

Evolving Internal Roles of the Armed Forces

Lessons for Building Partner Capacity

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The end of the Cold War more than two decades ago created new international realities, along with hopes and expectations for greater peace and stability worldwide. Part of that peace dividend was expected to be the result of a decrease in defense spending, with direct consequences for the size and functions of nations' armed forces. As a result, in parts of the world that benefited from increased security, the changing security challenges and interpretations of what should be considered suitable tasks and roles of armed forces have led to "profound ... shifts in their core roles ... (which are) ... increasingly challenging long-held assumptions about what armed forces are for and how they should be structured and organized".²

Governments and societies have been contemplating the appropriateness of newly defined or previously secondary purposes for their armed forces, which extend beyond their core role of national defense. These include the assignment of a variety of external and internal military and civilian roles and tasks. Some of these are performed as a subsidiary activity in support of operations under civilian command. An examination of the internal roles of the armed forces in 15 Western democracies shows that armed forces assist in internal security provision mainly as a resource of last resort when efforts are required to respond to exceptional situations. This is the case primarily during and after natural and humanitarian catastrophes as well as other emergencies that exceed the response capacities of civilian and hybrid security institutions. Under the command and control of civilian agencies, the usually subsidiary operations of the armed forces are designed to enhance the capacity of civilian security providers in such situations.³ What does this mean for armed forces in the developing countries in their indigenous state-building

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processes? What are the implications for donor nations from the North in their efforts towards “building partner capacity?”⁴

This article is divided into six sections. Following this introduction, the second section focuses on conceptual considerations as well as distinctions between internal and external security roles provided by armed forces. The third section focuses on the empirical evidence obtained from the case studies examined for this article. The most common internal roles are introduced and key driving forces behind the armed forces’ engagement in internal tasks are highlighted. The fourth section summarizes widely shared reasons behind the internal engagements of the armed forces. The fifth section examines potential hazards and opportunities for utilizing armed forces for internal roles and tasks. The concluding section discusses the mapping exercise’s findings for donor countries’ support of defense reform and security sector reform activities in the global South, particularly as they concern internal roles and tasks envisioned for the armed forces of partner countries.

New Challenges, New Roles for the Armed Forces?

It has become a common assumption that the role of the armed forces, especially among consolidated Western democracies, is to provide security against external threats, while police forces are tasked with providing internal security, surveillance and order inside a country’s borders. The distinction between external and internal security, as well as between the respective responsibilities of individual public security institutions, has been well documented,⁵ even to the point of what Keith Krause calls a “seemingly natural division.”⁶ Of course, this division was not the product of

a coherent process, nor did it innately appear. As Charles Tilly suggests, armies frequently served the purpose of consolidating wealth and power of princes, often at the expense of and in direct confrontation with the domestic population.⁷ In fact, it is commonly understood that the demarcation of public security institutions’ external and internal roles (in particular armed forces and police, respectively) was not generally accepted and normalized until “the spread of modern nationalism in the 19th century ... [when] the boundaries between external and domestic start to coincide with formal legal frontiers.” Such an understanding of the clear boundaries between internal and external security provision and providers remained through most of the twentieth century, especially during the Cold War period. During this time, while most nations braced themselves for anticipated imminent international conflict, this division seemed apparent and almost natural.

The end of the Cold War, however, triggered new security threats which challenged the “traditional” roles assumed by armed forces, especially within consolidated Western democracies. During the early stages of the Cold War the main priority of security provision in the Euro-Atlantic area was the search for the most appropriate response to a broad spectrum of military, ideological, political, social and economic challenges from the Soviet Union. Under the pressure of the ensuing nuclear arms race this initially wide conceptualization was narrowed down to a largely military focus – and thus national and regional security provision became the prime task of states’ armed forces and the military strategies of individual states and their security alliances. To be sure, during the Cold War a substantial and identifiable military threat existed,

providing the rationale for considerable defense spending. The arms race between East and West was not only about the quality and quantity of arms, but also about which side (i.e. political, ideological and economic system) could withstand the greater financial sacrifices needed to remain politically and militarily competitive. Moreover, during this period the focus was primarily on deterring and managing inter-state conflicts, which encouraged the maintenance of adequately armed military forces for both deterrence and combat operations, if needed. These threats were also the main focus of regional military alliances and, for that matter, United Nations involvement in traditional peacekeeping as well as Chapter VII military operations. Other parallel realities of course existed, such as internal conflicts (genuine intra-state wars and proxy wars of the superpowers) and various internal roles of armed forces that were unrelated to the suppression of internal violence or the deterrence of external threats. However, those non-traditional activities were overshadowed by Cold War priorities.⁹

After the likelihood of war between East and West faded away with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, predominant realist assumptions about the primacy of military security became less pronounced in national and international policy debates. The concept of security utilized by most Western states expanded to include a broader variety of threats (such as environmental, criminal or economic threats) at increasingly diverse levels of analysis above and below the state. Official security discourses during the Cold War focused primarily on national security, gave way to a more nuanced understanding of security needs beyond the individual state (at the regional and international levels) as well as

below the state (at the levels of communities and individuals).¹⁰ “Deterrence” has since been taking on a different, more subtle meaning: human rights provision assures human security; development assistance supports economic security; long-term investments in environmental protection facilitate sustainable environmental security; and the alleviation of poverty serves as a strategy to prevent violent community-based conflict. Moreover, international cooperation is increasingly considered to be the most effective approach to the prevention of inter-state and intra-state conflict and a plethora of new security challenges, including the growing fear of global terrorism.

