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# Contents

Preface .................................................. 4

1. The Security Sector/System ......................... 5

2. Reforming the Security Sector ....................... 8
   2.1 Political transitions ............................. 8
   2.2 Post-conflict SSR ............................... 11

3. Counterterrorism: Fighting an Elusive Enemy ...... 14
   3.1 Counterterrorism and the Defence Dilemma .... 14
   3.2 Preventative counterterrorism ................... 16
   3.3 Counterterrorism and active defence .......... 18
   3.4 Passive defence against terrorism .......... 20

4. Security Sector Reform and Counterterrorism ...... 23
   4.1 SSR and counterterrorism in and for the West .... 23
   4.2 SSR and counterterrorism in the South, for the West .... 26
   4.3 SSR and counterterrorism in and for the South .... 28

5. Conclusion ........................................... 31

6. Notes ............................................... 32
Preface

In the following report, the notion of security sector reform will be explored with a particular focus on its application to countries in the Third World. Even though any country might at any time decide to embark on a reform of its security sector, the concept has mainly been applied as an integral component of the process of transition from dictatorship to democracy, or from war to peace. This is where the present report also focuses.

The main emphasis is on the armed forces, even though the security sector is much broader than this, including also the police, judiciary and the penal system. It further narrows its focus by only including the statutory components (i.e. those belonging to the state and regulated by law) and largely disregarding the non-statutory elements of what might be called the security sector, including the functional equivalents of the statutory components.

It is further explored whether, or to what extent, security sector reform may help prevent, contain, or defeat terrorism, i.e. whether it might become an integral part of the global “war on terror.” In order to ascertain this, however, it first looks at various possible approaches to counterterrorism, distinguishing between prevention, active, and passive defence. In the final chapter, where security sector reform and counter-terrorism are considered in tandem, the analysis makes a distinction between three different settings: reform of the security sectors of the West for the sake of its own security against terrorism; reform of Third World security sector as a contribution to the same end; and, finally, security sector reform in Third World countries for the sake of their own security against what they regard as terrorist threats.
1. The Security Sector/System

“Security sector reform” (SSR) has become a prominent “buzzword” within the international donor community as well as international organisations, within and among which a general consensus has been reached about how to delimit the security sector and how to go about reforming it, at least in general terms. Moreover, there is a general willingness to support and fund SSR, which may go a long way towards explaining the apparent interest in SSR initiatives in recipient countries, mainly in the Third World.

The Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) occupies a central position within the donor community as it decides what to count as official development assistance (ODA). Not only because of this position of authority, but also because it has in fact published several works on SSR, representing the state-of-the-art of the discipline, it makes sense to take its conceptualisation as our analytical point of departure.

A certain conceptual confusion remains, however, partly pertaining to the term itself. Whereas OECD-DAC has decided to promote the term security system,1 most agencies continue to use the term security sector.2 What exacerbates this terminological confusion is that both terms use the same acronym, SSR. Even though the OECD DAC claims that the two terms are synonymous,3 there seems to be a certain conceptual distinction between how the two terms are used. The term “security sector” is often conceived as somewhat narrower than “security system,” usually by excluding the non-statutory elements.4 Occasionally, the terms security sector or system are used to include the justice sector, whereas in other cases the two sectors are kept separate whilst acknowledging a partial overlap.5 Moreover, as far as SSR is concerned, it is sometimes used as including disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants as well as initiatives pertaining to small arms and light weapons (SALW). In other contexts, SSR is conceptualised as excluding DDR and SALW initiatives, even though the need for simultaneity is usually acknowledged.

In the following, we shall stick to the term security sector, whilst using the following OECD DAC definition of the security system as our point of departure, as its broad and comprehensive scope seems warranted.
Core security actors (e.g. armed forces, police, gendarmerie, border guards, customs and immigration, and intelligence and security services); security management and oversight bodies (e.g. ministries of defence and internal affairs, financial management bodies and public complaints commissions); justice and law enforcement institutions (e.g. the judiciary, prisons, prosecution services, traditional justice systems); and non-statutory security forces (e.g. private security companies, guerrilla armies and private militia).\textsuperscript{6}

Fig 1: Security Sector(s) and System
Even though the main focus will be placed on the statutory elements, and especially the military, it is important to keep in mind that the field is still very wide. For practically every formal or statutory security agency there is a fairly close counterpart or functional equivalent in the form of a non-statutory agency belonging to the informal sector (see Table 1), which tends to be very large, especially in Third World and/or post-conflict countries. What further blurs the picture is that all agencies belonging to the security sector or system are multifunctional, some of which have little to do with security. Moreover, as quite a few of them provide security for their clients by generating insecurity for others, it is not always clear whether they are security providers or the exact opposite.

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<tr>
<th>Formal/Statutory</th>
<th>Informal/Non-Statutory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Armed Forces (Regular and home guard/territorial defence)</td>
<td>Rebel/guerrilla groups Pro-government militias Self-defence groups Private military companies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police (Regular and gendarmerie)</td>
<td>Vigilante groups Neighbourhood watch groups Court militias Private security companies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intelligence (external and internal)</td>
<td>Networks of informants “The grapevine”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judiciary (courts, judges, lawyers)</td>
<td>Informal courts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penal system (prisons)</td>
<td>Executioners, avengers Collectors of compensations</td>
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It is thus far from evident how to define or delimit the security sector, which inevitably has implications for the reform analysis.
2. Reforming the Security Sector

The statutory security sector is constantly undergoing change, as new regulations are adopted, new armaments or other equipment introduced, new procedures implemented, and bureaucratic reorganisations are undertaken, etc. It would seem bizarre to use the term SSR for each and every step in this continuous process, and more sensible to reserve it for such major reform “packages” that both explicitly intend to, and actually do, affect major changes. It seems less reasonable to define the concept in terms of who is undertaking the reform or whether it is for the better or worse - even though there seems to be a strong tendency to do just that.

Just because the term SSR has recently entered the donor vocabulary, it does not follow that the donor countries and international agencies have invented the phenomenon or the concept (as opposed to the term), and that it should thus presuppose external involvement. Moreover, reforms are invariably viewed by those undertaking them as positive, however much others may disagree. It is possible to adopt a teleological approach to definition, reserving the term reform for perceived improvements, but this assumes that one’s own values are universally valid. Be that as it may, at least in the West, there seems to be a general consensus on what to aim for. The OECD DAC Handbook lists four overarching objectives of SSR:

1. Establishment of effective governance, oversight and accountability in the security system.
2. Improved delivery of security and justice services.
3. Development of local leadership and ownership of the reform process.
4. Sustainability of justice and security service delivery.

