IN BRIEF

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Security Sector Reform: Defence Diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

The aftermath of the Cold War and the tragic events of 9/11 have forced western nations to re-examine the principles according to which they manage the international environment. The conflicts in the Balkans during the 1990s taught that ethnic hatred can still be a far stronger motivator than reason. 9/11 taught North America that its once-vaunted security is far more vulnerable than it had thought. In addition, the world has also had to come to grips with a variety of so-called "non-traditional" security threats, including environmental degradation, global warming, potential pandemics, failed states, transnational crime, etc.

When George F. Kennan penned "the Long Telegram" in 1946[1] outlining his views on how best to meet the growing Soviet threat, he realized that military might, although essential, would not in itself prove sufficient. While Moscow was "impervious to the logic of reason" but "highly sensitive to the logic of force," in the long run the principal tools required were to be economic, political, cultural and diplomatic. In order to be effective, the strategy of "containment" would have to comprise much more than military superiority.

Kennan proved the major architect of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War. It was because of his profound understanding of the complexity of the strategic environment, and the views of others like him, that the post-World War II period saw the development and growth of a variety of multilateral institutions. Along with a strong military, these institutions helped the West confront the moral and strategic challenges of the Cold War.

A NEW DISCOURSE

Today, the world faces equally serious challenges and has begun to develop "appropriate" mechanisms and concepts for dealing with them. Just as Kennan and his generation of visionaries understood, our generation too will need to use a mixture of military and civilian means. Indeed, we have adopted a discourse informed by a broader and more subtle set of concepts than previously possible. We speak of human security, capacity building, the sanctity of the individual, multilateralism, and the need to hold the authority of states themselves accountable.

It is no longer accepted that the pursuit of genuine security for human beings, as individuals, is necessarily subversive of the foundations of international society. Intervention in the behaviour of states to protect individuals is now deemed an accepted principle of international relations. In fact, Rwanda has taught that it can, at times, be an obligation. These views entail far more than the musings of disaffected intellectuals and idealists. They are attempts to come to terms with a reality that is not fully comprehended or accepted. What is certain is that today "security" means coming to terms with forms of domination and insecurities that had long been ignored or sacrificed on the altar of "realpolitik."

The primacy of the state in strategic thinking permitted a gap to develop between the meaning of the term security as applied to individuals and its meaning for the state. For security to make sense at the international level, it must make sense at the basic level of the individual human being. Thus, attempts to understand the complexities of security threats need to look not only to the perceptions and histories of statesmen and diplomats; they also need to take into account the experiences of those rendered insecure by

the present world order. While developed nations continue to speak of the importance of foreign aid, they now also accept the fact that the principle of state sovereignty can be breached in order to save those victimized by the state and its agents. Human security, first and foremost, entails physical security – the basic security of the individual. Without such security, foreign aid remains little more than a cheap meal on the road to continuing despair.

The language of realpolitik is slowly giving way to the more nuanced and humanitarian principles of "soft" power and human security. This new lexicon has enabled the West to widen its horizons and to put on the table security concerns formerly relegated to subsidiary, if any, relevance. It is, in part, because of this rethinking that we can seriously ponder the implications of a variety of so-called non-traditional threats for our long-term "common security" interests.

Needless to say, attempts to deal with the dislocations of the post-Cold War era have not been particularly successful. When looking at the failures of Rwanda and Somalia, the continuing struggle in Afghanistan, failed states like Haiti, and the fiasco in Iraq, western nations are led to wonder whether events have run ahead of our understanding or whether we simply lack the institutional capabilities for dealing with them. If our understanding is such that we cannot really grasp what is transpiring, then our ability either to construct or to restructure relevant institutions will be seriously hampered.