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The end of the Cold War was accompanied by widespread societal and political expectations for a considerable peace dividend, which carried consequences for states’ armed forces, including calls for their downsizing and decreased military and defense spending. As Timothy Edmunds argues, first “the end of the Cold War removed the dominant strategic lens through which armed forces were developed and understood, and has entailed a fundamental reconsideration of their purpose and the bases for legitimacy across the [European] continent.”¹¹ This has triggered wide-ranging defense reviews, significant cuts in military budgets and societal scrutiny of the armed forces’ roles, tasks and purposes.¹² Second, particularly in the wake of the

dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the “traditional” roles of armed forces have been challenged in the context of ethnic and civil conflict, in terms of both the roles of national armed forces as conflict parties and the involvement of external armed forces in international peace operations. Third, an increased emphasis on drug enforcement began to take off in the 1970s and especially in the 1980s, particularly in the United States. Based on the presumption that the military should not engage domestically, this development led to increased militarization of police services in order to combat the new threat. While this has put more military-type resources and capacities in the hands of the police, it has also allowed for greater engagement by the armed forces in domestic affairs, especially through the provision of tactical equipment, training

and intelligence sharing.¹³ Fourth, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 “reinforced existing pressures towards the development of expeditionary capabilities in reforming armed forces ... (which are) ... illustrative of the emerging dominance of Anglo-American concepts of military professionalization in the wider security sector reform area,” along with counter-insurgency and internal security tasks of the armed forces.¹⁴ The focus on the war on terror has also challenged the armed forces’ previous status as the primary organization capable of defending a state against external – terrorist – attacks. According to Edmunds, intelligence, border and police forces “may be more suited to meeting day-to-day operational challenges posed by international terrorism, and over the long-term the utility of the military in this role may be limited.”¹⁵



Dan Twomey

Knox County Sheriff's Office SWAT, 2010

This final point on the heightened perceived threat of terrorism deserves further discussion. Although expectations for a peace dividend due to the end of the Cold War put pressure on states to downsize their armed forces, new and diverse military commitments proliferated considerably. National defense strategies now placed emphasis on the so-called “war on terror” and the deterrence of terrorist threats, which put an increased importance on the role of armed forces and – contrary to expectations – increased defense spending (particularly in the United States). These newly defined national security priorities included the need to be prepared to prevent, deter, coerce, disrupt or destroy international terrorists or the regimes that harbored them and to counter terrorists’ efforts to acquire chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons. Multilateral peace and stabilization operations and defense diplomacy were seen as important assets in addressing the causes and symptoms of conflict and terrorism.¹⁶ Numerous crises – ranging from Kosovo to Macedonia, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Libya and, most recently, Syria – have demonstrated that the global security environment was to be as uncertain as ever and armed forces were facing an even broader range, frequency and often duration of tasks than previously envisaged.¹⁷ Along with an increased focus on international roles, internal roles were both highlighted and given greater attention.¹⁸ However, as an examination of evolving internal roles illustrates, they are diverse, dynamic and do not seem to follow a unitary logic even across the very small sample of countries referred to in this article – countries that reflect similar standards of political and security governance, are operating in a

very similar security environment and shared a similar logic during the Cold War. As such, much greater variation is expected if comparative examinations would move beyond the context of Western Europe and North America.¹⁹

Comparative Review of Evolving “Non-Traditional” Internal Roles and Tasks²⁰

Contrary to popular and traditional conceptions of armed forces’ missions, a broad and diverse range of internal roles and tasks are performed by all branches of the armed services in all the countries examined. In fact, some of these tasks are considered core functions of the armed forces according to regulating legal frameworks, such as national constitutions, as well as public organizational mission statements of the armed forces.

Internal roles and tasks of armed forces are varied and increasingly prevalent among the 15 countries examined. The exact role, authority and restrictions depend on historical, legal, social and political contexts that are particular to each country. Typically, internal roles and tasks can include education of civilians (youth re-education centers or specialized training centers); cartographical and meteorological services; road and infrastructure construction, improvement and engineering; and assistance to public administration and the population in case of the occurrence of a major industrial incident, a massive terrorist attack, a sanitary crisis following a major disaster, or natural disasters. They can include search and rescue operations; law enforcement; environmental protection; medical support for poor communities; support of training and education opportunities for disadvantaged youth; border surveillance; provision of security for supplies (food, energy, transport,

storage, distribution networks and information systems); security provision during major public events (international sport championships or major global conferences); and the replacement of vital services during work stoppage (strikes or labor movements disrupting economic activity). They can encompass counterterrorism – offensive and defensive measures to prevent, deter or respond to (suspected) terrorist activities; anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking operations; anti-drug operations – detecting and monitoring aerial or maritime transit of illegal drugs; integrating command, control, communications, computer and intelligence assets that are dedicated to interdicting the movement of illegal drugs; supporting drug interdiction and enforcement agencies; and humanitarian aid at home. Many of these tasks are subsidiary ones performed under the command of other security institutions.