History has seen many consecutive SSRs. Indeed, what are usually referred to as “military revolutions” almost inevitably entail SSR. However, we shall bypass the history of security sector reforms and concentrate on what is usually referred to as SSRs. Such SSRs have mainly been undertaken under certain “special circumstances” such as “political transitions” and following wars or other armed conflicts.

2.1 Political transitions

As far as transitions from military dictatorship to civilian rule is concerned SSR has mainly been intended as an antidote to “praetorianism.”
While this term usually connotes the interference by the military in politics pure and simple,11 it may make sense to distinguish between different forms of praetorianism. Under “direct praetorianism” the military launches a coup, deposes a civilian government and exercises power directly, whereas under “indirect praetorianism” the armed forces exercise political power behind the scenes. As far as motives are concerned, they may either be “predatory” or “patriotic.” In the former the military takes power in order to protect, and ideally, enhance its own privileges and the military rulers usually have no intention to relinquish power voluntarily. In the latter, the military usually does intend to hand back power to civilian leaders and their take-over is primarily motivated by a wish to “save the nation from itself” e.g. against corrupt civilian politicians or against policies not serving “the national interest”. The distinctions are far from clear-cut. Indirect praetorianism presupposes the possibility of, and contingency plans for, direct praetorianism; and because it is entirely possible that even the most patriotic praetorian rulers may take a liking to power and the economic and other benefits to be derived from it, thus gradually being transformed into predatory rulers.

The most obvious safeguards against praetorianism are reforms of civil-military relations (CMR). This is sometimes rendered as civilian supremacy, but David Chuter has made a convincing case for focusing on civil supremacy, i.e. of institutionalising the norm that the armed forces should serve the civis, i.e. the state, which may or may not be personified by civilians.12 A reform of CMR entails the institution of various control mechanisms intended to prevent the armed forces from going against the will of the political leaders. In most cases, this is a matter of what Samuel Huntington called “objective civilian control” or “professionalisation,” transforming the military into a politically neutral instrument for any legitimate government.13

Even though it does not follow logically from the principle of civil supremacy, professionalisation has usually been accompanied by a quest for democratisation of CMR,14 which may, mean at least two different things: Either the granting of democratic rights to soldiers, now conceived as “citoyens soldats” or “Staatsbürger in Uniform” enjoying the same rights as other citizens;15 or the democratic control of, or at least oversight over, the executive’s control of the armed forces. The latter is usually taken to mean measures of parliamentary control going beyond the legislature’s traditional “power of the purse” to include parliamentary control commissions etc. and the monitoring of all military activity.
The issue of professionalism has been particularly prominent with regard to the second set of cases, to which the term SSR has been applied—the transition from communism or other forms of totalitarianism to democracy-cum-capitalism. Each of these have in the past, seen at least one SSR, the essence of which has been to bring security sector information in line with the ideology of the new totalitarian rulers. Some have subsequently experienced a “remedial” reform, intended to remove the very same ideological element from the security forces—to which the term SSR is usually, (rather illogically), reserved. Quite a few SSR processes have thus been undertaken, often with the enthusiastic support of the West, in the former communist countries in Europe.\textsuperscript{16}

Some of these considerations apply to countries with a Baath’ist ideology, such as Syria and Iraq. The Iraqi security sector had been quite thoroughly reformed, albeit almost exclusively with a view to protect the incumbent dictator.\textsuperscript{17} Whereas there was an obvious need for a second SSR following the overthrow of the regime, it was implemented so poorly that it may well be the most counter-productive SSR ever undertaken. Having invaded Iraq, encountering very little resistance, and having decisively defeated the Iraqi army, the Coalition Transitional Authority (CTA) disbanded, with the stroke of a pen, the entire Iraqi security sector.\textsuperscript{18} The predictable result was widespread looting and sabotage, leaving the country and its civilian population in conditions resembling those of failed states. Subsequently, a thorough “de-baathification” was ordered, beginning with a formal disestablishment of the party and followed up with a set of criteria for dismissal, and in some cases, detention and conviction, based exclusively on party membership, rather than on the actual behaviour of the persons in question. An order was issued to commence with the creation of a new Iraqi army, a Civil Defense Corps was established, and steps were taken to establish a national intelligence service.\textsuperscript{19} In the meantime, however, a number of militias had sprung up, partly based on ethnic or religious affiliation – some being Kurdish, others Sunni and Shia Arabs, respectively.\textsuperscript{20} Whether labelling all or at least some of these rebels and militias “terrorists” is debatable,\textsuperscript{21} as some could also be seen as security providers for their respective communities, whereas others are waging a resistance struggle against foreign occupation. Another non-statutory element has been private security companies (PSC), for the extensive use of which provisions were made from the very beginning. The private military and security sector therefore experienced a sudden upsurge, with tens of thousands of private military companies’ (PMC) staff or PSC staff operating alongside, but not always co-operating smoothly with, the coalition forces and the fledgling Iraqi army and police forces, and with very little accountability.\textsuperscript{22}
Certain religious “ideologies” have unmistakable similarities with totalitarian political ones such as nationalist socialism or communism. When adherents of such “totalitarian religions” assume power in order to establish a “theocracy,” they often seek to ensure religious control of the armed forces and the rest of the security sector. This was the case of Afghanistan during the reign of the Taliban, who had by 1996 taken over Kabul and most of the rest of the country. The Taliban proceeded to rebuild the security sector around their original nucleus, which was subsequently transformed into the national armed forces. When the Taliban regime was defeated and ousted in 2001, the USA and its “coalition of the willing” thus faced the challenge of implementing (at least) a remedial SSR. This task was complicated by the fact that the coalition had collaborated closely with the Northern Alliance, a loose alliance of insurgents, the leaders of which were subsequently co-opted into the new Afghan government. The coalition and the United Nations (in a collaboration that was not always smooth and harmonious) then embarked on a post-conflict peace-building programme, including elements of SSR such as a DDR programme (but which excluded former Taliban combatants) and the building of a new Afghan Army, as well as reform of the National Police and prison system. Although it is too early to evaluate these processes, success is currently hampered by the fact that numerous warlords and their troops were incorporated without proper vetting, and that the defeated Taliban forces continue their resistance. At the time of writing, they seemed to be gaining ground and it does not seem inconceivable that they may eventually prevail. Moreover, as the new statutory security forces remain utterly unable to provide any satisfactory degree of security, the population seems to have largely resorted to self-help, based on their traditional tribal, clan and village communities.

