims at coordi-

<sup>7</sup> Sköns, E., 'Financing security in a global context', SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), pp. 294–295.

<sup>8</sup> UNDP (note i), p. 154.

<sup>9</sup> McCartney, C. et al. (eds), Security Sector Reform: Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation, Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series no. 2 (Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management: Berlin, 2004), p. 6, URL <<http://www.berghof-handbook.net/ssr.htm>>.

<sup>10</sup> Other concepts entail disarmament, demobilization and reconstruction, for example.

<sup>11</sup> For a list of principles that SSR should aim see Appendix 1.

nating the reform of all sectors that deal with security. This reform of the security sector is not a new issue, but it occurred previously through piecemeal reforms not as an all-inclusive process. Furthermore, SSR is not a matter that concerns only developing countries—many developed countries have undertaken this process. However, this paper focuses on the support of SSR from donor countries to developing countries.

The holism that characterizes SSR derives initially from the development concept of governance. This concept covers the rules, processes and behaviour by which power is exercised. One way to facilitate the understanding of the concept of SSR is to start from a context that presupposes a need to transform this sector. Such a context entails a dysfunctional security sector that fails to provide security to its citizens (by being unable to provide the service or by being the cause of insecurity) or a dysfunctional security sector that lacks democratic control. Thus, SSR is meant to tackle these failings and enhance the supply of security. It is important to bear in mind that SSR varies according to its aims. Several authors, including Ball, Hendrickson and Karkoszka and Bryden and Hänggi,

suggest that the form and aims of SSR will be influenced by the specific characteristics of each country—the level of economic development, the type of political system and the particular security situation<sup>12</sup>.

The central aspects of SSR are: the establishment of professional security sector forces of a suitable size and with the corresponding appropriate resources; the creation of explicit mandates for the different forces (e.g., police and armed forces); and the formation of democratic controls to regulate the sector<sup>13</sup>. SSR can be seen as having four dimensions: (a) political, which mainly concerns civilian oversight; (b) social, which aims to guarantee the security of citizens; (c) economic, which focuses on the allocation of resources to the SSR actors; and (d) institutional, which deals mainly with the professionalization of the security actors. The last dimension is most likely to be ignored by development cooperation interests, since it falls under the framework of military assistance<sup>14</sup>. However, for reform in the institutional dimension to be coherent, it should be done in coordination with reform in the other three dimensions of SSR.

The definition of security sector reform used in this paper is:

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<sup>12</sup> Bryden, A. and Hänggi, H., 'Reforming and reconstructing the security sector', DCAF, Security Governance in Post-conflict Peace Building (Lit Verlag: Munster, 2005), pp. 28–30.

<sup>13</sup> Wulf, H., Security Sector Reform in Developing Countries: An Analysis of the International Debate and Potentials for Implementing Reforms with Recommendations for Technical Cooperation (GTZ: Eschborn, Oct. 2000), p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Wulf (note xiii), p. 19.

The reforms of state institutions whose mandate is to provide security, with the aim of increasing democratic control and efficiency. As well as the armed forces, the police, the intelligence service, etc., the institutions include civil authorities and actors that control and have an oversight to the security sector (i.e., the parliament, civil society and similar actors), and the justice, law enforcement and non-statutory security forces<sup>15</sup>.

This paper assumes that SSR includes governance reforms—references to SSR should be taken as including governance reform. In theory, SSR is part of the concept of governance, but in practice, challenges to incorporating security in the development agenda remain. Both donors and recipients are unconvinced of the need for direct engagement in SSR. The following sections investigate some of the arguments of those countries that are sceptical about providing SSR assistance and assess their relevance.

### III. THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST ENGAGING IN SSR ASSISTANCE

Most of the donors are engaged in various security-related programmes such as demobilization, de-mining and control of small arms. However, these activities do not engage these countries in supporting comprehensive programmes of SSR; they

are piecemeal packages that have been done in the past without a comprehensive view being taken<sup>16</sup>. This section examines why there are so few donor countries engaged directly with SSR and describes the main explanations for scepticism towards SSR. It should be borne in mind that, while these sceptical arguments are a matter of concern for both donors and recipients, the recipient countries feel their ultimate effect. To aid the focus in the comparative case studies, in this section these arguments are divided into those of the donors and those of the recipients (see table 1).

The question of how the security sector might contribute to development is not a new issue. In fact, particularly in the mid-20th century the impression was that the military was a modernizing catalyst, either by being able to effect controversial reforms or by empowering nationalist sentiments to unify countries. Moreover, some economist, support the idea that military industries create spill-over technologies for civilian industries, enhancing the aggregated national production. However, the prediction that the military would act as a modernizer did not come true. Indeed, once the military were in power the perception was that they were human rights abusers, corrupt, repressive and undemocratic (particularly after the

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<sup>15</sup> Adapted from Hendrickson and Karkoszka (note iii), p. 179.

<sup>16</sup> Wulf (note xiii), p. 12.

several bloody coups d'état in Africa and Latin America). Furthermore, as Brauer demonstrates, the spill-over from military industries proved to be less beneficial to national industrial production than the reverse spill-over from civilian industry<sup>17</sup>.

### The donors' arguments

The confrontation between East and West during the cold war was also reflected in the patterns and style of aid delivery. Strategic objectives often influenced the two blocs' delivery of international aid, with the aim of encouraging a specific country to join (or remain in) one of the political and economic systems. For instance, countries such as the USA and France, which incorporated security assistance in their development packages, often gave more in military assistance than in development cooperation<sup>18</sup>. Such aid was mainly in the form of weapons or military training.

With the end of the cold war, there was hope that, together with the reduction of the levels of military spending, the patterns and style of aid delivery

would change. The first of these expectations, the reduction of military spending, implied that resources would be released from the military for other sectors of the economy—the so-called peace dividend. High military expenditure was seen as unproductive since public spending priorities were diverted from key development areas such as health and education. This, together with the structural adjustment programmes from the international financial institutions (IFIs), put pressure on developing countries to reduce their military budgets<sup>19</sup>. The second of these expectations, a change in the patterns and style of aid delivery, meant that development agencies disengaged from the work with security-related programmes, as it resembled working with those responsible for the coups d'état of the past. The development institutions wanted to avoid the use of international cooperation as a cold war-type strategic tool<sup>20</sup>.

From these perspectives arise two of the important arguments for scepticism towards incorporating SSR in the development agenda. First, one of the central ideas of the peace dividend is that there are to be

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<sup>17</sup> Brauer, J., 'The arms industry in developing nations: history and post-cold war assessment', Paper presented at the conference Military Expenditures in Developing and Emerging Nations, Middlesex University, London, 13–14 Mar. 1998, pp. 6–10.

<sup>18</sup> Wulf (note xiii), p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> On structural adjustments and the peace dividend from the IMF see Hamind, D. et al., 'Military spending, the peace dividend, and fiscal adjustment', IMF Staff Papers, vol. 48, no. 2, (IMF: Washington, DC, 2001), URL <<http://www.imf.org/External/Pubs/FT/staffp/2001/02/pdf/davoodi.pdf>>

<sup>20</sup> Wulf (note xiii), p. 13.

extra resources to spend on social priorities. Some donors fear that including the SSR agenda in development assistance would have the opposite effect: that *resources for social sector assistance would be diverted to security-related issues*, possibly reducing the overall support for social matters. This could be particularly the case for the development assistance budget, since it is usually limited and different programmes compete for resources. It is important to bear in mind that financing security is an expensive endeavour, which usually requires a long-term engagement from both donors and the recipient countries. Furthermore, SSR often increases the levels of security expenditure in the recipient countries, at least in the short term, caused by, for example, modernization programmes and training. While funding for these may be provided initially by the donor country, the recipient has to sustain them, thus diverting resources from the social sector to the security sector at the national level.

The second argument studied here arose particularly after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on the USA: that *development assistance will return to cold war-style strategic support*, with the role of the recipient countries in the 'global war on terrorism' will dictate the direction of the aid policy.

However, the scepticism also arises from the complexity of integrating the

SSR programmes themselves, which endorses the third fear: that *coordination and coherence are too problematic*. The ideal incorporation of SSR in development policy would require coordination and coherence from the donor's defence ministry, development agency and often trade ministry. For instance, there is often conflict between the interests of the development agencies' policies, which pressure recipient countries not to buy unnecessary weapons, and those of the donor's trade ministry, which push for arms sales to the same recipient countries. Another difficulty might arise when the various government departments involved have to differentiate between what is military assistance and what is SSR. While some argue that the supply of arms should be part of SSR, as it promotes the efficiency of the security sector, others argue that it is military assistance, as it might endorse interests in conflict with the development agenda. A consequence of the latter argument is that OECD countries cannot include assistance to the military in their development cooperation budgets. Some argue that denying involvement with the military means ignoring a major source of development problems and of possible solutions and so prevents the donor countries from engaging in holistic programmes of SSR<sup>21</sup>. In fact, the exclusion of the support for the military sector from development

<sup>21</sup> On the supply of arms to aid-recipient countries in the context of SSR see Wulf, H., 'Chances, dilemmas and obstacles of the security sector reform', McCartney, C. et al. (eds), *Security Sector Reform: Potentials*

agencies' programmes means that strong coordination is required with the donors' defence and foreign affairs ministries in order to prevent piecemeal reforms that do not entail comprehensive SSR.