The armed forces are thus called upon to assist in internal security provision in situations that require exceptional efforts to respond to exceptional situations

For instance, in Belgium these roles and tasks of the armed forces include assistance to the civil population, maintenance of public order and humanitarian assistance and relief assistance in cases of natural disasters and at times of terrorist attacks.²¹ In France internal tasks include civil-military actions at home – missions in support of police and gendarmerie; missions to benefit the civilian population and humanitarian missions (the latter can be carried out in cooperation with civilian aid organizations); civil defense – responses to national catastrophes and the preservation of public order; counterterrorism operations; and

involvement in other “states of urgency.”²² In Spain the armed forces provide mostly unarmed civil defense and intervention in cases of emergency and counterterrorism operations.²³ In the UK internal tasks include the restoration of public security after internal emergency and natural disasters.²⁴ In Canada, upon request, the armed forces provide support during major public events, such as the Olympic Games and international summits, technical and equipment support for enforcement of maritime laws and operations to ensure public order.²⁵ The Italian armed forces perform a broad range of internal roles and tasks, including operations to restore public order; counterterrorism operations; disaster response, such as combating forest fires; scientific research, including release of meteorological data; and law enforcement.²⁶ German armed forces handle internal tasks such as support during a state of emergency (e.g. disaster response or restoration of public order); community support, such as harvest support; environmental protection; search and rescue missions; and technical aid to assist the police.²⁷

The armed forces are thus called upon to assist in internal security provision in situations that require exceptional efforts to respond to exceptional situations – natural or humanitarian catastrophes that exceed civilian and hybrid security institutions’ capacities. At the same time, the capacity of civilian security institutions to respond to these situations is kept to a limit because the situations rarely arise, considerable costs are involved in preparing for them, and these capacities are already maintained regularly by the armed forces and thus exist within easy reach of civilian authorities and security institutions.

The following paragraphs review a broad range of internal roles and specific tasks

performed by the armed forces, based on the country research supporting this article, organized along five main clusters: Law enforcement-related tasks; disaster assistance-related tasks; environmental assistance-related tasks; cross-over tasks; and miscellaneous community assistance.²⁸

Law Enforcement-Related Tasks

Of the overall 20 categories of roles identified in the research effort, ten fall under a broader cluster of law enforcement-related tasks. The tasks vary substantially in terms of their prevalence across the countries examined and their apparent legitimacy. For instance, this category includes tasks related to “public order” which have been documented in all the countries reviewed. They often appear as one of the core functions of the armed forces as ascribed in the respective constitutions. However, the same category also includes tasks related to “crime investigation,” which in contrast have been the least documented, if not most restricted, tasks across the country surveys.

Public order: Public-order-related tasks include support in times of civil disorder and unrest, such as riots, strikes and rebellions. In fact, armed forces of most of the nations in this sample have engaged in public-order-related tasks throughout their history. It has been only relatively recently, for the most part within the past 150 years, that many of the countries examined established certain limits on these types of activities or raised the threshold for their engagement. Often this has coincided with the development of domestic security institutions, especially police services and paramilitary police units. Nonetheless, all the countries surveyed permit their armed forces to engage in public-order-related tasks, which are often referred to as core functions in

constitutional and legislative frameworks. Still, such involvement is nearly always limited to situations of last resort or when domestic police services are unable to address the threat.

Counterterrorism: Domestic counterterrorism roles have expanded greatly since the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001. The tasks covered under this label can be vast and vary from state to state. Often they include monitoring external threats to borders, border security, domestic intelligence gathering and post-attack response.

Border control: Border control and surveillance can involve national security, counterterrorism, drug interdiction and immigration enforcement operations. The hybridity of border control depends upon the perceived threats or needs of each country, and can change with time and context.

Drug enforcement: Drug enforcement assistance includes support to local and national police forces and/or gendarmeries in preventing illicit trafficking of controlled substances, particularly at ports of entry, as well as providing assistance, training and equipment for monitoring and arrests. While armed forces of certain states may be more heavily engaged in drug enforcement internationally, for the most part this is more severely limited domestically. However, this engagement allows for cooperation with domestic drug enforcement agencies, including information-sharing, provision of technical assistance and transference of tactical equipment.

Law enforcement: Here the specific task of law enforcement refers to the provision of assistance to facilitate arrests. Assistance may include equipment provision, training and surveillance, but rarely includes personnel to make direct arrests. Indeed, the use of the armed forces for domestic law enforcement

remains one of the more controversial internal roles, although eight of the countries surveyed have utilized armed forces to support such efforts. However, tight restrictions are placed upon the direct ability of military personnel to arrest civilians domestically. The U.S., German and Spanish armed forces have the strictest prohibition on law enforcement engagement.

