Paper Title: Is NATO the Right Organization for Security Sector Reform in Conflict and Post-Conflict Environments?

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IS NATO THE RIGHT ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN CONFLICT & POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS?

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Summary

- If NATO wants to be credible as it prepares to undertake broad SSR responsibilities in its "neighborhood" with Projecting Stability, it must actually adhere to the core principles of Security Sector Reform (SSR) as opposed to practicing Security Sector Assistance (SSA) relabeled as "SSR."

- The experience of Afghanistan is not a positive experience of SSR; it is in fact an ample demonstration of how not to run an SSR operation — a disunited command, conflicting objectives, and donors not adhering to the needs of the recipient government or its citizens.

- The experience of Afghanistan demonstrates that the civilian side of SSR must not be neglected and should be fully integrated into a unified SSR strategy.

- Accountability mechanisms combined with greater local participation could have helped avoid corruption and avoid the enabling of human rights violators. This lesson should be considered in future SSR.

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"*Whereas strategy is only concerned with the problem of winning military victory, grand strategy must take the longer view – for its problem is the winning of the peace. Such an order of thought is not a matter of 'putting the cart before the horse,' but of being clear where the horse and the cart are going.*" —B.H. Liddell Hart[2]

In 2016, at the Warsaw Summit, NATO leaders committed to the security sector support model called 'Projecting Stability' in order to contribute to the efforts in strengthening the security capabilities of partners beyond NATO borders. With this model, NATO aims to extend security cooperation to partner nations that face security challenges, including terrorism.[3] 'Projecting Stability' includes engagement, capacity-building, and crisis management measures relying on the military capabilities of the partner nations.[4] NATO Senior Policy Advisor Ruben Diaz-Plaja claimed in 2017 that NATO has "too much experience" expanding the number of tools, instruments and mechanisms in use with different partner countries over the course of 25 years. In his view, "Projecting Stability" would be a way to streamline this complexity into long-term sustainable action.[5] More importantly, 'Projecting Stability' was conceived as a much-needed preemptive security measure by NATO states in order to address the threats posed by weak and failing states both to their own populations and to the world. However, there is not much substantial evidence to show that NATO with its current capabilities is the right organization to implement this vision. Most of the literature on NATO programing regarding 'Projecting Stability' talks about NATO operations contributing to stabilization in crisis management operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq with Security Sector Reform (SSR) components.[6] These operations are used to show the capabilities of NATO as an organization that is able to implement 'Projecting Stability' model.

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2. B.H. Liddell Hart. "Strategy." New York: Meridian Printing, 1991. Pp: 349-350

3. NATO Encyclopedia. "Projecting stability in NATO's neighbourhood through practical cooperation." NATO Public Diplomacy Division, December 2017.

4. Diaz-Plaja, Ruben. "Projecting Stability: An agenda for action." NATO Review Magazine, March 13, 2018. https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2018/also-in-2018/projecting-stability-an-agenda-for-action-nato-partners/en/index.htm

5. Ibid.

6. Díaz-Plaja, Rubén. "What does NATO need to 'project stability' in its neighbourhood?" Real Instituto Elcano, May 17, 2017. http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connect/6ee5b258-9161-4a93-9657-6155c287bdf2/ARI40-2017-DiazPlaja-What-NATO-need-project-stability-neighbourhood.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=6ee5b258-9161-4a93-9657-6155c287bdf2

This paper discusses the capabilities of NATO as an entity for implementing the 'Projecting Stability' model and argues that NATO at its current capacity is not able to implement SSR. Meanwhile, its current use of traditional Security Sector Assistance (SSA) has not proven successful in the current security environment of the world. The main question this paper aims to answer is: why should NATO acquire SSR capabilities to successfully implement the 'Projecting Stability' model in its neighborhood? Using the case of NATO's involvement in Afghanistan's security sector, this paper outlines some key issues after seventeen years of SSA/SSR implementation in Afghanistan. While this case study may not exactly reflect the kind of SSA/SSR the 'Projecting Stability' model is trying to emulate, Afghanistan has been over-cited as a pre-qualifier and a successful NATO operation whenever NATO's capabilities in SSA/SSR are discussed. Therefore, it will be argued that security support to Afghanistan does not qualify NATO as the right organization to implement SSA/SSR in a holistic way.

What Constitutes SSR and Why 'Projecting Stability' Needs SSR Rather Than SSA?

In simplistic definitions, SSA deals with operational effectiveness and does not necessarily include reform of the security sector of host partner nations.[7] SSR, on the other hand, is a broader concept that includes "strengthening, reforming, restructuring the human and institutional capabilities and capacities of the security sector to provide security."[8] The important distinction between the two is the increasing institutional capabilities of civilian government that SSA does not encompass and SSR does. SSA only focuses on strengthening the security sector, which is suitable for developing states that have fairly functional government structures with institutions that have the capabilities of monitoring the security sector. On the other hand, SSR is more suitable for failing and fragile states because it not only provides support to the security sector but also strengthens the civilian governance side to enable the government to maintain a monopoly of power over the security sector.

