# eDIALOGUE SUMMARY REPORT

August 2011

## Security Sector Transformation in North Africa and the Middle East

Mark Sedra and Geoff Burt

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Cover photo: The flags of Tunisia, Libya and Egypt at a demonstration in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt.

# INTRODUCTION

As the Arab Spring continues to take root across the Middle East bringing unprecedented democratic change and also a high level of instability, debate has emerged on the role of security sector reform (SSR) in the fledgling transitions. From June 20 to 25, 2011, The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), in cooperation with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), held a virtual dialogue to explore this issue. Up to 30 experts in SSR and the Middle East region took part in the lively edialogue, which yielded interesting insights and dilemmas on the role SSR can play in consolidating democracy.

Many of the overarching global challenges facing the implementation of the SSR concept, were reflected in the debate on SSR's application in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), in particular, local ownership, timing and the civil-military relationship. This report is divided into two sections: the first outlines some of the open questions and ongoing discussions initiated by the edialogue, and the second offers some specific entry points and policy directions for reform. Opening statements from some of the participants and a participant list are included as an Annex.

While there was some consensus that a window of opportunity exists for donors to provide meaningful SSR assistance to the MENA transition states, there were differences in opinion over the composition, timing and pace that that assistance should take. Poorly designed assistance frameworks that fail to take into account the fluid political dynamics at play in the region and within individual partner countries could do tremendous harm. Accordingly, donors must build their SSR assistance strategies following careful consultations with local actors and good political and technical analysis of potential entry points and policy avenues for engagement. It is vitally important, as many participants in the edialogue noted, that this not be an elite-driven process. Serious effort must be taken to facilitate public debate in MENA states on the role of the security sector in their emerging democratic polities. Only with broad public engagement will the democratic change taking place be sustainable.

# ONGOING DISCUSSIONS

## CAN SSR BEGIN BEFORE DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION?

The relationship between democratic consolidation and SSR in the MENA transition countries was a question that arose throughout the edialogue. In one sense, as Major General (retired) Len le Roux argued, SSR's fundamentally democratic character means that the process cannot truly begin until a democratic mandate is established. Yuba Nath Lamsal from the World Journalists' Network wrote that "democracy is the first prescription for SSR." Problematically, Egypt and Tunisia find themselves in an interim stage of transition, whereby all sides have agreed to a fundamental societal reorganization along democratic lines, but ongoing abuses by security personnel jeopardize the state-society relationship and the wider transition.

Michael Lawrence, a CIGI junior fellow, asked: "Is there still scope for the international community to promote, if not comprehensive SSR, then at least changes in security force behaviour that could aid democratic consolidation and provide an entry point for future SSR?" On this point, Timothy Edmunds from the University of Bristol argued that SSR has elements that "are effectively about achieving 'transition'...including...the establishment of civilian control over (or at a minimum, some kind of accommodation with) the security services, the removal of the most compromised members/protectors of the old regime, and the elimination of gross systemic abuses of human rights." These early transitional steps can take place independently of larger democratization efforts.

Consolidating the democratic character of reforms involves more than just holding elections. As CIGI Senior Fellow Mark Sedra pointed out, public trust in the security forces tends to be low in post-authoritarian states, where "the security and justice institutions were instruments of repression for the previous regimes and assumed a predatory rather than protective role." In this context, steps must be taken to establish a new social contract between the state and society, including "some sensitization of the public as to the responsibilities of the security institutions to the public in a democratic society."

## IS THERE A VIABLE REGIONAL FRAMEWORK IN WHICH TO CONDUCT SSR?

Chris Steinitz from CNA Strategic Studies emphasized the need to consider the regional context in which SSR will take place: "When we talk about regional solutions and local ownership, it is vital that we remember precisely what regional forces are already at work. The question is how can security sectors be positively influenced in such a context?" Participants were divided about the potential for regional and international organizations to play a constructive role in SSR in MENA. Mark Sedra expressed skepticism about the contributions of the Arab League or other regional bodies: "The problem is that no Middle Eastern regional organization has engaged in SSR in a meaningful way. This has something to do with the high concentration of military dictatorships in the region, who view the notion of democratic civilian control of the security forces as a distinct threat (not to mention key SSR norms of transparency, accountability and human rights)." Researcher Madeline Kristoff echoed those doubts, noting that, so far, MENA regional organizations have little meaningful experience in SSR.

Participants agreed that some kind of regional coordination mechanism would be helpful in organizing donor programming. Len le Roux argued that "the first priority is establishing a coordinated approach to SSR in MENA within the donor community." Ambassador Donald Planty emphasized that "burden sharing is desirable, but only if it results in a clear and consistent model that is not implemented with disparate approaches that mirror the different national experiences among the international community."

To this end, le Roux pointed out that the African Union Policy Framework on SSR (which was scheduled to be released in July) emphasizes "African ownership of SSR processes, includ[ing] ownership by local communities, national ownership by member states, regional ownership by the RECs (Regional Economic Communities) and continental ownership by the African Union." Erwin Van Veen from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggested a United Nations (UN) regional political mission "that draws the entire North African region into a process of political dialogue, economic integration and development." Mark Sedra and others agreed that the UN might be able to provide a common framework to organize donor interests in the region. Independent security and defence consultant Stephen Andrews suggested that "key to any efforts in the security sector will be the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Yemen is a partial member already, and both Morocco and Jordan have recently been included within it, at least in respect of security issues. Any security reform efforts will, at the very least, need to work with Saudi Arabia, who is likely to be a significant donor to all members and associates of the GCC."