Crime investigation: Not to be confused with law enforcement, crime investigation-related tasks may include support at crime scenes (e.g. documenting crime scenes and collecting evidence), searching for missing persons and facilitating arrests and/or equipment provision, including surveillance equipment. However, similar to law enforcement tasks, these roles are greatly restricted across the

majority of the nations reviewed. Of the roles identified, crime-investigation-related was the least cited among the countries surveyed, with just five countries identified as utilizing their armed forces in this way. In particular, tight restrictions are placed on the ability of military personnel to arrest civilians domestically.

Support for major public events: Support for major public events varies depending on each event and relevant security agreements made, but can include, among other tasks, providing building and personnel security, air and satellite operations, and medical tents and equipment provision. In addition to global sporting events, such as the Olympics, the relatively recent prevalence of international summits has seen a great increase in the use of



The Border Security Force (BSF) is a Border Guarding Force of India. Established on December 1, 1965, it currently stands as the world's largest border guarding force.

the armed forces in support of domestic security institutions.

Building and personnel security: Building and personnel security comprises “physical security measures including guard forces and various surveillance and authentication methods, including biometrics.”²⁹ Often, the armed forces are used to secure royal facilities in constitutional monarchies as well as sites used by foreign dignitaries, particularly embassies, in West European capitals.

Cyber operations: Cyber-attacks involve assaults on computer networks, or exploitation and jamming of equipment. Cyber operations can be offensive or defensive, although they are usually confined to defensive roles in the internal context.³⁰ In addition, the armed forces may provide technical support and training to domestic agencies or limited sharing of technical equipment.

Intelligence gathering: Intelligence gathering refers to domestic data and information gathering. Usually related to another category such as counterterrorism or drug enforcement, it may also be relevant to general law enforcement and political purposes. However, when used in these two contexts, intelligence-gathering-related activities are highly restricted in most countries reviewed. Because of the sensitivity of the specific operations, intelligence-gathering tasks tend to be mentioned only vaguely and in passing.

Disaster-Assistance-Related Tasks

Among the five overall clusters, the use of the armed forces for disaster-assistance-related tasks appears the least controversial and, increasingly, the most authorized and utilized. Each of the 15 countries reviewed permit the use of its armed forces to provide domestic

disaster assistance, although they vary in terms of the triggering mechanisms for deployment.

Domestic catastrophe response: Domestic catastrophe response requires adequate disaster preparedness, including the “planning, training, preparations and operations relating to responding to the human and environmental effects of a large-scale terrorist attack, the use of weapons of mass destruction” as well as “governmental programs and preparations for continuity of operations (COOP) and continuity of government (COG) in the event of an attack or a disaster.”³¹ While at times included within concepts, strategies and programs of “disaster preparedness” or “relief,” domestic catastrophe response also exists as its own category, including within military missions and operations.³² As with disaster-relief-related tasks more generally, domestic catastrophe response represents one of the most prevalent internal uses of the armed forces across the countries surveyed. In addition, it often appears as one of the core tasks of the armed forces as detailed in respective constitutions or core pieces of legislation.

Disaster relief: Disaster relief tasks include efforts to anticipate and respond to natural and man-made disasters (e.g. earthquakes, floods, explosions). This involves preparing for a disaster before it occurs and providing emergency responses, such as evacuation, decontamination and support in rebuilding efforts following a disaster. As noted above, disaster relief is one of the most prevalent internal tasks performed by the armed forces of the countries examined. Like domestic catastrophe response, it often appears as a core military function within national constitutions or key legislation outlining the purpose and scope of the armed forces. This is especially true for the Western

European countries examined. Although examples of disaster relief by the armed forces can be found throughout many of the countries' histories, their involvement in these tasks has increased over the past three decades and greater efforts have been made to harmonize and coordinate the armed forces' response with domestic security institutions and other relevant civilian response agencies.

Environmental-Assistance-Related tasks

The third umbrella category, environmental assistance, contains environmental protection as the only group of tasks. Although of course similar to disaster-assistance-related tasks in the context of responses to environmental damage, this category is related specifically to environmental protection.

Cross-Over Tasks

The fourth umbrella category for internal functions of armed forces covers "cross-over" tasks. These tasks are grouped together as they relate directly to all three previous umbrella categories: law enforcement, disaster assistance and environmental assistance. In our research it was often difficult to locate precisely the specific umbrella category that these tasks relate to. Further, certain tasks may be performed in the service of law enforcement while at another point and time – or by another country – they are performed in the service of disaster assistance. Thus it seems appropriate to highlight these cross-over tasks by placing them in a distinct category.

Search and rescue: Search and rescue operations are often performed by a nation's



Marco Dominio - www.un.org/photo/

Members of the Jordanian battalion of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) carry children through flood waters after a rescue from an orphanage destroyed by hurricane "Ike". September 7, 2008. Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

armed forces, aimed at “minimizing the loss of life, injury, property damage or loss by rendering aid to persons in distress and property.”³³ While this most commonly covers “humanitarian” actions (e.g. rescuing trapped hikers), it can also relate to law enforcement or armed engagements, such as hostage rescue.

Training: Training refers to the training provided to law enforcement agents in various relevant tactics and strategies, including use of technology, disruption and use of force. Although it is probable that more than ten of the countries reviewed use their armed forces for training domestic security institutions and government agencies, explicit evidence documenting this role for the remaining five countries was not identified.

