



The Security Governance Initiative:

*An Effective Approach to Security Sector
Assistance?*

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Cover page image: U.S. Ambassador Eunice S. Reddick and Nigerien Deputy Minister Kaffa Rakiatou Christelle Jackou sign a law enforcement agreement which supports the Security Governance Initiative. (Photo U.S. Embassy Niamey), <http://niamey.usembassy.gov/>

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACOTA	Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance
ACSS	Africa Center for Security Studies
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AMEP	African Military Education Program
AM&E	assessment, monitoring, and evaluation
ASSN	African Security Sector Network
AU	African Union
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DCSD	<i>Direction de la Coopération de Sécurité et de Défense</i>
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DIB	defense institution building
DIILS	Defense Institute of International Legal Studies
DIRI	Defense Institutional Reform Initiative
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DoJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DoS	U.S. Department of State
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENVR	<i>écoles nationales à vocation régionale</i>
EU	European Union
EUTM Mali	European Union Training Mission Mali
GAF	Ghana Armed Forces
GOM	Government of Mali
GON	Government of Niger
GPS	Ghana Police Service
GSCF	Global Security Contingency Fund
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
IMET	International Military Education and Training
JCAP	Joint Country Action Plan
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoDA	Ministry of Defense Advisors Program
MoI	Ministry of Interior
OEF-TS	Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans Sahara
OPDAT	Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training
PIP	Performance Improvement Programme
PME	professional military education
PPD	presidential policy directive
PREACT	Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism
SGI	Security Governance Initiative
SPP	State Partnership Program
SSA	security sector assistance
SSG	security sector governance
SSR	security sector reform
USD (P)	DoD Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy
USG	United States Government

WEST AFRICA: MAP OF THE REGION



— Countries examined in study

SOURCE: *Map of West Africa*. digital image. Nationsonline.org. Web. 4 April 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In August 2014, President Obama announced the Security Governance Initiative (SGI), a whole-of-government approach to security sector governance reform in six African countries. The initiative is the newest addition to an already extensive array of U.S. security cooperation and assistance activities. Generally, all of these efforts are intended to (1) protect U.S. and partner nation security interests; (2) strengthen multinational defense arrangements and organizations; and (3) promote universal values, such as good governance. SGI is an important milestone, however, in that it represents a paradigm shift in U.S. government thinking toward what is currently referred to as security sector assistance.

SGI is designed to go beyond the narrow, militaristic focus of the “train and equip” model; it seeks to promote sustainable partner nation capacity by taking a holistic approach to security sector governance and engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders. To this end, SGI is premised on the provision of expertise rather than equipment, enabling it to function on a much smaller budget than other security sector assistance programs.

While a full appraisal of SGI would be premature, an initial assessment of its progress is appropriate as the program approaches its two year mark. To date, the U.S. Government and its African Partners have made noteworthy progress in laying the groundwork for collaboration and, in some cases, proceeding with implementation. In most countries, however, this progress has been slower than expected, and there are a number of deficiencies—both within SGI itself as well as its operational environment—that significantly constrain the program’s potential to yield meaningful results.

First, in keeping with the tenets of Presidential Policy Directive 23 (PPD-23), the U.S. government must revisit and rebalance the way in which it approaches security sector assistance. The existing security sector assistance framework exhibits structural flaws that are not conducive to SGI’s holistic approach and will invariably impede its effectiveness and efficiency: the lack of an overarching strategy; the complicated organizational architecture of U.S. security sector assistance programs, to include a lack of synchronization; inadequate systems for assessment, monitoring and evaluation; a restrictive set of legal authorities; budgetary uncertainty; and the Department of Defense’s disproportionately large role in administering security sector assistance.

Given these issues, we recommend that the U.S. government:

- Revise the security sector assistance organizational architecture to improve synchronization, efficiency, and effectiveness and, in doing so, link SGI with existing security sector assistance activities to maximize its effect;
- Streamline legal authorities in order to increase security sector assistance flexibility;
- Improve the assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AM&E) process for SGI and other security sector assistance activities;
- Stabilize and extend SGI funding as well as ensure program prioritization;
- Rebalance U.S. government roles to address the Department of Defense’s disproportionate stake in security sector assistance.

Second, in conducting security sector assistance, the United States must take stock of the unique political, economic, and security challenges facing West Africa and each of its nations. Key challenges to successful security sector reform in the region include (1) identity based tensions, (2) ineffective service delivery, and (3) a lack of government accountability and oversight. In view of such a complex environment, the U.S. government must regard SGI as just one of the instruments in its foreign policy toolkit that can help African partners move toward legitimate, democratic, transparent, and accountable institutions that are rooted in the principles of good governance. We recommend that the U.S. government:

- Carefully (re)assess whether SGI is the best tool for building security governance capacity in each given country;
- Put SGI into a framework of broader development needs;
- Use SGI to promote inclusive and accountable partner nation security sectors by recognizing civil society as an important stakeholder.

Third, the U.S. government must empower Africa's organic security sector reform capacity beyond the national level. The United States partners with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) on a wide range of political, economic, and security-related matters, but the extent to which the United States supports the long-term development of their respective security sector reform capacities is unclear. These institutions could serve as enduring mechanisms for assessing member state security sector needs, leveraging resources to address those needs, and synchronizing external support. This capacity, however, may be in jeopardy without immediate external support. To this end, we recommend that the U.S. government:

- Use SGI and other U.S. government resources to build ECOWAS and AU capacity to impel, guide, and support security sector governance reform in West Africa;
- Work with European allies and other international partners to help the AU and ECOWAS become focal points for security sector reform assessment and coordination.

Finally, the United States must work with its allies and relevant intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU), to develop a unified approach to security sector assistance in West Africa. At present, the United States' tendency to pursue assistance through bilateral initiatives leads to inefficiency, redundancy, incongruity, and confusion on the part of the partner nation. An institutionalized "division of labor" will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of U.S. efforts. We therefore recommend that the U.S. government:

- Institutionalize mechanisms for coordination and collaboration between the U.S. government, its allies, and intergovernmental organizations including the UN and EU;
- Work with, or through, UN, EU, and allied advisors to achieve SGI and broader security sector assistance goals;
- Support and leverage externally-run professional military education institutions.

Ultimately, continuing SGI and broader security sector assistance on their current trajectory will likely improve partner nation security sector capacity in specific functional areas, but to address the core aspects of security sector governance—accountability, transparency, and legitimacy—at a broader scale, the U.S. government must modify its approach.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Since assuming the role of the world's leading security provider after World War II, the United States has used security sector assistance (SSA) activities to advance U.S. interests world-wide. Once focused on Europe-centric Cold War aims, these efforts are now intended to help partner nations build sustainable capacity for addressing common security challenges; foster partner support for U.S. interests; promote universal values, such as good governance; and strengthen collective security and multinational defense arrangements and organizations.^{1 2}

Over the last several decades, instability on the African continent and the threat of violent extremism have driven the U.S. to expand the number and scope of Africa-centric SSA activities. To be sure, many U.S. programs have achieved noteworthy progress in building partner capacity in military-centric fields—particularly counterterrorism and peacekeeping. However, as with efforts further afield, these activities have yielded mixed results due, in large part, to the U.S. government's (USG) inefficient and shortsighted approach to SSA. More specifically, not enough attention has been paid to the institutions and systems partner nations require for achieving and maintaining security. Consequently, SSA has not always achieved enduring effects, in some cases even proving counterproductive to partner nations' political stability.

To ensure the long term viability of SSA efforts, the U.S. and other international stakeholders have developed the concept of security sector reform (SSR). SSR aims to improve the functionality of a partner nation's entire security sector, consisting of all stakeholders involved in the provision, management and oversight of national security.^{3 4} In practice, these include Ministries of Defense, Interior, and Justice, as well as the institutions under their charge, e.g. the armed forces, police, gendarmerie, customs, intelligence services, and the civilian authorities providing oversight.^{5 6}

However, SSR has focused almost exclusively on building partner nation capacity to provide security, without fully addressing the principles of effective security sector *governance* (SSG)—defined by the U.S. Department of State (DoS) as “transparent, accountable, and legitimate management and oversight of security policy and practice.”⁷ Effective SSG prioritizes adherence to “good governance principles, the rule of law, [and] respect for the legal framework including human rights and gender equality.”⁸

As the USG's experiences in Mali and Libya have proven, uncalibrated SSA can actually *decrease* stability and result in “dysfunctional security sectors that pose threats to the citizens of a state or community instead of providing for their security, or situations in which democratic civilian authority over the security sector is limited or even completely missing.”⁹

Drawing upon these insights, President Obama introduced Presidential Policy Directive 23 (PPD-23) in 2013 to strengthen “the ability of the United States to help allies and partner nations build their own security capacity, consistent with the principles of good governance and rule of law.”¹⁰ The Department of Defense (DoD), DoS, and other interagency SSA stakeholders have subsequently begun retooling their SSA programs in order to incorporate the tenets SSG reform.

The Security Governance Initiative (SGI) was announced at the 2014 U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit as one of the first SSA programs with an explicit governance focus. Taking a whole-of-government approach, SGI was launched to assist six African partner nations—Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia—in improving their security sector governance and building sustainable capacity to protect national security.

It bears emphasizing that the incorporation of good governance principles into SSR protocols represents an important milestone in pursuing effective and nuanced SSA solutions. This paradigm shift, as represented by PPD-23 and manifested in the SGI program, warrants academic examination against the backdrop of past SSA efforts. Thus, as SGI approaches its two year anniversary, this report seeks to take stock of the program's strengths and weaknesses, and to identify recommendations for improving its effectiveness in the context of an evolving U.S. approach to SSA.

The study begins with an overview of U.S. SSA activities, paying close attention to their structural challenges. It then examines SGI as a concept and examines its progress to date in the four SGI countries of Mali, Niger, Ghana, and Nigeria. The study then proceeds to assess African institutions and their potential for security sector reform. Finally, the study explores options for leveraging allied nations and intergovernmental organizations in order to create synergistic SSA efforts. The study closes with a brief conclusion. Recommendations are found at the end of each chapter.

PURPOSE

This study is conducted on behalf of the RAND Corporation and examines U.S. SSA efforts in West Africa, with a particular emphasis on the recent SGI initiative. The primary purpose of the study is to provide actionable recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of these efforts.

METHODOLOGY

The process used to conduct this study consisted of four steps: The first was a literature review examining the “supply” and “demand side” of SSA in order to better understand SGI's operational context. This review drew upon a wide range of U.S. and foreign publications, including studies on security sector reform, security cooperation and assistance, congressional testimonies, and other government documents. The review focused on publications addressing these issues in West Africa, with emphasis on four SGI countries: Ghana, Niger, Mali, and Nigeria. In keeping with the holistic ethos of a “governance perspective,” special care was taken to also consider sources on the political, economic, and social issues facing these countries.

The second step consisted of conducting interviews with academics and practitioners in order to fill informational gaps uncovered during the literature review. These interviews served to qualify published material by providing the most up to date perspectives on SSA and SGI. In total, our team conducted twenty-eight interviews with a variety of experts representing the United Nations, DoS, DoD, Institute for Defense Analysis, RAND Corporation, Columbia University, United

States Institute of Peace, International Peace Institute, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Services, Center for New American Security, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Sciences Po Paris, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

The third step consisted of aggregating and analyzing the gathered information. The resulting insights were structured in such a way as to provide a clear and holistic perspective on the current structure and dynamics U.S. SSA efforts. The information is presented in such a way as to parse key elements of SSA and present SGI as a unique manifestation of modern SSA.

The fourth and final step consisted of deriving recommendations from our analysis intended to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of SSA in general and of SGI in particular. The recommendations are addressed to the U.S. government and focus only on the most glaring weaknesses of current U.S. policies and practices in the area of SSA.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SUPPLY SIDE CHALLENGES OF U.S. SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE**THE EVOLUTION OF SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE IN AFRICA**

While roots of U.S. SSA activities in Africa trace back to the Cold War, the scope and scale of SSA programs in Africa have increased over the last several decades in response to U.S. political pressures and the continent's increasing significance for U.S. national security interests. The 1994 Rwandan genocide spurred U.S. efforts to help develop an organic African peacekeeping capacity, leading to the establishment of the African Crisis Response Initiative, the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, the International Police Peacekeeping Operations Support program, the Global Peace Operations Initiative, and the Africa Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership.^{11 12 13} In the wake of the 1998 East Africa embassy bombings and 9/11, the threat of violent extremism from Africa prompted the establishment of the Department of State's Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Fund, Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans Sahara (OEF-TS), and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT), and initiatives conducted under the broader Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF). These efforts have been accompanied by a “mosaic of programs” designed to develop African security institutions, increase their ability to contribute to peacekeeping and crisis response, and strengthen their capacity to deal with regional and transnational threats such as terrorism, illicit trafficking, piracy, and the spread of communicative diseases.^{14 15 16}

While successful in achieving “narrow military objectives” such as counterterrorism- and peacekeeping-force development, these initiatives—broadly speaking—have not addressed core security sector institutional shortfalls nor sufficiently reinforced the principles of democratic security sector governance.¹⁷ Since many activities include the provision of funds (Foreign Military Financing (FMF)) or equipment (Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Section 1206, GSCF, OEF-TS, PREACT, amongst others), U.S. SSA in Africa has also developed a transactional connotation. During preparatory SSA consultations, U.S. decision makers and their African partners often fail to develop a common understanding of the partner nations' security needs and what kind of resources are required to address those needs.¹⁸ Consequently, the U.S. has provided training and equipment based on the partner nation's professed gaps—often politically oriented and imprudently focusing on conventional warfare and advanced weaponry—in exchange for access to “critical air, land, and sea nodes.”^{19 20} One DoD official characterized the process in terms of the “give a man a fish” analogy: the U.S. has been “teaching a man to fish” without considering if fish is what the man truly wants or needs.²¹ Not only does this approach risk wasting U.S. resources—as was the case in Mali, where \$60 million of U.S. counterterrorism funding failed to prevent the rapid retreat of the Malian Armed Forces in the face of a security threat—, but it also runs the risk of undermining legitimate governance, exacerbating inter-communal tensions, empowering malign non-state actors, abetting abuses, and creating a moral hazard in disincentivizing partner nation development.^{22 23}

INCREASING USG EMPHASIS ON SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE REFORM

PPD-23 is emblematic of the sea-change in the USG's approach to SSA within the last decade. Sobered by the poor performance of the Iraqi Security Forces amid ISIL's onslaught in Iraq; the tentative state of the Afghan National Security Forces despite the expenditure of significant U.S. blood and treasure for over a decade in Afghanistan; and wasted efforts in Mali and Libya; the U.S. has since intensified its SSG-centered efforts.