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7. Hanlon, Querine and Richard H. Shultz, JR. "Prioritizing Security Sector Reform: A New U.S. Approach." Washington D.C: USIP, 2016. Pp: 3-14

8. Ibid.

While debates about conceptual definitions are not the focus of this paper, it is essential to be clear about the difference between SSR and SSA. The post-Cold War SSR concept emerged in the late 1990s. In contrast to pre-Cold War SSA that focused solely on providing support in the form of training, equipment, and armaments to the security sectors of allied states, the current SSR recognizes a broader approach to security assistance which includes "security services in the political and economic lives of countries."[9] This new model compared to previous forms of security assistance focuses on the governance of the security sector.[10] The need for a concept that is broader than the traditional SSA was felt when, in the 1990s, many peacekeeping and stabilizing military operations were not resulting in 'happy endings', despite the fact that the U.S. and its NATO allies had military advantages when it came to capabilities.

SSR was initially a European concept led by the United Kingdom and organizations such as Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). SSR originated at a time when the United Nations and other international actors saw the failures of international peacekeeping programs such as UNPROFOR, UNAMIR, and UNOSOM II. The UN, European Union (EU) and NATO started to draw linkages between security and development as a way to achieve peace in the developing countries.[11] These actors underscored that security institutions could implement development assistance programs focusing on peace in fragile states, leading to the application of SSR.[12] The OECD DAC's handbook to operationalize the 2005 DAC guidelines on SSR characterizes SSR as fit for "transitional countries moving from closed societies to democracies…as well as countries entering post-conflict."[13] At a time when new ideas about human security were emerging, SSR got attention because of its people-centric nature. It was adopted by the Netherlands,

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9. Hanlon, Querine and Richard H. Shultz, JR. "Prioritizing Security Sector Reform: A New U.S. Approach." Washington D.C: USIP, 2016. Pp: 3-14.

10. Sedra, Mark. "Introduction: The Future Of Security Sector Reform." The Future of Security Sector Reform, The Centre For International Governance Innovation (CIGI), 2010. Pp: 16-27

11. Chanaa, Jane. "Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects." Oxford: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002.

12. Hanlon, Querine and Richard H. Shultz, JR. "Prioritizing Security Sector Reform: A New U.S. Approach." Washington D.C: USIP, 2016. Pp: 3-14

13. The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice, OECD Publishing. 2007.

Germany, and Canada but not all NATO members have adopted SSR as their international security assistance strategy, the U.S. chief among them.[14] The United States did not see its national interests in SSR for their interventions prior to 9/11. SSR experts Dr. Querine Hanlon and Dr. Richard Shultz, in their 2016 book promoting SSR to the US foreign policy establishment, note that even in the post-9/11 Iraq and Afghanistan wars the U.S. adopted a "stability generation" approach.[15] The United States, being the highest contributor to majority of NATO missions, had still not incorporated SSR into their grand strategy of interventions. Many international security interventions by NATO have been and are still done using the traditional SSA model that focuses mainly on training and supplying arms to the security forces of weak and failing states, paying little attention to the governance and capacity building of oversight institutions within those fragile states.

Other SSR experts like Luc van de Goor and Erwin van Veen suggest that the SSR model should be allowed to expand into countries that don't fit into the "post-conflict" category provided it can easily link up with the local government's agenda and focus on the developing recipient's needs.[16] They explicitly state that current donor cooperation with Afghanistan does not fall under SSR as the donor objectives are just as much (if not more) about preserving their own security as opposed to taking Afghanistan's security sector needs as the starting point (a necessary condition of SSR in Groor and Veen's view). Shultz and Hanlon warn that SSR intervention in post-conflict environments is the most difficult to implement because, in post-conflict environments, host governments have to tackle internal disagreements from different parties to the conflict and also acquire the institutional capabilities to establish a monopoly on the use of force. However, Shultz and Hanlon still suggest SSR could play a vital role in post-conflict areas along with areas experiencing authoritarian transition and vulnerable democratic environments.[17] Peacebuilding expert Dr. Paul Jackson on the other hand

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14. Hanlon, Querine and Richard H. Shultz, JR. "Prioritizing Security Sector Reform: A New U.S. Approach." Washington D.C: USIP, 2016. Pp: 3-14

15. Ibid. Pp: 187-207

16. Goor, Luc van de and Erwin van Veen. "Less Post-Conflict, Less Whole Of Government And More Geopolitics?" The Future of Security Sector Reform, The Centre For International Governance Innovation (CIGI), 2010. Pp: 88-99

17. Hanlon, Querine and Richard H. Shultz, JR. "Prioritizing Security Sector Reform: A New U.S. Approach." Washington D.C: USIP, 2016. Pp: 3-14

criticizes SSR "orthodoxy" that seeks linear formulas to SSR and clean-cut categorizations of different conflict environments, noting the term "post-conflict" itself can have many implications. Dr. Jackson argues that while it may be tempting to view "post-conflict" countries as ripe for externally imposed models, it can be dangerous for donors to ignore existing norms and the origins of the violence in the recipient society. He also warns against ignoring potentially valuable local solutions and structures that could make SSR durable. [18] Therefore, donors involved in international interventions such as Afghanistan should take nuanced approaches on how best to utilize moments where the host governments are flexible and open for institutional reforms.