2.2 Post-conflict SSR
Besides political transitions, SSR has also often been a component in post-conflict settlements.

Victories in war have historically almost always been followed by punitive measures, enforced by the victors on the vanquished, usually accompanied by attempts to curtail the military power of the latter. Both world wars of the 20th Century were thus followed by elements of SSR, e.g. in Germany. Following the First World War, the Versailles Treaty regulated the German military, largely, in terms of its size. After the Second World War, having first abolished the Wehrmacht, the Western powers subsequently allowed, and actually promoted a German rearmament, while firmly embedding the Bundeswehr in NATO. Moreover, provisions were made in
the constitution prohibiting the use of the Bundeswehr for offensive missions. The treatment of defeated Japan was arguably even more rigorous, as the post-war constitution simply denied Japan the right to a military. Even though these restraints may be gradually eroding, it is nevertheless significant how slowly and cautiously this has happened. Anti-militarism thus seems to have become internalised to a very large extent in these countries.

Since the end of the Second World War, most wars have been internal i.e. within states. Such intra-state or civil wars may either end with a clear victory of one side over the other(s), with a negotiated settlement between the two sides, or with a decisive defeat for an incumbent government, yet with no victor in a position to take over the reigns of government. Each type of war ending is likely to result in a different kind of SSR as summarised in Table 2. A negotiated settlement is by far the most common way for a civil war to come to an end, and it usually involves a degree of power-sharing, often also extending to the security sector. From 1989 to 2005, 38 per cent of peace agreements included provisions for military integration. Integration of former enemies constitutes a major SSR in itself, but it is often also accompanied by other forms of SSR, often within the framework of a more comprehensive programme of post-conflict peace-building — usually organised as a companion and follow-up to a peace-keeping operation. SSR is thus usually conceived of as an integral element of post-conflict peace-building, which also includes other elements such as post-war reconstruction, governance reforms, state-building; and provisions for transitional justice.

<table>
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<th>Table 2: Civil War Endings</th>
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<td><strong>Victors</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Troops</strong></td>
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<td>Government</td>
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<td>Rebels</td>
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A central element in SSR in this context is DDR, which is usually one of the first measures to be implemented after the signing of a peace treaty or a ceasefire. There is nothing new in the disarmament and demobilisation elements, as all concluding wars have included elements of both disarmament and demobilisation. Disarmament is, however, an inherently risky venture, as being the only one to lay down arms makes both the disarming group and its individual members vulnerable. Hence, there is a need for a calibrated sequencing of steps, and often for the insertion of impartial peacekeepers as an insurance to either side against non-compliance. What is relatively new is the reintegration element of DDR, including the certainty of compensation to the former combatants, either in cash, in the form of vocational training, or by other means, all intending to ensure that the former combatants have alternatives to living by the gun.

Next comes the creation of new security forces (army, police, etc.), the creation of institutions to hold these security forces accountable, and the adoption of new security and defence doctrines. Especially as far as the police is concerned, SSR is often taken to refer to the relationship between the police and the local communities. As far as CMR are concerned, this will mainly be a matter of ensuring democratic accountability—which is all the more complicated because of the weak state structures arising from armed conflict. Finally, the post-conflict state also needs to adopt and implement a new security policy and defence doctrine, taking into account the end to the civil war, and the resulting changed security situation.

We have seen that security sector reform may be conceptualised more broadly than is usually the case. Indeed, the above account has almost exclusively focused on the armed forces. Had the scope of the paper and the expertise of its author permitted a comparable treatment of the police, the judiciary, the intelligence agencies and the penal system, the complexity would have increased considerably, reflecting the multifaceted nature of SSR. We shall now proceed to elaborate on “the basics” of counterterrorism before connecting the threads by looking at the demands of counterterrorism on SSR.
3. **Counterterrorism: Fighting an Elusive Enemy**

Counterterrorism is a complex undertaking because it entails fighting an enemy which is elusive in more than one respect. First of all, it is difficult to devise a logically consistent and practically workable definition of terrorism and all the related terms such as terror, terrorists and terrorist groups or organisations. Secondly, it has proven just as impossible politically to reach agreement on any concrete definitions on the designation of of terrorists and terrorist groups that are acceptable for all parties. In the following we shall take as our point of departure a tentative definition of terrorism defined as “large-scale and deliberate violence against civilians, perpetrated by non-state actors for non-selfish ends.”

Thirdly, the very nature of terrorism makes it exceptionally elusive, as it is often conducted by loose clandestine networks rather than by formal organisations. Finally, like guerrilla movements and armies—but even more so—terrorists fight in a manner emphasising and capitalising on their very elusiveness, avoiding pitched battles, and preferring “swarming” (in the sense of remaining dispersed until striking and then dispersing again) to ordinary troop concentration, thus blending in with the civilian population, etc.

3.1 **Counterterrorism and the Defence Dilemma**

Before embarking on counterterrorism, the first question political decision-makers need to address is what priority to assign to such policies. The question has obvious budgetary implications, but it is not merely a matter of economics, but also of a willingness to sacrifice other societal values such as freedom and human rights for the sake of protection against terrorist attack. It is conceivable that measures taken under the pretence of safeguarding security and other values against terrorism may in fact undermine those very same values—a phenomenon for which Barry Buzan coined the term “defence dilemma.”

According to the statistics of the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) Terrorism Knowledge Base the world’s total death toll from international terrorism over the last 39 years (1968-2006) has been 10,037 deaths, i.e. 257 per year (see Fig. 2). While terrorist attack has thus been one of the least likely ways of losing one’s life, almost everywhere, almost all the time, there is of course more to it than this.
First of all, there is the fear of even worse to come, as explicitly threatened by Al Qaeda. The possible threat of catastrophic or even “apocalyptic” terrorism has usually been associated with the risk of terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction. However, a closer look at the destructive potential of the various categories and weapons which are usually lumped together as WMD (nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons), and the skills and resources required to produce them shows an inverse correlation. The more likely an attack the less its destructive potential and vice versa, which should certainly provide some consolation. Secondly, there are, of course, the economic and other consequences of terrorist attacks. For instance, the direct costs of the 9/11 (clean-up, reconstruction of buildings, etc.) should also include the additional indirect costs following from loss of confidence, higher insurance premiums and the like. Whereas the United States was quite good at recuperating from the attack, if something similar had happened to a weaker and more fragile economy, it might well have precipitated a major crisis or even a total economic collapse.