Monitoring: Monitoring includes air and satellite operations related to national defense, disaster preparation, law enforcement and intelligence gathering. In addition, monitoring tasks overlap closely with border control, drug enforcement, counterterrorism, disaster relief and preparedness, and environmental protection.

Equipment and facility provision: The provision of equipment and facilities is documented across all the countries examined. It refers to the delivery, lease or operation of technological aid, including vessels, aircraft and facilities for use by law enforcement or other agencies. This represents one of the most common forms of assistance, especially given restrictions on direct involvement in law enforcement.

Miscellaneous maritime activities: In a number of countries the armed forces perform a range of maritime activities, mainly relating to safety (reducing deaths, injuries and property damage), mobility (facilitating commerce and eliminating interruption of passageways)

and certain security elements, such as preventing illegal fishing. Other maritime activities, such as drug enforcement and environmental protection, can be found in specified categories.

Scientific research: The armed forces provide a range of scientific and engineering research and development activities, including space research and technology development, cartography and civil engineering projects, such as construction of levees and dams. This group of tasks is one of the more traditional and most consistent internal roles of the armed forces among many of the countries examined.

Miscellaneous Community Assistance

The category of community-assistance-related tasks is the fifth and final identified internal role of the armed forces. Documentation was located among all countries surveyed, and it remains one of the oldest and most consistent internal roles of the armed forces. Community assistance tasks range from harvesting crops to minor community construction projects and providing color guards for local events, as well as youth outreach and education.

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Widely Shared Reasons Behind the Armed Forces’ Engagement in Internal Roles

The first driving factor behind these engagements is the demand to assist the delivery of services normally provided by civilian public services and government agencies, which are

temporarily unable to do so effectively or adequately. To be sure, across the board the use of the armed forces for internal purposes should only be a measure of last resort – and then only in response to exceptional or emergency situations. Thus although the internal roles and tasks identified above have become increasingly prevalent and diverse across various countries, for the most part they are not conceived as or intended to be central, daily tasks and responsibilities of the armed forces. Instead, civilian domestic security providers are designed to provide a first response and handle the majority of these incidents. Calling on the assistance of the armed forces is considered a measure of last resort, following a request of civilian authorities. Even in the case of maintaining public order or disaster assistance, which may be inscribed in law as a core function of the armed forces, the military becomes involved only when civilian security providers are deemed unable to respond adequately. Likewise, in roles that now have become a regular or “permanent” fixture, such as France’s internal deployment of its military under Operation Vigipirate, authorization was initially considered in response to exceptional needs and circumstances that surpassed the capabilities and resources of the gendarmerie and police.

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The second driving factor is the armed forces’ comparative advantage in terms of possession of the proper equipment, skills, experience and manpower, as well as unhindered

territorial access to all parts of the country. Overwhelmingly, military capacities and resources surpass those of civilian domestic security providers, as the armed forces are structured to provide defense against existential threats to the state and nation, including those that exceed traditionally imagined internal threats. As such, they often maintain and develop skills, training, experience and resources beyond the normal reach of civilian security providers. Certainly, this is relative and varies in each case study, especially considering the vast differences in security and military budgets: in 2011 the United States, for example, spent 4.7 percent of its GDP (approximately \$709 billion) on the military, while Austria spent 0.9 percent of its GDP (approximately \$3.7 billion) for the same purposes.³⁴ In regard to equipment and resources, this includes access to everything from satellites to icebreakers, submarines and airlift fleets, as well as financial resources and readily available manpower. Increasingly, however, armed forces have transferred tactical equipment to civilian security forces, ranging from assault rifles to armored personnel carriers to attire. Nonetheless, the combination of resources, skills and experience suggests that most militaries have a comparative advantage over civilian domestic security providers in these areas, particularly in response to large-scale crises, such as disasters, search and rescue, or counterterrorism.

A third driving factor is the ability of the armed forces to serve as a national unifying mechanism that reaches across all communities and classes of society, and all regions of the country, which allows it to impart in citizens a sense of national conscience and patriotism, especially among the youth. This is at times disputed by opponents of military

engagement (or proponents of alternative state security providers, such as home or national guards) based on the argument that civilian domestic security providers, such as the police, typically are from the cities, states, provinces or regions in which they are deployed. On the other hand, in various moments of perceived crisis, such as during a firefighter strike in the UK, a mine explosion in Spain or flooding in Austria, militaries are often considered to be imbued with a sense of patriotism and unity, possibly unlike their civilian counterparts. Especially in countries with national conscription, the members of the armed forces include individuals from across the country and service may be viewed as a nationally shared sacrifice and responsibility. Thus the popular support that many militaries receive within consolidated Western democracies makes them favorably situated to engage in internal roles, especially at times of crisis or emergency.³⁵

Potential Hazards and Opportunities of Armed Forces' Involvement in Internal Roles and Tasks

The 15-country mapping exercise underlying this article revealed a number of hazards and opportunities related to the armed forces' involvement in internal roles and tasks. While all of these may not yet have empirical documentation, they stand as potential prognoses and forecasts that should be taken into consideration when carrying out further analysis of the contemporary evolution of armed forces' relationship to internal roles and tasks.