Hanlon and Shultz criticize the current interchangeability of the terms "SSR" and "SSA" in the jargon of a majority of practitioners because it demonstrates a lack of conceptualization of these instruments. They argue that SSR requires a more tailor-made and long-term commitment approach. While the ready-made blueprints of the SSA model make it easier to adopt, they are not usually suitable for post-conflict environments even if they are often well developed and well funded. Shultz argues that before irregular threats escalate, there is a need for a new SSR strategy that encompasses not only strengthening the capacity and accountability of the security forces but also the defense ministries of weak and failing states.[19] SSR was successful in Eastern Europe in the mid-1990s because SSR was required as a prerequisite for membership in NATO and the European Union (EU). Moreover, these security reforms were incorporated into their security system in fairly stable security environments. Membership to the EU and NATO was used as an incentive for many European countries to uphold the principles of democratic civil-military relations and the potential for membership continues to be used to promote reforms in countries of the Western Balkans. Therefore, NATO and EU members developed the capacity of their civilian authorities and institutions to foster accountability and effective management of their armed forces.[20] Most of these reforms were

18. Jackson, Paul. "SSR And Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Armed Wing Of State Building?" The Future Of Security Sector Reform. The Centre For International Governance Innovation (CIGI), 2010. 118-133.

19. Shultz, Richard H. "Security Force Assistance and Security Sector Reform." The JSOU Press, 2013.

20. Ball, Nicole. "The Evolution Of The Security Sector Reform Agenda." The Future Of Security Sector Reform, The Centre For International Governance Innovation (CIGI), Pp: 29-41

self-implemented by the NATO European countries with the help of other NATO nations because of the need for a collective security in Europe. It was important to have security capabilities and policies aligned with European interests rather than purely national ones. Organization within the EU play a vital role through institutional instruments that include the European External Action Service, Council bodies, and the Directorate General for Enlargement to shape SSR in Europe and elsewhere.[21] However, the EU in its internal reports demonstrates an understanding that its experiences in Europe and especially Africa show a need to expand its tools for SSR beyond what it developed during the 1990s/2000s period of enlargement.[22]

Mark Sedra, President of the Canadian International Council (CIC), is skeptical of SSR, believing there is a dearth of notable success stories and that the next generation of SSR must bridge the conceptual with the contexts in which it is applied.[23] To do so, future models must be sensitive to the political realities of recipient nations. He is especially worried that the experience of Afghanistan created wariness around SSR as a concept; the experience has been an over-alignment with military objectives and a substantial divergence from the original SSR objectives. If NATO envisions stability for countries in its "neighborhood", the 'Projecting Stability' model should be on the basis of an SSR wrested away from the over-securitization seen in Afghanistan which for all practical purposes was more SSA than SSR.

NATO in Afghanistan

NATO has been in Afghanistan now for almost 17 years. The literature is silent on whether NATO's mission in Afghanistan was based on SSA or SSR or a combination of both. Between 2003 and 2018, through the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Resolute Support Mission (RSM), NATO together with the United States (U.S.) has trained, equipped, assisted and advised 227,374 Afghan military forces, and 154,626 Police Forces.

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21. Gross, Eva. "Assessing The EU's Approach To Security Sector Reform (SSR)." European Parliament; Directorate-General For External Policies of the Union: Policy Department, January 2013. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/433837/EXPO-SEDE_ET%282013%29433837_EN.pdf
22. Gross, Eva. "Assessing The EU's Approach To Security Sector Reform (SSR)." European Parliament; Directorate-General For External Policies of the Union: Policy Department, January 2013.
23. Sedra, Mark. "Towards Second Generation Security Sector Reform." The Future Of Security Sector Reform, the Centre For International Governance Innovation (CIGI), 2010. Pp: 102-114.

Since 2002, the U.S. alone invested over $83.1 billion in the Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF). NATO's current involvement in Afghanistan is mainly focused on three areas: the RSM, financial support, and long-term partnership. The first, RSM, is a non-combat mission which is mandated to train, advise and assist Afghan security forces and institutions. Second is financial support for Afghan security forces and the Afghan National Army Trust Fund.[24] The above two pillars of NATO involvement were mutually agreed upon between Afghanistan and NATO through the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) at the 2012 Chicago Summit.[25] The third pillar of NATO in Afghanistan is the NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership. This partnership was signed at the NATO 2010 Lisbon Summit with the assumption that NATO's mission (ISAF) would fully handover security responsibilities to Afghan security forces. The Enduring Partnership was intended to allow NATO to provide long-term political and practical support to Afghanistan as the country worked to rebuild its security sector. Since 2010, the Enduring Partnership has only been discussed at the NATO Summits in Wales 2014 and in Warsaw 2016. NATO has not yet operationalized the partnership and demand for its strengthening has yet come from the Afghan government.

It is unclear whether the U.S. and NATO use any specific model to build and support the security sector in Afghanistan. The security environment in Afghanistan overlaps between war-zone, post-conflict, and vulnerable democratic environments. Afghanistan fits Hanlon and Shultz's definition of a post-conflict environment, one where not all parties to the conflict have agreed to any specific settlement and where the government of the post-conflict state does not have a complete monopoly of force.[26] Afghanistan also qualifies as a vulnerable democratic state, again using Hanlon and Shultz's definition, because it has some democratic institutions and practices but they are not well established and functioning due to lack of capacity.[27] The security sector support by the U.S. and NATO in Afghanistan overlaps between SSR and SSA in a very uncoordinated manner.