DoD SSG Reform Activities

Recognizing the inadequacies of the piecemeal SSA approach to Africa, DoD is increasingly leveraging programs centered on Defense Institution Building (DIB)—the “institutional dimension of broader SSR” which “aims to establish responsible defense governance to help partner-nations build effective, transparent, and accountable defense institutions.”^{24 25} Although DIB has had a transformative effect in former Warsaw Pact countries, its implementation in Africa has, to-date, been limited. One “qualified success” story is the U.S. experience in helping to rebuild the armed forces of Liberia after its 14-year civil war which included “...establishing a professional defense ministry, drafting a national defense strategy, and designing a new force structure.”²⁶ Liberia's security sector still requires external support, Liberian democracy remains “fragile,” and many impediments to democratic security sector governance remain, yet the comprehensive approach the U.S. and its allies took appears to have fostered a stable security sector largely accountable to democratic civilian governance.^{27 28} DIB activities currently fall within three overarching categories: rebuilding, advising, and educating.²⁹ While DIB has been used in a “rebuilding” capacity—as was the case with the UK's efforts in Sierra Leone after the 1991-2002 war, and U.S. efforts in Liberia—current programs are largely centered on “advising” and “educating” due to resource limitations.³⁰

DoD SSG Reform Activities: DIB Advisory Programs

While effectiveness is difficult to gauge, DIB advisory programs show significant promise in helping to foster democratic and effective SSG.³¹ In 2010, the DoD instituted the Defense Institutional Reform Initiative (DIRI), a “low-cost, small-footprint, high-impact program” which dispatches teams of subject-matter experts on a periodic basis to “support a partner nation's efforts to develop its defense institutions' capacity to determine, plan, resource, and manage relevant military capabilities and oversee and direct their use in a legitimate manner.”³² To date, the program has been launched in Liberia, Libya, Guinea, DRC, and Botswana. Feedback suggests notable progress in aspects of security sector reform.³³ The Global Ministry of Defense Advisors (MoDA) Program closely resembles DIRI in that it “partners DoD civilian experts with foreign defense and security officials to build core competencies in key areas such as strategy and policy, human resources management, acquisition and logistics, and financial management.”³⁴ However, the program's implementation in Africa is currently limited to Botswana.³⁵ In the legal realm, the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS) is the “lead defense security cooperation resource for professional legal education, training, and rule of law programs for international military and related civilians globally.”³⁶ The program, which in FY15 covered 16 African nations, includes resident and online mobile courses and provides “assistance in setting up or reforming military justice systems, as well as improving accountability and transparency of legal systems.”³⁷ Lastly, the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) is a “low-cost,

small footprint” security cooperation tool that partners the National Guards of U.S. states with the armed forces of 12 African Nations. Centered on military-to-military engagements, SPP imparts professionalism through long-term interaction—often spanning several years.^{38 39}

DoD SSG Reform Activities: DIB Education Programs

The DoD has identified Professional Military Education (PME) as an important part of DIB and broader SSG reform. While its proximate goal is to improve the functional capacity of partner nation officers and senior enlisted personnel, PME is intended to serve a broader purpose in fostering a defense culture rooted in professionalism, respect for human rights, and the principles of democratic governance. The International Military Education and Training Program (IMET)—a DoS program administered by the DoD—, provides training at U.S. military institutions with “courses on defense management, civil-military relations, law enforcement cooperation, and military justice...”⁴⁰ Similarly, the Naval Post Graduate School—in addition to its work implementing DIRI—“delivers civil-military relations education to a broad selection of civilian and military participants in Africa” in topics covering the spectrum of SSG competencies.⁴¹ Additionally, the DoD’s regional center for Africa, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) with field offices in Senegal and Ethiopia, conducts extensive training—within the United States and on the African continent—focusing on SSG topics including national security strategy development, defense economics, and resource management.⁴² Perhaps the most significant program for supporting long-term PME, DoS’ African Military Education Program (AMEP) is aimed at developing Africa’s organic PME capacity by helping to “...build military professionalization through instructor and curriculum development at African countries’ military education institutions.”⁴³ Like advisory-focused DIB activities, the impact of PME is difficult to gauge. As Amadou Sanogo’s—an IMET graduate—2012 coup in Mali would suggest, PME alone cannot rectify SSG shortfalls. However, according to one U.S. PME expert, PME initiatives are making “baby steps” toward the professionalization of African military institutions.⁴⁴

DoS SSG Reform Activities

Beyond its broader efforts to strengthen partner nations’ governance and its collaborative SSA work with the DoD, the DoS is undertaking DIB-like activities for non-military security institutions. In addition to capacity building occurring through DoS’ counterterrorism-centric initiatives and peacekeeping-centric programs, DoS has actively worked to build partner nation criminal justice and counter-narcotics capacity. Much of the training, such as counter-IED training in Nigeria and criminal justice sector training in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has focused on technical capacity development.⁴⁵ However, in the Central African Republic, the DoS is supporting the re-establishment of criminal justice institutions and, in Liberia, has assisted the government in removing corrupt officials from the Liberian National Police and the Liberian Drug Enforcement Agency.⁴⁶ In Liberia, DoS has also assisted in the development and implementation of “the first meaningful Liberian Drug Law and DEA Act” through the U.S. West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative—which focuses on enhancing rule of law and building partner capacity to counter transnational criminal threats.^{47 48} Similar efforts aimed at addressing transnational organized crime have taken place in Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Nigeria. In 2011, DoS also established its Regional Training Center in Accra which focuses on combating transnational crime and building criminal justice sector capacity.⁴⁹

Other Interagency Stakeholders' SSG Reform Activities

In addition to the DoD and DoS, other members of the interagency including USAID and the Departments of Justice (DoJ), Homeland Security (DHS), Energy, and Treasury are working to improve security sector governance in partner nations.⁵⁰ USAID's Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation is working with the DoD Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD (P)) to support PPD-23 and has "identified four technical areas where USAID and DoD might cooperate: capacity building for ministries of finance, anti-corruption, executive oversight by civil society or parliament, and efforts to stem wildlife trafficking."⁵¹ The Justice Department's SSA activities are largely centered on the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) and Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training (OPDAT).⁵² ICITAP is intended to assist partner nation efforts "to develop effective, professional, and transparent law enforcement capacity that protects human rights, combats corruption, and reduces the threat of transnational crime and terrorism."⁵³ While ICITAP funding is allocated for programming in Mali, Nigeria, Niger and nine other African nations, only Benin and Algeria have permanent ICITAP field offices.⁵⁴ OPDAT focuses on prosecutorial capacity and "works with partner countries to develop and strengthen fair, just, and accountable justice sector institutions." In West Africa OPDAT has Resident Legal Advisors assigned on a yearly basis to U.S. embassies in Senegal, Mali, Niger, Benin and Nigeria as well as Intermittent Legal Advisors tasked with targeted assignments in Mauritania and Ghana.⁵⁵ In addition to supporting the DoJ's ICITAP program, the DHS Office of International Engagement oversees international training and technical assistance in topics including customs and transportation security.^{56 57} While these initiatives may prove effective supporting aspects of security governance reform in West Africa, limited resources preclude their wider application.

SGI: A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO SSG REFORM

At the 2014 U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, President Obama unveiled SGI, a new program intended to build upon these earlier SSG reform initiatives in the context of West Africa. With a modest initial budget of \$65 million, the program uses expertise, not materiel, to strengthen "the systems, processes, and institutions that reinforce democratic security sector governance" in Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia.⁵⁸ SGI, using a two-year framework, is specifically intended to:

Increase partner nation capacity to meet citizen security needs, such as accessing justice, countering transnational threats, and contributing to regional and international security and stability; prevent or mitigate instability and conflict and counter terrorist activities and their enabling environments; advance U.S. interests and strategic goals, including promoting democratic governance, rule of law, respect for human rights, and long-term economic development while improving the effectiveness and sustainability of other U.S. security sector assistance investments and activities; and deepen the impact of U.S. investments in countries that show leadership and political will to make reforms and policy decisions necessary to improve security sector governance.⁵⁹

In keeping with PPD-23's mandate for intragovernmental synchronization, SGI uses a whole-of-government approach. While DoS led, the program draws upon DoD, DoJ, DHS, USAID, and

National Counterterrorism Center “expertise and experience” to address SSG’s multi-faceted aspects of SSG.

To its credit, SGI is not a one-size-fits-all program. Its approach is “based on the recognition that sustainable solutions to security sector challenges must come from within the country.” SGI teams and the host nation agree to a set of programs and areas of assistance that will then serve as the focus of SGI in that respective country.

SGI follows four phases. The first is “pre-consultation coordination,” where the SGI teams meet with subject matter experts to develop a comprehensive understanding of the security situation facing each of the partner nations. The second consists of “consultation visits” in which interagency teams engage with the partner nation’s government and nongovernment experts to identify challenges facing the country and opportunities for SGI support. The third is “development of [a] Joint Country Action Plan (JCAP).” The JCAPs “define the parameters of the SGI partnership,” detail goals, the means to accomplish those goals, and the milestones for achieving them. The fourth is “JCAP implementation” in which the SGI program uses “a variety of bilateral engagement such as: technical assistance, mentoring, and workshops” to work toward achieving JCAP objectives. To oversee implementation, “Steering Committees convene periodically to review progress, modify goals as necessary, and agree on next steps.”

To date, the SGI program has commenced in all six partner nations and, although progress is not uniform—as will be discussed later in the report, SGI has garnered some positive feedback. Partner nation representatives were pleasantly surprised by the opportunity to meet with a USG interagency team and shape the program to address their needs. More significantly, in some instances partner nations assembled their own interagency teams to participate in consultations and debate priorities—collaboration which rarely, if ever, occurs. In this respect, the impact of SGI may extend beyond the SSG realm.

A DEFICIENT USG SSA FRAMEWORK: STRUCTURAL AND SYSTEMATIC FAILINGS CONSTRAIN SGI EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

This initial positive feedback suggests SGI may make incremental progress toward specific elements of SSG in many—if not all—partner nations, but this progress may appear modest considering the serious SSG challenges affecting West Africa. This is almost certainly due to a realistic appraisal of what the SGI program can achieve given its current parameters, but it calls into question the design of the initiative and the broader U.S. approach to SSA. Full implementation of PPD-23 would rectify many issues, yet, as it stands, SGI is plagued by several key challenges.

Major Challenges to SGI Implementation:

At present, SGI is constrained by the lack of an overarching USG SSA strategy and a clear role for SGI within this strategy and amongst parallel SSA activities; a complicated and restrictive array of legal authorities which has resulted in uncertain funding and insufficient time to affect reform; inadequate USG processes for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation and a disproportionate DoD role in SSA activities.

Lack of Strategy

A common refrain amongst SSA practitioners is that, while activities are coordinated “informally across regional and functional organizations,” the USG lacks a formalized, top-down strategy for guiding SSA activities across the interagency.⁶⁰ SSA programs are often the result of “bottom-up” processes in which country teams and regional leadership (AFRICOM and Africa regional bureaus within the USD (P) and DoS) lobby for programs to support DoS Joint Regional Strategies, Integrated Country Strategies, and DoD Theater Campaign Plans.⁶¹ As a result, activities are largely designed to achieve results at the national operational level, though these results may not be fully nested with broader U.S. foreign policy objectives.⁶² Although the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2016 “requires DoD, in coordination with DoS, to develop a strategic framework for DoD security cooperation to guide prioritization of resources and activities,” this does not cover the scope of SSA activities beyond the DoD.⁶³ While the SGI program has a very legitimate purpose, it was largely conceived as a “deliverable” for the 2014 U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit rather than an instrument to fill a gap in the U.S. SSA strategy—other existing programs arguably could have been expanded to serve the same purpose. A comprehensive strategy would prevent this ad hoc approach to SSA.

Complicated SSA Architecture

This lack of strategic direction is compounded by a complicated SSA control and oversight architecture which creates implementation and coordination challenges.⁶⁴ While the DoS, according to PPD-23, has the “lead in policy, supervision, and general management of security sector assistance,” it must coordinate with other interagency stakeholders and, as a result of organizational limitations, often defers to the DoD for implementation of many SSA activities. USD (P), with its subordinate DASD for Security Cooperation and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, is responsible for overseeing DIB programs and other DoD security cooperation activities. However, country teams in partner nation embassies which include AFRICOM’s Offices of Security Cooperation or Defense Attaché Offices play a significant role in orchestrating the programs.⁶⁵ As CSIS Fellow Melissa Dalton notes, “The management and oversight of DoD security cooperation programs are inefficiently spread throughout the organization.”⁶⁶ When DoS and other interagency SSA programs are factored in—which often use contracted personnel—the administrative challenges become even more significant.⁶⁷ The SGI program has adopted measures to mitigate some of these challenges—including a Washington D.C.-based SGI Coordination Office with interagency liaison officers and an SGI Working Group—though it remains to be seen if these mechanisms are enough to synchronize efforts rather than simply deconflicting parallel initiatives.⁶⁸

Inadequate Synchronization

One consequence of this lack of strategy and convoluted SSA architecture is what one former U.S. ambassador characterized as “initiative proliferation.”⁶⁹ According to a 2013 RAND report, at the time, the United States conducted 165 security cooperation activities globally including 78 DIB-related activities.⁷⁰ This multitude of initiatives presents opportunities for synergy, but increases the risk of inefficiency, redundancy, and incongruity.^{71 72} According to a 2012 DoD IG Audit Report, “...the lack of defense institution building policy allowed overlapping missions in DoD’s defense institution building-related efforts.”⁷³ The DoD has adopted—or will adopt in the

near future—several measures to improve its management of SSA activities including the Global Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System, a DIB Coordination Board, and a DIB coordinator office at AFRICOM—yet these measures will not extend to SSA initiatives beyond the DoD.^{74 75 76}

The SGI program adds yet another initiative to the mix and, while focused on SSG, has aims overlapping with the myriad DIB and DIB-like programs described earlier. For example, the Niger SGI JCAP identifies developing a National Security Review and Strategic Framework as a priority goal. The MoDA and DIRI advisory programs have experience conducting advisory work of this nature, while the ACSS has conducted related training courses. Similarly, Ghana’s cybersecurity and cybercrime efforts might be well served by experts drawn from DoJ’s OPDAT program and DHS—through its Office of International Engagement. The SGI program might improve efficiency and effectiveness by leveraging these existing programs for ministerial-level capacity building—filling budgetary and human capital gaps as needed—and focusing new SGI efforts on the supraministerial level. Linking SGI to other SSA activities beyond DIB programs also offers the potential to maximize results. In Liberia, linking \$400,000 in FMF funding with a DIRI logistics project “incentiviz[ed] Liberian buy-in and commitment to the project.”⁷⁷ A similar approach—linking SGI to FMF or other train-and-equip programs—may be helpful in certain instances, but should be calibrated to avoid perverse incentives which compel partner nation participation for the sake of material gain verses meaningful reform. This type of program linkage would require not only an improved SSA strategy and organizational architecture, but also changes to the legal authorities underpinning SSA activities.

Constraining System of Legal Authorities

The current “patchwork” of “stovepiped” legal authorities constrains the efficacy of SGI and other SSA programs. As noted in a 2013 RAND study, authorities for SSA “...vary considerably. Some authorities attached to programs are single-year, and some are multiyear. Some limit DoD to engaging only with a partner country’s military forces, while others allow DoD to engage other armed forces under the authority of ministries other than the Ministry of Defense (MoD). Some allow for training; others do not.”⁷⁸ Consequently SSA planners and practitioners are challenged to choose the right authorities to conduct SSA activities and support these activities over the long-term; they must often cobble together multiple authorities to achieve their objectives.⁷⁹ The SGI program is likely to encounter many of these same constraints since it draws funding from programs under both Title 10 and Title 22.^{80 81} According to DoD Directive 5205.82, DIB is permitted to “support the national legislative or non-defense executive branch organizations of allies and partners that oversee or influence the defense sector” only on “a case-by-case basis and when authorized by law.”⁸² These restrictions limit SGI’s freedom to use DoD advisory capacity beyond partner nations’ defense ministries. Practitioners have consistently raised the need for Congress to consolidate authorities and increase flexibility in how SSA can be conducted, but until it does the SGI program and other SSA activities will be constrained.⁸³

Funding Uncertainty

Correlated to the authorities issue, uncertain funding significantly limits what SGI and other SSG reform initiatives can achieve. As a former U.S. Ambassador to Africa noted, there is incongruence between the long-term goals inherent in SSG reform and the short-term funding

allotted to the SGI program and similar SSA initiatives.⁸⁴ Consequently, as a result of constraining authorities and funding limitations, SSR reform initiatives like SGI have a tendency to be “episodic.”⁸⁵ As a program focusing on “expertise” rather than “stuff,” SGI may not require a large budget, though it remains to be seen whether or not the initial \$65 million allocation will be sufficient to provide the human capital and resources needed to achieve program objectives throughout all six SGI nations. More critical than the size of the budget, however, is the need for sustainability over at least five years. As it stands there is uncertainty regarding how much Congress will appropriate each year and what constraints will be attached to the funding.⁸⁶ A critical failing of other SSA activities — particularly train-and-equip effort—has been the lack of sustainable funding required to keep U.S.-provided equipment operational.⁸⁷ Sustainment costs are less of a concern for SGI, but the need for multi-year funding is required to ensure continuity in USG efforts and provide assurance to partner nations that the USG is invested in their success.

Inadequate Systems for Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Although PPD-23 now calls for “common standards and expectations” for assessing partner nation needs and worthiness for U.S. assistance and “investing in monitoring and evaluation of security sector assistance programs,” DoD and DoS do not currently have fully implemented systems to “assess, monitor, and evaluate the performance of security cooperation efforts.”^{88 89}

In deciding where to focus SSA efforts, decision makers—to date—have not conducted adequate baseline assessments that take stock of the partner nations’ absorptive capacity, economic health, and government performance, nor considered the alignment of U.S. and partner nation interests.⁹⁰ ⁹¹ As illustrated by a 2013 RAND Study, these factors are strongly correlated to the effectiveness of U.S. efforts.^{92 93} When SSA activities are conducted in countries where conditions are not conducive to reform, they can be futile and even detrimental. As noted in a 2015 RAND study, “Weak and autocratic states have difficulty making positive use of security sector assistance, and in many studies, such assistance was found to have potentially destabilizing effects.”⁹⁴ Such was the case in Iraq, where \$25 billion worth of U.S. FMS and FMF programs could not compensate for the “highly sectarian and politicized rule” of President Nouri al-Maliki.⁹⁵ In determining where to focus SGI efforts, the USG noted that each of the six countries selected “demonstrated partnership with the United States, expressed a desire to strengthen its security sector, and committed to the core elements of the initiative.” Additionally, the SGI program “emphasizes the importance of joint assessment and analysis to ensure that partner countries are actively engaged,” but given the political and economic fragility of many of the nations selected for the program, it appears as though objective selection criterion was not applied to determine which countries were selected.⁹⁶ The precedents for SSA in weak states portend problematic results for the SGI program.