The problems of coordination and coherence are also often present in the donor community. In particular, some donors have specific programmes for supporting SSR and have undertaken the institutional reforms required for providing coordinated policies, whereas other donor states are struggling to understand and integrate the SSR concept. This has affected the overall coherence and coordination between donors due to differences in terminology and approaches. The main examples of this particular situation are the differences between the approaches of the UK, the USA, Germany and France. The UK has integrated different government institutions (with the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)) to form a coordinated and holistic policy for SSR. In contrast, the USA has not even internalized the concept of SSR and there are several agencies conducting

SSR programmes in a disorganized manner. Germany has a coherent approach but has been reluctant to engage more directly with the military, supporting mainly justice and internal security and the reform of the police. Finally, France has not so far engaged directly in SSR. Some donors may find the process of coordination and coherence too complicated and hence may prefer to stick with classical development assistance programmes<sup>22</sup>.

The fourth sceptical argument—that *countries in need of SSR are fragile states that are difficult to work with*—arises since the countries that are usually in need of SSR support are conflict-torn or post-conflict states. According to Collier and Hoeffler, the returns from providing aid in post-conflict situations are greater in terms of increasing the levels of growth than in other situations, particularly in the first four years after conflicts are resumed<sup>23</sup>. Nevertheless, engagement of the donor community with fragile states remains low. This probably explains why involvement in SSR programmes is also quite short. Engaging in SSR implies working with these complicated partners, the fragile states, which have often been avoided by

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and Challenges for Conflict Transformation, Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series no. 2 (Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management: Berlin, 2004), pp. 71–74.

<sup>22</sup> Wulf, H., 'Security sector reform in developing and transitional countries', McCartney, C. et al. (eds), *Security Sector Reform: Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation*, Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series no. 2 (Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management: Berlin, 2004), pp. 9–28.

<sup>23</sup> Collier, P. and Hoeffler, A., 'Aid, policy and growth in post-conflict societies', Development Research Group, World Bank, Washington, DC, Oct. 2002, p. 8.

the donor community since they are too complicated to work with or lack strategic importance. The difficulties of working with fragile states in SSR issues are numerous. For instance, the SSR recipients are often post-conflict countries, since there is usually more willingness to engage in all level of reforms following conflict. However, even though there is willingness, these countries' institutional capacity to support development programmes is weak. Often a recipient country's lack of enthusiasm for engaging with reforms is confused with a lack of commitment to democracy or even peace. Instead, such unwillingness is due to lack of instruments, resources and assistance to pursue the difficult changes that constitute a reform<sup>24</sup>. So, in spite of the higher potential

of aid in post-conflict countries, the donor community has a pessimistic view of such situations. In addition, donors are reluctant to engage in long-term development plans in conflict-prone countries due to their instability<sup>25</sup>.

SSR can also be implemented in conflict-torn societies with whom reluctance to work is probably even greater. In this situation the military might be unwilling to make any type of change given its unstable security environment. The reluctance might have strategic explanations or even be caused by suspicious of external support. But it can also be an excuse to maintain the power invested to the military. This lack of a favourable partner might give disincentives to donors in engaging with conflict-torn states.

**Table 1.**

**ARGUMENTS AGAINST ENGAGING IN SSR ASSISTANCE**

From the donor countries' perspective	From the recipient countries' perspective
Resources diverted to the military	Security is a sensitive area for national sovereignty
Return to cold war-style strategic support	Difficult balance between efficiency and democracy
Problems of coordination and coherence	Focus on supporting the forces authorized to use force
Working with complicated partners	Lack of local ownership

<sup>24</sup> Hendrickson, D. and Karkoszka, A., 'Security sector reform and donor policies', eds A. Schnabel and H. G. Ehrhart, *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (United Nations University Press: New York, 2005), p. 34.

<sup>25</sup> Addison, T. and McGillivray M., 'Aid to conflict-affected countries: lessons for donors', *Conflict, Security and Development*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2004).

## The recipients' arguments

As stated above, the reluctance to engage in SSR programmes also comes from the recipient countries. There are four sources of this reluctance. First, *security is a sensitive area* that involves dealing with one of the sectors most relevant to the sovereignty of a country. Often the security institutions—usually the military and the police—have deep-seated nationalist feelings and so it is difficult for them to accept external interference in their affairs. The citizens share this sensitivity, since the security of a country has been historically recognized as a matter of national integrity.

Second, there is a *difficult balance between efficiency and democracy* when implementing SSR programmes<sup>26</sup>. In this context efficiency means the rapid and effective solution of the security problems of a country, while democracy is the preservation of principles and values such as accountability, the rule of law, separation of powers, participatory processes, etc. The desire of some donor countries for quick solutions has sometimes meant that the importance of stable institutions and

processes that will make the reform longer-lasting has been overlooked. This type of aid is uninteresting for the developing country as the assistance does not provide lasting results and does not permit interference in a sensitive area as security. This disregard of the importance of democratic processes in attaining security has led, in some cases, to the third fear: a *focus on supporting the reform of the institutions authorized to use force* (among them the armed forces, the police and paramilitary forces), leaving aside key actors in the governance of the security sector. Given that these forces often represent the powerful institutions of a state, there is a reinforcement of the security interest of the elites. This has led to the ignoring of the involvement of grassroots actors in the definition of the security concerns, affecting the overall ownership of the SSR programmes<sup>27</sup>.

Furthermore, the recipient countries often perceive their security problems as too complex for donors to understand. Hence, they fear that the SSR programmes suggested by the donors are not suitable for their specific situation. This scepticism is not ill founded. Countries' experience from the IFIs' structural adjustment

<sup>26</sup> Presentation from Edmunds, T., 'Security sector reforms in transforming societies', Seminarium om SSR [Seminar on SSR], Organized by the Folke Bernadotteakademins Forskarforum, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Stockholm, 25 Apr. 2006.

<sup>27</sup> See Farr, V. A., 'Voices from the margins: a response to security sector reform in developing and transitional countries', McCartney, C. et al. (eds), *Security Sector Reform: Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation*, Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series no. 2 (Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management: Berlin, 2004), pp. 63–70.

programmes, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, left a suspicion of the understanding of particular country situations. The 'one-size-fits-all' methodology in the economic policies promulgated by the IFIs left devastating effects in many developing countries. The SSR programmes promoted by the developed countries are not far from this phenomenon. Indeed, current programmes assisting SSR have been mainly about the diffusion of the Western norms and practices of the security sector to the recipient countries<sup>28</sup>. This gives rise to the recipient countries' fourth fear: that *SSR lacks local ownership* in many cases.

While the arguments against engaging in SSR are shared by both donor and recipient countries, they have been presented separately here in order to simplify the focus of this paper. The list of reasons to be sceptical about engagement in SSR in the development agenda could be longer than that given here. Even though there might be many reasons not to engage in SSR, the reality is that security problems still pose great challenges for some countries in achieving better living standards. This reality has to be confronted somehow by both the donors and the developing countries. The following section of this paper examines if this scepticism about engagement in SSR is relevant or not.

#### **IV. ENGAGING IN SSR ASSISTANCE: THE CASES OF COLOMBIA AND SIERRA LEONE**

This section studies two countries that have been implementing SSR policies supported by donor countries: Colombia and Sierra Leone. These countries differ in many respects—geographical location, history, political and economical development, just to mention a few—prompting some to argue that these are not comparable cases. However, there are some similarities and differences, particularly regarding the two SSR processes, that make the comparison interesting, as is described below. This section first justifies the selection of the country studies of Colombia and Sierra Leone, then presents brief background information on both countries, and finally looks at whether the donors' arguments for not engaging in SSR are relevant. Two specific arguments will be examined for both countries: (a) the diversion of resources to the military; and (b) the problems of coordination and coherence.

##### **The choice of US assistance to Colombia and British assistance to Sierra Leone**

The selection of the case studies was not straightforward for this study. Given

<sup>28</sup> Hendrickson and Karkoszka (note xxiv), p. 32.

that the subject of SSR is a relatively new issue, the quantity and quality of evaluations on the topic are limited, and hence there are restrictions on the availability of information. However, the novelty of the SSR agenda is not the only explanation for this scarcity: indeed, in contradiction to one of the SSR objectives—to promote openness and transparency in the security sector—information on SSR is often available from neither the donors nor the recipient countries due to the sensitivity of the matter: the security sector<sup>29</sup>.