Hazards

Hazards of granting the armed forces a more prominent internal role may include fear of losing civilian control over the forces, and the military establishment's potential assertion of

a greater role and influence in society and politics, thus eroding the principle of separating civilian and military authority.³⁶ There is also fear about creeping militarization of civilian technical tasks, civilian partners in subsidiary missions and the population overall, and the militarization of genuine policing tasks of the justice system and penal institutions. Finally,

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there are concerns about potential misconduct and abuse by the armed forces due to improper training for internal deployment and inadequate understanding of applicable civil and criminal law and procedures. On the part of the armed forces, inadequate special training on internal roles does little to address the potential lack of local understanding and sensitivities required to respond effectively to local crises or needs. Finally, investing in the armed forces' dual internal and external roles might happen at the expense of public finances and adequate personnel levels among civilian institutions.

Like expanding the armed forces' peacekeeping and other international roles, strengthening their domestic footprint also raises the risk of eroding preparedness for the core functions of national defense and war-fighting abilities.³⁷

Opportunities

In contrast, a number of opportunities may arise from expansion of the armed forces' internal roles and tasks. They include the

provision of important peacetime contributions to the safety and security of society, and the ability to resolve national crises (e.g. natural disasters or widespread civil disturbances) that could otherwise not be resolved with civil means and instruments alone. It allows the deterrence of non-state armed challengers to domestic and regional security and stability through the maintenance of an independent domestic capacity to respond to threats. Particularly when circumstances necessitate heavy weaponry or specialized technology, utilizing the armed forces to deliver these could help prevent heightened militarization of regular domestic security forces and trigger greater public and legal scrutiny of their use. Finally, as an organizational interest, the addition of internal roles and tasks may develop new areas of expertise and (budgetary) relevance of armed forces at a time when traditional external military threats are considered to be low.

All of the potential hazards of entrusting the armed forces with internal roles and tasks expressed in the established democracies, boosting security sectors that are subject to reasonably solid good governance principles, are exponentially more critical in countries emerging from armed violence or passing through significant political, social and economic transition processes.

Lessons for Building Partner Capacity

Which lessons can be drawn for external actors' efforts to assist their partners in the South to build stable, robust and legitimate states, in the spirit of "building partner capacity?" Internal roles and tasks of the armed forces can consist of very constructive

contributions, yet only if they are carried out in supporting, subsidiary assistance to civilian actors. Particularly in states where society's experience with the armed forces has been one characterized by oppression, human rights violations and the excessive use of force, allowing the armed forces to perform internal roles has to be approached with much sensitivity, including public involvement, as well as in the context of extensive security sector reform programs. Moreover, the performance of internal roles – along with participation in international peace support operations under the aegis of the UN, regional organizations or military alliances – requires special skills that need to be developed as part of regular or specialized training.

Moreover, it is crucial that such internal roles are preceded by security sector reform activities that deserve the name "SSR" and thus include improved provisions for government and public oversight and management of the armed forces as well as all other security institutions. While "it is crucial but not sufficient that the security forces perform their statutory functions efficiently and effectively, they must also conform to principles of good governance, democratic norms, the rule of law and human rights. Consequently, reforms aimed solely at modernizing and professionalizing the security forces and thereby increasing their capacity without ensuring their democratic accountability are not consistent with the SSR concept."³⁸ It would be irresponsible and dangerous to empower the armed forces to carry out internal roles outside a solid and functional framework of democratic control over the armed forces, embedded in and guided by principles of good security sector governance and thus built on the primacies of the rule of law, accountability and transparency.

All of the potential hazards of entrusting the armed forces with internal roles and tasks expressed in the established democracies, boosting security sectors that are subject to reasonably solid good governance principles, are exponentially more critical in countries emerging from armed violence or passing through significant political, social and economic transition processes. As mentioned earlier in this article, these potential hazards include, among others: losing civilian control over the armed forces; the military establishment's potential assertion of a greater role and influence in society and politics; creeping militarization of civilian technical tasks, civilian partners in subsidiary missions and the population overall; militarization of genuine policing tasks, of the justice system and penal institutions; the armed forces' potential lack of local understanding and sensitivity required to respond effectively to local crises or needs; potential loss of public finances and personnel among civilian institutions; and eroding preparedness for core functions of national defense and war-fighting abilities as a direct result of strengthening their domestic footprint and capacities.

External actors should promote (increasing) internal roles of the armed forces only if updated national security policies and strategies are in place; if SSR programs are in place and are making solid progress towards establishing the necessary conditions for good security sector governance; and, if necessary, DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) is carried out successfully and effectively.

Conclusion

Useful lessons can be learned from countries where the armed forces, other security institutions, the state and society had to adapt to new security challenges. In order to address new

security roles – or in order to secure new security responsibilities in the absence of traditional roles – new competencies have to be developed, while others have to be dropped. Particularly in such evolving contexts, the armed forces and other security institutions have to embrace new “non-traditional” roles while maintaining a sensible level of capacity and preparedness to face “traditional” threats. Defense reform programs, for instance, focusing on the armed forces and ideally pursued in the context of larger security sector reform programs, are ultimately driven by such political and societal changes, conditioned by evolving internal and external security environments. In established as well as transforming security sectors (and in preparation for or during reform processes) it is absolutely crucial that additional roles for the armed forces are accommodated in terms of accountability (such as civilian oversight) and internal command structures – or otherwise new internal roles in particular should not be introduced.