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24. "NATO-Afghanistan Relations." Media Backgrounder, November 2017.
25. NATO-Afghan Government. "Agreement Between the NATO and The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the Status of NATO Forces and NATO Personnel." Afghan Unity Government, 2014.
26. Hanlon, Querine and Richard H. Shultz, JR. "Prioritizing Security Sector Reform: A New U.S. Approach." Washington D.C: USIP, 2016. Pp: 3-14
27. Ibid.

Security Threats and the Afghan Security Sector

Afghanistan's security sector is barely 17 years old and it is facing numerous challenges. One major challenge is terrorism. The Afghan public endures many violent attacks on a daily basis. According to the Afghan National Security Council (NSC), there are some twenty internationally proscribed terrorist organizations and insurgent groups operating in Afghanistan.[28] In addition to terrorism, transnational crime, drug trafficking, hybrid warfare, and border issues complicate the security environment. Furthermore, corruption has taken over state institutions, making it difficult for the state to provide simple public services. This has resulted in growing mistrust among Afghan people of the state's institutions. Street harassment has increased and regularly involves acid attacks on women. Large and small-scale kidnappings are prevalent even in big and reasonably secure cities in Afghanistan. Thefts and robberies are also among the challenges that the Afghan security and law enforcement sector face today.

Despite the tremendous investment of NATO states in the Afghan security sector, statistics from the U.S. Defense Department (DoD) showed that by January 2018 only 56% of the country was under Afghan government control with 14% under the Taliban's control and the other 29% remaining contested.[29] Additionally, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) recorded 12,636 civilians' casualties between 2018 and 2020, 3,458 of which were recorded in the first six months of 2020.[30] In the same year, 69% of the total conflict-related incidents in Afghanistan have been targeted killings, suicides, and combined IED attacks.[31] The Taliban has started employing the tactic of attacking attacking army bases and security checkpoints and seizing weapons and ammunition. Many government soldiers and police officers are killed in the process.[32]

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28. Sharifi, Arian, Director of National Threat Assessment for Office of the National Security Council of Afghanistan. Interview by author, June 22, 2018.

29. Constable, Pamela. "Afghan security forces declining in number, U.S. Inspector General report shows." The Washington Post, May 2018.

30. UNAMA. Afghanistan Protection Of Civilians In Armed Conflict Midyear Report: 1 January—30 June 2020. Quarterly, Kabul: UNAMA, 2020.

31. Ibid

32. "Taliban attack Afghan army base, killing 17 soldiers." Associated Press, October 14, 2018. https://apnews.com/article/ef3f3a064a804436a9acbd6fc910cd6f

Among the previously mentioned 20 terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan, the Afghan Taliban's insurgency is the longest standing. Within the Afghan Taliban are those that support and associate themselves with terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Haqqani Network and there are those that only fight because they want to regain political power and force the withdrawal of foreign forces. Counterinsurgency is not successful in Afghanistan because the security sector is unable to protect the population from the insurgents or to counter insurgent narratives that sow distrust of the government. On the ground, there are Afghans living in rural areas who buy into the Taliban's appeal that foreign powers have invaded the country and that the central government is allowing it.[33] Other factions of the Taliban spread terror and execute high-level attacks targeting civilians and security forces to show that the central government and its security forces are not able to protect the population from security threats. Thus, it has proven hard for Afghan security forces to gain the support of the population. The unclear classification of the Taliban as both insurgents and terrorists provides a significant security dilemma for the Afghan security forces with their current capabilities and resources.

Besides the complex insurgency by the local Taliban, Afghan security forces' most significant challenge is fighting irregular and hybrid warfare as Afghanistan continues to face externally-enabled and resilient terrorism supported by international criminal and terrorist organizations. Afghan security forces have to acquire both conventional and unconventional capabilities to fight these complex security needs. The twenty plus internationally proscribed terrorist organizations and insurgent groups that operate in Afghanistan are divided into four categories. First, there is the Afghan Taliban, which includes the Haqqani Network, the Quetta Shura, and the three military commissions. Second, there are the Pakistani terrorist groups that include Taherk Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Sepahi Sahaba, Lashkar Jhangvi and more. The third category is composed of regional terrorist groups, which include the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM, China), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jandullah (Tajikistan), and Jamaat Ansarullah (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan). The fourth category includes global terrorist groups such as Al-Qadea, Al-Qadea in the Indian sub-

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33. Activist, Civil Society, Community Mobilzer in Helmand province, interview by author, June 24, 2018.

continent, and Daesh Khurasan (ISK).[34] Apart from the Afghan groups, these terrorist organizations have objectives outside of Afghan borders and they are attempting to use Afghan soil to pursue their goals. Many of the groups are linked to each other as well as to transnational criminal organizations, collectively posing a grave threat to the security and stability of the region and the world.