Even though case studies can be too specific and present many limitations to provide generalized conclusions, they can elucidate particularities that extended studies overlook. There are two main similarities and two main differences that motivate the comparison between the cases of US assistance to Colombia and British assistance to Sierra Leone. First, the USA and UK are among the countries with the highest aid delivery in absolute terms. This makes them relevant cases to investigate from the donor perspective. Second, Colombia and Sierra Leone, respectively, are large security assistance recipients from these two donor countries. Third, the USA and UK have different approaches to SSR, making interesting their comparison for the investigation. Finally, Colombia and Sierra Leone are in different conflict stages. The first is in a conflict phase, while the

latter is a post-conflict country. In sum, the objective is that this set of similarities and differences complement each other to provide an illustrative comparison and to elucidate appealing conclusions.

The case of Colombia is studied over the period 1999–2005 and the case of Sierra Leone over 2002–2005. The chosen periods reflect the years in which the respective donor countries engaged directly in SSR assistance in these countries. From the list of arguments against engaging in SSR given in section III, only two of the donors' arguments will be examined for both cases: (a) the diversion of resources to the military; and (b) the problems of coordination and coherence. These arguments were chosen since they focus on the funding perspective of the donor support, which reflect the donor's strategy to assist the recipient country. This permits the examination of whether the assistance style illustrates the arguments against engaging in SSR.

### **Colombia: a background**

Unlike the rest of Latin America, Colombia has been a relatively stable democracy. Of all the countries in the region, Colombia has the longest uninterrupted democratic regime. However, the fact that a country has held elections does not imply that it acts entirely demo-

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<sup>29</sup> Please see section II of this paper.

cratically or pluralistically. Indeed, with the virtual disappearance of the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas in Peru, Colombia is the only country in South America with an active armed conflict<sup>30</sup>. Like all armed conflicts, that in Colombia is complex. Essentially, there are two main rebel groups that defy state control. Both are leftist and continue to promote their Marxist ideology, although some experts point out that economic interests from the revenues from kidnapping and drug-trafficking have replaced these beliefs<sup>31</sup>. Right-wing paramilitary groups and the widespread drug-trafficking in the country have also propelled the conflict. The paramilitary groups are involved in drug-trafficking and have connections with the legal armed forces in Colombia. The root causes of the Colombian conflict are: a mixture of a weak state with little state presence in much of the country and, hence, weak rule of law; economic and social inequalities, particularly unjust distribution of land; and a mostly oligarchic political system. The two latter factors do not inevitably lead to conflict, but combined with a

weak state provide avenue for the expression of discontent through illegal means. The security sector in Colombia should be understood within the context of this internal ongoing conflict.

SSR in Colombia does not concern a transition from a military regime to a democratic system, as it does elsewhere in Latin America. Nevertheless, as in other countries in the region, the Colombian military uses methods that just maintain a democratic façade<sup>32</sup>. Thus, even though Colombia has a democratic regime, many of the actual procedures it employs in the security sector do not correspond to the governance principles. Indeed, in many cases the channels needed for governance of the security sector exist, but civilian interest in the armed forces and the way they combat the country's security problems is quite low<sup>33</sup>. On the contrary, there is large popular support for strengthening the security sector to end the internal conflict, as was seen in the 2002 presidential elections. However, as Thomas Bruneau has demonstrated, actual civilian interest in making the security sector account-

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<sup>30</sup> While the number of battle-related deaths in Colombia in 2004 was more than 700, in Peru it was only 25. See Harbom, L. and Wallensteen, P., 'Patterns of major armed conflicts, 1990–2004', SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), pp. 129–132.

<sup>31</sup> Dwan and Holmqvist (note vi), p. 92.

<sup>32</sup> Diamint, R., 'Security challenges in Latin America', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2004) p. 49.

<sup>33</sup> Hamburger Informationen zur Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik, 'Towards more effective assistance in security sector reform', Policy Brief, Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik, Hamburg, June 2002, p. 4.

able is very low<sup>34</sup>. For instance, when the defence budget is discussed in Congress, it is approved the day after it is presented. The reason for such a paradox could be the fear of the armed forces that part of the Colombian population feels.

Several civilian massacres at the hands of paramilitary forces with the support or negligence of the military have made part of the civil society distrustful of the armed forces<sup>35</sup>. Furthermore, the democratic procedures in Colombia are seen by the armed forces as an impediment to fulfilling their mandate, along with the obstacles caused by the extended functions of the armed forces<sup>36</sup>. The air-mobile battalion for the interdiction of drugs is an example of traditionally civilian functions that are carried out by the military<sup>37</sup>. Hence, the unstable civil–military relations can explain this paradoxical approach to security.

In addition to the problems of civil–military relations, the security sector in Colombia is hampered by weak rule of law. Not only is the system inefficient, corrup-

tion is also widespread. For instance, even though the justice sector is independent it is still overloaded, corrupt and intimidated by both rebel groups and criminal gangs, and hence is ineffective<sup>38</sup>. The country is also confronting new security sector challenges from the peace negotiations with the paramilitaries during the administration of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, typical in post-conflict situations, have been going on with the right-wing paramilitary groups. There are fears that some demobilized paramilitaries have rejoined non-demobilized paramilitary groups. Others fears concern the possible retaliation from the left-wing rebel groups in those areas in which the paramilitaries were demobilized, facilitated by little protection from the state.

The USA is the main donor of support to Colombia's SSR programme. During the period 1999–2005 total US expenditure on assistance to Colombia was approximately US\$3 billion<sup>39</sup>. Co-

<sup>34</sup> Bruneau, T., 'The military in post-conflict societies: lessons from Central America and prospects for Colombia', *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peace Building* (United Nations University Press: New York, 2005), p. 234.

<sup>35</sup> Example of massacres are the ones of Mapiripán (July 1997), Barrancabermeja (May 1998), La Gabarra-Tibú (Aug. 1999) and San José de Apartadó (2005). Watson, C., 'Civil–military relations in Colombia: a workable relationship or a case of fundamental reform?', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 3 (2000), p. 538.

<sup>36</sup> Watson (note xxxv), pp. 538–39.

<sup>37</sup> Watson (note xxxv), pp. 542.

<sup>38</sup> US Department of State, '2002–2003 report on supporting human rights and democracy: the U.S. record', Washington, DC, 24 June 2003, URL <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/shrd/2002/21761.htm>>.

<sup>39</sup> Sköns, E. et al., 'Military expenditure', *SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International*

Colombia is the major recipient of US aid in the western hemisphere and the fifth in the world after Iraq, Israel, Egypt and Afghanistan<sup>40</sup>. The principal reasons are that Colombia produces around 90 per cent of the cocaine and 40 per cent of the heroin entering the USA<sup>41</sup> and has three illegal armed forces listed by the US State Department as terrorist groups (the two main left-wing guerrillas and a right-wing paramilitary group). Hence, the USA has identified two major threats in Colombia: drugs-trafficking and terrorism.

The USA's strong involvement in Colombia began after the Colombian Government called for international support in its 1999 Plan Colombia initiative. This aimed at restoring the peace negotiations with the rebel groups and reinforcing the war on drugs while providing alternative economic activities to drug production. Other components of the plan are to reform the security sector by modernizing the armed forces and police, making an efficient justice system and supporting the protection and respect of human rights<sup>42</sup>.

The first main focus of the US assistance to Colombia is to decrease the levels of illegal drugs coming into the USA through the interdiction of illicit flights, aerial eradication of drug crops and alternative development. The US support to Plan Colombia can be understood within the SSR framework. As explained above, the plan's aims include modernization of the security sector, including the armed forces and the justice system. Within these programmes, the USA intends to support the regaining of state control over isolated areas of Colombia, providing the proper equipment and training to both the military and the police and assisting in the professionalization of the armed forces. The USA also supports democratic and rule-of-law projects in the security sector; assists the justice system to be more efficient through the creation of more capable and organized justice mechanisms; gives aid for the training of auditing officers for promoting transparency and less corruption; and supports human rights protection<sup>43</sup>. It should be borne in mind that training and support

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Security (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), table 8.7, 'US assistance to Colombia by programme, financial year 1998–2005', p. 332.

<sup>40</sup> US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 'Drug control: U.S. non-military assistance to Colombia Is beginning to show intended results, but programs are not readily sustainable', GAO Report-04-726, Washington, DC, July 2004, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> GAO (note xl), p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> US Department of State, 'Plan Colombia', Fact Sheet, Washington, DC, 14 Mar. 2001, URL <<http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/2001>>.