## WHAT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WILL AFFECT SSR IN MENA?

There was a consensus that reform programs must take into account the region's political context. Donors should recognize that SSR, in turn, shapes local political realities. Timothy Edmunds cautioned against viewing SSR "as a technical, neutral — or at least self-evidently beneficial — agenda." Reforms do not affect all members of the society equally and consequently must navigate a political arena that sometimes has as many opponents as allies. As Edmunds wrote, "If we are to understand SSR in any given case, it is important to engage seriously with the domestic political context. What are the specific constraints and opportunities which local reformers (and indeed recidivists) face? How do external SSR priorities strengthen, support or threaten these dynamics?" In this context, SSR's political dimension is at least as critical as its technical aspects.

International actors must be realistic about the constraints faced by local reformers. Stephen Andrews argued that "the start of any SSR program should involve at least some stakeholder analysis and therefore some documented understanding of the goals of different actors. It might be that one of the goals of the ruling elite (even if a new group) will be to consolidate power and to only relinquish that which is absolutely necessary for them to remain in power." Alp Özerdem from Coventry University in the United Kingdom added to this point, stating that a new "political elite" is emerging from the Arab Spring, and the international community should "be cautious about their possible 'democratic' credentials [because] their use of security apparatuses for the protection of their newly acquired power in the future might be in contradiction with what that political transformation is hoped to be producing."

## HOW CAN REFORM PROGRAMS BALANCE NATIONAL AND HUMAN SECURITY?

Alp Özerdem outlined the challenge of balancing concern for national security, which may be favoured by existing security elites, with a broader concern for human security that incorporates the needs of people and communities. These human security priorities are threatened by the inertia of "business as usual" approaches to reform, which are chiefly concerned with containing transnational security threats like terrorism and illegal migration. As Özerdem wrote, "it is important to remember that the 'authoritarian' security sector structures in most MENA countries are, to some extent, the product of the Western financial and technical assistance."

There is a risk that if Western donors select the most obvious entry points for reform based on existing relationships — ministries of defence and intelligence, as well as producers and suppliers of weapons — they will continue to privilege national security over human security. Timothy Edmunds outlined the various roles historically played by international actors, including "strategically driven training assistance and equipment programs; arms sales...and — to a much lesser degree — good governance and democracy assistance." Mark Sedra commented that we may continue to observe a focus from donors on train-and-equip assistance that trumps the human security goals sought by the citizens of many Arab states. As Yuba Nath Lamsal pointed out, human security has not yet found a place on the agenda of Arab governments.

What is required, according to Özerdem, is "a radical change in listening to the voices of people and responding to their security needs. This would mean, in the short term, the SSR programs should ensure the immediate protection of civilians while in the long term, increase the strength of the relationship between the state and the society." The challenge of this approach is that it requires, as Mark Sedra wrote, "a level of political sophistication in donor interventions that has not always been readily apparent in SSR engagements." Timothy Edmunds cautioned that, "while the importance of democracy promotion and the rule of law seems likely to increase in the wake of recent events, it will remain but one of a number of international objectives in the region," making the West vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy, that is to say, "strong pressure for democratic SSR in Egypt, none in Saudi Arabia or Bahrain."

## WHEN SHOULD THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY GET INVOLVED IN SSR?

How to balance the short-, medium- and long-term priorities of SSR in MENA was one of the edialogue's central debates. Stephen Andrews suggested that it is too early to envision a comprehensive SSR program in any of the transition countries since, as he argued, "any SSR efforts in the MENA will depend largely upon 'how the dust settles'" and the degree of dependence upon external assistance. Michael Lawrence pointed out that "security structures are likely to endure regime change, and we probably have to expect slow, gradual change." Mark Sedra highlighted the importance of expectation management: given the intense demand for change under the Arab Spring, "people may be very disappointed when change invariably takes longer to achieve than

they hope." Expectations of real change should adopt a generational time scale.

Nonetheless, donors are likely to favour reform programs that promise immediate results. CIGI Research Officer Geoff Burt pointed out the "tension between the ideal outcome, a democratically based, locally led reform process, which may take some time to develop, and the fear that if donors do not act quickly, they may be missing a short-term opportunity to advance reforms." Mark Sedra wondered if there was even a role for external actors this early in the process: "Should donors be pushing security sector elites in the region to move reforms now, or wait for them to reach out for SSR support?" Sedra cautioned that although there may appear to be a window of opportunity, "ill-constructed reforms could do tremendous harm at this time." Carefully establishing short-, medium- and long-term priorities (as suggested by Colonel Babacar Diouf from Senegal) might allow for a pragmatic approach to SSR with room to adapt to emerging dynamics. On this issue, Diouf suggested that there is some urgency in supporting civil society organizations (CSOs) in the development of an indigenous reform agenda even while their governments are still in a phase of transition.

## DO WE NEED A MORE PRAGMATIC SET OF GOALS FOR THE REFORM PROCESS?

One of the most interesting discussions during the edialogue was between those who favoured comprehensive SSR programming in MENA and those who endorsed a more flexible, pragmatic set of goals. Noting that the "best practice" SSR approach, based on Western institutional models, may be out of touch with local realities in recipient countries (stemming in particular from the lack of a robust "citizenship" identity amidst strongly held ethnic and religious allegiances), Alp Özerdem introduced the idea of "good enough" SSR, focusing on what is achievable rather than merely what is desirable. This approach "would be almost like a mitigatory measure to act in a proactive way rather than wishing for the best practice approach that is often advocated from a liberal peace perspective…[aiming] for something that is possible, viable and achievable in a particular context." Madeline Kristoff expressed concern that this model could embolden countries to seek only to satisfy the bare minimum criteria for reform, undercutting the comprehensive and holistic character of SSR. Kristoff cautioned: "If external actors engage in 'good enough SSR'…then I worry that will translate into 'good enough' effort."