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The armed forces surveyed for this article assist in internal security provision as a resource of last resort in circumstances that require efforts to respond to exceptional situations. These include natural and humanitarian catastrophes and other urgencies that exceed the capacity of civilian and hybrid security institutions. In addition, subsidiary operations under the command and control of

civilian agencies are designed to enhance the capacity of civilian security providers in such situations.

For the countries reviewed in this article – with the exception of terrorist activities – the core function of national defense has lost significance. The risk of external military aggression – or internal armed conflict – is diminishing in the perception of the population and their political representatives. The latter are therefore, for the most part, less willing to spend public resources to prepare for seemingly remote threats. These views might be unique to societies that have, at least since the end of the Second World War, experienced an unprecedented level of peace and stability at home and in their immediate neighborhood. This remains true even though this sense of security rested on very unstable grounds during the Cold War and was challenged in different ways during the explosion of ethnic violence in the wake of the Yugoslav successor wars in their immediate backyard – and more recently across the Mediterranean Sea and throughout Northern Africa.

Military engagements in places such as Afghanistan, Iraq or Libya – and calls for military support to political protest movements against authoritarian leaders throughout the Arab world and elsewhere – have reignited sensitivities about “traditional” combat requirements. In addition, the crises, human suffering, economic damage and political instability created by natural disasters point to an increasing demand for the involvement of the armed forces in facilitating immediate responses to such crises. Modern armed forces are increasingly called upon to expand dual- or multiple-role capacities that allow them to address both “traditional” and “non-traditional” threats – both at home and when

advising or helping partner nations in the global South that are in the process of redefining the place of their security sector in society and are defining new roles for the armed forces.

However, changes in the armed forces’ *raison d’être* (and the division of roles and tasks among all security institutions within society) need to be made very carefully and in accordance with established national law and custom. This should always follow a thorough assessment of potentially emerging threat scenarios. The threats for which security sectors were put in place, trained and equipped might be changing. This applies to countries in the North as in the South. Our mapping has shown that changing threat and risk contexts in the surveyed countries have in fact triggered shifts in the roles of their armed forces. Those threats and risks include various climate change scenarios and their impact on already fragile regions and countries, especially in the form of potential increases in large-scale natural disasters; South-North, South-South and rural-urban migration due to instability, climate change and resulting changes to people’s habitats and livelihoods; catastrophes resulting from a combination of natural and man-made disasters, such as the recent earthquake, tsunami and nuclear catastrophe in Japan; continuing threats from international terrorist networks; cyber insecurity; evolving terrorist threats; and political revolutions such as those most recently experienced in the Middle East and North Africa.

However, caution is called for when promoting or preparing for such expanded internal roles in countries that have recently emerged from or are in the process of undergoing substantial political, social and economic transformation. Unless good governance

principles guide the security sector, in particular the armed forces in their search for new roles in a changing security context, new roles, particularly internal ones, should not be developed or supported by external partners willing to build capacity without simultaneously pushing for and ensuring effective democratic oversight. **PRISM**

NOTES

¹ Albrecht Schnabel and Marc Krupanski, *Mapping Evolving Internal Roles of the Armed Forces*, SSR Paper No. 7 (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2012).

² Timothy Edmunds, "What are armed forces for? The changing nature of military roles in Europe," *International Affairs* 82, no. 6 (2006), 1059.

³ Schnabel and Krupanski, *Mapping Evolving Internal Roles of the Armed Forces*.

⁴ James Q. Roberts, "Building the Capabilities and Capacity of Partners: Is This Defense Business?," *PRISM* 4, no. 2 (2013), 67-75.

⁵ David Bayley, "The Police and Political Development in Europe," in Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Michael Broers, "Notabili, Gendarmes and the State: Preserving Order and the Origins of the Centralized State in the Italian Departments of the First Empire," in *Le pénal dans tous ses Etats* (Bruxelles: Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis, 1997), 179-190; Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 169-191.

⁶ Keith Krause, *Towards a Practical Human Security Agenda*, DCAF Policy Paper No. 26 (Geneva: DCAF, 2007), 9.

⁷ Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime."

⁸ Krause, *Towards a Practical Human Security Agenda*, 10.

⁹ Albrecht Schnabel and Danail Hristov, "Conceptualising Non-traditional Roles and Tasks of Armed Forces," *S+F: Sicherheit und Frieden / Security and Peace* 28, no. 2 (2010), 74-75

¹⁰ Barry Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War", *Cooperation and Conflict* 32, no. 1 (1997), 6.

¹¹ Edmunds, "What are armed forces for? The changing nature of military roles in Europe," 1062.

¹² Samuel Huntington, "New Contingencies, Old Roles," *Joint Force Quarterly* (Spring 2003), 38-43.

¹³ Radley Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013).

¹⁴ Edmunds, "What are armed forces for? The changing nature of military roles in Europe," 1063.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1064.