According to one African affairs specialist “Neither the DoS nor DoD have used consistent metrics to systematically measure progress or evaluate the results of such assistance over time.”⁹⁷ When programs are initiated, evaluations are largely focused on inputs—such as number of seminars conducted and students trained—rather than outputs—their effects.⁹⁸ Most significantly for SSG reform efforts, as CNAS fellows Dr. Dafna H. Rand and Stephen Tankel note, “...not much effort is being made at present to ask or assess how the interactions, trainings, and assistance offered by the United States are effectively shaping a foreign partner military’s culture and behavior.” Additional problems arise from lack of continuity in assessment methodology due

to USG personnel changes and what one PME expert referred to as “assessment fatigue:” the tendency for the U.S. and its allies to conduct frequent uncoordinated assessments with little results to show for them.^{99 100} Furthermore, the U.S. reluctance to enforce conditionality and “turn off” aid when progress is not made—whether due to fears of damaging bilateral relations or broader political concerns—creates a moral hazard.¹ As Carnegie Endowment for International Peace senior associate Richard Sokolsky notes, “the United States has allowed too many countries to treat our assistance as entitlement programs, rather than pushing them to reform...”^{101 102}

The SGI program has taken steps to address these shortfalls, but the strength of its assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AM&E) framework remains to be seen. According to its 2015 review fact sheet, the SGI program “regularly measures and evaluates progress through consultation and dialogue with security sector stakeholders in partner countries,” and has developed a “monitoring and evaluation framework.”¹⁰³ However, it is unclear how well gauging progress against SGI’s established criteria translates to broader SSG reform progress. It is also unclear what mechanisms are in place to suspend SGI partnerships if progress is not met.

Disproportionate DoD Stake in SSA

While SGI takes a whole-of-government approach to SSG reform, the current DoD-heavy imbalance in SSA authorities and resources limits what other interagency SSA stakeholders can contribute. As one former U.S. Ambassador noted, many of the security challenges in Africa, such as poor rule of law capacity, cannot be solved with uniquely military means and require the support of other U.S. agencies.¹⁰⁴

Yet—largely due to the USG’s prioritization of counterterrorism initiatives—the majority of post-9/11 authorities have been geared toward the DoD and “used primarily to meet DoD operational goals rather than broader foreign policy requirements.”¹⁰⁵ According to one African affairs specialist, “assistance to police and other law enforcement agencies is comparatively small.”¹⁰⁶ As a result, DoS and other interagency entities with equities in SSA have not developed expeditionary capacities that would permit more extensive SSG reform efforts. Consequently, they often rely on contracted personnel to perform advisory functions—a practice which, as evidenced by USG experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, entails risks of inefficiency and command and control challenges.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, contractors’ interest in financial gain may take precedence over meeting program objectives as quickly and efficiently as possible. This is compounded by a limited focus on SSA activities within DoS. The 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development review underscores the importance of security sector reform, but “...the recommendations provided for elevating this area strategically, across broader diplomatic and programmatic efforts, have not been fully implemented.”¹⁰⁸ Though a rebalancing of SSA activities will take time, the USG—particularly DoS as the statutory SSA lead—should ensure an adequate civilian stake in the SGI program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE U.S. APPROACH

- **Revise the USG’s SSA organizational architecture to improve synchronization, efficiency, and effectiveness.** In addition to, or in lieu of, the National Defense

Authorization Act-directed DoD security cooperation strategy, develop an overarching top-down strategy for SSA that spans the interagency. Create formal, institutionalized mechanisms to guide SSA programming and implementation which synchronize the U.S. approach, reduce overhead, and prevent gaps, redundancies, or overlap stemming from disjointed efforts.

- ❖ **Link SGI with existing SSA activities to improve efficiency, reduce redundancy, and achieve maximum effect.** Leverage and expand existing advisory programs including DIRI, MODA, DIILS, DoJ's Resident Legal Advisor Program, and the Army National Guard's SPP, which have established processes, resources and, in some cases, relationships to perform advisory functions. SGI should enhance these programs and concentrate new efforts on aspects of security sector governance that transcend the ministerial level. In coordinating PME support for partner nations, SGI should use existing military institutions operated by the partner nation, regional and supranational organizations, and donor nations to the maximum extent possible. Additionally, the AMEP program should be used in conjunction with SGI to enhance the capacity of these institutions to improve security governance-oriented curriculum. In the interim, the SGI program should draw from existing U.S. PME and civilian security sector education capabilities including IMET, the NPS Center for Civil-Military Relations Africa Program, the ACSS and the DoS Regional Training Center to develop the professionalization of senior partner nations' civilian, officer, and enlisted ranks.
- ❖ **Streamline U.S. legal authorities in order to increase SSA flexibility.** Legal authorities are necessary to ensure SSA activities are in line with U.S. interests, yet the existing "patchwork" creates administrative hurdles and constrains vital SSA activities. Implementing agencies require greater flexibility in carrying out their work, including quicker approval, longer implementation time frames, the freedom to partner with security entities outside the ministries of defense, fewer geographic constraints, and the ability to conduct activities they deem essential to achieving established objectives. Revise legal authorities to enable the integration of SSA activities including, but not limited to, the use of FMF to support sustainment requirements and incentivize progress toward institutional reform. Extend the SGI framework from two years to a minimum of five years to provide adequate time for SSA to register results. To meet the intent of the "Leahy Laws" without abandoning necessary SSA activities, create a joint commission to identify and expedite the removal of human rights-violators from the ranks of partner nations' security services.
- **Improve the assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AM&E) process for SGI and other SSA initiatives.** In selecting which nations to partner with, consider more carefully political will, absorptive capacity, economic health, and government performance in addition to considering how closely the interests of the United States and the partner nation align. Develop a standardized, universally-implemented process for monitoring and evaluation that includes definitive performance benchmarks and "SMART" objectives: those that are "specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented, and time-bound."¹⁰⁹ Ensure the AM&E process is conducted through, or in concert with, other donor nations,

regional and supranational organizations, and civil society representatives to develop a common understanding of partner nations' needs and avoid "assessment fatigue." Ensure JCAPs include a monitoring and evaluation plan which includes specific provisions for "turning off" U.S. support if mutually agreed-upon benchmarks are not met.

❖ **Create a transparent SGI selection process with clear eligibility requirements.**

Drawing from the Millennium Challenge Corporation model (see Appendix A.), establish definitive eligibility requirements which create a more equitable process for partner nation selection and incentivize reform beyond partner nations participating in the SGI program.

- **Stabilize and extend SGI funding as well as ensure program prioritization.** Address the incongruence between SGI's current long-term goals and short-term funding by revising authorities to permit a funding time frame at least five years in duration. If drawing SGI funds from the DoD's CTPF and State's PKO fund proves to be efficient, maintain a dedicated outlay for SGI within these sources in future budgeting. Reinforce SGI's critical role in achieving the PPD-23's directive. Allocate sufficient human capital, including Foreign Service Nationals at embassy country teams, to sustain SGI program focus and ensure long-term continuity.
- **Rebalance USG roles to address DoD's disproportionate stake in SSA activities.** Support DoS efforts to expand its expeditionary capacity, enabling it to assume a larger direct role in advising non-military security sector entities while reducing dependency on contracted personnel. Increase funding allocations for rule-of-law and justice-centered activities to ensure partner nations are adequately supported in their efforts to improve domestic security. Improve DoJ, DHS, and Department of Treasury capacity to advise partner nation counterparts in their respective fields of expertise.

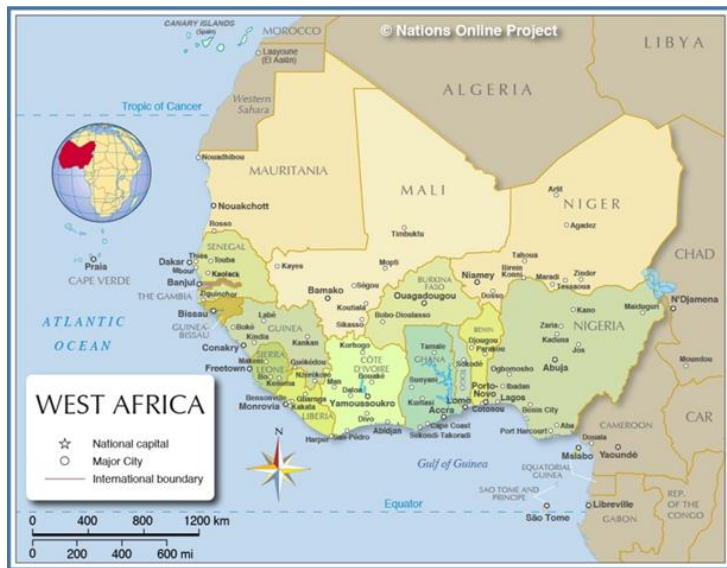
CHAPTER THREE

WEST AFRICA: DEMAND SIDE CHALLENGES OF U.S. SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Security Environment & Political Context

In the past two decades, many states in West Africa have made significant progress in terms of effective governance. Today, there are more fair elections than military coups, which characterized much of the 1960s and 1970s following decolonization.¹¹⁰ For instance, in Nigeria, President Buhari's election in 2015 represented the first time in the country's history that an incumbent president defeated an opposition candidate in a general election.¹¹¹ The 2014 citizen uprisings in Burkina Faso showcased the region's growing resistance to heads of state attempts to manipulate constitutions for self-serving motives.¹¹² After three decades, Ghana has established itself as a stable democracy and a regional security leader, having overcome its initial trend toward military rule. Effective governance in many West African nations is on the rise and the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States have increasingly enforced norms consistent with good governance and liberal values, such as by refusing to recognize regimes that come to power through military coups.¹¹³



However, many challenges persist, and regression remains all too common. Social and economic issues continue to undermine effective governance, such as: a growing youth bulge, the marginalization of younger populations, chronic underdevelopment, persistent inequalities, and political patronage and nepotism.¹¹⁴ Government policies remain overly centralized and are often perceived by the typical citizen in Africa as foreign. Meanwhile, climate change exacts an ever greater toll on the region, leading to significant economic and security complications.¹¹⁵ For example, the shrinking of Lake Chad in Niger is impairing the region's ability to provide food, water, and livelihoods—further disenfranchising the youth bulge and making it increasingly susceptible to organized crime and religious extremism.¹¹⁶

Additionally, non-state actors have taken hold of vast territories, managing services normally provided by the state. In many instances, these non-state actors are more powerful than their legitimate government counterparts and are using technology and globalization to consolidate their grip on power. Many distort religion to legitimize violence and exploit the weakness of state

institutions to foment local disillusionment with the government, as seen with Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in northern Mali.¹¹⁷

In the face of these difficulties, policy responses have tended to focus on the symptom of violence rather than the root cause of conflict: poor governance.¹¹⁸ Indeed, it is widely understood that government deficits are “the heart of Africa’s violent conflicts.”¹¹⁹ Many of these governance challenges are closely related to SSG. Four case studies—Ghana, Niger, Mali, and Nigeria — highlight key SSG challenges.

KEY PROBLEMS FACING SSG IN WEST AFRICA

Three challenges to SSG in West Africa stand out:

- **Identity Based Tensions: In West Africa, the absence of national identities and the failure to accommodate diversity greatly jeopardizes the provision of social services.**¹²⁰ Colonialism’s systematic discrimination based on ethnicity was adopted by the leaders of newly independent African countries, thereby hamstringing national unity. Such leaders refused to accept a nation-state made up of different ethnicities and identities. They often pushed a common-identity system in an attempt to build a nation.¹²¹ West Africa, however, is an ethnically and religiously diverse region. This dissonance between systemic discrimination and societal diversity inevitably lead to the disenfranchisement of certain groups. Many nations in Africa are rife with identity based tension, due to the inequities of political participation. Leaders often exploit ethnic or religious differences as a means of gaining power. These identity based tensions precipitate military coups, election violence, and border disputes amongst other issues.¹²²

Societal cleavages, exacerbated and institutionalized by the political system, often lead to the marginalization of ethnic groups not aligned with the central government. These divisions weaken the public’s ability to mobilize against this marginalization.¹²³ Indeed, many of Africa’s rural populations regard the notion of statehood as a foreign, and central governance as an imposed construct with little relevance to their day-to-day lives. Consequentially, any type of assistance couched in terms of governance and institutional reform is a project by and for the elites; groups that represent a fraction of the population. Regrettably, these elites too often perpetuate the exploitative and extractive practices associated with the colonial era. Designing functional institutions and strengthening the government, though noble, may be seen by the populace as contrived and self-interested efforts geared toward the elites. To be sure, this does not invalidate conscientious development and institutional reform efforts, but it demands rigorous analysis on the USG’s part to better understand local contexts.

- **Ineffective Service Delivery: Corruption, insecurity, and limited government capacity are the major impediments to West African states’ ability to provide services—most importantly, public safety and security.**¹²⁴ Public safety and security are fundamental aspects of a stable nation state, and the inability to adequately provide them greatly undermines government legitimacy. High levels of insecurity and conflict undermines popular confidence in the central government and brings the implementation

of social services to a halt, further increasing the likelihood of violence and civil unrest. Even when there are no security impediments to service delivery, corruption siphons resources away from the general population and toward political patrons.¹²⁵

- **Lack of Accountability: Many countries in West Africa fail to address a lack of government accountability and uneven access to justice in the face of human rights violations.**¹²⁶ Many criminals, both within the government and from non-state actors, are not held accountable. Moreover, when justice is exercised, it is often punitive rather than being aimed at rehabilitation and reconciliation. In order to be effective, rule of law institutions must be perceived as equitable, transparent, and effective. The provision of justice is a central governance function—without it, governments become irrelevant in the eyes of the populace.¹²⁷

COUNTRY IN FOCUS: MALI

Once lauded for its democratic stability and successful implementation of SSR, the January 2012 rebellion in the North, subsequent coup d'état, and rise of violent extremism in the ungoverned territories of the North and East exposed the fragility of Mali's democratic institutions.¹²⁸ The speed with which the government and the armed forces fell revealed the extent of their decay and inefficiency.¹²⁹ While the army's dissatisfaction with the government's handling of a February 2012 Tuareg rebellion served as the catalyst for the coup, the event triggered a chain of overlapping security, political, and humanitarian crises.¹³⁰

As the government in Bamako became consumed with the coup, Tuareg rebels advanced in the North, seizing territory and displacing an estimated 350,000 civilians.¹³¹ Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and allied Islamist groups took advantage of the North's security vacuum and began advancing on the South, prompting the French military response, Operation Serval, and the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The intervention successfully stabilized the immediate security situation; however, the Government of Mali (GOM) remains ill equipped to independently counter the Islamists should the conflict resume in the near-term.

Current Security Environment & Political Context

Today, Mali faces a host of multi-faceted challenges, including chronic poverty, continued violence and unrest, and rising extremism. Through MINUSMA, French and multinational forces protect Mali's territorial integrity while encouraging continued progress in implementing the June 2015 Peace Accord. Despite incremental implementation progress, Mali remains vulnerable to many of the same fundamental governance challenges that contributed to the 2012 coup and state collapse.¹³²

Major Challenges to SGI Implementation:

- (1) Volatility of current security situation
- (2) Lack of clarity regarding level of political will for comprehensive SSG reform
- (3) Mixed progress implementing June 2015 Peace Accords
- (4) Lack of interagency cooperation within the Malian government

Outlook: Despite early successes and initial government buy-in, the long-term outlook for SGI in Mali remains unclear due to the volatility of the political and security situations.

We recommend SGI in Mali be reevaluated with a possible re-prioritization of USG resources toward stabilizing conflict-affected areas.

"Mali's problems reflect the fragility of governance in the region, the lack of economic development, especially in Northern Mali, the absence of meaningful opportunities for people to engage with their government, and the widespread desperation that exists in an unforgiving arid region with chronic food insecurity."

- Ambassador Johnnie Carson, Speaking before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, February 2013

While current President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta has pledged to unite the country and fight corruption, the government's continued perception of separatists—and specifically Tuaregs—as enemies of the state hinders sincere efforts toward reconciliation.¹³³ Post-conflict analysis suggests that internal ethnic divides within the Malian armed forces contributed heavily to the

army's failure to effectively project force and counter the threat posed by Islamic extremists in the North.^{134 135}

President Keita benefits from the backing of religious leaders and, through an entrenched patronage system, wields extensive control throughout the bureaucracy. This may enable him to more quickly enact reforms. However, in a society rooted in consensus politics, this practice has fostered a strong perception amongst the populace of unchecked corruption and has largely contributed to the government's perceived lack of credibility, particularly in the North.^{136 137 138} Given that many in power benefit from patron/client relationships, the level of political will for comprehensive reform remains uncertain at best. Heavy reliance on political patronage is also likely to hinder efforts to increase transparency and accountability.