<sup>43</sup> GAO (note xl), pp. 18–21.

in combating drugs-trafficking is part of a holistic view of SSR, since the illicit drugs trade in Colombia is a major threat to the country's stability.

### **The arguments against engaging in SSR assistance: the case of Colombia**

This section examines whether the arguments from the donor community perspective for not engaging in SSR support are illustrated in the case of the US assistance to Colombia, particularly the arguments regarding: (a) the diversion of resources to the military; and (b) the problems of coordination and coherence.

#### **The diversion of resources to the military**

When examining SSR assistance, the fear of transfer of resources from the social sector to the security sector can occur in both the national and international spheres. The international assistance can

influence some national public policies since programmes that are initially financed by the donors must be followed and sustained by national governments.

Examining the trends in the security spending of a country is a complicated matter. The most widely recognized data measuring the investment of public expenditure priorities on security only include the military sector, excluding the police and the justice sector for instance. However, if the police forces have paramilitary functions, they are included in the definition of military spending, which is the case for Colombia<sup>44</sup>. This section considers the military expenditure (including the police) of Colombia for the period 1995–2004.

During this 10-year period, Colombia increased its military expenditure as a share of GDP from 2.6 per cent in 1995 to 3.8 per cent in 2004 (see table 2). This means that the burden on the Colombian economy represented by military expenditure increased by 46 per cent over this period. There are two main peaks in the

**Table 2.**

**MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN COLOMBIA AS A SHARE OF THE GROSS**

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Military expenditure	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.8

*Source:* Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database, SIPRI, Stockholm, 2006, URL <[http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex\\_database1.html](http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_database1.html)>.

<sup>44</sup> Stålenheim, P., 'Sources and methods for SIPRI military expenditure data', SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), pp. 374–76.

increase of military expenditure in Colombia, one in 1999 and the other in 2001. The military burden has been maintained since 2001 at or near its highest point of 3.8 per cent of GDP. Two key questions are examined below. First, whether there is a correlation between the increase in military expenditure and the decrease in social spending; and second, whether the US support of the SSR in Colombia has a causal relation with this.

Regarding the first question, for simplicity social expenditure will be limited to spending on education and health<sup>45</sup>. In order to illustrate whether there has been some diversion of social expenditure to the military, expenditure on education, health and the military in Colombia for the period 1998–2001 can be considered<sup>46</sup>. Establishing this correlation can be problematic because there are many other factors that could determine changes in public budget management, or variations in the military expenditure could be reflected in other areas of the public spending—not necessarily in education and health. However, this paper assumes that since Colombia is a resource-limited country, and some of

the major areas of public expenditure are usually education, health and the military, any variation in the spending of one of the sectors will modify the investment in the others. According to Colombia's 1991 Constitution, both education and health are public spending priorities<sup>47</sup>. However, despite this prioritization, the overall levels of social expenditure, particularly education, has been decreasing as can be seen in table 3.

For the first three years, 1998–2000, the levels of spending on both education and health were higher than the military budget. Nonetheless, the share of education spending has decreased during these four years (by 22.2 per cent), with a particular drop between 2000 and 2001 of 21 per cent. Simultaneously, military expenditure increased over the four years, by 22.6 per cent, roughly the same percentage change as the decrease in education expenditure. The public spending on health has remained relatively stable. Thus, there has been a change in the public expenditure priorities in Colombia over this period, particularly regarding education and military spending.

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<sup>45</sup> Broadly speaking, social expenditure covers public and private allocations in a broad range of other areas. Since the aim is to compare public expenditure priorities, the private spending in this sector will be excluded.

<sup>46</sup> This period was chosen because of the availability of comparable data, while it also coincides with the major changes in military expenditure level in Colombia. For the methodology for the data selected see Perdomo, C., 'Methodology for international comparison of government priorities', Background Paper, SIPRI, Stockholm, 2004, URL <<http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/bgpapers/frontpage.html>>.

<sup>47</sup> Constitución Política de la República de Colombia [Political constitution of the Republic of Colombia], 1991, Chapter IV, Article 361.

**Table 3.****EDUCATION, HEALTH AND MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN COLOMBIA AS A PERCENTAGE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, 1998–2001**

	Education	Health	Military
1998	4.5	3.5	3.1
1999	4.3	4.0	3.5
2000	4.4	3.7	3.4
2001	3.5	3.6	3.8

*Source:* Perdomo, C., 'Tables of military and social expenditure', Background Paper, SIPRI, Stockholm, 2004, URL <<http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/bgpapers/frontpage.html>>.

Establishing the causal relation connecting this change in public spending priorities in Colombia with the USA's SSR assistance to Colombia has to be done with caution. The initiative to implement a plan to promote peace, economic development and the enhancement of security was made by Colombian President Andres Pastrana in 1999, which coincides with the first boost in military spending. Under Pastrana's government the number of soldiers increased from 79 000 to 140 000, mostly accounted for by a tripling of the number of professional soldiers<sup>48</sup>. It was the Colombian Government that asked for international support for Plan Colombia, with the USA being the country that contributed the most. However, as a report from the US Congressional Research Service has established, the objectives of

Colombia and the USA for Plan Colombia differ, although they overlap in some respects (e.g., the drugs fight)<sup>49</sup>. While for Colombia the objectives of the plan are to promote peace and economic growth, for the USA are to stop the trafficking of cocaine and heroine from Colombia. Over time, the emphasis of Plan Colombia shifted to increase the focus on the USA's objective. This was clear with the national shift towards prioritizing the military under President Uribe's administration, which for example established by decree in 2002 a war tax that totalled 2.6 billion pesos to be distributed in 2002–2004<sup>50</sup>. Thus, although this was clearly a national decision, the effect of the US support to Colombia has important consequences for the recipient's national policies. For instance, if the USA provides 16 UH-60L/

<sup>48</sup> 'Profile: Andres Pastrana', BBC News, 15 Jan. 2002, URL <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/1759419.stm>>.

<sup>49</sup> Veillette, C., 'Plan Colombia: a progress report', Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, Washington, DC, 9 May 2005, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> Stålenheim, P. et al., 'Tables of military expenditure', SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), p. 369.

S-70A Black Hawk helicopters to Colombia, 14 for the army and 2 for the police, as was the case in 2001<sup>51</sup>, the Colombian Government would have to maintain the machines and train its soldiers to make use of the helicopters. The USA provided

integrated logistics services, technical assistance and field services in this specific case, but at some point these activities will have to be supported by the government of Colombia. Hence, even though the strong focus on the military has been a national

**Table 4.**

**US ASSISTANCE TO COLOMBIA BY SOURCE, FINANCIAL YEARS 2000–2004**

Figures are in US\$ m. Years are financial years.

Type of assistance	2000a	2001	2002	2003b	2004	Total
Agency <sup>c</sup>						
Department of State <sup>d</sup>	774.9	48.0	275.4	416.6	495.8	2 110.7
USAID <sup>e</sup>	123.5	0	104.5	122.2	122.2	472.4
Department of Defense	128.5	190.2	119.1	165.0	122.0	724.8
Total	1 026.9	238.2	499.0	703.8	740.0	3 307.9
Of which non-military <sup>f</sup>						
Obligated	125	24	151	152	123	575
Expended	1	130	97	59	23	310

<sup>a</sup> Figures for 2000 include funds appropriated for Plan Colombia through the 2000 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act.

<sup>b</sup> Figures for 2003 include \$93 million in foreign military financing funds appropriated in the 2003 Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Appropriations Act; \$34 million appropriated to the Department of State; \$34 million in the 2003 Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act; and \$1 million for foreign military financing allotted from the supplementary appropriation for financial year 2003.

<sup>c</sup> These figures are for appropriations.

<sup>d</sup> These figures include \$88 million in funding transferred by the Department of State to the Department of Justice for its rule-of-law programmes.

<sup>e</sup> In financial years 2000–2003 the Department of State transferred \$375 million to USAID for alternative development, democracy and rule of law, and internally displaced persons programmes. In financial year 2004 the US Congress directly appropriated money for these programmes to USAID.

<sup>f</sup> The Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs did not provide complete funding data. As a result, the table may not reflect what was actually promised (obligated) and spent (expended).

*Source:* US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 'Drug control: U.S. non-military assistance to Colombia is beginning to show intended results, but programs are not readily sustainable', GAO Report-04-726, Washington, DC, July 2004, table 1, p. 8, and table 2, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> 'Pentagon contract announcement', Defense-Aerospace.com, 15 Dec. 2000, URL <[http://www.defense-aerospace.com/produit/3907\\_us.htm](http://www.defense-aerospace.com/produit/3907_us.htm)>.

initiative from the Colombian state, this tendency has been reinforced by the patterns of the US assistance.