Another security threat to Afghan security is "ethno-political corruption", a tool of warlords and ethnic leaders [35] currently integrated into the Afghan Unity government used to demand powerful government positions and the accompanying resources. Afghan security forces are not immune to these ethno-political corruption networks. Therefore, security forces need to provide the Afghan central government protection against internal forces and warlords. In 2004, the U.S. government tried to incentivize these warlords with high positions in government in exchange for giving up on their militias/military power and to make them concur to the Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process. However, the DDR program failed; the warlords maintained their militias, and continued to engage in illegal activities and set up illegal checkpoints.[36] This has not only prevented the central government from forming a unified strong security sector, it also prevented the government from having a monopoly on the use of force which is one of the fundamental Weberian principles of nationhood and a core principle of successful SSR. Moreover, Afghanistan's relations with regional and global powers are closely linked to economic considerations, mainly in regard to energy supply routes. With few exceptions, most actors see Afghanistan as a "geostrategic pivot," meaning a country whose strategic value is determined more by its geographic position as a "gateway" than by its natural wealth. Therefore, complicated geopolitical rivalries have perpetuated between powers that want Afghanistan to be part of their spheres of influence. These powers can penetrate Afghanistan because of its lack of strong state institutions and especially its lack of a strong security sector which could deter and caution some of these geopolitical rivalries.

34. Sharifi, Arian, Director of National Threat Assessment for Office of the National Security Council of Afghanistan. Interview by author, June 22, 2018.

35. Chayes, Sarah. Thieves of State: Why Corruption Threatens Global Security. W. W. Norton & Company, 2015.

36. "Corruption In Conflict: Lessons From The U.S. Experience In Afghanistan." SIGAR, 2016. https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/sigar-16-58-ll.pdf

There are many questions to be answered as it relates to the Afghan security situation. Among the most pressing are: first, what went wrong in the security assistance provided by the U.S. and its NATO allies, and second, is NATO the right organization for security assistance in the conflict and post-conflict environments? To answers these questions, it is important to focus on whether NATO has incorporated the lessons learned from Afghanistan into its future programming and if NATO is the right entity to implement "Projecting Stability." This can be done by taking a closer look at the Afghanistan as a case study.

Failing at Stabilizing Afghanistan

In 2003, NATO took over ISAF's mission of providing security support to the new interim government backed by the international community. At the time, Afghans but also many countries around the world were optimistic because ISAF forces grew to 30,000 by 2008, which fostered hope that the SSA to Afghan security forces would increase as well. However, contributing states consistently failed to deliver expected results because the United States under the Bush administration was entirely focused on the war in Iraq. While NATO's assumption of the mission helped to increase the size of the Afghan security forces,[37] it could not stop the security situation from worsening in coming years. Lieutenant-General Jonathon Riley, a former deputy commander of the ISAF, concludes that the damage done in Afghanistan was due to incoherence in the military approach; there was, "no single command of the money, no attention to addressing Afghan community needs as opposed to those of donors, no means of prioritizing, and no means of rewarding good behavior and punishing bad."[38] It is crucial to discuss a few of the flaws of the NATO mission in Afghanistan, such as lack of unity of command, lack of uniformity of commitments by NATO states, lack of coordination among the NATO and donor states, lack of accountability and corruption, parallel structures by NATO undermining the Afghan government, and last but not the least lack of a unified SSA/SSR strategy.

37. Stapleton, Barbara J. "Military And Civilian Assistance In Afghanistan: An Incoherent Approach." State Strengthening In Afghanistan: Lessons Learned, 2001–14. 19-34, USIP; Peaceworks, May 2016. P. 16. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW116-State-Strengthening-in-Afghanistan-Lessons-Learned-2001-14_0.pdf
38. Ibid. P. 29.

Many of the NATO states actually did not have any unified strategy for SSA/SSR other than that they were called on by their powerful co-member state, the United States. Former EU Senior Policy Advisor Barbara Stapleton, remarked "the burden-sharing arrangement in Afghanistan with NATO member states was considered more of a necessity to enable a full U.S. military campaign in Iraq than a demonstration of U.S. confidence in NATO's capabilities."[39] The result was that even at this early stage, the international intervention lacked consensus on objectives while coordination between the U.S. and its NATO allies proved inadequate due to the lack of a unified strategy and fragmented civilian actors for security assistance to Afghanistan.[40]

The confusion over 'who is reporting to who' is not a new phenomenon in any coalition intervention, let alone military coalitions. NATO's mission in Afghanistan was certainly not immune to it. Many military officials in Afghanistan identified early on the effects of the lack of unity of command but not much of this criticism was translated into change of policy. Colonel Ian Hope, who served in Afghanistan, is one such official who attributes military failure to divergence from the principle of unity of command which he believes occurred in 2006: "Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A) passed control of the ground fight to ISAF and split operations between Commander U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), and Commander U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM)".[41] Colonel Hope concludes that the fraught politics of the 2000s dividing the US and Europe caused this fracture of command: "U.S. reluctance to work within NATO and European refusal to support U.S. unilateralism have created a fractured command structure that is abetting the Taliban insurgency and the forces of corruption that plague Afghanistan."[42]

However, most analysts including Colonel Hope point the finger at the division of responsibilities undertaken at Bonn in 2001. Individual nations

39. Stapleton, Barbara J. "Military And Civilian Assistance In Afghanistan: An Incoherent Approach." State Strengthening In Afghanistan: Lessons Learned, 2001–14. 19-34, USIP; Peaceworks, May 2016. P. 22. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW116-State-Strengthening-in-Afghanistan-Lessons-Learned-2001-14_0.pdf
40. Ibid. 30
41. Hope, Ian. "Unity Of Command In Afghanistan: A Forsaken Principle Of War." SSI, Novmber 2008. P. 1. https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2008/ssi_hope.pdf
42. Ibid. P. 12.