Deep-rooted distrust between Northern populations and the central government in Bamako presents one of the greatest challenges to President Keita's government. Conversations with country experts suggest the government in Bamako is out of touch with the challenges facing the North.¹³⁹ Since the start of the conflict in 2012, the Northern regions of Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal have been left to their own devices as the central government has failed to provide public services—most notably education and reliable healthcare.^{140 141} This lack of services in the North threatens the perceived legitimacy and credibility of government institutions.¹⁴²

The persistent threat posed by Islamic extremists in the Saharan and high Sahelian regions, where the central government exerts little control, further aggravates existing political and security challenges. For many years this remote, largely ungoverned, area has become a haven for transnational organized crime and illegal arms, narcotics, and human trafficking. Mali's political and security challenges are further exacerbated by a lack of economic development and chronic food security challenges.^{143 144} President Keita's government has a unique opportunity to leverage international community support to confront these economic challenges. If left unaddressed, however, lack of education and youth underemployment may aggravate political instability and make disaffected youth populations susceptible to extremist recruitment.¹⁴⁵

Security Sector Governance Reform: Progress & Challenges

Given the volatility of the current security situation, the GOM's immediate focus is on security operations rather than long-term reform.¹⁴⁶ While this prioritization of stability is understandable, it must not be used as a pretext to return to the corrupt and poor governance practices that marginalized large portions of the population. Effectively addressing the root causes of the 2012 crisis will require comprehensive, sustained governance reform in tandem with efforts to stabilize the current security situation.

"The Malian Government was less focused than we [the USG] were on countering AQIM and the significant levels of narcotics and other trafficking in the region...the Government of Mali focused primarily on the perceived threat posed by zoned Tuareg populations..."

- Deputy Assistant Secretary Amanda Dory,
Speaking before the Committee on Foreign
Affairs, February 2013

National-Level Reform

The GOM—specifically President Keïta—has shown early interest and surface-level commitment to governance reform initiatives, including USG-led SGI efforts. President Keïta demonstrated initial enthusiasm for reform, removing several judges suspected of corruption and appointing a well-respected Prime Minister, Oumar Tatam Ly.¹⁴⁷ However, President Keïta has since overseen a succession of three prime ministers, and faces criticism that reforms will not lead to substantial change.¹⁴⁸ High turnover rates of prime ministers hinder efforts to establish policy continuity and build relationships with diplomatic partners.

According to a country expert who has spent time with MINUSMA, the French were in some ways too successful in rapidly eliminating the threat posed by Islamists. Operation Serval successfully halted the threat before fighters reached major southern cities, which had the adverse effect of insulating the government in Bamako and reducing pressure on it to enact comprehensive reforms.¹⁴⁹ Further, many stakeholders in the state and security hierarchy remain unconvinced of the importance and value of comprehensive SSG reform.^{150 151}

Despite the signed peace accords, a large disconnect remains between MINUSMA, which views the threat posed by Islamic extremists as a central concern, and the GOM, which continues to view separatists as the primary enemy.¹⁵² This divergent view threatens to thwart implementation of the peace agreement; especially efforts to more fully integrate Tuaregs into the Malian armed forces. While the GOM's military leadership acknowledges the importance of integration within the armed forces, in practice the armed forces seem predominately interested in integrating Tuaregs from one specific caste, which is at odds with many of the mainstream Tuareg groups. This uneven recruitment strategy is likely to further fractionalize rebel groups and may destabilize the existing peace agreement.¹⁵³

Conversations with country analysts suggest that GOM stakeholders possess some political will for reform; however, it is unclear whether this political will translate to the action Western partners are seeking. Reports that the armed forces are seeking dual-use military capabilities to create an elite paramilitary force within the existing army suggest a lack of interest in comprehensive military reform.¹⁵⁴ Such dual-use military capabilities, intended to support counterterrorism efforts, could be used by the GOM against Northern separatists.

U.S. Cooperation

USG priorities in Mali include the promotion of stable democracy and improved governance; enhanced regional security; reduced economic and social vulnerabilities; and sustained economic growth. The 2012 coup exposed many of the shortcomings of previous USG-led assistance to the GOM, specifically military cooperation, which fell far short of achieving deep-rooted security sector reform.

Discussions with USG representatives suggest a promising start to SGI engagement. Within the USG there is a strong sense that the Malians are serious about implementing sustainable and comprehensive government reforms. Interestingly, this assessment differs from interviews conducted with experts outside the USG. When assessing such contradictory views it is important to bear in mind SGI's primary aim, which is to create conditions, through enhanced

interministerial cooperation and joint strategic planning, in which the GOM can work to improve governance.¹⁵⁵ SGI was never conceived as a program to singlehandedly address deep-rooted political and security challenges. In Mali, SGI is uniquely positioned to encourage interagency dialogue within the relatively new administration of President Keita and to encourage the GOM to adopt a more integrated, rather than stovepiped, governing model.

SGI focus areas in Mali include: aligning Ministry of Defense resources to match operational needs; improving human resource management for the police; and developing a justice sector strategy. The ultimate aim across these efforts is to enhance GOM interagency coordination.¹⁵⁶

USG SGI representatives and their GOM counterparts signed a JCAP in January 2015 and hosted a defense strategic planning workshop in Washington, D.C. in January 2016. The SGI team plans to travel to Bamako at the end of April 2016 to host an interministerial planning meeting aimed at advising the GOM on how to move away from their current stovepiped governance structure.¹⁵⁷ The volatility of the current security situation has prevented extensive SGI engagement outside of Bamako and has precluded the appointment of a full-time SGI coordinator. Should the security situation stabilize, a permanent Bamako-based SGI coordinator may help raise the stature of SGI with the GOM, as exemplified in Niger.¹⁵⁸ Despite initial successes, conversations with country analysts outside of the USG suggest that the combination of the GOM's lack of political will for comprehensive reforms and SGI's failure to address the deep-rooted issues, which facilitated the 2012 coup, threaten the success of sustained SGI reforms. Additionally, the GOM and military continue to struggle with issues of authority, credibility, and leadership. Numerous changes in key government posts have resulted in difficulties establishing continuity in GOM program leadership.¹⁵⁹

Recommendations

The following recommendations address both country-level and SGI-specific challenges. As the above analysis suggests, SGI will only be successful if the GOM displays the political will necessary to enact comprehensive reforms that address the serious political, economic, and security grievances at the heart of the 2012 coup.¹⁶⁰ However, fostering political will that stretches beyond surface-level reforms will be a persistent challenge for both GOM and USG stakeholders seeking to implement SGI and broader U.S. foreign policy.

Recommendations for SGI in Mali

- **Reevaluate whether SGI is the best USG tool for building security governance capacity and consider a shift in USG focus to stabilization of conflict-affected areas.** The volatility of Mali's security situation has prevented the GOM from adopting a long-term outlook and has diminished political will for transformative and comprehensive government reforms. The successful implementation of SGI in Mali requires a baseline of both sustained GOM political will and a stabilized security situation, which is currently absent. While SGI plays an important role in facilitating GOM interagency collaboration, the USG should consider reprioritizing its engagement to place a greater emphasis on ensuring the stabilization of conflict-affected areas. This shift in priorities may include greater support for USAID's Transition Objectives (TO) aimed at delivering near-term, tangible humanitarian and stabilization support at the community level.¹⁶¹

- **Align SGI objectives more closely with MINUSMA, EUTM, EUCAP Sahel Mali, and the work of other partners. Rather than work unilaterally, SGI should seek to strengthen existing governance programs.** By leveraging expertise and infrastructure that has already been developed, SGI programming can better ensure continuity of effort. Current SGI efforts to build upon the human resource management training developed by EUTM Mali demonstrate the feasibility of such alignment. SGI, where possible, should also seek to support MINUSMA's focus on reconciliation, which will be crucial to creating an environment conducive to sustainable government reforms.
- **Understanding that SGI is designed as a government-to-government program, SGI should encourage GOM to engage more actively with civil society stakeholders especially in the North.** Engaging civil society stakeholders will help to identify whether the priorities of the population and civil society parallel those of the government. Mali's system of political patronage has resulted in an elite ruling class, which has contributed to the central government's low credibility. Long-term SGI success will require consensus and momentum for governance reform beyond immediate GOM stakeholders.

Recommendations for U.S. Foreign Policy in Mali

- **Encourage the Malian Armed Forces to shift away from a war-fighting model in the North.** The law enforcement model used by the gendarmerie has proven more effective in fostering relations in the North. The gendarmerie has a better understanding of the situation on the ground and moves about more freely than the armed forces. The armed forces may benefit from refocusing efforts to civilian protection programs such as assisting in delivery of public services and protecting schools/hospitals.¹⁶²
- **Support programming to improve accessibility of judicial system.** As of 2014, an estimated 42% of the population believed the judicial system was corrupt.¹⁶³ The official language of the judicial system is French, which many Malians do not speak fluently. Translators are not provided on a reliable basis, leading many citizens to seek vigilante justice or to turn to tribal chiefs and religious leaders to settle disputes.¹⁶⁴ Training programs for translators and/or the court system's use of local dialects may encourage plaintiffs to use the central government's judicial system and assist in reestablishing the government's credibility in rural areas.
- **Strengthen voices of moderate Islam among Tuaregs as counterweight to spread of radical Islam in the North.** Morocco has deployed an innovative program of training for moderate imams, which could be replicated in Mali.¹⁶⁵ Morocco has spearheaded regional efforts to train imams in moderate religious thought, which the government hopes will serve as a bulwark against the spread of fundamentalist Islam.^{166 167 168} Since 2013, an estimated 500 Malian imams have traveled to Morocco to receive such training.¹⁶⁹ At present, there is a sense within GOM that this approach may prove successful if replicated, but there is a lack of capacity and understanding on how to implement such a program.¹⁷⁰ While USG-support of such a program may not be feasible given political

sensitivities, other international partners could play an implementation role with USG advisory support.

- **Encourage adoption of a budget model that enables more reliable and rapid dissemination of funds from the central government to local districts.** At present, government effectiveness suffers due to the high level of centralization, which in turn diminishes the central government's credibility in areas outside of Bamako. While a decentralized model was adopted in 1994, the central government continues to resist transferring financial resources to local districts.¹⁷¹

COUNTRY IN FOCUS: NIGER

Since its independence from France in 1960, Niger has been alternatively governed by military rulers and elected civilian leaders. The Republic of Niger has already experienced five different constitutions and numerous coups d'états in its fifty-six years of independence. This “culture of coups” is a defining feature of post-independence Niger, revealing the extent to which the military is involved in the political and institutional affairs of the country. These governance issues are intertwined with broader development issues. Having struggled with a “poverty trap” situation for many years, Niger has one of the highest demographic growth rates of sub-Saharan Africa and one of the lowest GDP per capita ratios of the world.

Current Security Environment & Political Context

The security situation in Niger suffers from the current instability of the broader Sahel region. The 2011 military intervention in Libya and the ongoing crisis in Mali have had important security consequences for Niger, a landlocked country that shares borders with Algeria, Mali, and Libya to its north and west. The Nigerien Armed Forces lack the logistical and organizational capacity to face renewed terrorist threats and unconventional security challenges posed by Boko Haram and other violent extremist organizations. The crisis in Mali has caused a resurgence of Tuareg claims for independence, while also confronting Niger with an influx of more than 25,000 refugees.¹⁷² Drug trafficking is also thriving, as it represents a lucrative enterprise for those capitalizing on Niger’s strategic location on the drug trade route stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Horn of Africa.

Major Challenges to SGI Implementation:

- (1) Persistent poverty trap hinders public and private investment;
- (2) A “culture of coups” has prevented the emergence of civilian control of military affairs and a sense of citizenship;
- (3) External factors such as regional instability and climate change exacerbate domestic challenges.

Outlook: The prospects for SGI success in Niger are favorable due to the high level of political commitment from the government of Niger and the USG.

We recommend SGI in Niger be extended.

In addition to these regional threats, Niger faces non-traditional security challenges such as climate change, population displacements, and uncontrolled demographic growth. The shrinking of Lake Chad has had severe economic consequences for Nigerien farmers and breeders: fewer jobs are available for a growing youth population, thus making illegal businesses and terrorist organizations more appealing. Despite its natural resources, such as uranium and oil, Niger remains the least developed country in the world, according to the Human Development Index.¹⁷³

However, despite internal weaknesses and the volatile regional environment, the Nigerien state has remained relatively stable since the last coup d'état in 2010. The “culture of coups” is a defining feature of post-independence Niger, as the military is deeply involved in political and institutional affairs. The 2010 coup illustrates the paradoxical role of military coups in the country: a group of senior military officers led a coup to restore democracy and a multi-party political system after the President had dissolved all oversight institutions in an attempt to stay in power. Mahamadou Issoufou was then elected President for his first five-year mandate. In March

2016, he was re-elected for a second mandate. The election process was relatively transparent and democratic and allowed for other candidates to campaign against the incumbent. However, the opposition claimed that many irregularities undermined the legitimacy of the elections.¹⁷⁴ Since his re-election this year, President Issoufou has sent positive signs of openness and willingness to cooperate with the opposition, thereby sending a signal of respect for democratic governance to the international community.¹⁷⁵

Several international organizations and foreign countries have stakes in Niger's security environment. Above all, France, concerned about the security of oil and uranium deposits as well as the safety of French citizens living in Niger, has remained actively involved in the country. The EU's mission, EUCAP SAHEL Niger, was created in 2012 with the goal of enhancing security, governance, and stability in the country and the region.¹⁷⁶ As for the U.S., it views Niger as a key partner for counterterrorism efforts in West Africa and has recently established drone bases in the country, while strengthening its overall security cooperation.

Security Sector Governance Reform Progress & Challenges

The concept of security sector reform, in itself, is often perceived in Niger as a foreign idea that is neither applicable nor desirable. Yet, over the last several years, the government of Niger has expressed a real interest in addressing some of the major challenges to security sector governance.

National-Level Reform

The key to understanding SSR challenges is to remember that the Nigerien Armed Forces not only have a military role, but also represent a de facto political authority within the state, due to their history of acting as an "arbiter of political and institutional affairs."¹⁷⁷ Thus, many military leaders in Niger stand to lose political influence if security governance reforms denying them preferential status were implemented.

A related challenge for SSR in Niger is the perception among most Nigeriens that the military is beyond the reach of civilian influence. Civilian oversight of the military, at the moment, is extremely limited. Consequently, it would be a difficult step for the government to initiate dialogue with the population and conduct an inclusive assessment of security needs. Yet, this integration is essential for developing a common vision for security sector reform and ultimately shaping a security sector that is best suited to serving the public.

Finally, Niger lacks resources to fund its fragile institutions. For instance, the judicial system is underfunded to the point that it lacks basic material resources and infrastructure. Thus, any serious SSR program in Niger has to take into account the country's high level of poverty and low level of development. Given Niger's dire economic condition, funding for SSR programs should be allocated separately from funds (government outlays or foreign aid) dedicated to development goals such as fighting chronic food insecurity, poverty, and illiteracy. Separating funding for SSR and development programs will ensure neither is neglected due to prioritizing one initiative over the other: both are essential to successful SGI implementation.

U.S. Cooperation

Niger is a key partner for the U.S. in the Sahel, due to its strategic location for counterterrorism efforts. However, it is clear that a fully successful partnership will require major strengthening of Nigerien institutions, hence the relevance of SGI in Niger. Since the initial SGI consultation visit in January 2015, the USG and Government of Niger (GON) have effectively collaborated on a JCAP and moved into the implementation phase, thus making Niger one of the most promising countries for SGI. The level of political commitment to SGI in Niger seems to be indicative of a broader willingness to cooperate with the U.S. The two governments have agreed upon three focus areas: 1) National Security Review and Strategic Framework development; 2) alignment of human and material resources to more efficiently address short- and long-term security needs; and 3) external communication.¹⁷⁸

The predominant USG view is that the implementation phase is unfolding well. This optimistic start is likely attributed to two main factors. First, on the USG side, a senior diplomat has been appointed specifically to the Niger Country Team to act as the embassy SGI Coordinator. A high level, permanent USG representative has given SGI stature in the eyes of the GON and provides support for the relatively small Country Team, which is often preoccupied with day-to-day management of the embassy as well as their other duties. Second, on the GON side, the President of Niger appointed a senior-level official in the Office of the Presidency as the SGI point of contact. This demonstrates the current high level of political commitment to SGI from the GON, a positive sign for the future of SGI according to recent studies that show that political commitment from the partner nation is key for the success of DIB programs.¹⁷⁹

Recommendations

The below recommendations address the need to sustain cooperation between the United States and Niger on security issues. However, in order for this cooperation to be sustainable, the SGI program and USG efforts at large will have to better take into account the broader development needs of Niger.