The second sphere of the possible diversion of resources is the transfer of funds from the social-related assistance budget to security-related issues. The US assistance to Colombia has been accused of suffering myopia<sup>52</sup>. Its strong focus on the 'hard' security aspects of the conflict in Colombia has led to an unbalanced support which concentrates mainly on the military and police, while leaving aside key social aspects of the conflict. Between 2000 and 2004 approximately 82 per cent of the US assistance to Colombia was for the provision of training and equipment for the military and the police<sup>53</sup>. Of the US\$3.3 billion aid from the USA to Colombia in the period 2000–2004, only \$575 000 was for non-military assistance (see table 4). The US assistance given to Colombia is quite large but it has been constrained by the strong focus on military aspects, such as controlling the illicit traffic of drugs and, subsequently, the global war on terrorism (which relates to another negative argument from the donor countries of the strategic use of aid

discussed in section III).

The non-military package of the US assistance to Colombia is the one that supports some of the governance aspects of SSR. The package includes, for example, programmes to enhance the criminal justice system, promote human rights, support local government, and promote transparency<sup>54</sup>. Some improvements are noticeable in this dimension, but the projects often face obstacles such as lack of funding and insecurity, which affect the overall attainment of the programme's aims<sup>55</sup>. These budget cuts have led to, for example, the lowering of the initial targets, obstacles to the hand-over of responsibility for these programmes to the Colombian Government or even the endangering of the sustainability of the projects. Various governance areas need further support. For instance, the justice sector, even though it is independent, is still overloaded, corrupt and intimidated by the rebel groups and criminal gangs, and hence ineffective<sup>56</sup>. At the same line, establishment of democratic control of the military is in progress, but there are still gross violations of human rights by the armed forces. The US State Department has acknowledged that even

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<sup>52</sup> Christman, D. W. et al., *Andes 2020: A New Strategy for the Challenges of Colombia and the Region*, Report of an Independent Commission Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations Center for Preventive Action (Council on Foreign Relations: New York, 2004), p. 15.

<sup>53</sup> Sköns et al. (note xxxix), p. 334.

<sup>54</sup> Veillette (note xlix), p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> GAO (note xl), p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> GAO (note xl), p. 11.

though the military is under civilian control, there are still cases of military consent for paramilitary activities and violation of human rights remains a problem<sup>57</sup>. As is shown below, these cuts in the non-military support to Colombia are a result of the limited coherence and coordination of the US assistance to Colombia.

### **The problems of coordination and coherence**

Assessing the problem of coordination and coherence involves looking at how the internal agencies in the donor country work with those of the recipient country and with the rest of the international donor community. Particularly in the case of SSR the USA has not taken a coordinated approach to its policies, and this is evidenced in Colombia.

The main US offices working to support Plan Colombia are the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) office of the State Department, the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Department of Defense through the Southern Command. Two main reports on Plan Colombia have

underlined the deficiency in coordination between these agencies. According to the Council on Foreign Relations each of these offices pursues its programmes in a policy vacuum<sup>58</sup>. A report from the US Government Accountability Office in 2004 further described the problems with internal coordination faced in many of the non-military programmes in Colombia. Among many examples, the report stated that some grantees of non-military assistance programmes have never met in order to coordinate their work due to barriers and disincentives. For example, some projects are executed by two different grantees, and if the beneficiary targets are achieved by only one of the grantees the project can be claimed to be accomplished. This has created disincentives to cooperate among grantees, while also creating individual competition<sup>59</sup>. One example is that half of the grantees working with USAID did not know that the US State Department was also involved with their programmes, in this case assistance to displaced people; they therefore had no knowledge of whether the beneficiaries had already received humanitarian assistance from the State Department<sup>60</sup>.

The coordination between the USA and the international community has been neglected since the beginning of

<sup>57</sup> Veillette (note xlix), p. 11.

<sup>58</sup> Christman et al. (note lii), p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> GAO (note xl), p. 23.

<sup>60</sup> GAO (note xl), p. 24.

Plan Colombia. The European Union (EU), Japan and the United Nations (UN) disagreed with the USA's focus on assistance for counter-narcotic activity and have instead engaged in separate small projects in Colombia, without coordination. In addition, while the EU and UN keep condemning the Colombian state for gross violation of human rights (while recognizing that it is not a state policy), the USA continues to certify Colombia as meeting human rights standards. In fact, several non-governmental organizations that monitor human rights have criticized the US State Department for continuously certifying Colombian progress on human rights issues<sup>61</sup>. The international community has no coordinated voice on this matter, hence it has been sending mixed messages to Colombia while the USA has portrayed the EU and UN as making unfair judgments on the situation in the country. For example, in the beginning of 2006 Colombian Vice-President Francisco Santos Calderón publicly questioned the data published in a UN report and regretted that the document was not objective while pretending to be neutral<sup>62</sup>. Relations

between the Colombian Government and the UN have been unstable, particularly during the Uribe administration, deterring further engagement by the UN<sup>63</sup>.

Regarding the coherence of the programme, attaining peace in Colombia requires a move beyond the strong support for counter-narcotic activity. It will require a holistic approach that entails assistance to the peace negotiations and the subsequent DDR process; strong support for addressing Colombia's rural and infrastructure problems; cooperation to create a regional trade regime; and more general development initiatives for the neglected areas of the country<sup>64</sup>. As a report from the Council on Foreign Relations has established, there has been an excessive focus on the supply side of the drugs problem, plus the sustainability of the anti-drug initiatives is in question. As long as social inequalities and injustices remain in the country, the incentives for engaging in illicit drugs cultivation and trafficking will remain. The Council on Foreign Relations thus suggests that the USA strongly supports land reform and rural development in Colombia. Another area of focus

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<sup>61</sup> Veillette (note xlix), p. 11.

<sup>62</sup> 'Representante de Derechos Humanos de la ONU, Michael Frühling, se despide de Colombia' [UN Human Rights Representative, Michel Frühling, says goodbye to Colombia], *El Tiempo*, 21 Feb. 2006, URL <[http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/coar/DER\\_HUMANOS/derechoshumanos/ARTICULO-WEB\\_NOTA\\_INTERIOR-2755285.html](http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/coar/DER_HUMANOS/derechoshumanos/ARTICULO-WEB_NOTA_INTERIOR-2755285.html)>.

<sup>63</sup> 'The UN's Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for \$62 million in humanitarian assistance to Colombia is underfunded. Donations as for November 2003 amounted to approximately \$14 million, of which the US contributed about 42 percent.' GAO (note xl), p. 24.

<sup>64</sup> Christman et al. (note lii), p. 30.

should be the Alternative Development Program (ADP), which should complement the Aerial Eradication Program (AEP) in order to provide new opportunities for peasants to withdraw from illicit markets. Currently, these programmes are not fully complementary due to lack of efficient and sufficient support to the ADP—for the ADP to be comprehensive would need approximately US\$4 billion over 3 years, while USAID plans to give only US\$234 million<sup>65</sup>.

The mainly military and counter-narcotics emphasis of the USA is not having the intended results. The US State Department admitted the shortcoming in the US approach to Colombia, while quoting a 2006 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR). The latter pointed out that, while 170 000 hectares of illegal coca plantations have been destroyed, in 2005 the drug producers replanted nearly the same area<sup>66</sup>. Drugs-trafficking alongside other criminal acts such as kidnapping fuels the conflict in Colombia. However, these are not the essence of the Colombian conflict. As stated above, the country has weak rule of law, widespread corruption, oligarchic economic and political systems, and tremendous social injustices.

In conclusion, the USA's focus on the military approach in Colombia has led to a

diversion of resources from the social sector to the military, both in the US assistance package to Colombia and in the recipient's national public spending priorities. The US support is not achieving its objectives, due in part to the lack of coherence and coordination of the assistance. Hence, these specific arguments against engagement in SSR are illustrated by the case of US assistance to Colombia. However, a combination of even more factors probably contributes to this outcome, such as the limited knowledge of the Colombian conflict in the USA, the use of assistance as a strategic tool or the short-term interest in attaining quick results. It would be misleading to conclude that all donors that have been involved in SSR have faced as many limitations as in this case. Indeed, there are some successful cases that prove the opposite, such as the case of the UK's assistance to Sierra Leone.

### **Sierra Leone: a background**

West African countries are quite unstable given their experiences with civil wars and their widespread poverty. Sierra Leone's experience is therefore not unique, but in the 2005 HDR its HDI was second lowest (176th of 177 countries) and its civil war was one of the most violent, known for its cruel mutilation practices

<sup>65</sup> GAO (note xl), p. 11.

<sup>66</sup> 'US policy at a critical crossroads', Latin America Security & Strategic Review, Mar. 2006, URL <<http://www.latinnews.com/lss/LSS9492.asp?instance=2>>.

and the large number of child soldiers. Around 500 000 people were displaced and nearly 60 000 died as a consequence of the conflict<sup>67</sup>. While the complexities of every violent conflict are numerous, this section gives a brief description of the history of the conflict in Sierra Leone in order to frame the country's security sector challenges.