Fig. 2: International Terrorism 1968-2006
Irrespective of the dubious rationality, terrorism seems to have been effectively “securitised,” i.e. discursively constructed as a security problem of existential importance and considerable urgency, hence demanding and therefore justifying a resort to extraordinary measures. To proclaim a global “war on terror,” as US President Bush did, is clearly an instance of securitisation, even considering that the United States has something of a tradition of proclaiming “wars” against such phenomena as drugs, crime, abortion, and even obesity. This securitisation has, among other things, allowed for justifying infringement on civil liberties, the establishment of a legal no-man’s-land at Guantanamo, etc. It may also be used as justification of security reform measures that might otherwise not have been deemed appropriate, e.g. for more relaxed civilian controls of the security services, if this were believed necessary to boost their effectiveness. Perhaps even more significantly, the proclamation of wars seems to imply that the brunt of the fighting will fall on the military rather than on other components of the security sector.

Whether terrorism has been securitised to the same extent, or at all, in the rest of the world is less obvious. Notwithstanding repeated references to terrorism as a security threat by just about every government in the world, most governments have in fact refrained from resorting to the extraordinary measures. This is, for instance, the case of the European Union, which has repeatedly underlined the need for continued adherence to, e.g., human rights standards.

Having now, hopefully, demonstrated that terrorism can be securitised, in the form of, for example, a declaration of “war,” we are faced with the question of how it may be waged. One approach is to distinguish between three basic options for grand strategies, which may of course be combined, and all of which have strategic as well as tactical implications. The distinction is mainly one of timing, prevention seeking to address the motives of potential terrorists in order to avoid the hatching of plans of terrorist attacks; active defence seeking to prevent the actual launch of such attacks; and passive defence aiming to minimise the consequences. The more successful the first set of measures, the less there will be a need for the second and third set, but it would surely be unwise to disregard the latter.

3.2 Preventative counterterrorism

If the terrorists are rationally calculating costs and benefits of their various moves, including the “meta-move” to embrace terrorism as such, states should be able to dissuade them by reducing the benefits or increasing the costs of terrorism, or both.
In ordinary strategy, the preferred form of dissuasion has been deterrence by punishment, aimed at increasing the costs.

Some have argued that such deterrence may also work against terrorism, but there are rather formidable problems with this. First of all, some terrorists will be undeterred by punishment because they have already made up their minds to make the ultimate sacrifice, as is the case of suicide terrorists. It follows that capital punishment would also be ineffective and that for deterrence to have any effect it would have to be directed against others, e.g. the families of suicide bombers—as Israel has attempted on occasions by the punitive demolition of the homes of the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. This does, however, violate a whole range of human rights standards, and such measures may provoke rather than deter terrorism. Secondly, quite a few—but far from all—suicide and some other terrorists view themselves as obeying God’s commands and perhaps even expect to be rewarded for their deeds in an ever-lasting afterlife. If so, even the most draconian punishments are unlikely to have much deterrent value, even presupposing that the terrorists are rationally weighing costs and benefits.

Deterrence by punishment may have a certain effect on the group level, where a political or other group which has engaged in terrorism may be susceptible to punishment and just might find the costs (e.g. of freezing economic assets and blocking sources of support) outweigh the gains. It might also work against state sponsors of terrorism. It may, however be important to leave a “golden bridge” open for “repentant” groups and state sponsors, as actors who are predestined to remain ostracized indefinitely have little to lose by continuing their sponsorship of terrorists. Increasing the benefits accruing from non-terrorists avenues of action may hold some promise. Depending on the political aims of the terrorists, concessions to their demands might make them abandon terrorism, albeit at the risk of encouraging future terrorists by showing that terrorism pays.

Changing the political system, for example through democratisation, might make avenues of political action other than terrorism appear more promising, thereby reducing the incentive to resort to terrorism. However, notwithstanding the plausibility of this hypothesis, there is little, if any, empirical support for it. Indeed, in some respects democracies are worse at combating terrorism than authoritarian regimes, because they are more constrained in their actions. In addition, if they try to improve their performance in this respect, they risk weakening or undermining their democratic norms. The same is the case for the granting of political and minor-
ity rights to dissatisfied minorities, which would also seem likely to be able dissuade terrorism, but for which there is likewise little empirical support in the form of significant correlations.\textsuperscript{56}

Even though there are no general and significant inverse correlations between democracy and minority rights on the one hand, and terrorism on the other, there may well be concrete cases where the granting of political and human rights may help prevent terrorism, or pacify a terrorist group, just as there are plenty of good reasons to prefer democracy-\textit{cum}-minority protection to other forms of government. It may also be possible to somehow weaken the particular ideologies and religious belief systems, which spur terrorists into action.\textsuperscript{57} The problem is that there is not one but several ideologies. In such counter-ideological initiatives it is important to target only those ideological elements that are deemed prone to terrorism.

It would surely be even better if the prevention of terrorism could also operate at the macro-level of those societal factors seen as promoting or hampering terrorism. A number of assumptions about this have established themselves as almost unquestionable verities, even though closer analysis reveals them as based either on flawed logic or on very weak empirical evidence, or both. Some simply seem to be wrong, e.g. the assumptions that poverty causes terrorism, that democracy prevents it, or that failed states attract terrorism or terrorists. For elaboration and documentation the reader is referred to another recent report by the present author where correlations are tested and found not to meet even the most relaxed standards of statistical significance.\textsuperscript{58} In sum, what little is known about terrorism is very context-specific and does not lend itself to such generalisations as essential “generic” preventative measures, i.e. measures that would immunise a country against all forms of terrorism. On the other hand, to know, for instance, the grievances motivating and the typical ways of working of a particular terrorist group may assist in taking remedial action to prevent or contain specific attacks.

3.3 Counterterrorism and active defence

Active defence against terrorism presupposes that terrorists can be identified in advance, and that they may be captured or killed prior to the terrorist act.