Recommendations for SGI in Niger

- **Maintain the momentum by committing to retain the embassy SGI Coordinator beyond the two-year program limit.** Given the promising start of SGI in Niger, it is important to keep the momentum going and to make sure that both the US Country Team and the GON keep investing the appropriate human resources and time into the implementation phase.
- **Put SGI into a framework of broader development needs.** SGI efforts will be fruitless in the long-term if SGI is not part of a broader set of programs aimed at supporting the economic and social development of Niger, one of the least developed countries of the world. A simple step in this regard would be to ensure that SGI funding is not taken out of funds allocated for other development programs.

- **Encourage the GON to launch a media campaign.** As of today, it seems that too little attention has been given to Nigerien civil society input. This is unfortunate, especially given that one of the three focus areas of SGI in Niger is improving external communications in order to “build public trust with its citizens.”¹⁸⁰ As pointed out in a DCAF study on SSR in Niger, “whatever measures are planned as part of the reform process, the most important aspect is the credibility of institutions and the confidence of citizens.”¹⁸¹ A step in the right direction would be GON engagement with the populace via the media: first, use the network of community radio stations (i.e. Ruranet) to broadcast the message that the GON is committed to improving the relationship between citizens and the security forces. Second, use Niger’s vibrant private newspapers to reinforce this message. This is both an affordable and effective way to make SGI more inclusive and thus more legitimate.¹⁸²

Recommendations for U.S. Foreign Policy in Niger

- **Increase funding for development programs in Niger and in the region,** especially those focused on fighting against the receding of Lake Chad and creating economic opportunities for youth. USAID has a critical role to play in this process, particularly in conjunction with the work that the French Development Agency is already doing.¹⁸³
- **At the political level, keep signaling that cooperation with Niger is a priority.** The future of SGI and of other American interests will be best served if the USG and GON can maintain a close relationship in which both parties show goodwill. This can be accomplished through high-level visits to Niger and official statements, as well as by incentives given to the private sector for investing in infrastructure projects in Niger.
- **Encourage the GON to promote inclusivity and outreach.** Beyond SGI efforts and in conjunction with increased government-to-government cooperation, the USG should encourage the GON to engage in consultations with Nigerien NGOs, and other representatives from the civil society, in order to ensure the sustainability of reforms.

COUNTRY IN FOCUS: GHANA

Since becoming the first African nation to achieve independence in 1957, Ghana has undergone an exceptional transformation in terms of its governance. The first 35 years of the country's 59 year history were defined by a degree of militarism and political instability that was unusual even by African standards. Between 1966 and 1981 alone, there were four successful military coups (in 1966, 1972, 1979, and 1981) and many failed attempts.¹⁸⁴ Yet, this initial trend of military authoritarianism and severe economic problems notwithstanding, Ghana successfully transitioned to a relatively stable democracy in little more than a decade.

Major challenges to SGI implementation:

- (1) Hedging against corruption;
- (2) Identifying and engaging all relevant stakeholders in the focus areas of maritime and border security;
- (3) Integrating SGI with extant SSA efforts and PME institutions to ensure impact maximization.

Outlook: The prospects for SGI success in Ghana are favorable due to the high degree of political stability and a comparatively well developed security sector.

We recommend SGI in Ghana be extended.

Paradoxically, the foundation for Ghana's governance transformation was laid by Jerry Rawlings, whose rule stemmed from a military coup he staged in 1981 against then president Hilla Limann. During his 19 year rule, Rawlings all but completely transformed Ghanaian governance via a number of reforms that culminated in the groundbreaking 1992 constitution. Since enactment of the national constitution, Ghana has held six democratic elections, suggesting that the country has successfully departed from its history of military coups.

In view of this checkered history, it is all the more astounding that Ghana has emerged as a strong regional security leader. Despite its security service's small size of 13,500 members (compared to Nigeria's active military of approximately 60,000 troops¹⁸⁵), the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) have participated in a multitude of regional and overseas peacekeeping missions, beginning with the UN Operation in the Congo in 1960. Ghana played pivotal roles during the UN operations in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) and Liberia (UNMIL), but has also deployed to a host of other countries such as Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), the Central African republic and Chad (MINURCAT), and many others.¹⁸⁶

Ghana thus unifies in its history both the typical growing pains associated with state-building in post-colonial Africa, as well as examples of successful democratic reform. To be sure, the country's governance successes must be attributed in large part to Jerry Rawlings who, acting as a benevolent dictator, ushered the country into its democratic transition and set the foundation for its future development.

Current Security Environment & Political Context

Ghana is widely considered to be one of the most stable and secure countries in West Africa, even being described as a "reference point for democratic practice."¹⁸⁷ While there is occasional civil unrest and sporadic violence associated with chieftancy disputes and national elections, security at a macro level may be classified as good compared to other West-African countries such as Nigeria or Mali.

Currently, the greatest threat to Ghana's stability is economic. Inflation has doubled to almost 20% since 2012, with the national debt to GDP ratio rising from 26% in 2006 to 67% in 2014.¹⁸⁸ In this context, many Ghanaians appear to be losing confidence in President John Mahama's ability to secure an acceptable standard of living for the populace. The austerity measures enacted as part of the IMF bailout have further enflamed public opinion. Yet, while economic grievances may lead to protests and civil unrest, they are unlikely to result in widespread violent conflict.

It should be noted, however, that political tensions have increased in recent years, and national elections have grown increasingly antagonistic and contentious. The 2012 elections were heavily disputed by opposition leader Nana Akufo-Addo and resulted in an eight month election petition trial at the Supreme Court, the result of which was a narrow five-four decision in favor of the incumbent John Mahama.

While the 2015 Transparency International corruption perception index identifies Ghana as one of the least corrupt countries on the African continent, the administration of justice continues to be a systemic challenge in the country. Most recently, seven judges from the High Court were suspended in October 2015 amid bribery allegations.¹⁸⁹

In sum, while grassroots unrest may be rooted in the country's poor economics, mounting doubts about the electoral process and the opposition's access to justice may lead to more increased civil unrest. Much will depend on the outcome of the national election in November 2016. Should the elections become contentious or violent, the Ghanaian armed forces are well equipped to quell unrest and maintain internal stability should the need arise. Corruption within the Ghana Police Service (GPS), however, remains a security risk insofar as it can compromise border integrity at a time when terrorism is spreading across the region.

Security Sector Governance Reform: Progress & Challenges

Beginning with the overthrow of the People's National Party government by Rawling's Provisional National Defence Council in 1981, security sector institutions slowly began to assimilate the tenets of democratic control. The move to multi-party democracy in 1992 further strengthened Ghana's reputation as one of West Africa's most secure and stable democracies.

Nevertheless, there are severe and persistent challenges to Ghana's ability to reform its security sector, chiefly:

Weak governance and oversight institutions; inadequate oversight stems partially from unclear legislation, e.g. the vague formulation of parliament's oversight role, as well as institutional culture. Public debates on defense, for instance, are viewed as threats to national security.¹⁹⁰ As such, there is a discrepancy between oversight bodies' mandate and their actual performance.

Lack of civilian expertise; there is a clear civil-military divide with respect to the administration of security sector issues. This problem, rooted in inadequate training, is exacerbated by high civilian employee turnover rates and insufficient access to, and clout with, military counterparts.

Corruption; the general perception in Ghana is that corruption remains one of the central factors undermining the reputation of the security sector, and GPS in particular. To this end, the accountability and legitimacy of the security sector is undermined.

National-Level Reform

Significant restructuring of top military commands is customary in Ghana as newly elected presidents take office. Beyond such routine reshaping, however, there have been few major reform programs attempting to address security governance related mechanisms.

The Performance Improvement Programme (PIP) was introduced in 1997 to improve the competencies of civilian staff within the ministry of defense. Among the program's main objectives were: (1) improve organizational and management systems in the ministry, (2) strengthen human resource capability and training, (3) establish a management information system to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.

The PIP has been assessed as suffering from uncertain political support and engagement.¹⁹¹ However, it appears that one of the impacts of the program was the creation of a security sector governance and management course, which is regularly conducted by African Security Defense Research, Ghana University, and the Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration. This course seems to enjoy popular support, though it is unclear to what degree it has positively impacted the Ministry of Defence's effectiveness. Overall, GAF is considered a highly professional and reliable force.

Given the relative absence of external threats, Ghana has focused increasingly on domestic security issues, shifting resources away from the military and attempting to increase the effectiveness of the GPS.¹⁹² Nevertheless, the GPS remains a force that is primarily reactive. It continues to lack the resources necessary to effectively respond to and investigate serious crimes.¹⁹³ The National Police Reform Programme, rolled out in 2002, achieved little after funding from the United Nations Development Program expired.

Increased focus on the GPS has not, however, been able to stem the tide of corruption that is rampant within the service. On the contrary, the perception among the general public seems to be that police corruption is getting worse, perhaps also, in part, due to the economic downturn. Such corruption within the national police service not only erodes public trust in the effectiveness and legitimacy of the police, it may also compromise national security by exposing ports of entry to greater risk of penetration by adversaries.

The development of the Ghanaian security forces has further stagnated due to detrimental institutional path dependencies as well as the lack of a clear national security policy framework. In this context, while the Ghana Armed Forces must be seen as more effective than the Police, this attention has done little to improve police effectiveness, and corruption continues to be a major problem.

U.S. Cooperation

SGI in Ghana is still very much in a nascent stage. Four focus areas were approved during JCAP development in September 2015: (1) Maritime security; (2) border management; (3) cybersecurity and cybercrime; and (4) the administration of justice.

The JCAP was scheduled to be signed in February 2016; the implementation plan is currently being finalized, and programming for these focus areas is was due to begin in April.

Overall, the prospects for success of SGI in Ghana appear quite good. The focus areas are distinct and specific; political will is strong; and the human capital available to coordinate implementation is sufficient since Ghana has one of the larger U.S. embassies in West Africa.

It is noteworthy, however, that Ghana has preferred not to broaden its SGI cooperation to the wider region, instead insisting that the program remain a strictly bilateral effort with the U.S. The reason for this is unclear, but it is reasonable to expect that this decision will undermine the full effectiveness of SGI-related efforts. The focus areas of maritime security and border management necessarily affect neighboring states and, as such, stand to benefit greatly from expanded multilateral cooperation.

Recommendations

Despite Ghana's reputation as a relatively stable and secure democracy, it appears that SSR focused on governance issues remains underdeveloped in Ghana. The few initiatives that have come along over the last 25 years have been a piecemeal assortment of half-hearted efforts that suffered from insufficient political support and financial resources. While the country is frequently referenced as an example of good security governance within Africa, expectations must be raised significantly if Ghana hopes to raise the quality of its SSG to Western standards.

In terms of reform, the diffuse web of underfunded initiatives has been unable to reshape the extant governance mechanisms in Ghana's security sector. The Ghanaian government lacks the resources to plan, program, and fund significant security sector reforms.¹⁹⁴ This means that public oversight and accountability of the security sector remains inadequate, despite its formal democratic subordination to the civilian government.

Recommendations for SGI in Ghana

Engage civil society stakeholders; the administration of justice is an overarching theme for JCAP programming in Ghana. In order to hold the government accountable to its citizens and make SGI efforts more sustainable, stakeholders from civil society should be involved. Potential candidates could be African Security Dialogue and Research, the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, and the Legal Resource Centre.

- **Adopt an inclusive approach to SGI focus areas;** improving Ghana's long-term effectiveness in managing its maritime and border security must include mechanisms of cooperation and collaboration with neighboring states and regional stakeholders. To this end, active collaboration, coordination, and exchange with regional stakeholders should be encouraged during SGI implementation.

Recommendations for U.S. Foreign Policy in Ghana

- **Conduct an in-depth study to assess the potential for improving governance-based SSR in Ghana;** the country has a well-functioning military and relatively stable political institutions. As such, there is significant potential to conduct effective governance-based SSR, e.g. to improve the administration of justice. However, in view of limited resources, an extensive study should identify the most promising entry points for SSR.
- **Encourage Ghanaian government to bridge civil-military divide to improve oversight;** in order to turn *de jure* oversight mandates into de facto oversight capacity, efforts should be undertaken to reconcile the strong institutional culture within the GAF with the civilian administrators. One measure to achieve this could be to form long-term joint oversight commissions to promote rapport building.
- **Support Ghanaian government efforts to strengthen and expand governance-focused training for civilian employees;** the course on security sector governance and management can serve as a proof-of-concept that ought to be made mandatory for career officials in the security sector.

COUNTRY IN FOCUS: NIGERIA

In March 2015, Nigeria successfully completed its first peaceful transition from one civilian leader to another without a military coup in-between. President Muhammadu Buhari has since made some headway in shaking-up the military high command, removing corrupt officials, and cooperating with neighboring countries in the campaign to counter Boko Haram.¹⁹⁵ Embracing the nickname “Baba Go-Slow and Steady,” he has adopted a slow moving reform agenda that appears to show promise with the people of Nigeria.¹⁹⁶ However, the government of Nigeria’s overall record on democracy, human rights, the rule of law, corruption, trafficking in persons, the prevention of internal conflict, and the welfare of its citizens remains problematic.¹⁹⁷ Today, Nigeria faces three significant challenges: (1) the dramatic fall in the price of oil which has caused immense economic problems; (2) continuing corruption from the past decade which has brought about the pressing need for widespread reform; and (3) Boko Haram’s increasing use of suicide bombers to carry out a campaign of terror across the region, as the organization moves away from its previous practice of occupying territory.¹⁹⁸

Major challenges to SGI implementation:

- (1) Sustaining local ownership and maintaining political will;
- (2) Overcoming corruption;
- (3) Strengthening multilateral implementation;
- (4) The absence of candid discussions concerning human rights abuses and the security sector.

Outlook: The prospects for SGI success in Nigeria are unfavorable due to the above set of challenges.

We recommend SGI in Nigeria be reevaluated if it is the best tool for achieving security sector governance. The USG should consider refocusing its time and resources on supporting local level non-state initiatives, while fostering advocacy amongst Nigeria’s civil society.

Current Security Environment & Political Context

Boko Haram, the world’s most lethal terrorist group, has gained much attention due to its brutal attacks.¹⁹⁹ The long-term stability and effective governance of Nigeria is the most pressing concern of the international community, even though Boko Haram is the most headline-grabbing threat. Boko Haram has come about because of a decade or more of poor governance and the political marginalization of northern Nigeria.²⁰⁰

Nigeria’s government has greatly exacerbated the security situation by its own actions. Corruption is widespread and rarely punished.²⁰¹ The security services have responded to Boko Haram in a heavy-handed manner, resulting in significant human rights violations with little accountability.²⁰² Indeed, the Nigerian military’s protracted fight against Boko Haram has been undercut by its incompetence, complicity, corruption, and savagery.²⁰³ These controversies have spilled into the public arena as the media questions troop capability and preparedness.²⁰⁴ Recently, the Buhari administration has made some headway against the insurgency by cooperating with neighboring countries, enabling it to reclaim large tracts of territory.²⁰⁵ Today, Boko Haram has been weakened and has given up significant territory, allowing Mr. Buhari to declare a “technical victory.”²⁰⁶ But, the group can still launch deadly suicide attacks at a relentless pace across the region.²⁰⁷

Security Sector Governance Reform: Progress & Challenges

National-Level Reform

On May 29, 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo (1999 to 2007) took office as the first elected head of state in Nigeria after 16 years of military rule. His administration began security sector reform in Nigeria by shifting from military to civilian rule.²⁰⁸ These efforts, however, were largely undermined by excessive executive centralization and little interest in cooperating with the parliament or civil society.²⁰⁹ Additionally, Obasanjo attempted to modify the constitution so he could serve a third term as President, though the controversial plan was blocked by the Senate.²¹⁰ The SSR process was further weakened by the absence of broad media and social support.²¹¹ His successors Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007 to 2010) and Goodluck Jonathan (2010 to 2015) largely neglected SSR.²¹²

Nigeria's military deteriorated under these two administrations.²¹³ The military leadership was left to carry out SSR with little civilian oversight and according to its own agenda.²¹⁴ SSR slowed as the military opposed international as well as civilian involvement.²¹⁵ They favored quick technical enhancements and costly equipment upgrades rather than meaningful, long term reform.²¹⁶ Each succeeding chief of army staff had his own agenda.²¹⁷ The illness and death of President Yar'Adua in 2010 coincided with the emergence of Boko Haram.²¹⁸

Under the Jonathan administration, the military's counterterrorism struggle with Boko Haram not only sidelined the SSR process, but—in the manner in which it was conducted—reinforced toxic SSG practices.²¹⁹ Jonathan dramatically increased the defense budget, continuing a tradition of using executive orders to permit access to extra legislative funds.²²⁰ This entrenched procurement process was fraught with corruption and continues today.²²¹ It is widely believed that significant defense funds are misused for personal purposes by some of Nigeria's military and civilian leaders.²²²

Today, the security situation remains tenuous. Buhari's efforts are greatly complicated by the military's inadequate response to Boko Haram as well as disagreements among the army command on the best methods for achieving SSR; to further complicate matters much of the military leadership is suspicious of international assistance.^{223 224} Meanwhile, Nigeria's parliament has failed in its oversight role.²²⁵ There has been no meaningful SSR legislation due to the lack of competence and political will.²²⁶ Instead, the parliament focuses on approving new military appointments and extending the emergency rule in the north east. The media covers matters of security and military failures—increasing public attention, but has not adequately highlighted the need for comprehensive SSR.²²⁷ Civil society involvement in SSR has been minimal, as there is a lack of expertise.²²⁸ Therefore, the military leads the SSR discussion with little input from the parliament, media, or civil society.