The conflict started in 1991 when rebel groups, with support from Liberian groups, rose against the Sierra Leonean Government which, as well as being corrupt, was highly centralized in the capital, Freetown, thus neglecting far away provinces and the large youth population. The conflict was fuelled by the propagation of small arms and illegal financing through the mining of diamonds. During the conflict three coups d'état took place; in one case (1997) the coup leader invited the leader of a rebel group to share government. The Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which was mainly Nigerian, restored the democratically elected government in 1998, but the rebel groups continued fighting, taking over large parts of the country. In 1999 the Sierra Leonean Government and the rebel groups signed a peace agreement in Lomé and UN peacekeeping interven-

tions were arranged—first the unarmed UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) and then the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). In spite of the peace agreement, the conflict continued; the turning point came when UNAMSIL peacekeepers were taken as hostages and the UK intervened militarily in support of the UN mission in restoring order in Freetown. By 2000 the rebel resistance was over and a ceasefire agreement was signed in Abuja. Thereafter, consolidation of the peace process has been taking place, accompanied by the retaking of the rebel-held areas and the demobilization of combatants. The security sector in Sierra Leone has to be understood in the subsequent post-conflict situation.

Sierra Leone's young security sector, established after independence in 1961, had nearly vanished after the civil war. Hence, the SSR support to Sierra Leone must be considered as a reconstruction of the security institutions almost from scratch. The political system had become highly militarized, with civil–military relations basically represented by the military's interaction with the executive. The MOD had only a limited number of civil servants, who were usually by-passed by the military, which preferred to have direct contact with the president instead of dis-

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<sup>67</sup> Seybolt, T. B., 'Major armed conflicts', SIPRI Yearbook 2001: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2001), pp. 30–31.

cussing military matters with the civilians in the ministry<sup>68</sup>. This politicization of the security sector was also seen in recruitment and promotion processes: the hierarchy of the armed forces was overlooked and merit was not taken into consideration. As a result of corruption and this politicization, the armed forces were undisciplined and inefficient. At the same time, morale and incentives for efficient work lowered because of the lack of equipment, training and welfare support<sup>69</sup>. Furthermore, the monopoly of the military over security affairs did not permit the creation of a civilian interest in making the security sector accountable. Hence, the security forces were above the democratic and governance processes, and were subject to almost no control or auditing.

There were also security sector challenges in 2002 for Sierra Leone beyond civil–military relations. The demobilization process was one of the greatest problems of the country’s security sector. In 2002 nearly 24 000 ex-combatants were awaiting reintegration in legal security forces and more demobilized soldiers were to come in subsequent years. Some

ex-combatants were reintegrated in the army or police forces, but the security forces were not capable of assimilating all the demobilized soldiers. Instead, in 2002 both the Armed Forces of Liberia and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) rebel group recruited some Sierra Leonean ex-combatants to fight in the neighbouring country<sup>70</sup>. The rule of law was also extremely weak in Sierra Leone, particularly in remote areas. In the diamond-mining areas, for example, there was constant competition for access to resources, with residents being expelled and advantage being taken of the absence of state control<sup>71</sup>. A 2002 UN report stated that law and order in many districts of the country faced logistical problems, such as an unprepared police force and judicial and penal systems with partial coverage. The report also pointed out the need to support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to assist the construction of local capacity for the promotion and protection of human rights. There was a need to build judicial capabilities in order to consolidate peace and the rule of law in the country<sup>72</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> Gbla, O., ‘Sierra Leone’, *Budgeting for the Military Sector in Africa: The Processes and Mechanisms of Control*, eds W. Omitoogun and E. Hutchful (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2006), p. 192.

<sup>69</sup> Bryden, A. et al., ‘Security sector governance in West Africa: turning principles to practice’, Policy Paper no. 8, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Geneva, Nov. 2005, p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> UN Security Council, Fifteenth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, UN document S/2002/987, 5 Sep. 2002, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> This was the case in districts like Kono and Tongo Fields, where ‘Thuggish youth groups [attempted] to fill the vacuum by the absence of firm Government control’. UN Security Council (note lxx), p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> UN Security Council (note lxx), pp. 8–9.

In addition to the strong support received from the UN in Sierra Leone, the UK has played a key role in stabilizing the country. The UK's objective in assisting Sierra Leone is to create a conflict-prevention strategy for this country. The UK's first engagement in Sierra Leone was in 1998 as a result of Sierra Leonean President Tejan Kabbah's desire to have professional armed forces and to enhance the police's role. The British Government was invited to contribute to this initiative and responded with a contribution from the FCO of £10 million to draft a SSR initiative for Sierra Leone. Subsequently, the British DFID donated £20 million in order to execute the SSR over a three-year period<sup>73</sup>. Thus, in June 1999 the first stage of the British-supported SSR was launched. With the end of the three-year strategy and with the declaration of the end of the civil war, the Sierra Leonean and British governments signed a 10-year collaboration plan in 2002 for reconstruction and poverty alleviation. For the period 2002–2004 the UK allocated £120 million to support Sierra Leone, four times more than the initial £30 million in aid given in the first stage of the assistance in 1999.

The UK objectives for its assistance strategy in Sierra Leone can be summa-

rized in three main points: (a) the creation of effective, affordable and democratically accountable security agencies with the national capacity to protect the country from internal and external threats; (b) effective reconciliation, justice and the reintegration of ex-combatants; and (c) reduction of regional threats to Sierra Leone<sup>74</sup>. Of the outcomes achieved, the most noticeable are the more professional and trained armed forces; the creation of an MOD under civilian control and managed by both military and civilian personnel; the publication of a Defence White Paper; and the establishment of two important agencies: the Office of National Security and the Central Intelligence and Security Unit. There has been also a successful development of legal and institutional frameworks for national security and defence, with the aim of controlling corruption and promoting transparency. An additional particular accomplishment was the reform in the Sierra Leonean Police (SLP). Not only is the SLP more visible in Freetown, but both the capacity and moral of the force has been enhanced. Local ownership was also advanced in 2003 with the departure of the British Inspector-General of Police and his replacement by a local<sup>75</sup>.

As described above, the UK's support

<sup>73</sup> Sköns et al. (note xxxix), p. 338,

<sup>74</sup> Ginifer, J., 'Evaluation of the conflict prevention pools: Sierra Leone', Evaluation Report EV 647, DFID, London, Mar. 2004, URL <<http://www2.dfid.gov.uk/aboutdfid/performance/files/ev647sleone.pdf>>, p. 1

<sup>75</sup> Stone, C. et al., *Supporting Security, Justice and Development: Lessons for a New Era* (Vera Institute of Justice: New York, 2005), p.18.

to Sierra Leone is a SSR strategy since it involves holistic approach to activities in the security institutions of the recipient country. There are programmes for the professionalization and modernization of the armed forces; the provision of support to the police; and assistance for the government in retaking control of previously dangerous areas. The UK also provides aid for enhancing the rule of law, civil–military relations and governance aspects like control of corruption and transparency. The British role has also been key to re-establishing the effectiveness of the justice sector and in DDR programmes.

### **The arguments against engaging in SSR assistance: the case of Sierra Leone**

This section examines whether the arguments from the donor community against engaging in SSR support are illustrated in the case of the UK's assistance to Sierra Leone, particularly the fears regarding: (a) the diversion of resources to the military; and (b) the problems of coordination and coherence. The same benchmarks from the Colombian case are assessed, in order to facilitate the comparison.

#### **The diversion of resources to the military**

The fear that resources will be transferred from social expenditure to the

security sector has been present in Africa, particularly on the donors' side. African countries are among the most resource constrained, while suffering acute human security challenges that need to be tackled. As stated above, the transfer is feared in both the national and international spheres. The international assistance can influence national public policies since programmes must be followed and sustained. In the case of Sierra Leone, the holistic and long-term engagement of the UK has prevented (or delayed) this concern; this is shown below, first through the analysis of national military expenditure, then by describing the public expenditure priorities and finally with the examination of the focus of British assistance.

As stated above, there are many limitations when measuring the security spending of a country. One of the most relevant limitations is that data usually only covers the military sector, which is the case for Sierra Leone. Beyond this limitation, Sierra Leonean military spending is rather complicated to examine. To begin with, for the chosen period 1995–2004, military regimes and very weak democratic institutions mean that an accurate picture of the trends in the military expenditure in this country is hard to come by. For instance, during the 1997–98 dictatorship of Major Johnny Paul Koroma, the Central Bank Governor was instructed directly to release money from the Consolidated Fund to finance the military without any formal budget-

**Table 5.****MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN SIERRA LEONE AS A SHARE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, 1995–2004**

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Military expenditure	2.9	2.0	1.1	..	..	4.1	2.4	1.7	1.8	1.2

*Source:* Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database, SIPRI, Stockholm, 2006, URL <[http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex\\_database1.html](http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_database1.html)>.

ary practice<sup>76</sup>. Indeed, as shown in table 5, there are no data available for 1998–99, coinciding with the period in which the military government made budget decisions. Off-budget revenues were also a practice in the military budgetary process, but these were often not reflected in the expenditure provision figures. However, military expenditure in Sierra Leone has steadily decreased, particularly in the period 2000–2004, dropping by 71 per cent as a share of GDP. This coincides with the period of the UK's strong support.