In some cases this is reasonably simple, as when they reside in training camps, such as was the case with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Quite a strong case can even be made
for the legality of such action as “anticipatory self-defence,” as it may be the only way for a state to defend itself and its citizens against an attack such as 9/11. If a state has already suffered an attack originating from a certain location, it is plausible that another attack may follow, and the state at risk is clearly entitled to take steps to prevent it, if needs be by means of military attack.  

In the main, terrorists do not congregate to form suitable targets for military attacks, and this makes matters a lot more complicated. It may, of course, be possible to identify and track down individual terrorists or terrorist leaders in order to apprehend or kill them, but it is usually difficult to pin-point their location sufficiently accurately to launch “surgical attacks,” even though some such attacks have been successful in the past. Less discriminatory modes of attack are likely to cause substantial collateral damage, especially if the terrorists take refuge in residential areas. Even if the counterterrorist actors are successful in the sense of actually killing the target, the civilian deaths inflicted by the attack may well cause more people to join the ranks of the terrorists, thus making the attacks counter-productive.

It may also be possible to intercept terrorists on their way to the target or during the planning phase, but prior to the actual launching of their attack. However, this presupposes accurate and reliable knowledge of their itineraries, which is usually impossible to acquire, especially with regard to “sleepers,” i.e. prospective terrorists infiltrated into a country long before the planned attack, and who have, in the meantime, usually led quite normal and inconspicuous lives. To deal with such adversaries may call for very protracted surveillance, mainly in the form of secret agents who have either been infiltrated into a terrorist organisation or have been “turned.” In all other cases active defence becomes almost impossible as neither the origin of the attack nor the intended targets are known.

In some cases the entry of terrorists into the defended territory may be Preventable. This is the rationale for the protective fences around US embassies the world over, and of Israel’s establishment of roadblocks at entry point from the occupied territories into Israel, as well as its erection of the protective fence, which, in some places, is actually a wall. Unless the identity of the would-be terrorist attackers is known in advance, however, such measures inevitably restrict the freedom of movement of the innocent many as well as the guilty few. This is likely to cause resentment, which may increase the support for terrorism among the civilian population.
The final set of steps that might be taken is to intercept the attack after it has been launched. In the case of the 9/11 attacks the hijacked aircraft might have been shot down in flight, thereby preventing them from reaching their intended targets. To do so, unless absolutely certain, would be tantamount to killing hundreds or innocent passengers. Moreover, to announce a policy of shooting down passenger aircraft on mere suspicion may have quite severe economic repercussions for the airlines, as well as raising legal issues. This was illustrated by the German Air Security Law of 2005, which envisaged such a shoot-down policy.\textsuperscript{61}

While all of the above measures would surely be possible, we are left with the problem of the completely unexpected. Just as few\textsuperscript{62} had expected an attack such as 9/11, it is entirely conceivable that terrorists may come up with an idea so diabolical that nobody else has envisioned it, and for which no active counters have therefore been planned. It is, of course, possible to prepare for any finite number of different contingencies, thereby forcing prospective terrorists to abandon plan A in favour of plan B, for which a defence should then also be prepared, etc. \textit{ad infinitum}. However, there will always remain the “n+1 problem,” i.e. the contingency for which no defence is in place and the likelihood that the terrorists will then seek to exploit this loophole. This does not mean that solving the “n problem” has been in vain as the aggregate and cumulative effect may be to reduce the total number of successful terrorist attacks which is surely also a meaningful objective, depending, of course, on the costs.

\subsection*{3.4 Passive defence against terrorism}
Passive or defensive defence measures may be subdivided into generic and specific measures, the former referring to general protection against terrorism as such, and the latter to defence against concrete expected attacks.

The main problem with the former is that it is impossible to defend everything all the time. Modern societies are inherently vulnerable to all kinds of hazards such as a breakdown of their power supply or their local transport system. Each and every one of these facilities could be reasonably well protected for some of the time, but it is clearly impossible to defend all of them all the time. To this might be added the impossibility of guarding against “cyberterrorism,” e.g. in the form of “hacker” attacks on the world-wide web which is, by its very nature, non-territorial and thus not suitable for any “point defence.”\textsuperscript{63}
In the absence of reliable intelligence which could transform general into concrete, specific warnings, the value of passive defence seems to depend on risk assessment, which is notoriously difficult, especially for such infrequent events as terrorist attacks.\textsuperscript{64} It would have to assess the probability of attacks against, say, the power grid of a country, estimate the damage wreaked by such an attack and weigh this against the costs of providing impenetrable, around-the-clock protection. Taking into account that terrorists are rationally and strategically calculating opponents, it would need to take into account that the better protected the country would be against one kind of threat, the more likely it would become that the terrorists would attack something else or somewhere else—the perennial “weakest link” problem.\textsuperscript{65}

Whereas the public might certainly help in spotting would-be terrorists on the receipt of clear “tactical” warning, specifying the when, where and what to look for, public surveillance is close to useless without such specifics, because it entails the risk of flooding the warning system with warnings which it is unable to follow up. One might even fear that citizens would be particularly on the lookout for people resembling “the usual suspects,” which may lead to xenophobia and thereby further alienate exposed minorities who may thus be inadvertently pushed in the direction of support for, or even participation in, terrorism.\textsuperscript{66} Calls for “vigilance” in a generic sense (as implied by the “colour coding system” of the US Department of Homeland Security) may further cause either panic or apathy.\textsuperscript{67} In any case they are unlikely to do much good, as merely being warned of a growing risk provides absolutely no clues as to how to respond. The main function may thus be to shift responsibility from the authorities to ordinary citizens, as convincingly argued by Lawrence Freedman.\textsuperscript{68}