Mark Sedra agreed that contemporary SSR programming "should be more pragmatic and less overtly normative" and emphasized that this approach "does not mean abandoning core SSR principles, but doing a better job adapting them to local contexts, replete with their unique norms, histories and institutional cultures (creating new hybridities)." Attempting to advance "ideal-type" SSR in MENA at this time could do more harm than good. Instead, donors should accept that there is not one model for a well-functioning security sector, but many.

# POLICY DIRECTIONS AND ENTRY POINTS

The edialogue participants identified a number of potential entry points for reform in MENA transition countries, including structural reforms, civic education for security forces, strengthening oversight mechanisms and civilian control, education and training programs for civil society, and the facilitation of dialogue between state and civil society leaders.

## RESTRUCTURE THE SECURITY FORCES

Ambassador Donald Planty wrote that donors can assist MENA governments by providing advice on the overall restructuring of the security forces, including militaries, police and intelligence agencies: "This could start with advice on basic structural reforms such as redesigning militaries to concentrate on external defence and eliminating internal functions such as domestic security activities, redirecting intelligence agencies away from a focus on internal developments to concern with external threats and international cooperation and reconfiguring police forces to positive engagement with citizens and away from repressive practices." As an example, Erwin Van Veen wrote, "the police and intelligence agencies feature an unhealthy merger of executive and information gathering tasks, not dissimilar to states in the former Yugoslavia. This must be separated if the police is to have the confidence of citizens." Mark Sedra suggested that donors could "support this process by helping these states (in the background, of course) to undertake new threat assessments and security policy reviews that could develop some momentum for fundamental structural change."

## STRENGTHEN OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS AND CIVILIAN CONTROL

US Army Intelligence Analyst Matthew Malik emphasized the importance of democratic civilian control of the security sector, noting that security apparatuses in MENA are perceived as an extension of the ruling regimes rather than an instrument of the state and a servant of its people. Len le Roux argued that civic education programs for the security forces would be "fruitless if the elected civil/political authorities are not simultaneously educated and capacitated to fulfill their governance and oversight." Mark Sedra wrote that if a genuine break with the past is to be achieved (a transformation in line with the spirit of the Arab Spring) then donors "must look beyond those traditional security elites and seek to cultivate change agents within hitherto marginalized segments of the polity, like civil society groups and the legislative branch."

Regarding oversight of the security forces, Noha Bakr of the American University in Cairo pointed out that in Egypt, "the People's Assembly is formally vested with a wide range of oversight powers on the security apparatus." Mark Sedra stated that even when oversight frameworks exist in post-authoritarian states, parliaments often lack the "capacity to exercise this mandate/responsibility." Chris Steinitz agreed that the opportunity to provide security sector education to parliamentarians and other civilian leaders represents a valuable entry point.

## PROVIDE CIVIC EDUCATION FOR THE SECURITY FORCES

Len le Roux emphasized the importance of civic education for the security forces, focused "on the principles of healthy civil/security relations, the rule of law, international law and national constitutions, human security and human rights." Le Roux argued that the most crucial imperative is the establishment of civilian control over the security forces, meaning that programs should focus on "building capacity in security ministries and parliamentary committees and subjecting the members of the security services [particularly senior leaders] to civic education." Ambassador Donald Planty argued that "leadership training is especially needed...Professional training and development is the best guarantee that reforms will last. Developing human capital — capacity building — is the bedrock of institutional change." Participants agreed that in Egypt and Tunisia, the institution most urgently in need of reform was the police.

## CREATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Mark Sedra agreed that targeting top security officials to secure their engagement in the process is a vital entry point for reforms, but argued that "there has to be corresponding engagement with civil society groups and wider populations." On this topic, Madeline Kristoff stressed the importance of civil society engagement, noting that the most promising entry points for change seem to come from local civil society actors. Sedra suggested that a key role for security sector donors will be to assist "civil society groups to understand and assert their new role and rights vis-a-vis the security sector." Accordingly, "civic education and sensitization efforts should target and engage a wider swathe of society outside security sector elites."

It is therefore vital to support CSOs with information — what Colonel Babacar Diouf referred to as "a sort of orientation tour of SSR" — which lets them know what to expect, what challenges they might face and what their role might be before, during and after the process. These programs should be based on helping CSOs develop their own security agenda, rather than attempting to provide one for them. Matthew Malik stressed the need for "a grassroots education movement, informing the citizens about the rule of law and of the fact that they have options in how they are engaged by their government, including the role of the security sector...start[ing] with the civic leaders and educators, using key-leader engagements."

## FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS

Colonel Babacar Diouf described a fundamental asymmetry between state and civil society actors: "Usually, the people agree upfront [to SSR] because it corresponds to their hopes/wishes but many don't know much about it," whereas unless they have explicitly committed to reform, "political leaders usually resist more, knowing perfectly well what it means to their power." Due to these political considerations, Colonel Diouf argued that there may be a window of opportunity for the international community to engage both political elites and CSOs, and "see to what extent a space for dialogue could be established between these two." Given the importance of local ownership and respect for political realities, there appears to be a general consensus that a key role for international actors is, as Sedra put it, to create "space for dialogue between state and society." Stephen Andrews emphasized the importance of local ownership, stating: "Essentially there has to be an open

dialogue, hopefully based on mutual trust and respect, that will allow a jointly owned program plan to be developed."