It should be noted that the fall in military expenditure since 2000 does not

mean that there has not been heavy investment in the recovery of the military sector after the end of the civil war. Indeed, the reason for the relatively low share of GDP invested in the military is that the international community, particularly the UK, has financed most of the modernization, training and professionalization programmes. The long-term engagement from the UK has meant that Sierra Leone has not needed to spend large amounts on the military in recent years, and thus social investment has not been displaced by increases in defence-related allocations. After British assistance ends, an effect

**Table 6.****EDUCATION, HEALTH AND MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN SIERRA LEONE AS A PERCENTAGE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, 1998–2001**

	Education	Health	Military
1998	1.0	1.3	..
1999	..	2.0	..
2000	3.8	2.6	4.1
2001	..	2.6	2.4

*Source:* Perdomo, C., 'Tables of military and social expenditure', Background Paper, SIPRI, Stockholm, 2004, URL <<http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/bgpapers/frontpage.html>>.

<sup>76</sup> Gbla (note 67), p. 193.

on social spending could be seen in the future. For example, the 2004 military expenditure budget for Sierra Leone was \$34 million, half of which was provided by the UK (see tables 5 and 7).

Unfortunately, for the years that comparable data on education, health and military are available, Sierra Leone was at war and the data have low reliability. Furthermore, data, particularly on education and military expenditure, are not available for certain years, making the comparison inconsistent (see table 6). The reason for this lack of information is the poor state of government institutions during the conflict. As a consequence, it is difficult to establish a trend in the national budget priorities. Osman Gbla, a Senior Researcher from the Center for Development and Security Analysis in Freetown, has established that the military is not treated with preferential treatment and indeed has to compete with other public

priorities, particularly since 2001. In 2002 the parliament only allocated 30 per cent of the sum requested by the military, although it still obtained the third largest portion of the budget after education and health<sup>77</sup>. The military budgeting process changed significantly after a number of reforms in the democratization of the security sector. The adoption of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework in 2001, for example, provided for sectoral planning, a more participatory process and outcome, and thus a more efficient system for military expenditure. So, even though it is difficult to assess the government's expenditure priorities in Sierra Leone, the improvements in budgetary processes have reduced the opportunities for abuse of national resources with unbalanced or unreasonable military budgets. An accountable and transparent process for determining the national budget contributes to an effective prioritization of the national re-

**Table 7.**

**BRITISH ASSISTANCE TO SIERRA LEONE, FINANCIAL YEARS 2002/2003–2005/2006**

Figures are in thousands of pounds sterling, at current prices. Years are financial years.

Type of assistance	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	Total, 2002/2003– 2005/2006
Military assistance	14 165	14 801	17 245	17 139	63 350
Other assistance	33 044	33 000	40 000	40 000	146 044
Total	47 209	47 801	57 245	57 139	209 394

Source: Sköns, E. et al., 'Military expenditure', *SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), p. 338.

<sup>77</sup> Gbla (note lxviii), p. 187.

sources. The question addressed below is whether the UK's assistance has influenced this change to a more democratic budgeting process in Sierra Leone.

The British Government's holistic approach has indeed supported an improvement of the control of Sierra Leone's national budget. The aim of the British partnership with Sierra Leone is to form effective, affordable and democratically accountable security agencies. Hence, the bulk of the military assistance is framed within governance principles, preventing any extreme focus on the military. Much of the spending on the security sector for its improvement and effectiveness is highly dependant on the British support. This has probably prevented a high investment by the Sierra Leonean Government in the military sector.

Another possible explanation for the rather balanced public expenditure priorities in Sierra Leone is that the British Government support pays heavily attention to the non-military aspects of peace-building and development in Sierra Leone. Indeed, the non-military-related assistance to Sierra Leone is more than twice the military support (see table 7). As noted above, the donors' strategies influence the recipients' policies since the recipient has to follow programmes. The UK's holistic approach involves coordination and coherence from its state agencies working with Sierra Leone, as is described below.

### **The problems of coordination and coherence**

The second benchmark to assess is the coordination and coherence of internal agencies within the donor country and of the donor country with the rest of the donor international community. In the case of the UK's assistance to Sierra Leone, there has been coordination and coherence, particularly thanks to the African Conflict-Prevention Pool (ACPP), which provides a formal space for inter-departmental cooperation and that permits a more coordinated strategy with the other donor partners.

A specific policy for internal agency cooperation did not exist in the UK prior to mid- 2002. It was only after DFID introduced the concept of SSR that issues cutting across different state agencies created a stronger argument for coordination. The main agencies involved in a coordinated strategy for SSR in the UK are the MOD, the FCO and DFID. The case of Sierra Leone was one of the first—together with Indonesia—to have a formal mechanism promoting coordination. An evaluation of the ACPP, specifically for the case of Sierra Leone, has stated that before the appearance of the pools there was not a sense of coordination between the objectives and duties of the different British departments in the recipient country<sup>78</sup>. The creation of the ACPP facilitated

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<sup>78</sup> Ginifer (note lxxiv) p. 24.

a coordinated justification of programmes and budgeting, while it also expanded the recognition that there is a relationship between democratic civil–military relations (pursuit by the MOD’s Defence Diplomacy programme), SSR support (promoted by DFID) and the programmes relating justice sector reform, safety and security (also done by DFID).

Of course inter-departmental coordination is not perfect, but at least there is a formal procedure to promote dialogue and cooperation between state agencies. Among the problems of coordination in Sierra Leone is that meetings to discuss the ACPP are part of other discussions, hence there are no formal and regular meetings on the specific subject of the ACPP. In the same way, the meetings with the Sierra Leonean Government seem to be quite informal and do not take place regularly. This has posed questions about the UK’s ability to pass on the holistic SSR approach to the Sierra Leonean Government. National and international NGOs have also expressed their discontent regarding the lack of coordination and consultation from the UK (particularly DFID). Apparently, DFID has been absent from several meetings organized by NGOs, although it has always been invited. These coordination complications with the Sierra Leonean Government and the NGOs can ultimately complicate the degree of

local ownership of the British support programmes.

Despite this, it is worth saying that the British assistance has most of the time considered coordination with the UN as being crucial, and this pre-dates the creation of the ACPP. Formal meetings with UNAMSIL have been a key part of the assistance strategy, and furthermore the British support to the UNASMIL troops was central to restoring peace and security in the country. While critical for preparing the Sierra Leonean security forces to prepare for the withdrawal of UNAMSIL, there have been some differences, particularly with the UN civilian police, since the UK and the UN have different policing models. However, in general, the UK’s coordination with external actors has been part of the assistance approach within the ACPP. On other fronts, the British offices have supported the UNDP and USAID in the DDR programmes, and hence, have been actively engaged in the Multi-donor Trust Fund, for example<sup>79</sup>.

Regarding coherence, the UK acknowledges the importance to tackling the social areas of the security problems and of not neglecting the regional component of the conflict in Sierra Leone. Concerning the first issue, the social component of the conflict, the UK supports programmes such as an Anti-Corruption Commission, the rehabilitation of the legal system, aid

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<sup>79</sup> See Ginifer (note lxxiv), pp. 20–25.

to the National Electoral Commission and Sierra Leone's Special Court, the strengthening of financial management systems, civil service reform, support to the diamond industry and assistance for the elaboration of the poverty-reduction strategy<sup>80</sup>. Indeed, of the overall support (provided and planned) of the British to Sierra Leone, 70 per cent is non-military assistance (see table 7). Some areas have been pointed out as being unattended or not given enough attention. Among them is the engagement of the young population in Sierra Leone, which comprises 50 per cent of individuals under age 18. As noted above, the guerrilla groups sustained themselves with the support of child soldiers, who committed gross mutilations and rapes during the conflict. Hence, failing to fully integrate the young segments of the population could signify a major source of unrest in the future<sup>81</sup>.

Concerning the second issue—not neglecting the regional component of the conflict—the UK has, together with the USA and through ECOWAS, been supporting a post-Taylor strategy<sup>82</sup> in order to boost peace-building capacities in the region. With the same aim, special training has been provided to the Sierra Leonean

armed forces and police to deter possible spill-over from the conflicts in Liberia, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire<sup>83</sup>.