A NEW MISSION

Defence diplomacy is one of the organizing principles used to help the West come to terms with the new international security environment. It has become an increasingly important component of the "whole of government" approach, and in the United Kingdom defence diplomacy has been made one of the military's eight "defence missions." The United Kingdom began work on security sector reform in 2000. Early in the process, planners realized that new policy frameworks would be required if Britain's efforts in conflict prevention were to be effective. While relevant ministries drew up policy papers, it soon became clear that a joint approach to security sector reform required a common policy framework.[2] The government went on to set up a security sector reform policy committee and an informal interdepartmental strategy was then developed.[3]

Planners also created two interdepartmental funding pools, the Global Conflict Prevention Pool and the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool, in order to improve the United Kingdom's conflict prevention policy and effectiveness through joint analysis, long-term strategies, and improved coordination with international partners. Much of the U.K. security sector reform work is financed through these two pools, which receive both overseas development assistance (ODA) and non-ODA funds for programs based on agreed Ministry of Defence (MOD), Department for International Development (DFID) and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) strategies. In order to promote stronger adherence to the common framework, the U.K. Treasury contributes additional resources to the pools beyond those committed by the foregoing ministries. The Netherlands has also established a "Stability Fund" in order to provide for coherence through pooled funding, as well as an integrated policy-driven approach to security and development issues.[4]

The consensus seems to be that U.K. interventions have proven more effective when based on a shared analysis of a conflict and a joint response. Such an approach also makes for a better synergy between government policy and operations. The conflict prevention pool approach has also been helpful in giving the Treasury a better understanding of the issues faced by the departments on the ground. Both pools have a peacekeeping and a program component. The peacekeeping component covers the United Kingdom's assessed and voluntary contributions to international peacekeeping and related operations. The program component is further subdivided into country or regional strategies and thematic strategies, like security sector reform. A parliamentary vote decides the settlement figure given to pools, which incorporates an extra top-up amount to encourage interdepartmental collaboration.[5]

Money contributed to the Global Pool by the four departments is managed by the FCO, and funding for the Africa Pool is managed by the DFID. Once activities are agreed upon, they are examined by the DFID for ODA eligibility. The strength of this approach lies in the fact that "distinct roles remain for development and security sectors, [while] working under one overarching security system reform policy in a coherent way with relevant departments."[6] Also, under such a scheme, development agencies can better comprehend and have an increased impact on security-related issues when they are vital for development goals. It is important that development

agencies establish effective partnerships with their defence and security counterparts, especially when operating in areas where their effectiveness might be restricted because of security issues.[7]

It is then easy to see how defence diplomacy fits into the overall policy framework. Its basic aim is "to provide forces to meet the varied activities undertaken by the MOD to dispel hostility, build and maintain trust and assist in the development of democratically accountable armed forces, thereby making a significant contribution to conflict prevention and resolution." Included in the mission are a number of military tasks, e.g.:

- arms control, non-proliferation, and confidence and security building measures;

- outreach (advice and assistance to countries);

- other defence diplomacy activities.[8]

Recognizing the importance of security sector reform and defence diplomacy, the United Kingdom also established what is called the Defence Advisory Team (DAT) in 2001. Today the DAT provides advice and assistance on governance and civil military relations, defence reviews, defence organization, force structures, procurement and logistics, and change management, financial and human resource management and development in the defence sector. Since the DAT's inception, the U.K. government has significantly increased its funding.

The British approach to security reform and defence diplomacy might prove a useful model for Canadian policy makers. The integrated policy framework and pooled funds provide an important degree of flexibility and efficiency when addressing security concerns. The type of approach envisaged would, of course, require both cooperation and coordination among several government departments and agencies, including the Canadian International Development Agency, the Department of National Defence, Foreign Affairs Canada, Finance, and the Privy Council Office.

Given Canada's ongoing commitment to peacekeeping and the 3D approach (Defence, Diplomacy, and Development), policy makers might do well to look at the British model as a way of organizing our "whole of government" approach to security matters.

(1) Kennan wrote this telegram while serving as an American diplomat in Moscow. He came to call his policy "containment" and outlined its principles in an article published the next year in *Foreign Affairs*; he signed the article with an X.

(2) The Department for International Development developed two policy statements, one for security sector reform and one for Safety, Security and Access to justice. The Ministry of Defence developed a policy paper on defence diplomacy.

(3) See David Pratt, *Re-tooling for New Challenges: Parliaments as Peace Builders*, The Parliamentary Centre, Ottawa, 2005.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 40. See also OECD, *Security System Reform and Governance: Policy and Good Practice*, 2004, pp. 20-22.

(5) OECD (2004), pp. 21-22.

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 24.

(7) Pratt (2005), p. 41.

(8) United Kingdom, *Defence Diplomacy,* Ministry of Defence Policy Paper No. 1, pp. 2-3.