## DELAYING DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION/DOWNSIZING FOR THE MILITARY

There was agreement among edialogue participants that "right-sizing" the overweight security forces — in particular the militaries — of post-authoritarian states like Egypt and Tunisia was a critical long-term goal. At the same time, there was a strong consensus that in the short term, as Mark Sedra argued, these steps would be provocative and even dangerous, "given the fact that it will threaten the livelihoods and power of a large number of influential elites." Alp Özerdem raised the concern that "a hastily undertaken decommissioning exercise could result in high security risks, but following the guidance of a comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) framework might dictate just that!" Chris Steinitz argued that DDR should be a lower priority because "not only does this require other significant reforms before it can take hold, but in the particular case of Egypt, the country's chronic unemployment would be exacerbated precisely because the security sector has been used as a form of 'militarized social welfare.'"

Citing the experience of South Africa, Len le Roux made the point that a rushed decommissioning process can lead to missed opportunities, such as incorporating demobilized soldiers into other sections of the security apparatus. Mark Sedra argued that "while consultations on the future role and structure of the army should begin soon (led by the Egyptians, of course) actual reforms, including right-sizing and decommissioning, are better left to a later date."

# CONCLUSIONS

SSR in the MENA region, like the wider processes of democratization, will be slow moving and proceed in fits and starts. Donors and recipients alike must accept that there is no linear path to change and must show some resilience in implementation. A historic opportunity has been presented to both MENA states and their donor partners in the West and beyond. The Arab Spring has shown the bankruptcy of not only authoritarian one-party rule, buffeted by the security state, but also the type of Cold War–era train-and-equip donor assistance that sustained those regimes. The fall of the regimes in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen have, to a certain extent, vindicated

the SSR model, which is predicated on the notion that repressive, unjust and undemocratic security sectors contribute to long-term instability and inhibit sustainable human development. The tremendous challenge faced by security sector reformers in the MENA states also presents an opportunity to renew the SSR concept, which despite increasing visibility in the international system, has achieved few tangible successes. SSR in the MENA states, if it does succeed, could mark a paradigm shift in SSR and set an important example for other transition states going forward.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Mark Sedra** is a senior fellow at The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) and the leader of CIGI's Security Sector Governance project. He also teaches in the department of political science at the University of Waterloo. His current research focuses on the topic of post-conflict state building with an emphasis on security issues. He has conducted research on a number of countries and regions, including Afghanistan, Northern Ireland, Sudan, the Middle East and the Balkans. Mark was formerly a research associate at the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), a German-based independent think tank specializing in peace and security issues, and a visiting research fellow at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. He also served as the 2004–2005 Cadieux Léger Fellow in the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). Mark has served as a consultant on international security issues to numerous organizations and governments, including the United Nations, DFAIT and the British Department for International Development.

**Geoff Burt** is a research officer at CIGI, focusing primarily on SSR and post-conflict reconstruction. He is the project coordinator of the Security Sector Reform Monitor and SSR Issue Papers series and the administrator of the SSR Resource Centre. Geoff was a recipient of the Canadian Department of National Defence's Security and Defence Forum Internship, which he held at CIGI in 2009–2010.

# ANNEX

## eDIALOGUE OPENING STATEMENTS

### NOHA BAKR, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

One of the main issues that led to grievances and dissatisfaction in Egypt leading to the January 25 revolution was the complete dissatisfaction with the police performance and human rights abuses.

**1. Internal working conditions of police force in Egypt**

- Wages: Belief that they are underpaid, which leads to opening a channel for corruption

- Long working hours

- Pressure from superiors to produce quick results

- Lack of efficient mechanization and training (monitoring cameras, programs for data analysis, etc.)

- Lack of specialization, and feeling of injustice between police officers (for example, tourism vs. prison officers)

- Syllabus and methodology of teaching in the Police Academy

- Lack of reporting feedback channels/tools on the performance of police officers (hotlines, Internet sites)

- Lack of efficient training on securing crime locations in order to not lose evidence

- Need to increase numbers of individuals trained in forensic medicine, as there are only 160 serving all Egypt, which delays results

**2. Checks and balances**

There must be measures to subject the police security sector to effective oversight from Parliament. Budgets should be reviewed and procurement decisions, appointments and dismissals to be approved should be monitored, if not by Parliament as a whole, at least by a committee that is assigned responsibility for it. This requires a strong system of good governance.

As for the legislative system's control over the security sector in Egypt, the People's Assembly is formally vested with a wide range of oversight powers on the security apparatus. However, there is no comprehensive real practice of actual oversight exercised by the assembly on military and security establishments. The Egyptian minister of defence and minister of interior are formally required to make an annual presentation to the assembly's standing committee on defence and national security; however, in practice, there is no real dialogue in security matters between Parliament and the security authorities. Indeed, Parliament lacks the intellectual and technical capacity to discuss military and security matters. In Egypt, the assembly is constitutionally authorized to oversee defence budgets.

**3. Good governance**

This would imply greater transparency, a right to know about the functioning of the various security sector components and an open discussion about their performance and possible alternatives. It would also imply greater inclusiveness by all those who have a stake in security sector governance: the civilian administration; the parliament; political parties; men and women, whose security is directly affected; and a proper grievance procedure to redress occurred violations. It will bring cases of corruption and nepotism into the limelight, hindering and deterring it from reoccurring.

This requires legislative efforts to modify laws hindering good governance and monitoring systems, such as the law on non-governmental organizations (law no. 84 of 2002), and the emergency law (no. 168 of 1958), which includes provisions that are condemned by civil society institutions for infringing human rights.

**4. Gender diversification**

Gender diversification in Egypt would enhance the SSR outcome.

On a national level: Women share specific security challenges in Egypt, such as domestic and intimate partner violence, community violence, human trafficking and being targeted by security to destabilize opposition movements. Integrating gender diversification in the security sector in Egypt will improve women's outcome in confronting such challenges.

On the international level: Gender diversification will allow further and enriched involvement of Egypt in peacekeeping forces.