Despite these many problems, SSR has made some progress in the first months of Buhari's term. He has arrested several former officials for looting funds intended for the fight against Boko Haram.²²⁹ If convicted, it would be damning evidence that major wrongdoing had reached the highest levels of the Jonathan administration, while accounting for the gross under resourcing of the security sector. He has also purged a number of former officers while appointing new officers from the Muslim north.²³⁰ He has relocated the military headquarters to Maiduguri, the capital of

Borno state and the center of the Boko Haram crisis.²³¹ Finally, he has placed the national police services under the new Ministry of the Interior and appointed retired General Abdulrahman Bello Dambazzau, who is untouched by allegations of corruption and has extensive experience in the security sector.^{232 233} However, challenges remain—most notably making good on his promises to investigate credible security sector human rights violations.²³⁴

U.S. Cooperation

As an aspiring democracy and strategic partner in Africa, Nigeria should have a more central role in Washington's foreign policy calculus.²³⁵ Nigeria's security challenges have spillover effects, providing ungoverned space for radical groups hostile to Western interests to operate and threaten nascent democracies elsewhere on the continent.²³⁶ Additionally, Nigeria has the largest Muslim population on the continent, which is expected to skyrocket in coming years and is vulnerable to radicalization.²³⁷

The administration of George W. Bush (2001 to 2009) gave scant attention to Nigeria's domestic politics.²³⁸ Indeed, under the Bush administration, Washington either did not recognize or had little appetite to address Abuja's administrative mismanagement and expanding corruption.²³⁹ Meanwhile, the Obama administration has not publicly denounced human rights abuses committed by the Nigerian security services.²⁴⁰ Relations between the U.S. and Nigeria further soured due to the Jonathan administration's noticeable lack of political will, the Nigerian military's inability to fight Boko Haram, and its failure to free the Chibok schoolgirls.²⁴¹ However, to help combat Boko Haram, President Buhari has recently embraced American assistance, putting an end to recent years of tense relations.²⁴² The Pentagon is considering sending dozens of special operations advisers to Maiduguri, a major city in the north of Nigeria, to help Nigerian military planners engage in more effective counterterrorism operations.²⁴³

However, the U.S. continues to encounter a number of issues complicating its SSA with Nigeria. These include popular resistance in Nigeria to international SSR and the Leahy amendment which prohibits providing military assistance to Nigerian military units that violate human rights with impunity (U.S. embassies examine military units for eligibility, and if they are found to have been implicated in human rights abuses, they are ineligible for American training until the government prosecutes those responsible).²⁴⁴ There are few Nigerian military units that can pass Leahy vetting. U.S. security assistance to Nigeria would be more effective if Abuja were to investigate and prosecute human rights abuses by its security forces, thereby allowing for an improved and more professional Nigerian military.²⁴⁵ Former President Obasanjo, echoing popular views amongst Nigerian officers, has publicly criticized foreign security assistance to fight Boko Haram, especially U.S. assistance.²⁴⁶ While President Buhari supports SGI, buy-in from other top officials in his administration and military is less certain.²⁴⁷

Under these circumstances, the U.S. SGI program in Nigeria has not yet been implemented. SGI has been further delayed due to the presidential election, Buhari's slow-moving cabinet appointments, and insecurity tied to Boko Haram.²⁴⁸ While the SGI focus areas for Nigeria have not yet been made public, considerable attention will be given to fiscal responsibility and accountability.²⁴⁹ U.S. SGI representatives believe that they can make progress, having secured buy-in from President Buhari and Minister Dambazau.²⁵⁰

Despite these promising signs, challenges for SGI implementation remain. These include: (1) sustaining local ownership and maintaining political will; (2) overcoming corruption; (3) strengthening multilateral implementation; and (4) entering into candid discussions concerning human rights and the security sector.²⁵¹

The White House selected Nigeria for SGI without its consent, which may jeopardize the program's sustainability.²⁵² Moreover, there are differing levels of SGI buy-in from Buhari's administration; corruption remains entrenched and wariness of external meddling complicates reform efforts.²⁵³ Another concern is the long-term U.S. embassy investment in the SGI program, as resources remain constrained and competing demands take precedence.²⁵⁴ To maximize partner nation buy-in, U.S. SGI representatives have avoided the issue of human rights in consultations with the Nigerian government. However, the absence of candid conversations between U.S. SGI representatives and the government of Nigeria on human rights abuses by the Nigerian military may not be acceptable to the U.S. Congress and may present legal difficulties in terms of the Leahy amendment. Sustainable SSR requires strong national government leadership to acknowledge fundamental SSG problems, particularly chronic human rights abuses and widespread corruption.

Recommendations

The following recommendations address both country-level and SGI-specific challenges. As the above analysis suggests, SGI in Nigeria is unlikely to be successful and should be reconsidered. The USG should pursue a strategy that pressures Nigeria to end its gross human rights abuses and rewards reforms in this regard with greater assistance.

Recommendations for SGI in Nigeria

- **Reevaluate whether SGI is the best USG tool for building security governance capacity.** The absence of candid discussions concerning chronic human rights violations by Nigeria's security sector and widespread government corruption has prevented the government of Nigeria from adopting a long-term outlook for SGI. In addition, American representatives handling SGI in Nigeria have compromised sustainability for quick political buy-in by not addressing these issues. The successful implementation of SGI in Nigeria requires strong national leadership to acknowledge fundamental problems in its security sector. The first step in solving any problem is recognizing that the problem exists. The USG should consider refocusing its time and resources on supporting local level non-state initiatives, while fostering advocacy amongst Nigeria's civil society.
- **Support Nigeria in creating a decentralized justice and security hub in Maiduguri in an effort to bring SSR outside the capital and focus on bringing security as well as justice services closer to the people in the north.** Community SSR focuses on local security surveys to identify security challenges and puts an emphasis on community policing while leveraging the informal security sector and civil society as agents of change. SSR at the community level benefits from greater awareness of popular grievances and can prove more responsive in addressing security deficiencies. It enhances ownership by bringing security services closer to the people where they can be held accountable for failings and abuses.

- **SSR in Nigeria should aim at doing less and at a slower pace, including a thorough multi-year budgetary analysis, and engaging the ministry of finance in all meetings to ensure sustainability.** Although controversial due to the need to show quick impact and fund disbursement rates, such a SSR strategy will allow for long term viability. Including ministry of finance officials in all SSR policy discussions will ensure sustainability.
- **SSR in Nigeria should give greater agency to the U.S. Embassy by implementing a flexible program model characterized by short-term, targeted, and recurrent steps. Meanwhile, the DoS should appoint and maintain a SGI Coordinator to the U.S. Embassy beyond the two-year limit.** SSR needs to be viewed as a long-term, process made up of different, sometimes unrelated phases. The tendency to seek to accomplish too much quickly undermines long term efforts.

Recommendations for U.S. Foreign Policy in Nigeria

- **Consistently press the government of Abuja on human rights abuses by its security sector abuses and call for the transparent investigation of credible claims by human rights organizations.** Senior State Department Officials should publicly denounce incidents of mass human rights violations by Nigeria's security services. The USG should make the expansion of security assistance programs contingent on Abuja taking meaningful steps to investigate and prosecute human rights abuses by its security forces. Finally, the USG should support and increase contacts with Nigerian civil society who are working for human rights, such as NGOs, religious leaders, and traditional authorities.
- **Support Nigeria's efforts on reform of the procurement process to reduce corruption and establish value for money.** Efforts are needed to obtain clear and reliable information, such as the mapping of security institutions and censuses of security personnel, in order to fill information gaps as well as ensure programs are based on real figures. Greater effort should be placed on initiatives that formalize security recruitment, promotion, dismissal as well as transparency with procurement and budgetary procedures.
- **Support Nigeria's ability to share crucial information about terrorist threats within their security services and between neighboring countries.** The military campaign by Nigeria and neighboring nations to combat Boko Haram has been handicapped by a failure to share intelligence.²⁵⁵ The new intelligence "fusion center" in Chad, a multinational task force to help coordinate efforts, is a good start but has experienced capacity shortfalls. Building trust among neighboring partners and not creating a dependence on the U.S. will help Africans take the lead for Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF SGI IN WEST AFRICA AND BEYOND

Having examined the specifics of SGI within each of the four countries, it is now important to look at the commonalities, trends, and lessons learned that are applicable to SGI throughout West Africa. Awareness of these commonalities is important for future SGI programming in advance of the program's potential expansion in other West African countries.

- **Common Challenge:** The prospects for successful SGI implementation may be particularly weak in countries where the national government lacks the ability to control and police its territory and/or in countries where political will for partnering with the U.S. is weak. This is particularly true of Nigeria and Mali: arguably, the implementation of SGI is being undercut because the two governments are either not interested in cooperating (Nigeria) or focused on more pressing security threats (Mali). In this context, a program like SGI that relies heavily on partner nation buy-in and a certain threshold level of government capacity might not be the best tool to use. On the other hand, in countries where a clear political will has been identified (like Niger), SGI can be a powerful instrument.

Recommendation: Reevaluate whether SGI provides the best return on investment for building security governance capacity in (prospective) partner nations.

- **Common Challenge:** SGI efforts are hindered by partner nations' limited ability to absorb assistance. The West African nations in which SGI is currently implemented are some of the least developed countries in the world. Government spending in developing countries is critical and can be part of the solution in bringing these nations out of the poverty trap.²⁵⁶ Yet, in countries like Niger or Mali, public resources are so scarce and economic prospects so gloomy that governments are not able to finance necessary reforms and investment projects. Solutions will require SGI to take development needs of the partner nations and their lack of capacity into account.

Recommendation: Put SGI into a framework of broader development needs by better including USAID, the UN, and the EU within the program, from the consultation phase to implementation and evaluation.

- **Common Challenge:** SGI efforts lack sustainability if partner nations do not improve engagement with civil society as part of the process. It is not the role of SGI to engage directly with substate actors, seeing that SGI is designed as a government-to-government program. Yet, SGI achievements may not be sustainable if partner nations do not engage with civilian stakeholders. In order for the government to be held accountable for its reform efforts, communication with civil society concerning SGI and its goals must be clear and transparent. This is especially important where SGI efforts concern the administration of justice.

Recommendation: Use SGI to promote inclusive and accountable partner nation security sectors by recognizing civil society as an important stakeholder.

Beyond SGI: USG foreign policy in West Africa

Providing recommendations for U.S. foreign policy in West Africa is beyond the scope of this report. Yet, looking at SGI's limitations and the challenging context in which it operates underscores the need for a renewed USG approach to partnering and engaging with West African nations, especially when it comes to governance issues. As it stands, SGI and parallel initiatives will likely improve partner nation security governance capacity in specific functional areas. However, to address the core aspects of security sector governance (accountability, transparency, and legitimacy), the USG must be willing to commit the necessary resources over periods longer than the congressional budget cycle. In addition, it must strive to create synergies by better coordinating its efforts with other stakeholders, e.g. the UN, EU, AU, ECOWAS, among others.

CHAPTER FOUR

AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS: EMPOWERING AFRICA'S ORGANIC SECURITY SECTOR REFORM CAPACITY

Improving the USG approach to SSA will pay dividends in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of SGI and similar SSG reform initiatives. Yet, the United States—as an external stakeholder—is not always best suited to support SSR and may not have the will or the means to provide long-term support as domestic political and economic conditions evolve. Regional and supraregional organizations such as the African Union and ECOWAS have comparative advantages in supporting SSR and can play important roles in institutionalizing policy frameworks for SSR, assessing member state needs, leveraging African resources to address those needs, and synchronizing external support as required.

“...regional and subregional actors such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have become increasingly indispensable in the conceptualization, implementation, monitoring evaluation and provision of external support to security sector reform processes, including through the articulation of policy frameworks”

- UN Report of the Secretary-General “Securing States and societies: strengthening the United Nations comprehensive support to security sector reform” August 13, 2013

ECOWAS AS A REGIONAL DRIVER OF SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Though its past SSR initiatives have had mixed results, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with external support, could become an enduring proponent of regional SSG reform.²⁵⁷ The organization is in the process of finalizing the *ECOWAS Regional Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance*, a policy document aimed at “provid[ing] the ECOWAS Commission, Member States and other stakeholders with guidelines to design, implement, monitor and evaluate SSRG processes, programmes and projects...promot[ing] a regional platform for advocacy and learning on SSRG...and provid[ing] basis for cooperation between member states...” and other SSG reform stakeholders.²⁵⁸ The document’s five-year implementation plan is expected to include measures for improving SSR programming and improving collaboration such as a Security Sector Governance Observatory. This observatory would be jointly operated by ECOWAS and the African Security Sector Network (ASSN)—a private “pan-African network of experts and organisations working in the area of Security Sector Reform.”^{259 260} Its purpose would be to develop partnerships between member states undertaking reform and multilateral organizations including with the AU and UN, regional security experts, civil society organizations, and technical experts from organizations such as the ASSN and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).²⁶¹

ECOWAS has several comparative advantages over external actors such as the United States in promoting SSG reform. It is closer to its member states, shared threats and regional challenges. Consequently, it arguably has a better understanding of the security needs of the people than the USG.²⁶² It offers a streamlined point of entry to its 15 member states, enabling a collective

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approach to addressing cross-cutting challenges.²⁶³ Its existing Training Centres of Excellence (TCEs)—the National Defence College in Abuja, L'Ecole de Maintien de la Paix in Bamako, and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra—could be expanded to support SSG related education.²⁶⁴ In addition to its security sector reform policy, ECOWAS' other policy documents such as the *2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* and the *2011 Code of Conduct for the Armed Forces and Security Services of ECOWAS* provide a normative framework for SSG reform and can serve as mechanisms for holding member states accountable.²⁶⁵

Despite the will to assume a greater role in SSG reform, ECOWAS is currently constrained by limited resources. Perhaps the most pressing concern is limited human capital. The ECOWAS Commission currently has a single SSR program officer operating within its Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security. It intends to establish a SSR unit and is seeking support from the UN and UNOWA for capacity development.²⁶⁶ ECOWAS has been unable to devote any funds for SSR since 2014 due to competing requirements such as the fight against the Ebola Virus, support for the ECOWAS Security Mission in Guinea-Bissau, and activities centered on counterterrorism and counterpiracy.²⁶⁷ The development of a dedicated SSR funding mechanism is critical for implementing ECOWAS' five-year plan and supporting SSG reform.

THE AFRICAN UNION AS A GUIDING FORCE FOR SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Like ECOWAS, the African Union has an important role to play in SSG reform in West Africa—not as a primary implementation agent—but as guide and coordinator.²⁶⁸ Firstly, the AU promotes the normative basis for SSR throughout the continent. ECOWAS's policy framework, currently under development, builds upon the *2013 African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform*, which is intended “to provide a continental policy framework on SSR that provides the AU, Regional Economic Communities, Member States and other stakeholders with the necessary guidelines to implement SSR programs.”²⁶⁹ In addition to institutionalizing the key tenets of effective SSG—such as democratic control and oversight of the security sector, merit-based appointments, transparent personnel management, financial transparency and accountability, and gender mainstreaming—the document also lays out guidelines for effective conduct of SSR, stressing national ownership, the role of civil society, and partnerships with external entities.²⁷⁰

Secondly, the AU is an important SSR capacity building mechanism to support the Regional Economic Communities. The AU, with support from the UN, EU, and ASSN, has conducted SSR training workshops such as the Joint Orientation Workshop, held in Tunisia in September, 2014, and, in its policy document, has established the goal of “conduct[ing] research and provid[ing] training on security related issues.”²⁷¹ This function would afford African SSR stakeholders the opportunity to learn from the experiences of other nations implementing SSG reforms amidst similar security and political challenges, but would require resources that, at present, are currently in short supply within the AU.