were pressured to take the lead in interrelated elements of Afghan government reform. For example, the justice sector was assisted by Italy; Japan was responsible for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; the United Kingdom managed counter-narcotics; police reform was overseen by Germany; and the building of a new Afghan army was the responsibility of the U.S.[43] Most of these nations were not coordinating their efforts with each other. The situation was furthermore complicated due to the multi-national sponsorship of the security sector with no unified expectations. For instance, Stapleton notes that in 2006, the training and institution-building of the Afghan police led by Germany was funded by "twenty-five countries and several international organizations, but there was no common vision on the kind of police force Afghanistan needed."[44] The multi-donor SSA resulted in a mismatch between the overlapping resources at hand and the institutional needs on the ground, a situation resulting in the handoff of Germany's responsibilities to the EU the very next year.

The lack of alignment of donor countries' priorities regarding security sector reform is visible in both NATO missions (ISAF and RSM) that concentrated on recruitment in the Afghan security forces under the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI) rather than prioritizing development of the scope of their work and the quality of the recruits. The international community also failed to align its security support with the needs of the Afghan security sector based on the needs of Afghan society and this is reflected by the lack of proper resources and processes to do so.

The duplication of programs and throwing heavy funding without any accountability mechanisms in place resulted in the institutionalization of corruption in the government institutions. Corruption contributes to the core of any institutional failure and the ANDSF is no different. The crucial points in counterinsurgencies, as Shultz argues, are the uncorrupt law enforcement and judicial systems which are part of the nation-building process.[45] The

43. Stapleton, Barbara J. "Military And Civilian Assistance In Afghanistan: An Incoherent Approach." State Strengthening In Afghanistan: Lessons Learned, 2001–14. 19-34, USIP; Peaceworks, May 2016. P. 23. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW116-State-Strengthening-in-Afghanistan-Lessons-Learned-2001-14_0.pdf
44. Stapleton, Barbara J. "Military And Civilian Assistance In Afghanistan: An Incoherent Approach." State Strengthening In Afghanistan: Lessons Learned, 2001–14. 19-34, USIP; Peaceworks, May 2016. P. 23. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW116-State-Strengthening-in-Afghanistan-Lessons-Learned-2001-14_0.pdf
45. Shultz, Richard. "Counterinsurgency History, Theory, Practice." Boston: The Fletcher School, November 14, 2018.

Afghan population has lost confidence in these two entities because neither can provide sufficient protection and law enforcement services to the public (a failure often stressed in the insurgents' propaganda). In the 1990s, the Taliban gained initial support from the Afghan public due to their promise to restore order and end the corrupt and predatory behavior of warlords. However, in 2001, during the U.S. Military operation "Operation Freedom," the U.S. brought these warlords back onboard, ignoring their human rights atrocities, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, land grabbing, illegal checkpoints, and corrupt behavior during the 1980s and 1990s.[46] For example, Marshal Fahim was appointed as Defense Minister, which entrenched his ability and others like him to use donor community resources for his patronage networks.[47] General John Allen, ISAF Commander has stated, "The existential threat to the long-term viability of modern Afghanistan is corruption." However, it is crucial to highlight that these warlords and corrupt individuals also benefited from the mismanagement of donor nations who did not dispute their control of Afghan institutions and allowed them to participate in resource extortion. The Taliban are using the same strategy of associating the Afghan central government and security forces with corruption to fuel grievances and gain support for their insurgency.

Parallel structures without local ownership was another big gap in NATO's mission in Afghanistan. Nation building in Afghanistan was agreed upon in the Bonn agreement of December 2001 which highlights nation building as the DDR of former militia, the building and training of the new Afghan National Army (ANA), the training of the Afghan National Police (ANP), the establishment of the jurisdictional system and counter-narcotics operations.[48] However, the question of who would take the responsibility of supporting the Afghan government in implementing these priorities was missing.

The lack of unified priorities for Afghanistan among the NATO states has resulted in duplication of efforts and neglect of local ownership to Afghans by many international organizations and individual countries

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46. "Corruption In Conflict: Lessons From The U.S. Experience In Afghanistan." SIGAR, 2016. https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/sigar-16-58-ll.pdf

47. Ibid.

48. Brandstetter, Gerd. "Action Building In Afghanistan: The German Provincial Reconstruction Team Concept—Means To Improve Efficiency Of Effort?" USAWC Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, March 18, 2005. P. 3. https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a431763.pdf

due to the absence of an authoritative lead institution that could align multiple assistance efforts. Other than the U.S.' military role, post conflict operations (either NATO-led or led by other international organizations in Afghanistan) remain vague. Afghanistan became a country in which many donor countries were running their own administrations and not reporting the progress of their programs to the Afghan government in a systematic manner. This situation was further exacerbated by the limited capacity of the Afghan government leading to the establishment of parallel structures by the international community which further undermined the credibility of Afghan local governance. The most prominent example of parallel structures are the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).