### TIMOTHY EDMUNDS, UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

The Arab Spring is a multi-faceted and complex

phenomenon, incorporating states, polities and circumstances as diverse as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and others. In each case, the manner in which the "Spring" has expressed itself, the response of the state, and the role and significance of the international community has been distinct. In all cases, the security sector — broadly defined — has been a key actor, and it will continue to be so as events unfold and consolidate. Within this milieu, the role of SSR is likely to be significant, though the opportunities and challenges it presents will be widely varied. In this context, I have three opening observations and points for discussion:

**1. Scope:** The security sector in general is diverse, and no more so than across North Africa and the Middle East at present. Different security sector actors have different interests in continuity or change and pose different questions for SSR. There is a clear and obvious distinction between the police and army in most cases, but also elements within these — such as special units or (often autonomous or independent) intelligence agencies. Some of these may be more resistant to change than others, or at least to change in particular areas, while some may be more open to — or even embrace — reform. So, for example, while democratization may be something the Egyptian Army can work with, challenges to its extensive economic interests may be more difficult to accommodate. Civilians are important here, too. Indeed, experience from the post-communist region suggests that civilian actors can sometimes be as much of an obstacle to SSR and democratic civil-military relations as the security sector itself.

**2. Goals:** International actors' engagement with the security sector in the region has been extensive in the past and incorporated multiple — even contradictory — roles. These include: strategically driven training, assistance and equipment programs; arms sales, including many ongoing contracts; and — to a much lesser degree — good governance and democracy assistance. While the importance of democracy promotion and the rule of law seems likely to increase in the wake of recent events, it will remain but one of a number of international objectives in the region. Key questions for external promoters of SSR include how to balance between different — potentially competing priorities — both with regard to specific institutions (again the Egyptian Army springs to mind) and between different states in the region.

**3. Ownership:** Democratic SSR is normative. It is about promoting a particular idea of how states should govern themselves and organize their institutions of security.

In this context, there is often a tension between local ownership of SSR — widely agreed to be necessary if it is to be self-sustaining — and external priorities. It is also worth bearing in mind that democratic politics comes in many shapes and sizes. Not all of them are liberal, and indeed, some can be explicitly illiberal in nature. There are no easy answers here; however, international actors need to be realistic about local circumstances and the constraints under which local reformers are often working. "Political will" — whatever that is — tends to be absent for a reason, and that reason is what we normally call "politics" in our own "donor" countries.

## DALE F. EICKELMAN, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

V. I. Lenin reputedly said: "There are decades when nothing happens, but there are weeks when decades happen." The Arab Spring of 2011 is a great transformation that has been underway for more than two decades. The term "Arab Spring" is an analogy borrowed directly from its 1968 antecedent, the "Prague Spring," which began in January and was crushed by Soviet tanks by August. Nonetheless, the analogy, as Claude Lévi-Strauss might have said, is good to think with (bon à penser), and suggests family resemblances that span different historical epochs and contexts.

The recent experience of Syria offers a curb on excessive optimism. Bashar al-Assad gave an extraordinary interview to *The Wall Street Journal* (January 31, 2011) that offered hope that his government would use the protests and demonstrations in neighbouring countries to persuade his own hard-liners to acquiesce to reforms. Few would argue since March that the Syrian government is capable of significant reform.

The contexts in which the Arab Spring is taking place are well known, but none in themselves provide a clear explanation of the course that events are taking. *The Economist* (London) called its July 17, 2010 special section on Egypt "Holding Its Breath" and wisely offered no prediction that the regime's breaking point was imminent. The same holds for the best assessment of Tunisia written in the past two decades, Béatrice Hibou's *La force de l'Obéissance* (2006).

Some of the elements of the Arab Spring are obvious: the majority of the population is under 30 years old and this is likely to remain the case for at least another decade; there is large-scale unemployment or underemployment at meaningless tasks; opportunities for emigration have diminished; there are increasingly high levels of schooling in terms of levels of education if not quality,

vastly widening the opportunity to "talk back," even in repressive states; and greater accessibility to new media technologies, increasing the opportunity to learn about developments elsewhere, compare and talk back. The region does not suffer from a democracy deficit in terms of understanding, personal dignity and aspirations; implementation is another matter. The November-December Wikileaks disclosures of how much the US government knew of corruption in particular states of the region added little to what citizens of the affected countries already knew, but they raised serious questions about why the US government took no action in spite of its public commitment to transparency and democracy.

Since January 2011, some governments have learned to listen, react and adapt more quickly than others. Niccolò Machiavelli used the term "civil principality" to describe leadership based not on crime or intolerable violence but on persuasion, which applied to the Middle East in part means militaries, police forces and intelligence forces refocusing on the rule of law, and analyzing and confronting genuine external and domestic threats to civil society rather than suppressing or manipulating real or perceived opposition. In some cases, tribal alliances, village and clan ties, and extended sub-governmental ties of family have provided, as they have all along, a ballast against government repression and rapacity. By way of example, let me contrast Tunisia and Morocco.

I would argue that Tunisia's "Jasmine" revolution was relatively successful in part because the army and the security forces aimed to pre-empt a more powerful social upheaval. It is tempting to assume that the strength of Tunisia's dominant political party, the Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique (RCD) has been broken. For many it served as an extensive network for favours and upward social mobility. The RCD political "machine" will be no easier to dismantle than that of Mayor Richard J. Daley (1902–1976, Chicago's last "big boss"). What is perceived as "corruption" is part of this extensive network of reciprocity, and underlying everything are economic challenges that remain unmet and that require the restructuring of the economy and greater diversification.