This does not mean that nothing can be done to protect the potential victims of terrorist attacks. Even in the absence of knowledge about the form, location, timing or trajectory of a terrorist attack, it is fairly predictable what the consequences may be in terms of human injuries or material damage. Buildings may be blown up or set on fire, infrastructure destroyed, toxins released into the air, or water, etc—all of which would call for treatment of victims, evacuation of localities, the extinction of fires, the reconstruction of infrastructure, etc. As these are more or less the same kind of consequences as might result from “ordinary emergencies” they would call for the same kinds of remedies, and most countries have plentiful experience to draw upon.\textsuperscript{69} Thus, whatever contingency pans and preparations are put in storage for terrorist events which may never occur would therefore be available for use in other circumstances.
More direct protection against more specific terrorist threats is also conceivable, and in many cases the unintended side-effects may be negligible or even positive. It is beyond the scope of this report to enumerate the “low-cost and moderate inconvenience” steps which might be taken, but there are surely a wealth of them. According to the aforementioned “weakest link” logic, however, there can be no certainty that the overall number of attacks or victims will decline, as terrorists may simply adapt by switching to other forms of attack. However, it is not unreasonable to hope that the more such steps are taken, the less likely terrorist attacks will become or the smaller their consequences—which certainly seems a good enough reason to implement them.
4. **Security Sector Reform and Counterterrorism**

All of the above has possible implications for the security sector, and may necessitate reforms of it—both in the countries on the “receiving end” of terrorism and in those from which the attacks are launched or which are assisting the terrorists. It is possible that the struggle against terrorism may call for changes in the configuration of the security sector, mainly intended to enhance its capacity. The opposite may also be the case, i.e. that the security sector may impact terrorism, as when repression infuriates parts of the population who then rebel. By implication, it is conceivable that SSR efforts intended to enhance counterterrorism capabilities, may in fact create more terrorism, especially if capacity enhancement comes at the expense of legitimacy.

Besides the tripartite subdivision of counterterrorism into prevention, active and passive defence and these two parameters of capacity and legitimacy, we also need to distinguish between three different “settings,” to which different logics apply:

- What a state (usually in the global North) does to its own security sector in order to protect itself against terrorism;
- What other states (usually in the South) do to modify their security sector in order for Northern states to achieve better protection; and
- How other states (e.g. in the South) reform their security sectors for the sake of their own security against terrorism.

4.1 **SSR and counterterrorism in and for the West**

The diversity of the groups from which terrorism springs has implications for the prevention and dissuasion of terrorism, as there is no reason to expect the same measures to work against all forms of terrorism. While countries of the West have previously been confronted with both left and right-wing as well as separatist political terrorism—not to mention various form of “environmental” terrorism—the attention of the West is today almost exclusively focused on the “jihadist” threat from militant Islamist groups. Without necessarily endorsing this threat perception, the following analysis will take this as its analytical point of departure.

As far as preventive strategies are concerned, the most important challenge is how to prevent the emergence and spread of homegrown “jihadists,” which has little to do with the security sector and much more with ensuring the integration of im-
migrants and their progeny into society. It may also be of importance to establish a dialogue on religion, e.g. with a view to furthering moderate forms of “Euro-Islam” as an antidote to more extremist Islamist ideologies such as represented by various strands of salafism. It is, of course, possible to task parts of the security sector with this—as is to some extent happening in Denmark—but in most cases it is better left to completely civilian institutions.

What the security sector may do is to provide reliable intelligence estimates. The best way of obtaining these is probably through an infiltration of informants into the organisations deemed potentially dangerous (or by “turning” members of such organisations) or the religious communities and institutions which are believed to play a central role in the recruitment for extremist organisations. This must almost always take place undercover, which makes it all the more important to exercise caution. Nobody really appreciates being surreptitiously monitored, and ethnic or religious minorities may resent this even more than most other citizens. There is a need, therefore for scrupulous parliamentary and judicial oversight of such activities, and for a continuous dialogue with influential members of the same religious communities. There is also a need for intelligence personnel with an understanding of other religions, both for the gathering and analysis of data. Whether any or all of these changes would be tantamount to a security sector reform, however, seems questionable.

**Active defence** against terrorism might call for (pre-emptive) attacks against other countries in certain exceptional cases. This would necessitate an offensive military posture with substantial power projection capabilities. As the experience from Afghanistan and Iraq shows, however, this is far from enough. Besides the military ability to instil “shock and awe” in a hostile regime, a state embarking on regime change in other countries also needs military, police and other forces to subsequently occupy and administer the polity. For less ambitious forms of military coercion—e.g. limited air strikes intended to dissuade other states from supporting terrorists—no change in the military postures of countries in the West seem to be required as they already possess the requisite striking power.

Besides this, there are only few tasks for the armed forces “as such,” even though the military may be deployed for constabulary or police missions within a country’s own borders. It would also be the air force or air defence units which would be responsible for the possible downing of hijacked civilian aircraft in “9/11 contingencies.” However, none of these missions seems to call for any major reforms of the armed forces or CMR.
Most active defence tasks would fall under the jurisdiction of the police. Hence, quite a strong case could be made for what might in fact qualify as an SSR, i.e. a radical shift of emphasis from the military to the police. It would make sense to acknowledge the police as the primary provider of internal national security. Doing so might be preferable to further blurring the boundaries between military and police as in, for example, assigning armed forces to police duties on a regular basis. Police and military forces have major distinctions between both the typical ethos, as well as ways of working. The military prefer to use a maximum amount of force, whereas the police prefer to use a minimum. The latter also work much closer to the civilian population than the former and are required to work within the framework of the law of the land and in close collaboration with the judiciary, etc.

Whether the police should, in turn, undergo any major changes in order to optimise for counterterrorism is another question. In many respects terrorists are much like (other) criminals, except for the fact that they are spurred by motives other than personal gain or satisfaction. Many of their activities are very similar, and the police work to prevent these acts is therefore not all that different from routine policing.