Thirdly, the AU also has an important role to play in assessing Member State SSR needs, coordinating international support, and providing technical assistance for SSG reform initiatives.

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The AU has played a direct role in South Sudan in helping to develop a National Security Policy in 2012 and has assisted Central African Republic SSR efforts through the African-led International Support Mission to CAR.²⁷² For post-conflict scenarios, the AU has an important role to play in assessing security sector reform needs for member states. It has conducted several assessment missions involving representatives from the UN, ECOWAS, EU, ASSN, and a host of other relevant actors in its mission to Guinea-Bissau on 2-12 March 2015 and a mission to Mali on 16-21 November 2015.^{273 274} During the 2014 Africa Forum on Security Sector Reform, participants specifically identified the need for this type of AU technical SSR support which is currently constrained by limited AU capacity.²⁷⁵

The AU's ability to sustain this type of technical support is uncertain.²⁷⁶ Much of its SSR work has been conducted under the auspices of the *"Building African Union Capacities for Security Sector Reform (SSR): A Joint United Nations/European Union Support Action,"* a 30 month project which ended on 31 December 2015.²⁷⁷ As of January 2016, AU SSR functions have been "mainstreamed as part of AU activities within the framework of the broader African Peace and Security Architecture."²⁷⁸ It remains to be seen whether or not the AU will be able to sustain its emphasis on SSR and work to ensure its 2013 policy is put into practice.

CURRENT COLLABORATION

The USG partners with ECOWAS and the African Union on a host of political, economic, and security-related matters, and notes, "...with satisfaction the increasing role that the African Union and each of the Regional Economic Communities are playing in supporting and encouraging the reform of the security sector."²⁷⁹

The USG—through the United States Mission to The African Union and other channels of engagement—has made marked progress

developing these regional and supraregional organizations. Through the Early Warning and Response Partnership initiative and the infectious disease response-centric African Partner Outbreak Response Alliance, It has worked to develop ECOWAS and AU's crisis management capabilities.^{280 281} Additionally, the USG has helped in the development and implementation of the Yaounde Code of Conduct dealing with information sharing and maritime security cooperation, and has provided valuable security sector training to AU and ECOWAS personnel.²⁸²

Major Challenges to SGI Implementation:

Although Regional and supraregional organizations such as the African Union and ECOWAS have comparative advantages in supporting SSG reform and stand to play important leadership roles, the extent to which the United States supports them in this regard is unclear.

However, the extent to which the United States supports the SSR capacity of the AU and ECOWAS—the ability to support and guide member state reform efforts—, or will do so in the future, is unclear. The USG has had no observable representation in recent AU and ECOWAS Joint Needs Assessment Missions and is not mentioned as a key contributor to AU and ECOWAS SSR policy framework development and implementation.^{283 284} As noted above, the ECOWAS and AU are at a critical juncture: their nascent SSR capacity is likely to atrophy without external support. The USG—through SGI, its other SSA mechanisms, and working with

its allies—has an opportunity to empower this capacity and, in doing so, support an African-led approach to SSR.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. SUPPORT

- **Build ECOWAS and AU capacity to impel, guide, and support SSG reform in West Africa.** In accordance with PPD-23’s directive to “analyze, plan, and act regionally” SGI should work with and through African institution.²⁸⁵ Providing the resources and training ECOWAS needs to form a functional SSR unit; establish an SSR funding mechanism; expand the mandate of its Training Centres of Excellence (TCEs); and implement its *Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform and Governance* will pay dividends in terms of reducing the need for direct-U.S. involvement and empowering the region to address its own SSG shortcomings. Similarly, using SGI resources to grow the AU’s SSR unit and address any lapses which may have arisen since the conclusion of the “Building African Union Capacities for Security Sector Reform (SSR): A Joint United Nations/European Union Support Action,” will ensure that the AU retains the capacity to assess, coordinate, and support SSG reform in West Africa and across the continent. Channeling SGI and all other U.S. SSR support through these African institutions—and encouraging allies to do the same—will empower local capacity, improve synchronization, and reduce the likelihood of waste or redundancy. This type of support will likely necessitate means beyond SGI—potentially including congressionally-appropriated funds—but this initial investment would pay dividends in the long term.
- **Work with international partners to help the AU and ECOWAS become focal points for SSR assessment and coordination.** Needs assessment missions and SSR consultations conducted by the USG and its allies on a bilateral basis with partner nations are wasteful, increase the chances of incongruity and inefficiency, and are frustrating for partner nations. The AU and ECOWAS have already taken the lead in spearheading assessment missions. The USG and its allies should work through these mechanisms and allow the AU and ECOWAS to take the lead in coordinating external support. Since partner nations are sensitive to the role of these organizations, they may prefer support to occur on a bilateral basis, but this does not preclude the AU and ECOWAS from coordinating the support at the outset and assessing its progress.

CHAPTER FIVE

ACHIEVING SYNERGY WITH INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ALLIED PARTNERS

The majority of USG SSA, to date, has occurred through bilateral initiatives which frequently parallel efforts undertaken by European allies and intergovernmental organizations. This has resulted in inefficiency, redundancy, and incongruity. PPD-23 seeks change in this regard, calling for “a division of labor with other bilateral, multilateral, and regional actors based on capacity, effectiveness, and comparative advantage.”²⁸⁶ DoD reinforced this mandate with its recent policy on DIB.²⁸⁷ As evidenced in the next section, Allied donors and intergovernmental organizations have extensive experience, resources, and relationships invested in West African SSG reform. The USG should work with—not simply alongside—them to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of SGI and its broader SSA enterprise.

THE UNITED NATIONS

With decades of experience, the United Nations continues to play an important part in global SSR initiatives. It fills the normative roles of “establish[ing] common international principles and standards as well as policies and guidelines, in addition to the contribution to collective knowledge on security sector reform.”²⁸⁸ It also fills the operational roles of “help[ing] to establish an enabling environment by supporting needs assessments and strategic planning, as well as coordination and specialized resource mobilization, providing technical advice to and building the capacity of security institutions and their oversight mechanisms, and supporting national and international partners in monitoring and reviewing progress.”²⁸⁹

To support these roles the UN has a permanent SSR Unit located within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) which serves as “the focal point and technical resource capacity on SSR” and as a “centre of excellence in developing guidance and fostering an international normative basis for SSR.”²⁹⁰ The SSR Unit also plays a role in the Interagency SSR Task Force (IASSRTF) which is composed of representatives from all relevant UN agencies “responsible for developing United Nations guidance, standards and practices in a number of areas of SSR; undertaking consultations with regional organizations; managing a roster of SSR experts and delivering training to United Nations personnel, external partners and member states.”²⁹¹ The SSR Unit and the IASSRTF support 14 peacekeeping and special political missions and peacebuilding-support offices in their work to promote SSR.²⁹²

In West Africa, the UN primarily leverages its SSR section at the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in Dakar and MINUSMA in Bamako to affect reform. UNOWA and its SSR officials are tasked with “supporting the establishment and implementation of sub-regional approaches on transnational SSR issues, especially through ECOWAS; strengthening national processes related to SSR and security sector governance particularly at the strategic and political levels; facilitating the UN system’s internal cooperation and harmonization of its approach on SSR in West Africa; and providing SSR inputs into mediation processes, as a result of UNOWA

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political and good offices mandate.”²⁹³ Over the last several years, UNOWA’s activities have included partnering with the Guinean government in implementing SSR provisions, promoting provisions addressing sexual and gender-based violence, and conducting SSR needs assessment missions.^{294 295 296 297}

In Mali, MINUSMA is mandated to support SSR activities according to paragraph 14 of Resolution 2227, and has been active in this regard over the past few years.²⁹⁸ Among other critical SSR tasks, MINUSMA has consulted with Parliament and civil society organizations regarding security sector reform and democratic oversight of security institution; it has established a technical working group to coordinate international support for the Government’s National Council for Security Sector Reform; and it has held valuable workshops in Bamako on topics including democratic control of the security sector and the role of civil society in security sector reform.^{299 300 301 302} MINUSMA’s activities are also supported by other UN entities such as the UNDP which, in early 2015, supported the Malian government by conducting capacity-building activities for 575 officers of the national police, gendarmerie, civil protection force, and National Guard.³⁰³

Consistent with its aim of empowering regional and sub-regional SSR initiatives, the UN actively supports regional and supraregional organizations including the AU and ECOWAS. The UN has worked through its United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) in Addis Ababa to work with the AU on SSR workshops, assessment missions, and the development of the AU’s policy framework on SSR.³⁰⁴ The UN has provided similar support to ECOWAS and is currently working with ECOWAS to accelerate the development and adoption of ECOWAS’ own policy framework on security sector reform.³⁰⁵

THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU is deeply engaged in SSR in SGI partner nations in West Africa and further afield. In addition to improving near-term defense capabilities, it has contributed to positive SSG reforms. Under its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), the EU has completed nine missions in Africa since 2003 and has another nine currently in progress.^{306 307} These missions focus on a range of security sector issues including support for border security capacity building in Libya and Somalia and EUCAP Nestor in the Indian Ocean, which focus on maritime security capacity building. Three of the nine ongoing missions have been launched to support the EU’s 2011 *Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel*: EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUCAP Sahel Mali and the EU training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali).³⁰⁸ The impact of these missions is enhanced by the EU’s “other instruments and programmes,” such as the 20 million Euro Instrument for Stability (IfS) support package for Mali.^{309 310}

EUCAP Sahel Niger was launched in August 2012 and, with a staff including 56 international experts composed of gendarmes, policemen, and legal experts, is dedicated to “contribu[ting] to the development of an integrated, coherent, sustainable, and human rights-based approach among the various Nigerien security agencies in the fight against terrorism and organized crime.”³¹¹ The civilian-led initiative is focused on Niger’s three security forces: the Gendarmerie, National Police, and National Guard.³¹² While much of its work has been focused on operational-level

functions like criminal investigations, the mission is also dedicated to SSG functions such as “improv[ing] human resources, training and logistics management policies” and is tasked with working with Nigerien authorities to design and implement a National Security Strategy.^{313 314}
³¹⁵ Though the mission struggled initially due to lack of local buy-in, its performance has steadily improved and, with a growing budget, will continue to at least July 2016.^{316 317} The mission has also become the secretariat for international coordination in the security sector in Niger” and “helps to coordinate all international assistance and donations to Nigerien security forces.”³¹⁸

The EU Training Mission Mali was established in February, 2013 with the parameters of “non-involvement in combat operations; the provision to the Malian Armed Forces of training and advice in command and control, logistical chain and human resources, and international humanitarian law, protection of civilians and human rights.”^{319 320} The mission—which consists of 580 servicemen and women, 200 trainers, and 20 consultants (advisors)—is divided into an Advisory Task Force and Training Task Force.”³²¹ The Training Task Force trains the Malian Armed Forces on individual soldier skills, leadership training, modules on International Humanitarian Law, and “Train the Trainer” courses intended to bolster long-term capacity.³²² To date, seven GTIAs (battalions) have processed through EUTM Mali training. The Advisory Task Force focuses on SSG aspects and, with a team of 20 French-speaking military consultants, works to improve Malian Armed Forces logistics, finance, and planning capabilities.³²³ The Task Force also includes a small team of specialists which conducts specific projects to improve the functionality of the Malian Armed Forces including the introduction of a human resources management system and a logistics management system.³²⁴ As of 17 March, 2016 the EUTM Mali mandate has been extended to May of 2018.³²⁵

In January 2015 EUCAP Sahel Mali was established to deliver strategic advice and training to the nation’s three internal security forces: the Police, Gendarmerie and Garde Nationale.^{326 327} Its objectives are specifically to improve their operational effectiveness, to re-establish a chain of command, to reinforce the role of judicial and administrative authorities in the management and supervision of their missions, and to facilitate their redeployment to the North of Mali.³²⁸ With 110 personnel, the mission has reportedly made notable progress during its first year and “...has created strong relations with relevant Ministries and each of the Malian civilian security forces...[and]...also ensured close coordination with EUTM Mali and MINUSMA, to avoid gaps or duplication.”³²⁹ The mission has working to develop “oversight and auditing of the different departments, human resources and logistics support..”—critical aspects of SSG reform.³³⁰ The mission is projected to continue to at least January 2017 and is expected to be allotted a budget of 15.1 million for the January 16 – January 17 period.³³¹

In addition to its independent SSR functions, the EU has worked to bolster local SSR capacity. According to one SSR expert, “for the EU, the importance of collaboration with regional and sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the AU is increasing. The aim is to put these organizations in a better position to prevent and manage crises in the region themselves.”³³²

FRANCE

Much of France's efforts in West Africa over the last several years has centered on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, first with Operation Serval from January of 2013 to July of 2014—intended to rout Islamic Militants from the North of Mali, and most recently with the ongoing Operation Barkhane, a counterterrorism operation spanning the “G5 Sahel:” Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger which consists of approximately 3,500 French troops.^{333 334} France clearly has a vested interest in SSR and SSG reform efforts, particularly in the Francophone nations of West Africa and other nations it deems relevant for its strategic interests. For example, under its Sahel Cross-Border Cooperation Assistance Programme—a border area management project targeting the Liptako Gourma region of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger—France is working on improving cooperation among the interior, justice, defense, and finance ministries.³³⁵

France's approach to, what it refers to as security system reform, is centered on the principles of “legitimizing and re-establishing the rule of law, in observance of human rights; establishing civilian and military security forces which are effective, well-trained and accountable to civilian authorities; and creating institutions responsible for the management and democratic oversight of security actors.”³³⁶ Its SSR efforts are guided by the Direction de la coopération de sécurité et de défense (DCSD) of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and fall under two categories: structural and operational.³³⁷

Structural cooperation focuses on long-term projects and is coordinated directly by the DCSD. It is carried out by *coopérants* who “are tasked with building the capacity of a host nation's military units through training, advising, and joint operations.”³³⁸ Its operational role is coordinated through the MoD's joint staff and through the MoI's International Police Technical Cooperation Service. The MoD assigns *commandement interarmées* which deploy operational instructional detachments and technical instructional detachments to provide assistance for periods spanning a few weeks to a few months.³³⁹ The MoI contributes gendarmes to DCSD-led cooperation activities and MoD operational coordination activities.³⁴⁰ In addition to these trainers, France also assigns advisors on a, typically, three-year basis to work with senior partner nation officials like chiefs of staff and defense ministers on issues such as defense organization, planning, command, staffing, logistics, and budgetary matters.³⁴¹

Like the United States, France emphasizes PME under the category of structural cooperation. France has opened up its domestic military institutions such as the French Military Academy of Saint-Cyr, the French Naval School in Brest, and the National Gendarmerie Officer School, to African students and, since 1997, has operated Region-Focused National Schools (ENVRs) in 10 African countries.^{342 343} These institutions have specialties related to SSG such as the *École militaire d'administration* (EMA) in Mali which focuses on administration, the *École d'état-major* (EEM) in Gabon which serves as a staff college, and the *École de guerre* in Cameroon which functions as a war college. Other ENVR's relate specifically to issues prioritized for the SGI program like the *École Navale de Bata* (EN) in Equatorial Guinea which focuses on maritime security and a planned ENVR which will focus on strategic-level maritime issues.^{344 345}

UNITED KINGDOM

The UK's SSR efforts are shaped by the 2013 International Defence Engagement Strategy under the areas of activity of "Regional Stability, Conflict Prevention, Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Stabilisation" and "Defence Diplomacy."³⁴⁶ Efforts are overseen by a Defence Engagement Board which is jointly chaired by MoD and Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials and which "provides strategic oversight of priorities both geographically and thematically..."