Morocco offers an example of the importance of timing, and, to some extent, an anticipation built on a close reading of events elsewhere in the region. The government may have been caught by surprise at the strength of the February 20 demonstrations, a Facebook-organized series of protests throughout the Kingdom against corruption and the concentration of key decisions and economic opportunities in the hands of the monarch and his friends. A week later, one of the monarch's key advisers was reported as saying that the protests offered an opportunity "to accelerate a movement for needed reform in Morocco," a response similar to that which the Moroccans made after the May 2003 bombings in Casablanca. The adviser concluded: "We have to listen to what people are saying, it's reality. And you have to listen and accelerate change, because these kids want better things, not bad things." Since then there has been a carefully timed project of constitutional reform, a constitutional referendum scheduled for July 1, as well as quieter, behind-the-scenes activities intended to accelerate reforms and make the security sector more accountable. The Moroccan reforms are all the more plausible because they are locally initiated.

## ANN FITZ-GERALD, CENTRE FOR SECURITY SECTOR MANAGEMENT

**Challenges**

- Western donor approaches to SSR encourage a "whole of government approach" to SSR programs. To a large extent, this whole of government culture does not exist in many Middle East countries. Indeed, many ME security institutions pride themselves on being quite independent from the "rest of government."

- As national security policy becomes an important "platform" for informing SSR programs, there are important cultural and language considerations that should be noted prior to any externally funded support being designed and developed. One example is the approach to policy making — it is often the case where policies exist without a supporting strategy as distinctions are sometimes not made between "policy" and "strategy." The result is often that many policies do not get implemented, and do not secure the resources required for implementation.

- The ambitious timelines that normally underpin SSR interventions will face difficulties in some Middle East countries — particularly those programs that support stabilization. It is often the case that formal "conventions" are required to underpin externally funded SSR programs. If not considered in the program planning, this requirement can cause significant delays to the SSR effort. Conventions are agreements between at least two parties, which require drafting, agreement, signing (a public signing ceremony is often desired) and exchanging. The need for "conventions" underpinning SSR activities has

posed serious time delays to a number of our Middle East programs. These formalities must be respected and adhered to.

- Sectarianism plays a significant role in the recruitment and promotion practices of some Middle East security sectors — for example, a senior military officer may skip two ranks in order to promote into an Army Board position that has always been "allocated" to a certain sectarian group.

- Legal amendments and changes to existing laws will be an important area for SSR in the Middle East. We have often seen SSR programs unfold at the technical level that have no legal basis and that therefore will not be sustainable. This is particularly important for changes to national security policies. Legal expertise and legislation drafting represent two important areas of competency for future SSR interventions in the Middle East.

- In some Middle East countries, the view is that defence policy informs security policy, which may seem odd for those comfortable with the western model of national security as an executive function of government that informs cabinet-level security-related policy.

**Lessons from past SSR interventions**

- There is a great deal of intellectual capital, competency and pride in the Middle East. "Dialogue," underpinned by permissive and effective facilitation, will be an important element of future SSR programs. Lasting dialogue should not be rushed. In a number of Middle East countries, some initial dialogue processes last 12 months before any related programs develop; in my own experience, and based on the importance of "status," "advisory boards" supporting such dialogue can result in a good degree of "buy-in" from key stakeholders.

- As the military is such a significant player in most Middle East countries, lessons should be drawn from the central and eastern European experience of "support to civil-military relations" — whole-of-government SSR would be too ambitious a goal for the initial five years.

- Care must be exercised in developing SSR objectives and milestones. Prior to the Arab Spring, certain Middle East armies have been accustomed to generations of authoritarian/dictatorial rule. The "mindset," "ethos" and "attitude" required to

civilize and "democratize" security institutions will not be apparent for another generation. Even among the younger officers, training and education has been shaped around a certain historical system of governance. A good comparison may be to evaluate the degree to which the Government of Ethiopia — which has already endured 10 years of a progressive transformation program — has adjusted to this "democratic" ethos. In Ethiopia, there is still much to achieve in developing a democratic foundation for lasting reform. The Middle East situation poses much larger and more multiple challenges than the case of Ethiopia and other sub-Saharan African experiences.

- An important lesson from past SSR interventions will be to engage with civil society and help support the following:

  - bringing issues related to national security and the role of security institutions into mainstream education programs;

  - supporting academic programs that form part of the formal military training and education (for example, staff college programs — possibly working in support of "embedded" post-graduate programs within existing staff college programs). These programs could provide a platform for exposure to comparative and international practice;

  - assisting in the facilitation and development of civil society networks;

  - providing training that imparts knowledge on peaceful and "effective" demonstrations (and other methods of advocacy); and

  - providing training and education on "evidence-based analysis" — there are many books and publications on "security" that circulate inside the Middle East education system and are not evidence-based (and are not translated into English).

- Measures outlined above also contribute to preparing the ground for the future generations of government leaders.

## MADELINE KRISTOFF

- International assistance to transition states should follow comprehensive security sector transformation programs that prioritize, sequence, manage and implement real change. The European Union (EU)

has experience with programs reforming security institutions in former Soviet European states to meet requirements for membership in European institutions. The US and the EU can cooperate to assist transition states in North Africa and the Middle East by developing common objectives with locals and establishing frameworks to provide comprehensive assistance.

- Other lessons to learn from the US experience with rebuilding the security sector in Iraq and Afghanistan:

  - A proliferation of bilateral police assistance programs that reflected the policing practices of donor countries compounded problems with both Iraq and Afghan police reform programs.

  - Using improperly trained, equipped and supported Afghan National Police as "little soldiers" resulted in the police suffering three times as many casualties as the Afghan National Army.

- Reform entry points:

  - Militaries must be revamped and refocused on external defence.

  - Police forces must become police services that enforce the rule of law. This requires a comprehensive training mechanism that changes the attitudes/behaviour of the police trainees, not just training police how to use a weapon.