In conclusion, the case of Sierra Leone demonstrates that designing a holistic SSR programme should include both the hard and soft security problems according to the recipient's needs. This will be reflected in the funding assistance package to the recipient country, which will be at the same time key in influencing the recipient's policies towards development and stability. It is central to achieving such a holistic approach that the different institutions from the donor country are in permanent coordination, while permitting a coherent approach to the programme plans and practices. In the specific case of the SSR assistance to Sierra Leone important problems remain. It is key for the UK to establish a clearer policy to enhance local ownership in order to facilitate the upcoming hand-over of the programmes to the recipient country. There is particular risk of a vacuum in the future financing of the security sector, since it has been heavily financed by the UK, and the Sierra Leone Government might have trouble in sustaining these levels of spending. The next section illustrates the results of the

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<sup>80</sup> Sköns et al. (note xxxix), p. 340.

<sup>81</sup> 'Sustaining peace in Sierra Leone: assessing indigenous capacity to maintain stability and peace in parallel with the UNAMSIL drawdown', Graduate Student Working Group, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, Dec. 2002, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> This refers to the former Liberian president Charles Taylor, who was ousted in 2003.

<sup>83</sup> Ginifer (note lxxiv) p. 16.

comparison between the cases of US assistance to Colombia and British assistance to Sierra Leone.

### The comparison

Both the conflict in Colombia and that in Sierra Leone have particularities that cannot be identified entirely in this paper. Nevertheless, some key differences should be mentioned. Colombia has been a consolidated democracy since 1958, but with limited democratic control of the military<sup>84</sup>. Hence, the challenge for Colombia in SSR is to consolidate the existing democratic institutions that exercise security sector governance and to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. Whereas in the case of Sierra Leone the imperative is to build democratic security sector institutions from scratch, since the civil war destroyed the security establishment.

Colombia and Sierra Leone represent extreme cases compared to the SSR processes in other countries. European donors have sponsored most SSR programmes, but the international support for Colombian SSR has been sponsored mainly by the USA. Of the European SSR programmes, Sierra Leone is the most successful case,

with the UK as the leading donor in this process. As explained above, the USA and the UK have distinct approaches to SSR. On the one hand, the USA has not engaged explicitly in SSR support but has implemented separate assistance programmes within a package—Plan Colombia—that can be categorized as SSR with little internal coordination and coherence of the US government departments. On the other hand, the UK has been the country most engaged in the SSR support, taking a consistent approach within its state agencies. Therefore, while Plan Colombia resembles an uncoordinated SSR assistance, SSR assistance to Sierra Leone is coordinated<sup>85</sup>. This has had an impact on the coherence of the assistance strategies, which in both cases is reflected in the balance of the aid budgets. In the case of the US assistance to Colombia there is an unbalanced support, which leans towards military assistance, whereas the British assistance to Sierra Leone has a larger social component that is complemented by a military strategy. The US support of Plan Colombia is a result of its interest in reducing the threat of illegal drug-trafficking to the USA, while the objective of the assistance given by the UK to Sierra Leone is to prevent conflict<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>84</sup> Bruneau (note xxxiv), p. 233.

<sup>85</sup> Ball, N., 'Evaluation of the conflict prevention pools: the security sector reform strategy', Evaluation Report EV 647, DFID, London, Mar. 2004, p. 27, URL <<http://www2.dfid.gov.uk/aboutdfid/performance/files/ev647/ssr.pdf>>.

<sup>86</sup> Sköns et al. (note xxxix), p. 342

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Some of the poorest countries in the world bear the expensive burden of fighting wars and recovering from them. These countries are trapped in this situation since the lack of security destabilizes the factors necessary for development, while poverty, inequality or lack of freedom do not provide the context for peace and security to flourish. Both the donor and recipient communities have acknowledged that development and security go hand-to-hand and that there is a need to support both in a holistic manner. Security sector reform is a way to support security within the broad development agenda. However, even though, conceptually, there is way to bring SSR into the development discourse, there are a number of arguments against engaging with SSR assistance, from both the donor and recipient countries.

Two arguments against incorporating SSR in the development agenda are examined in this paper: (a) the diversion of resources to the military; and (b) the problems of lack of coordination and coherence. The case studies of the US assistance to Colombia and British assistance to Sierra Leone illustrate that some of these negative arguments can be relevant. In the first case, the US assistance package is dominated by military components. This has led to insufficient support to non-military components of the assistance, making the overall support inefficient. The imbalance in the aid given to Colombia has

influenced the way the Colombian Government is tackling its problems, partly because the US support has to be followed up. Hence, the Colombian Government is also increasingly investing in military matters, while decreasing some aspects of social expenditure. The unbalanced US assistance reflects the lack of coordination and coherence of the US agencies working in Colombia. The communication between agencies is poor and in some cases nonexistent. This reflects the fact that only some US agencies understand the importance of holistic assistance to Colombia, while the others focus mainly on the war on drugs. International coordination and coherence, particularly with the EU and the UN, has been deterred partly due to the USA's militaristic approach to Colombia.

The British assistance to Sierra Leone is much more balanced towards non-military aid, while complementing it with military support. The Sierra Leonean Government shares this prioritization of social aspects, while still making efforts to support the military. However, it remains to be seen if the pattern of national spending will change when the UK's assistance stops—Sierra Leone is dependent on foreign support for financing the military. The British approach to Sierra Leone is coherent, given that different agencies understand the importance of a holistic approach. This is a product of the ACPP which offers a space for coordination and discussion with national and international donor agencies. It must be said that prob-

lems remain regarding coordination with local actors. This has made difficult the transfer of the programmes from the UK to Sierra Leoneans.

One possible way to limit the potential negative impacts of supporting SSR is to formulate the SSR as genuine cooperation with the recipient country. This requires a true understanding of the needs of the recipient country and that the objectives of the support should ultimately

be for the benefit of the country receiving the aid. A second way is to emphasize the importance of the agencies having space for communicating with each other, since this improves cooperation and spreads knowledge of all the recipient's problems and will facilitate a coherent assistance. Finally, it is key to promote local ownership of the assistance so that the programmes can be sustained and accommodated to the local realities.

## APPENDIX 1.

### PRINCIPLES OF SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE

Security sector reform should aim at achieving these key principles of security sector governance:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Security sector actors are accountable to civil society, including the civilian elected authorities.</li> <li>■ Security sector actors follow both national constitutional law and international law.</li> <li>■ Government and civil society can access the planning and budgeting documents of the security sector.</li> <li>■ Security sectors resources are managed with discipline and in a comprehensive way.</li> <li>■ Civil-military relations are based on three key components: a well articulated authority; mutual rights and obligations; and the respect of human rights.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The operations and budget of the security sector are under control of civil authorities.</li> <li>■ Civil society monitors the security sector.</li> <li>■ Political debate on security sector is open to contributions from civil society.</li> <li>■ The environment permits that the civil society is consulted on issues such as security policies, security resource allocations, and other relevant aspects.</li> <li>■ Security sector personnel are professional and exercise their duties democratically.</li> <li>■ Policy-makers prioritize peace and secure environments in the region and sub-region.</li> </ul> |
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Source: UK Department for International Development (DFID), Security Sector Reform and the Management of Military Expenditure: High Risks for Donors, High Returns for Development, Report on an International Symposium sponsored by the UK Department for International Development, (DFID: London, 15– 27 February 2000), p. 46.

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### Acronyms

- ACPP: African Conflict Prevention Pool  
 ADP: Alternative Development Programme  
 AEP: Alternative Eradication Programme  
 DAC: Development Assistance Committee  
 DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration  
 DEA: Drug Enforcement Administration  
 DFID: Department for International Development  
 ECOMOG: ECOWAS Monitoring Group  
 ECOWAS: Economic Community of West Africa  
 EU: European Union  
 FCO: Foreign Commonwealth Office  
 GAO: Government Accounting Office  
 GDP: Gross Domestic Product  
 HDI: Human Development Index  
 HDR: Human Development Report  
 INCSR: International Narcotics Control Strategy Report

INL: International Narcotics and Law  
Enforcement

MoD: Ministry of Defence

NGO: Non- Governmental Organization

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation  
and Development

SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research  
Institute

SLP: Sierra Leonean Police

SSR: Security Sector Reform

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development  
Programme

UNAMSIL: United Nations Mission in Sierra  
Leone

UNOMSIL: United Nations Observer Mission in  
Sierra Leone

USA: United States of America

USAID: United States Agency for International  
Development

USTR: United States Trade Representative

Perdomo, Catalina.

“International assistance for security sector reform”,  
en *Oasis* 2006-07, núm. 12, Centro de Investigaciones y  
Proyectos Especiales, CIPE, Facultad de Finanzas, Gobierno  
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