PRTs were established in 2002 to help improve the state authority and security in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. The goal was to bring civilian and military efforts together for the reconstruction of the country.[49] However, this goal was not shared or accepted by many NATO nations involved in Afghanistan. ISAF force member states were unwilling to participate in setting up their own PRTs. They argued that expanding their mission outside of Kabul into the provinces was not in their mandates. The result was the U.S. taking a greater share in the establishment of PRTs.[50] As with other matters in Afghanistan, PRTs were also implemented by different NATO states in different provinces of Afghanistan with different sets of goals and priorities with limited coordination among them. Although ISAF implemented PRTs, they were still managed and controlled by their respective national authorities.[51] There were several harms caused by the PRTs, most notably the way it was undermining state authority, overwhelming the capacity of subnational government to absorb resources, and imposing undesired and unsustainable projects on these subnational units.[52] Additionally, many aid budgets were made in the capitals of NATO nations rather than in Kabul.

49. Murtazashvili, Jennifer. "Subnational Governance In Afghanistan: Back To The Future." State Strengthening In Afghanistan: Lessons Learned, 2001–14. 53-67, USIP; Peaceworks, May 2016. P. 60. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW116-State-Strengthening-in-Afghanistan-Lessons-Learned-2001-14_0.pdf

50. Brandstetter, Gerd. "Action Building In Afghanistan: The German Provincial Reconstruction Team Concept—Means To Improve Efficiency Of Effort?" USAWC Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, March 18, 2005. P. 5. https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a431763.pdf

51. Stapleton, Barbara J. "Military And Civilian Assistance In Afghanistan: An Incoherent Approach." Peaceworks, May 2016.

52. Murtazashvili, Jennifer. "Subnational Governance In Afghanistan: Back To The Future." State Strengthening In Afghanistan: Lessons Learned, 2001–14. 53-67, USIP; Peaceworks, May 2016. P. 60.

The priority was given to designing projects that could absorb the funding while ignoring the needs and capacities of the subnational units in the Afghan institutions. As a result, most of the military and civilian projects were unaligned with Afghan national development strategies.

The NATO mission not only ignored focusing on the needs of the people but also undermined security threats face by women that could have been dealt with by including women in the security sector. Afghan women rarely feel protected under the current law enforcement forces because men in Afghanistan do not identify with the security threats faced by women.[53] Some civil society groups and donor countries pushed on behalf of the needs of women in the security sector but women's inclusion in the Afghan public sector overall was mostly done to satisfy these donors' requirements rather than as a recognized institutional need.[54] Both the Afghan government and NATO missions have failed to identify the scope and importance of women in the security sector. Thus, women are included at some levels in the security sector but with limited scope and without being properly utilized as force multipliers. As one of the senior officials of RSM stated, most women in the MoD do not have an office space or necessary facilities.[55] This officer argued that the biggest problem is prioritization. The international community pushed for increasing the numbers of women and the Afghan government brought those numbers but without the proper scope and planning for it. The RSM advisors are told to reach a quota of how many women should be recruited rather than first reforming the structure to accommodate women, further revealing the ad hoc methodology of SSR in Afghanistan. Being inclusive to women in the security sector (and really in any part of the Afghan public sector) is seen as a luxury and a sideshow compared to more mainstream reform issues. Although traditional cultural norms and insecurity are key challenges facing Afghan women throughout Afghan society and the ANDSF,[56] structural barriers remain the top obstacles for women's effective inclusion in the security sector.[57]

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53. Sarwar, Halima, Executive Director of Paywand Afghanan, A Civil Society Organization for Women Access to Legal resources, Interview by author, May 26, 2018.

54. Dostyar, Aref, Director General for International Relations and Regional Cooperation Office of the National Security Council Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Interview by author, May 22, 2018.

55. Officer, US Special Forces. Interview by author. Posted to US mission in 2011 and 2016, August 2018.

56. Austen, Abigail. Interview by Lima Ahmad. Enduring Partnership Coordination Cell, June 26, 2018.

57. Gerber, Rebekah. Interview by Lima Ahmad. MoD Senior Gender Advisor NATO Resolute Support Mission. November 16, 2018.

The Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Operations at NATO, John Manza, stated in a 2017 interview "we are not doing enough and I would give us an "F" in Projecting Stability" though he sees Projecting Stability as less fundamental to NATO interests than traditional deterrence and defense.[58] Even so, the lessons learned from NATO's missions in Afghanistan are used to qualify NATO's capabilities for implementing the 'Projecting Stability' model. In reality, NATO lost credibility in Afghanistan as an organization that could provide SSR support to failing and fragile states. Thus, gaining the trust of the donor nations in NATO's capabilities requires concrete measures within NATO and its member states to align their commitments and objectives with the resources and commitments they opt for 'Projecting Stability.' It is also important that the host governments of those failing and fragile states trust the capabilities of NATO in providing them with SSR support. The 'Projecting Stability' model should be less affected by member states' different political priorities and more technical in nature, implemented on the basis of the security needs of partner nations. Additionally, if most of NATO's decisions are made only by one country (and predominately by the U.S.), then it will be tough to utilize the full commitment of other NATO countries. If NATO missions in Afghanistan are the examples of NATO's capabilities, then NATO is surely not the right organization for implementing a "Projecting Stability" model because it lacks a unified SSR/SSA model.