¹⁶ Secretary of State for Defence Geoff Hoon, *Delivering Security in a Changing World: Defence White Paper* (London: UK Ministry of Defence, 2003), 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁸ Hans Born and Aidan Wills, "The Roles of Armed Forces in Council of Europe Member States," European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission), Study on Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Study No. 389, CDL-DEM(2007)009 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, September 26, 2007).

¹⁹ Schnabel and Hristov, *Conceptualising Non-traditional Roles and Tasks of Armed Forces*, 73-80.

²⁰ This section draws on the empirical findings of the 15-country review and mapping exercise carried out for this article. The countries covered in that study are the Western European established democracies of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, along with the United States and Canada. For more details, see Schnabel and Krupanski, *Mapping Evolving Internal Roles*.

²¹ Royal Decree of 6 July 1994 on Operational Engagement of Military Forces and the Law of 20 May 1994, as cited in Pierre d'Argent, "Military Law in Belgium," in Georg Nolte, ed., *European Military Law Systems* (Berlin: De Gruyter Recht, 2003), 191-193.

²² See Ordinance No. 59-147 from January 1959; 1983 Decree No. 83-321 on the Prerogatives of Prefects in Terms of Non-Military Defence; Ministerial Instruction from 7 February establishing the SGDN; Ordinance 60-372 from 15 April 1960 on the State of Urgency; Inter-Ministerial Instruction No. 500/SGDN/MTS/OTP of 9 May 1995 on the Participation of the Military in Maintaining Public Order, as cited in Jörg Gerkrath, "Military Law in France," in Georg Nolte, ed., *op.cit.*, 285-290.

²³ See Royal Decree 1125/1976, Organic Law 4/1981 on the Declaration of Emergency, Law 2/1985 of 21 January 1985 on Civil Protection, cited in Kim Eduard Lioe, *Armed Forces in Law Enforcement Operations? The German and European Perspectives* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2011), 108.

²⁴ See Emergency Powers Act 1920 and Emergency Powers Act 1964.

²⁵ See Part XI of the National Defence Act (R.S. 1985, c. N-5), the Fisheries Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. F-14), and the Queen's Regulations and Orders (QR&Os).

²⁶ See Statute of July 11, 1978, No. 382; Decree of November 28, 1997, No. 464, Art. 5(1); Law No. 331/2000 Article 1; and Law of February 24, 1992, No. 225.

²⁷ See Basic Law, Articles 87, 91, 35 paras. 1 and 2, Article 87a, para. 2.

²⁸ Schnabel and Krupanski, *Mapping Evolving Internal Roles*, 17-40.

²⁹ "Building and Personal Security", *The Washington Post*, <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/functions/security>.

³⁰ Benjamin S. Buckland, Fred Schreier and Theodor H. Winkler, *Democratic Governance Challenges of Cyber Security*, DCAF Horizon 2015 Working Paper No. 1 (Geneva: DCAF, 2009); Fred Schreier, Barbara Weekes and Theodor H. Winkler, *Cyber Security: The Road Ahead*, DCAF Horizon 2015 Working Paper No. 4 (Geneva: DCAF, 2011); Fred Schreier, *On Cyberwarfare*, DCAF Horizon 2015 Working Paper No. 7 (Geneva: DCAF, 2012).

³¹ "Disaster Preparedness", *The Washington Post*, <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/functions/disaster-preparation/>.

³² Spencer S. Hsu, "Agencies Clash on Military's Border Role," *The Washington Post*, June 28, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/27/AR2009062700956.html>; and Patrick Martin, "Pentagon to Deploy 20,000 Troops on Domestic 'Anti-Terror' Mission," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 2, 2008.

³³ "The SAR Mission", United States Coast Guard, available at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg534/>.

³⁴ The World Bank, "Military expenditure (% of GDP)", available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS>.

³⁵ Please see the larger study for a number of factors that have been identified as explaining variation of roles and tasks among the case studies' armed forces. These factors include: Type of political order or system; presence or absence of a constitution; extent of constitutional restrictions; historical context; military history; presence of gendarmeries or home guards; presence of services within the armed forces with explicit internal roles; external determinants; recent or ongoing internal conflicts; membership in military alliances or regional bodies. The study has also identified three common traits that have emerge from the mapping exercise: First, in the selected case studies the armed forces are always secondary security providers, called upon under exceptional circumstances, when police or gendarmeries cannot alone meet a particular security

challenge; second, in all cases the armed forces provide assistance in cases of natural disaster, which is largely undisputed and accepted across broad political spectrums among the political elites and the broader public; and third, there is a trend across countries of an increased domestic counterterrorism role for the armed forces.

³⁶ Keith Krause, *Towards a Practical Human Security Agenda* 11-15; and Forster, 160.

³⁷ According to Huntington, for instance, additional tasks for the military should not impair the army's main mission, which is warfare. See Huntington, "New Contingencies, Old Roles."

³⁸ Fairlie Chappuis and Heiner Hänggi, "The Interplay between Security and Legitimacy: Security Sector Reform and State-Building," in Julia Raue and Patrick Sutter, eds., *Facets and Practices of State-Building* (Leiden/Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009), 45.

Photos

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