In West Africa, the UK has representation in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, and Togo through nonresident accreditation, but its SSR efforts have primarily focused on the Anglophone countries of Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, in which it has embassies with defense sections tasked with SSR activities. In Ghana, the British Military Advisory and Training Team (West Africa) worked with the Ghanaian command and staff college from 1976 to 2009 when it was withdrawn due to spending cuts. In Nigeria, the UK has actively supported the Nigerian state through activities undertaken by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and has played an instrumental role in supporting Nigeria's efforts against the Boko Haram threat.³⁴⁷ With respect to SSR, the UK has assisted in running the Nigerian Defense College, "maintains a senior British military advisor to the Nigerian MoD, and has developed capacity building programs through the office of Nigeria's national security adviser." In 2014 the UK assisted the Nigerian MoD in establishing an Intelligence Fusion cell to process information relating to the Boko Haram threat. The UK's SSR efforts in Sierra Leone between 2000 and 2013 have been very successful, but have since been scaled back into an International Security Assistance Team which currently focuses on senior staff with a focus on the police and judiciary. In addition to SSR functions, this team was instrumental in supporting Sierra Leone's efforts to address the Ebola virus.³⁴⁸

CURRENT COLLABORATION

As illustrated by PPD-23 and similar allied policy documents, there is significant U.S. and allied executive-level will for reducing costs and increasing yield through increased collaboration. Similar emphasis can be found at the implementation level where country teams and SSA program leads have worked to synchronize activities. For instance, the USG has contributed funds to ENVRs, the U.S. has worked informally with its French counterparts to synchronize the U.S. ACOTA program and its French/European equivalent, EURORECAMP, and AFRICOM has established an international cooperation and coordination liaison cell, through which, "U.S. assistance is synchronized with international partners from France and the United Kingdom to build interoperable and sustainable partner defense institutions."^{349 350} However, integration at the SSA policy-design level—for reasons tied to budgeting, divergent national agendas, and the inherent challenges of joint planning—is lacking. Consequently, cooperation on the ground—while well intentioned—tends to be "ad hoc" and informal.

Major Challenges to SGI Implementation:

Although USG collaboration with allies, multilateral organizations, and African institutions has markedly expanded over the last decade—particularly since the inception of U.S. AFRICOM and the urgent need to address violent extremist organizations—cooperation on SSR remains lacking.

From its inception, the SGI program established the goal of consulting with “a broad audience, including civil society, international donor partners and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs)” and, in its review of 2015 activities, noted the importance of an “SGI community” to share ideas, analyze problems, and “prevent the duplication of efforts.” As evidenced by SGI efforts to build upon EUTM Mali’s work developing Mali’s human resource management capacity, progress has been made in this regard. However, to achieve the institutionalized “division of labor” envisioned by PPD-23, SGI will need to be nested within a broader USG SSA plan which, in turn, would need to dovetail with the SSA plans of other allies and intergovernmental organizations. This type of synchronization is only possible at the policy-design level.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOSTERING A UNIFIED APPROACH

- **Institutionalize mechanisms for coordination and collaboration.** Coordination between the U.S. and its allies on SSR initiatives tends to be ad hoc, and the U.S. underutilizes the expertise of other donor nations. The AU or ECOWAS SSR unit should ultimately take the lead in assessments and coordination of external support. However, in the interim, the United States should work towards synchronizing SSR activities at the policy-design level by assigning liaisons to relevant SSR planning bodies potentially including the UN’s IASSRTF, the EU’s EEAS, the French DCSD, and the British Defence Engagement Board. In turn, the USG should request allied and intergovernmental representation at the USG SSA policy-design institutions potentially including the DoS’ Bureau of Political Military Affairs, DASH Security Cooperation Office, the SGI Coordination Office, and AFRICOM’s DIB Coordinator office. Additionally, existing cooperation mechanisms like the Sahel Multilateral Planning Group could be leveraged to synchronize security cooperation activities. At the operational level, U.S. country teams—particularly defense attachés—should be closely engaged with their foreign counterparts and with regional and supraregional bodies to ensure SSG reform initiatives are synchronized. U.S. needs assessments should be conducted under the auspices of an AU or ECOWAS assessment mission with representation from all relevant external stakeholders to develop a common understanding of what partner nations require and how external entities might be able to assist.
- **Work with, or through, UN, EU, and allied advisors to achieve SGI and broader SSR goals.** French coopérants and embedded advisors already have established relationships and extensive experience in working with senior partner nation security sector leaders in West Africa’s Francophone Nations, while their British counterparts in Nigeria and Ghana have experience developing partner nation capacity at the ministerial level. Their expertise and rapport with partner nation officials should be leveraged to the maximum-extent possible to address sensitive aspects of SSG reform. Additionally, advisors and trainers supporting UNOWA, MINUSMA, EUTM, EUCAP Sahel Niger, and EUCAP Sahel Mali, have already made positive strides in advancing SSG reform and empowering regional and supraregional organizations. Their existing initiatives should be supported and supplemented by the SGI program and other U.S. SSA activities.

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- **Support and leverage externally-run PME institutions.** The United States should contribute funding, trainers, and whatever other resources are necessary to ensure French ENVRs remain operational. These institutions should be leveraged to achieve SGI objectives. For instance, courses at the École militaire d'administration should be used to support Mali and Niger's human resource management capacity and the École Navale de Bata should be used to improve Ghana's maritime security capacity. The U.S. should help France realize its goal of internationalizing these institutions and should encourage ECOWAS and the AU to assume responsibility for their operation.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ROAD AHEAD

CONCLUSION

It has become clear that the USG's efforts to promote regional security and good governance in West Africa have expanded and evolved significantly over the last two decades. On this note, SGI marks an important milestone in how the U.S. thinks about SSA.

Conceptually, SGI is a milestone because it recognizes the strong interdependencies between the security sector and other elements of governance as enshrined in PPD-23. As such, SGI constitutes a departure from traditional "train and equip" models by adopting a more holistic and inclusive approach to SSA. Rather than providing equipment and training to the military, SGI's approach is premised on the diffusion of knowledge and the simultaneous engagement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders. It is predicated on the understanding that a nation's long-term security rests on many interdependent pillars, to include the rule of law, the principles of accountability and transparency, as well as the inclusion of civil society. It thus adopts the notion of "good governance" as its guiding principle and favors long-term sustainable capacity building over the short-term provision of materiel. Moreover, the SGI approach is novel in that it is based on consultations with the partner nations, thereby promoting partnership and cooperation rather than latently paternalistic, one-way disbursements of assistance.

To date, however, the stated ambitions of the program stand in sharp contrast to its small budget and its seemingly low level of prioritization within the USG. Admittedly, this may be due in part to the program's young age. As SGI moves beyond a proof-of-concept, however, securing stable funding and political support will be crucial to its success in achieving JCAP objectives and informing other U.S. SSA efforts.

Extrapolating from the four case studies examined for this report, a number of observations can be made about the unique dynamics of SGI. First, the contrasting examples of Niger and Nigeria demonstrate that political will is a crucial prerequisite for the credibility and success of the program. SGI requires champions in the partner nation's government as well as in the U.S. country team.

Second, successful implementation of SGI rests on a well-coordinated and inclusive consultation process. Formulating a sensible JCAP that addresses critical focus areas and outlines feasible goals is equally central to SGI's success and credibility. The case of Nigeria emphasizes that identifying these focus areas is as much political challenge as it is a technical one and, as such, the process relies heavily on competent and experienced facilitators. Beyond providing insight into the evolution of SSA and describing the unique characteristics and dynamics of SGI in four West African countries, this report has provided the following key recommendations for making SGI more effective:

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- Carefully (re)assess whether SGI is the best tool for building security governance capacity in each given country;
- Put SGI into a framework of broader development needs;
- Use SGI to promote inclusive and accountable partner nation security sectors by recognizing civil society as an important stakeholder.

It is important to emphasize that SGI cannot be a panacea; it is but one of many tools the U.S. government may employ to promote its strategic interests in Africa and assist partner nations in making their nations more secure. Taking this into account, the report made the following *general* recommendations for U.S. security sector assistance practice:

- Revise the security sector assistance organizational architecture to improve synchronization, efficiency, and effectiveness and, in doing so, link SGI with existing security sector assistance activities to maximize its effect;
- Streamline legal authorities in order to increase security sector assistance flexibility;
- Improve the assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AM&E) process for SGI and other security sector assistance activities;
- Stabilize and extend SGI funding as well as ensure program prioritization;
- Rebalance U.S. government roles to address DoD's disproportionate stake in security sector assistance.

While many of the challenges facing SGI and its operational environment will be difficult to address, acknowledging them is an important first step in ensuring a U.S. approach to security sector assistance that is sensible, effective, and sustainable. Maintaining and communicating a clear sense of what SGI is and, crucially, of what it isn't will be paramount for the program's long-term viability. More broadly, the U.S. must achieve clarity on the strategic implications of PPD-23 and the degree to which this new paradigm should shape existing SSA infrastructure and future SSA efforts. In so doing, It is important to differentiate between PPD-23 as a paradigm and SGI as a practical manifestation thereof. In other words, practical shortcomings of SGI should not be interpreted as weaknesses of governance-based SSA as a concept. The SSA paradigm outlined in PPD-23 is a valuable and important addition to the U.S. foreign policy toolbox.

With respect to the current iterations of SGI, we strongly recommend extending the program in Niger and Ghana. We further recommend initiating the program in additional, carefully chosen partner nations. Ensuring a requisite level of stability, as well as a threshold level of political will are basic requirements of SGI. Arguably, the former is lacking in Mali, and the latter is lacking in Nigeria. Whether or not the U.S. wishes to redouble its efforts in these countries will ultimately depend on the result of a more thorough assessment and evaluation that goes beyond the scope of this report.

APPENDIX A: THE MILLENIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

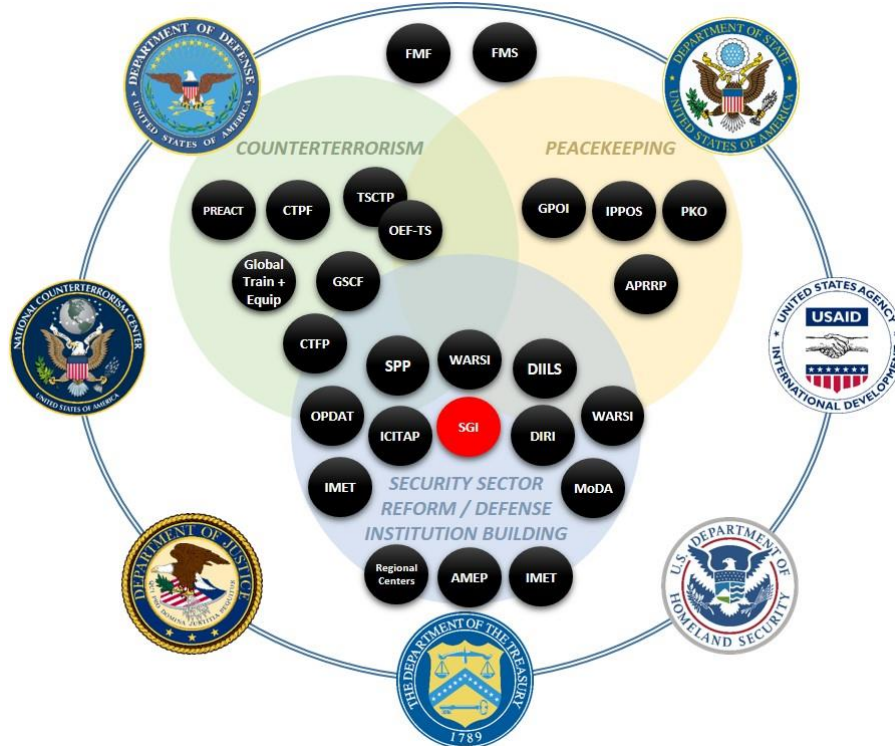
The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)—an independent U.S. foreign aid agency launched in 2004 to help to address global poverty—highlights the value of conditionality in providing U.S. assistance, and may serve as a useful model for the SGI program.³⁵¹ The program is similar to SGI in that implementation is largely country-led and priorities are developed primarily by the partner nation with U.S. support, but unique in that the MCC board “examines [the partner country’s] performance on independent and transparent policy indicators and selects compact-eligible countries based on policy performance.”³⁵² Once grants are awarded, MCC “applies stringent performance and evaluation controls to monitor and hold MCC partners accountable for results.” The program has approved over \$10 billion in support, channeled through Compacts—five year grants for countries meeting all of the MCC’s eligibility criteria—and Threshold Programs—smaller grants awarded to countries who have not yet met all eligibility requirements, but have demonstrated a commitment to improving their performance.³⁵³

Unlike many other U.S. initiatives, the MCC is a results-oriented enterprise. “Monitoring and evaluation are integrated into the entire life cycle of a Compact from concept through implementation and beyond.”³⁵⁴ Each Compact has an associated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan which includes definitive indicators (process, output, outcome, and goal), baselines, and targets; a monitoring strategy with reporting requirements; and evaluation methodologies.³⁵⁵ This approach has yielded positive results, particularly in the nations identified for the SGI program. In Ghana, The Ghana Compact resulted in the successful completion of a critical section of the N1 highway, and another five-year Power Compact was signed in 2014.³⁵⁶ In Kenya, the Kenya Threshold Program is working to reduce corruption, particularly in the public procurement system. As a reflection of the programs seriousness in promoting reform, in 2009 MCC suspended its Niger Threshold Program due to political events and in 2012 MCC terminated its Compact with Mali in 2012 due to the nation’s military coup.³⁵⁷

While the MCC program is not without fault, it has resulted in some positive effects. The selection process—due to its definitive eligibility requirements—has incentivized reform for both nations selected for the program and those seeking grants.³⁵⁸ The program has encouraged government inclusivity, compelling governments to interact with civil society, NGOs, and journalists. MCC has also fostered a sense of ownership amongst participant nations and created an environment of transparency in pursuing the compacts.³⁵⁹ Most significantly, the compacts have largely met their prescribed benchmarks or were terminated if they failed in this regard.³⁶⁰

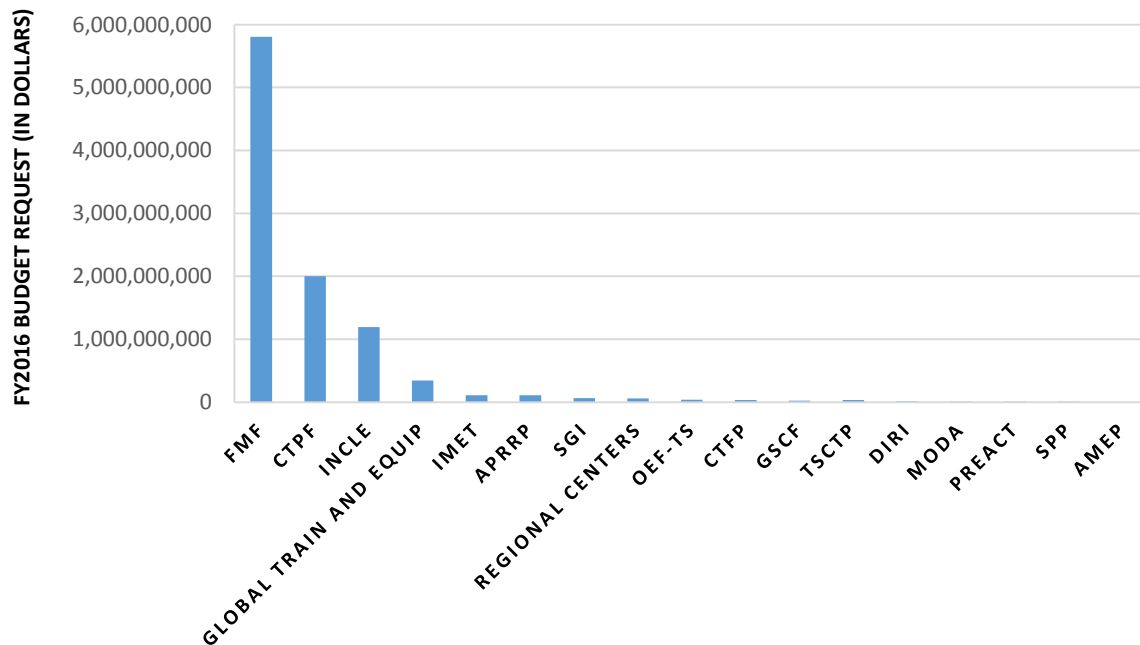
In light of MCC’s achievements, policymakers should apply similar approaches to the SGI program. Setting definitive performance indicators and benchmarks may be more challenging in the SGI program than the economic-oriented MCC initiative due to its focus on less quantifiable aspects like oversight, financial management, adherence to rule of law etc..., but the MCC’s approach for monitoring and evaluation and its focus on pre-conditionality should serve as a precedent for the SGI program. Additionally, policymakers should consider the MCC’s five-year time frame as the minimum needed for the SGI program—since SGI is intended to address deep-seated institutional problems rather than clearly defined development challenges.

APPENDIX B: SGI: ONE OF MANY SSA INITIATIVES



NOTE: Graphic displays a small sample of SSA programs underway in Africa. A 2013 RAND study identified 165 security cooperation mechanisms world-wide at the time of its publication. *Department logos from <https://commons.wikimedia.org>*

SSA PROGRAM BUDGET COMPARISON



NOTE: Data derived from Congressional Budget Justification, Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, Fiscal Year 2016 and Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Estimates Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA)

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