Conclusion

The U.S. and its NATO allies' engagement in Afghanistan, in addition to countering terrorism, was meant to strengthen the state's capacity not only to maintain a monopoly of power over a strong security sector but also be able to have functioning local governments and state institutions. Noting the scale of the objectives being simultaneously undertaken, former EU Senior Policy Adviser Stapleton wryly adds: "...priorities [were] determined as much by the electoral, budgetary, and news cycles of leading NATO member states as by conditions in Afghanistan."[59] Furthermore, many NATO states

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58. Rousselet, Lelia. "John Manza gives NATO an "F" in Projecting Stability." The German Marshal Fund of the United States (GMF), December 13, 2017. https://www.gmfus.org/blog/2017/12/13/john-manza-gives-nato-f-projecting-stability

59. Stapleton, Barbara J. "Military And Civilian Assistance In Afghanistan: An Incoherent Approach." Peaceworks, May 2016. P. 21.

committed to the SSA/SSR missions because the U.S. needed such burden-sharing in order to focus on Iraq. The lack of unity of commitments by the U.S. and NATO may have helped grow the number of security forces but capacity building on the civilian side of Afghan institutions remained pretty much ignored especially in the provinces.[60] This lack of commitment to unifying goals resulted in different international actors following their own individual interests and preferences in an uncoordinated manner.

The absence of an integrated strategy that included political-military, economic, and humanitarian elements in the nation-building model caused every NATO nation to implement their version of security assistance models in different institutions and provinces of Afghanistan. Additionally, the decisions about projects and training were made by different NATO states with separate chains of command in their capitals, not Kabul.[61] Unfortunately, in Afghanistan, there was no consensus on a unified SSR. Once called a post-conflict state, Afghanistan has again become a conflict state. It was once a perfect case of a post-conflict environment, where a comprehensive SSR strategy with unifying goals could have made it a success story. Dr. Hanlon and Dr. Shultz explain that in a state where conflict is still ongoing, "putting police officers back in the classroom to learn the new rules of democratic policing or changing basic police procedures while the institution is fighting for its life is not practical. Nor realistic."[62] Therefore, it is hard to imagine implementing SSR in a holistic way in Afghanistan today because the government does not have a monopoly of force, nor can it provide basic services. This has cost the government its credibility among a majority of the Afghan public.

The model of 'Projecting Stability' will not work if it is only a SSA with its traditional purpose of solely training and equipping security forces. A successful "Projecting Stability" needs the commitment of the NATO countries, the political will for security assistance with local ownership, under the "broader umbrella" of an SSR approach with a unity of effort by the NATO

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60. Murtazashvili, Jennifer. "Subnational Governance In Afghanistan: Back To The Future." State Strengthening In Afghanistan: Lessons Learned, 2001–14. 53-67, USIP; Peaceworks, May 2016. P. 64.

61. Ibid. 61

62. Hanlon, Querine and Richard H. Shultz, JR. "Prioritizing Security Sector Reform: A New U.S. Approach." Washington D.C: USIP, 2016. Pp: 3-14.

donor countries. It is important to achieve the full commitment of the host nations where the 'projecting stability' model is going to be implemented. If the locals in those nations are not onboard, it will be complicated for NATO to implement their strategy of stabilizing their "neighborhood." Shultz argues that a "large, multiyear Afghanistan-era engagement can no longer be sustained…" but the engagement in Afghanistan is not prolonged because of the SSR model but rather because of the absence of a well-designed SSR strategy which resulted in the duplication of efforts and programs.

Policy Recommendations

It is clear that SSR will not be successful without the active participation of national actors in countries undergoing SSR. SSR expert Mark Sedra warns, however, that the "effectiveness of the security sector is not just measured by the capacity of the security forces, but how well they are managed, monitored and held accountable."[63] The 'Projecting Stability' model can play a positive role in the security environment of our world today where saving weak and failing states from becoming safe heavens of terrorists and armed groups has become a necessity, not an option. The following are some of the lessons learned from the Afghanistan case that NATO needs to incorporate into its SSR model:

- Unified SSR Strategy for NATO: NATO nations must develop a unified strategy that encompasses the principles of SSR in its holistic meaning. NATO should not only focus on strengthening the security forces but also ensure that they aren't leaving the civilian side of the state in deteriorating conditions as is the current result in Afghanistan today.

- Unity of Command: Unity of command is one of the key issues that NATO has to develop to avoid the mission creep that has prolonged operations in Afghanistan. Unity of command is also crucial for NATO to avoid duplication of programs for implementation of SSR that would result in the waste of resources.

- Ensuring National Ownership of SSR Processes: In failed and post-conflict states, SSR models should not merely be imposed by external

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63. Sedra, Mark. "Introduction: The Future Of Security Sector Reform." The Future of Security Sector Reform, The Centre For International Governance Innovation (CIGI), 2010. P: 16.

actors as this eventually results in failed SSR. It is vital to achieve the full commitment of the host nations where the 'Projecting Stability' model is implemented because, if the locals in those nations are not onboard, it will be challenging for NATO to implement their strategy successfully.

- Role of NATO Nations in Supporting SSR: For the success of SSR programming, external support, particularly in post-conflict contexts, is also vital. However, external support should not be uncoordinated as witnessed in Afghanistan. Additionally, external support for implementing SSR must avoid incoherence between the policies and the funding for implementing these policies which can happen due to the difference in political commitments of NATO states towards the host states. Therefore, NATO states have to work on coherence and maintain long-term, sustainable financial commitments for implementing 'Projecting Stability'.