  - Intelligence agencies must focus on analysis of external threats.

  - The security services must be brought under effective civilian oversight.

- Public opinion of security forces is an important factor to consider. When you look at the Egyptian revolution, the police were not trusted and the military were the staunch supporters of the people. This will be an integral part of the reform of the Egyptian security services in the future — how to change perceptions of the Egyptian police for the future of comprehensive SSR in the country.

## ALP ÖZERDEM, PROFESSOR, COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

The USIP-CIGI edialogue event argues that "the transformation of the security sector in former authoritarian states is essential to achieving democracy and the rule of law" in MENA countries, which have been going through a turbulent process of political change over the last six months. In principle, there would be no reason to have a counter-argument for such a statement as it is from a normative sense very much in line with the rhetoric of the liberal peace agenda. However, it is also important to question the following points before reaching such an essentialist conclusion. First, what would be the ideological basis of such an SSR process? In other words, who would be setting its agenda, structure and primary contours for action? Second, what do we mean by "transformation"? Would such a transformation be in the realist view of "conflict management" at the macro level and undertaken in a top-down way or in a "conflict transformation" sense, involving communities at the micro-level, in which their security would be the primary concern of SSR programs, but not solely national and international geopolitical interests.

In conjunction with this point, it is important to remember that the "authoritarian" security sector structures in most MENA countries are, to some extent, the product of Western financial and technical assistance. Therefore, in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring, there is a significant advantage with the "technical" side of SSR undertakings of MENA countries, as most of those security structures have been created and supported by the West in the past. Let's not forget that those "authoritarian" regimes of MENA, such as Egypt and Tunisia, were the close allies of Western interests until their departure from power. Therefore, there may seem to be some obvious entry points that could be identified without much difficulty by Western security actors — ministries of defence, departments of intelligence, producers and suppliers of weapons, but for any SSR undertaking to be effective in MENA, it is important to ensure a number of prerequisites. To start with, there needs to be a radical change in listening to the voices of people and responding to their security needs. This would mean, in the short term, the SSR programs should ensure the immediate protection of civilians, while, in the long term, increase the strength of the relationship between the state and society. Governance, accountability, responsiveness and effectiveness would obviously need to be the cornerstones of future SSR programs in the region. However, rather than adopting a more conventional SSR approach of "train and equip" or building up the "hardware" of security sector structures, the response needs to reflect the complexity and reality of local people's experiences and their security needs.

## AMBASSADOR DONALD PLANTY, THE EMERGENCE GROUP

States in MENA are in various stages of transition from the former authoritarian states to more participatory democracies. That said, all face serious structural challenges as they seek to reform their militaries, police and intelligence services.

Effective reforms are particularly urgent in the police realm. Police forces need to be reconfigured to reflect the new democratic context. This restructuring will require preparation of new strategic plans and institutional reorganization. Plans should include the introduction of modern, democratically oriented curricula in police academies both at the cadet (entry) level and for in-service personnel. Leadership training is especially needed. Concepts such as community policing should be hallmarks of the new police forces, ensuring that the police engage communities in the process of achieving security through mutual cooperation and the building of trust. In addition, up-to-date, in-depth training will be needed in key areas such as investigations, forensics and anti-corruption activities.

International actors can support these reform processes in two ways. The first is to assist governments by providing advice/expertise on the overall re-structuring of the three institutions — militaries, police and intelligence agencies. This could start with advice on basic structural reforms such as re-designing militaries to concentrate on external defence and eliminating internal functions such as domestic security activities, re-directing intelligence agencies away from a focus on internal developments to concern with external threats and international cooperation and re-configuring police forces to engage positively with citizens and away from repressive practices. Secondly, international actors can complement these fundamental structural changes with training to develop capacity in all three areas and create professional capabilities. Professional training and development are the best guarantee that reforms will last. Developing human capital — capacity building — is the bedrock of institutional change.

With regard to experiences, lessons and expertise, ongoing programs in Tajikistan in the area of police reform deserve consideration. Tajikistan is the only former Soviet Republic to shed completely the old Soviet police model and replace it with a comprehensive, modern democratically inspired police reform. This reform is taking place from top to bottom and includes a complete revamping of the police academy curriculum and basic and leadership training, and the introduction of community policing methods. The Tajik experience is a resounding success to date and can be considered a model for countries in transition.

Finally, as the international community engages in SSR in the MENA region, it should avoid multiplicity of actors, overlapping responsibilities and conflicting models. Burden sharing is desirable, but only if it results in a clear and consistent model that is not implemented with disparate approaches that mirror the different national experiences among the international community. There should be a single, agreed-upon construct that the international community will pursue, coupled with a well-defined, single model for implementation.

## CHRIS STEINITZ, CNA STRATEGIC STUDIES

In addition to the long-standing issues (such as transparency, accountability and sectarian issues) that continue to trouble various Middle Eastern states, the Arab Spring has produced at least two general SSR trends. Transitioning regimes, such as Egypt and Tunisia, will have to tackle the need to eliminate undesirable institutions and practices, while rebuilding trust and authority and maintaining stability. In Egypt, for example, there has been much acclaim for the elimination of the state security apparatus, but also reports that because of low morale, many police officers have not returned to their duties. The challenge will rest in rebuilding a security sector that can fulfill essential state duties to preserve peace and stability, while ensuring that the undesirable practices of past remain in the past.

Yet not all SSR can be viewed as a positive development. Many regimes in the Middle East are in the process of reforming their security sectors in order to consolidate their power. Saudi Arabia's announcement that it will increase the number of Interior Ministry employees should be viewed with skepticism, as should the discovery that Abu Dhabi has hired Blackwater founder, Erik Prince, to import Columbian mercenaries. At this time of flux, many regional governments feel vulnerable, and it will take dedicated attention from the international community to urge these states to adopt preferred practices that uphold universal values rather than simply boost authoritarian muscle.