Just as it is important for terror prevention, intelligence is also essential for any active defence against the terrorist threat. There is a need for intelligence activities both at home and abroad, and in both cases collaboration and intelligence-sharing is extremely important, yet not without problems. First of all, it is essential to ensure collaboration between the various intelligence services within a country, and among other things, between those responsible for foreign and for home intelligence, but not even this is always easy. For instance, there are good reasons for the US prohibition against CIA operations at home, as it might undermine civil liberties to allow the agency the same prerogatives as they have enjoyed when operating abroad. International cooperation is at least as important, but more complicated. Even though quite extensive collaboration has taken place under the auspices of EUROPOL and EUROJUST, even a highly integrated organisation such as the EU has not managed to achieve complete information-sharing across borders, and collaboration with the United States has its particular difficulties. International intelligence collaboration also raises major problems with regard to the accountability of the intelligence services, which, as mentioned above, is an indispensable companion of any intensified surveillance of citizens. Unofficially and on an ad hoc basis, however, quite a lot of sharing of information may well take place, as seems to have been the case with the near-simultaneous crackdown on suspected terrorists in Denmark and Germany in early September 2007.
As far as police and intelligence are concerned there are also private functional equivalents. Even though these are mainly used for passive defence, some of them also have possible roles to play in active defence. Private security companies may, in principle, assist in the apprehension of terrorist suspects just as they may contribute to the surveillance of particular groups or persons—either acting on behalf of other private actors (e.g. airlines or insurance companies) or via outsourcing from public authorities. Finally, private citizens may be used as a large surveillance network, reporting on suspicious activities, and use might be made of the wealth of surveillance cameras installed by private firms and others for crime protection. All of this seems to be happening and might be seen as tantamount to a “creeping SSR,” but all have potentially serious detrimental implication for accountability.\(^{30}\) Relying increasingly on “citizens’ surveillance,” moreover, may have the effect of amplifying mutual suspicions between ethnic or religious groupings in society, thereby feeding the kind of resentments that may give rise to terrorism. It may also be of limited use as the problem is rarely a lack of raw intelligence data, but rather the ability to distinguish between what is trivial or significant, accurate or wrong.

As far as passive defence against terrorism is concerned, some of the most promising initiatives that might be taken by the West have little to do with the security sector. Rather it is a matter of upgrading the public readiness for dealing with “generic disasters,” which may or may not be caused by terrorist acts. What matters however, is to ensure an integration of the security sector with the overall emergency management system, which is not necessarily uncomplicated as it usually involves cooperation between ministries and national and local authorities.

### 4.2 SSR and counterterrorism in the South, for the West

The impression is quite widespread in the West that terrorists threats against the West originate in the global South, and that measures are needed to address these threats, some of which may involve SSR in the South.

Most groups in the South that warrant the terrorist label operate exclusively in the South, mainly against their respective national governments. Some groups in the countries of the South do, however, represent threats to the West itself. First of all, the threats of attacks in the South against individuals or organisations from the West, such as tourists, military personnel, private companies and their personnel, or embassies. Secondly, the threat of attacks against the West in their home countries by terrorists
coming from countries of the South; and thirdly the threat that states in the global south may sponsor terrorism directed against the West. In the two former cases, the West both wants and is reliant upon the assistance of countries in the South, which in several cases has involved support for the security sectors in the South, including targeted support for SSR.\(^{81}\)

As far as the \textit{prevention} of terrorism is concerned, the deterrence of state sponsorship may entail threats of, or actual attacks against, such sponsors. One could make a plausible case for the deterrent effect of attacks, such as those by the United States against Libya in 1986, Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998 and the latter again in 2001—perhaps even for the invasion of Iraq in 2003, if the US statements about the case for war are taken at face value. In actual fact both the attacks on Libya and Iraq seem to have provoked rather than deterred terrorism. If we nevertheless take this strategy seriously, its implications are that the West should do its best to weaken the defences of the prospective targets of intervention and, in particular, prevent them from acquiring nuclear weapons, as these would surely deter any intervention. Whether such hypothetical measures to weaken or destroy the security sector should qualify as SSR may, however, be debated.

At the other end of the spectrum we find the stated aim (and to some extent actual practice) on the part of governments in the West to instrumentalise their development aid for counterterrorism, and especially for the prevention of terrorism.\(^{82}\) As this is the topic of a lengthy report by the present author,\(^{83}\) it is sufficient here to summarise that these ambitions are based on very fragile foundations in terms of actual knowledge about the root causes of terrorism.

Between these two extremes we have the possibility of targeted assistance, e.g. for SSR in Third World countries, which may make them less likely to foster or otherwise assist terrorist acts directed against the West. Whereas security assistance to regimes with dubious human rights and governance records may be useful as far as active defence against terrorism is concerned, it is at least as likely to backfire in terms of prevention, where it is rather a matter of “winning the hearts and minds” of those otherwise likely to turn against the West. Hence, SSR assistance from the West to countries in the South would be better advised to give priority to legitimacy over capacity, to the extent that there are clearly tradeoffs between the two.

As far as the \textit{active defence} against terrorism is concerned, it is convenient to be able to draw on the security forces of friendly governments for operations against
terrorists in their respective countries. Not only do indigenous security forces probably have capacities, which the counterterrorists of the West lack (such as local knowledge), but letting these forces do the job also solves the problem of sovereignty. Hence, the United States has stepped up its security assistance to several states in the Third World, including some which are notorious for their abysmal human rights records. Whether the net effect of such assistance will be positive or negative is uncertain, as it may exacerbate domestic repression, and also has the potential to create the impression of the repressive regime as a pawn of the West, thereby perhaps making it more likely that opposition will be anti-Western—as may be the case of Pakistan.

It is also possible to wage counterterrorist campaigns in the stateless parts of the South. This may entail supporting certain warlords or guerrilla movements in their struggle against others, as for example, in Somalia in 2006, where one or several of the perpetrators of the 1998 embassy bombings were suspected to have sought refuge and where Islamism was believed to be on the rise. Hence, the US helped bring about, and subsequently supported, a coalition of warlords labelled the ARPCT (Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism), but thereby unwittingly seems to have provoked a countervailing alliance of the various Islamic courts which subsequently took control of most of the country. The US support for Ethiopia’s invasion of Somalia in December 2006 to unseat this Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) in favour of the otherwise moribund Transitional Federal Government, TFG, seems to have seriously backfired in the sense of creating, rather than defeating, terrorism and other forms of violence. It remains to be seen whether the TFG and its foreign masters will embark on an SSR and whether this will also apply to the UIC court militias which enjoyed a greater legitimacy than most other security forces.

As far as passive defence against terrorism, the West has few interests in what happens in the South, except in as far as embassies, tourist resorts and the like are concerned. Such protection is usually undertaken by the West itself, often by means of private security companies. However interesting, passive defence is outside the scope of this report.

4.3 SSR and counterterrorism in and for the South
Depending on the definition of terrorism quite a few countries in the South suffer from indigenous terrorist attacks (“large-scale and deliberate violence against civilians, perpetrated by non-state actors for non-selfish ends”) which are largely ignored in the
international community’s discourse on terrorism and counterterrorism. Not all of such groups are exclusively terrorists, but most are part of broader nationalist, religious or political movements, and some of them even provide a modicum of security to their respective communities, whilst terrorising the rest of the population. It stands to reason that groups belonging to the different categories cannot automatically be treated in the same way.