In both of these trends, the dynamics being set in motion now will play out over the next several years, if not decades. Many of the challenges will require years of dedication to address. Yet in this moment of change, there is an opportunity to have direct impacts that will echo for

as long as these dynamics unfold. Here, in its efforts to shape more robust and responsible security sectors, the international community will face challenges of funding, long-term attention and political will.

## ERWIN VAN VEEN, OECD INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY

### Arab Spring: Opportunities for International Engagement

It is clear that the developments in North Africa offer a unique opportunity for game changing international engagement. It is also clear this opportunity is not being used very well so far. Three actions are key to ensuring that this "good crisis does not go to waste": First, a UN regional political mission needs to be established that draws the entire North African region into a process of political dialogue, economic integration and development. Its aim should be to facilitate the modernization of governance and economic institutions on the basis of citizen's needs and rights to create more prosperity. Second, it needs to be backed up by an EU North African Marshall plan; however, this should focus on trade, investment and education more than on aid. It will fail if it focuses too much on European concerns around migration and security. The long-term game is to invest in economic progress that pays off in the future when a graying Europe shows less economic dynamism. Third, a compact should be drawn up with each North African country that wishes to enter this partnership, laying out key commitments, processes and structures for channelling UN and EU support. Finally, Arab countries of good standing and solid levels of development should be closely associated with the process and lead on much of its work.

### Transitioning to Citizen Security and Fair Justice

From the perspective of serving the needs of their citizens, the current security and justice architecture of some North African countries seems plagued by at least three challenges. First, the police and intelligence feature an unhealthy merger of executive and information gathering tasks, not dissimilar to the former Yugoslavia, for example. This must be separated if the police is to have the confidence of citizens. Second, events in both Tunisia and Egypt have clearly shown that meaningful civilian control over the military is a fiction. While this may have been fortunate in both cases, it offers little guarantee for a sustainable democratic future in which security forces are accountable. Third, confidence must be restored that the justice system generates similar

outcomes for similar cases and functions on the basis of internationally established principles and rights. Finally, efforts to support security and justice must go hand in hand to achieve a successful transition.

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The Centre for International Governance Innovation is an independent, non-partisan think tank on international governance. Led by experienced practitioners and distinguished academics, CIGI supports research, forms networks, advances policy debate and generates ideas for multilateral governance improvements. Conducting an active agenda of research, events and publications, CIGI's interdisciplinary work includes collaboration with policy, business and academic communities around the world.

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Le CIGI a été fondé en 2001 par Jim Balsillie, co-chef de la direction de RIM (Research In Motion). Il collabore avec de nombreux partenaires stratégiques et exprime sa reconnaissance du soutien reçu de ceux-ci, notamment de l'appui reçu du gouvernement du Canada et de celui du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

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# CIGI SSR RESOURCES

## THE FUTURE OF SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

*The Future of Security Sector Reform*
Edited by Mark Sedra, Waterloo: CIGI (2010).

In November 2010, CIGI released its first ebook, *The Future of Security Sector Reform.* Written by leading international practitioners in the field, it offers valuable insight into what has worked, what has not and lessons that can be drawn in development, security and state building for the future. The ebook is available on the CIGI website as a free PDF download and can also be purchased in ebook format.
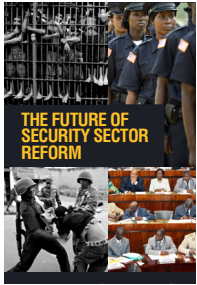
## REPORTS

*Security Sector Reform and the Domestic-International Security Nexus: The Role of Public Safety Canada*
Mark Sedra and Geoff Burt, Special Report (May 2011).

*At the Margins of SSR: Gender and Informal Justice*
Geoff Burt, Conference Report (April 2011).

*The Future of Security Sector Reform*
Mark Sedra, e-Conference Report (2009).

*The Way Forward in Afghanistan: A Report of the National Town Hall on Afghanistan.*
Mark Sedra, Anne-Marie Sánchez and Andrew Schrumm (2009).

## PAPER SERIES

**SSR Issue Papers**

**No. 1** "Security Sector Reform in Haiti One Year After the Earthquake," Isabelle Fortin (March 2011).

**No. 2** "Sudan's Aspirational Army — A History of the Joint Integrated Units," Aly Verjee (May 2011).

**No. 3** "Military Justice and Impunity in Mexico's Drug War," Kristin Bricker (August 2011).

**Security Sector Reform Monitor**

This series tracks developments and trends in the ongoing SSR processes of five countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, Southern Sudan and Timor-Leste. The *SSR Monitors* cover a wide range of actors, topics and themes, from reforms in the rule of law institutions and armed forces to demilitarization activities and the role of non-statutory security and justice actors. The series is available at: www.cigionline.org/publications/paper-series/ssrmonitor.

**The Afghanistan Papers**

The papers in this series seek to challenge existing ideas, contribute to ongoing debates and influence international policy on issues related to Afghanistan's transition. The series is available at: www.cigionline.org/publications/paper-series/234.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

The SSR Resource Centre is a website that serves as a hub and meeting place for SSR practitioners, analysts, policy makers and interested observers from across the world. It features a blog, frequently updated events and jobs sections, country profiles, special reports and our SSR publications. In 2011, the SSR Resource Centre will launch an open-source, searchable experts directory and a collaborative SSR Research Community. The site can be found at: www.ssrresourcecentre.org.

Security Sector Governance project page can be found at: www.cigionline.org/project/security-sector-governance.