The prevention of terrorism in the South would appear to overlap, for the most part, with the prevention of armed conflict, because most groups switch back and forth between the two forms of struggle. Quite a voluminous literature exists on conflict prevention, e.g. highlighting the links between independent variables relating to economic or demographic factors and armed conflict as the dependent variable. For instance some have suggested an almost Malthusian correlation between population growth and conflict, in the sense that so-called “youth bulges” supposedly predispose countries to armed conflict, while others have pointed to the links between such population pressure and environmental factors.\textsuperscript{86} All these theories may be used for devising strategies for both long-term (“structural”) and short-term (“operational”) conflict prevention.\textsuperscript{87} To a large extent, such strategies will be identical with the measures mentioned above under the heading of post-conflict peace-building, and some of them entail SSR elements such as ensuring the accountability of the security agencies to civilian, and preferably democratic, authorities; DDR of former combatants, etc. As in other cases, choices may have to be made between enhancing the efficiency and the legitimacy of the security agencies, and it is usually unwise to place all one’s eggs in the “capacity basket.”

As far as active defence against terrorism in Third World countries is concerned, however, the capacities of the security agencies, mainly the police, definitely need enhancement, making training and train-the-trainers initiatives potentially quite important. Besides this, as mentioned in the last section, the United States is providing more targeted support in several Third World countries for an upgrading of their counterterrorist capacities, apparently largely intended to help contain threats to the US itself.\textsuperscript{88} To the extent that Third World terrorists also employ guerrilla tactics, as is often the case, the regular armed forces will also have a role to play in regular counter-insurgency warfare. Unfortunately, however, this often becomes very nasty, resulting in escalation of the struggle, which inflicts major damage on civilians—some of whom may react by joining the rebel/terrorist groups, either out of sympathy for their cause or for the sake of simple self-protection.
A major question in most countries is to what extent it is advisable to fill capacity gaps (mainly with regard to policing) by means of non-statutory forces such as pro-government militias and other paramilitaries or by enlisting the support of neighbourhood watch and vigilante groups. Even though they have occasionally been able to establish a modicum of order on a local scale, such forces have shown an unfortunate tendency to gradually become parts of the problem rather than of its solution. It is, for example, not uncommon that such forces have been found looting and otherwise harassing and intimidating the civilian population, having escaped the control of the state agencies. Moreover, relying on such forces does little to promote the state’s monopoly on the legitimate use of force. The same is the case of the use by states of either old-fashioned mercenaries or their modern counterparts in the form of PMCs. Even though they have on more than one occasion helped defeat rebels (e.g. RUF and UNITA), the very fact that their use is outlawed as well as generally condemned, militates against regulation of their use which might in turn, help make their use more acceptable.89

As far as passive defence against terrorists as well as rebels is concerned, quite a large share probably comes down to local communities and their self-protection, as the state is usually utterly incapable of offering the requisite protection for anything besides particularly important state facilities and personnel—and the less so the further away one gets from the national or provincial capitals.
5. Conclusion

Despite the rather elaborate analysis of the possible links between security sector reform and the fight against terrorism this report does not, alas, point to many obvious conclusions or policy recommendations.

First of all, the security sector or system is extremely amorphous, especially in Third World countries, where it comprises a wealth of non-statutory elements alongside statutory agencies such as the armed forces, the police and the judiciary—but it remains controversial upon which to include as security providers or the exact opposite, i.e. threats to security. Hence the requisite scope and contents of security sector reforms are bound to remain unclear and contested—and there is no reason to expect “one size fits all” measures to be effective.

Secondly, it is far from clear how to define terrorism or which groups or broader movements to count as terrorists, and even less clear how to fight them. Even though some passive defence measures hold some promise against “generic terrorism,” most preventative and active defence measures may, at best, be efficient against specific types of terrorism—and there remains the perennial “weakest link problem”: Guarding against one type of terrorism simply invites terrorists to revise their tactics and explore remaining loopholes. The main consolation may in fact be that terrorism remains one of the least likely causes of death or destruction, i.e. it is much less of a problem than often assumed.

Thirdly, the links between security sector reform and counterterrorism seem neither to be self-evident nor strong, especially not in general terms. Neither is there a particular variety of security sector reform that can protect any country against all forms of terrorism, nor any “generic SSR” that will protect countries against particular forms of terrorism. The closest one comes to such a general link seems to be a major shift of emphasis from the military to the police as the primary provider of security, but the prospects of this actually happening seem very remote. Whatever links there may be between SSR and counterterrorism may thus be concrete and context-specific in the sense that particular elements of SSR may be useful against specific forms of terrorism under specific conditions.
6. Notes


2 “Security sector reform” also seems to be most common in general, a Google search undertaken on the 23rd of May 2007 yielding a total of 278,000 hits as compared to a mere 41,000 for “security system reform.”


5 An example of the latter, using the terms “security and justice reform” is Call, Charles T. (ed.): Constructing Justice and Security After War (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007). The term does, however, seem to be quite rare, a Google search (29 May 2007), yielding only 19 hits.


9 which will be the topic of a forthcoming DIIS book by the present author.


14 Lovell, John P. & David E. Albright (eds.): To Sheathe the Sword. Civil-Military Relations in the Quest for Democracy (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997); Desch, Michael E.: Civilian Control


18 The various documents are available on the website of the CPA at www.cpa-iraq.org/.

19 For a very critical analysis, see Cordesman, Anthony: *Iraq Force Development and the Challenge of Civil War: The Critical Problems and Failures the US Must Address if Iraqi Forces Are to Eventually Do the Job* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006).


38 For an elaboration on some of the themes see Møller, Bjørn: “Terror Prevention and Development Aid: What We Know and Don’t Know,” DIIS Report, no. 2007:3 (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2007).


For elaboration and documentation see Møller: *op. cit.* 2007 (note 37).


See note 37 above.


Canada and Australia see Chalk, Peter & William Rosenau: *Confronting the ‘Enemy Within’. Security Intelligence, the Police, and Counterterrorism in Four Democracies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2004), passim.


81 As seen under the US EACTI (East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative) programme or what used to be its Pan-Sahel Initiative which has recently been modified and become the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI) accompanied by an even more military-oriented “Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara (OEF-TS).


83 See note 37 above.


