

## THE CHANGING DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT: SECURITY MATTERS!

JOHANNA  
MENDELSON-FORMAN

The last decade ushered in a new relationship between security and development. While the two have always been somewhat intertwined, practitioners of both disciplines have only recently recognised the symbiotic nature of their roles. Without security the development process will falter. An unstable environment lacking a reformed security sector will prevent the creation of opportunities for investment, socio-economic growth and reconstruction. Most important, any attempt to alleviate poverty – the ultimate goal of development – is impossible if citizens cannot work or enter the market due to ongoing insecurities.

A new truth has emerged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century regarding development: conflict prevention is the term now used to address what was once thought of as traditional development. Structural conflict prevention or activities that include improving governance, expanding economic growth and reforming the judicial and security sector at both the national and community level have become standard components of the development community's toolkit. These types of interventions differ from the more traditional development efforts which focused solely on improving economic indicators without much consideration of the political development factors which must go hand in hand with any type of assistance. Especially nuanced in structural prevention is the role that development practitioners are playing in efforts to reform

the security sector of developing states. Such activities reflect the change in attitude about the security-development nexus (Carnegie 1997).

The linkage from development to conflict prevention arises from events leading to the end of the Cold War when internal conflicts or civil wars resulted in the undermining of decades of development progress. From the destruction of key infrastructure to the failure of states to provide for basic security, economists and development practitioners saw the ruin of a half-century of progress. These conflicts of the post-Cold War period also forced development practitioners to realise that development was a political act despite previous efforts to portray development as an apolitical and purely economic function (Uvin 2002).

### What is Development?

The concept of development is complex, centring on alleviating poverty by working to create an economic system that will facilitate a country's ability to be self-sustaining. Development has also been linked to the concept of freedom, since development is impossible when political, civil and economic rights are imperilled (Sen 1999). In order to have a functioning economy there must be a legal system and a banking system that allows those who want to invest in a country. A legal system is also essential for the enforcement of contracts and remedies for their breach. Development is also about preventing violent conflicts. Any state that seeks to advance economically will also need a system that provides for the resolution of conflicts in a non-violent way. Local courts as well as traditional legal remedies often exist side by side as means of problem solving in developing states.

Successful development programmes should seek to create not only economic growth, but also mechanisms for good governance by encouraging citizen participation and supporting the freedoms



that are needed to allow every individual the ability to pursue economic, political and social wellbeing. Good governance also means that a state will support the creation of transparent processes for overseeing economic and political activities. This includes transparency in the security sector as a key component of any development effort (Mendelson Forman 2002).

Human security, a concept first developed in the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report* in 1994, has evolved as a more holistic standard for measuring development. The World Bank also revised its viewpoint when it surveyed the poor in all regions of the developing world. Much to the surprise of the researchers, the poor did not want goods and services first; they wanted freedom from fear or security first. It also is probably the clearest recognition of how the development community has come reluctantly to include in security not only the defence of borders or internal order, but rather an all-encompassing set of rights that citizens must have to be 'secure' in their homes (Narayan et al. 2000).<sup>1</sup> A recent Commission on Human Security which issued a lengthy 2003 report about this subject concluded that people as well states needed security, thus expanding the concept of the state-centric security notions to the needs of non-state actors.

### **'Developmentalisation' of Security**

The conflicts of the last decade have also brought changes to the role of military and civilian aid workers engaged in what is now called 'nation-building' or post-conflict reconstruction. The military has assumed a greater post-conflict development role, due partly to the precarious nature of the security environments after fighting stops. The military has transformed itself into an institution that not only provides humanitarian services in the field. In many cases it has replaced the non-governmental agency (NGO) and civilian aid givers as the

sole external caregiver in the early post-war timeframe. Iraq is certainly the clearest manifestation of this phenomenon. This new role for the armed forces has been described as the 'developmentalisation' of security. This term characterises the growing role for armies to run the gamut of internal security roles, from policing and running justice ministries to running elections and building institutions of local government.

Unlike the development community that traditionally would have played this post-war role, military organisations are challenged by being asked to perform jobs that exceed the core capacities of armed institutions. When the security environment remains precarious after war or internal conflict, soldiers are being asked to perform development tasks. The debates about how this new development mission affects armed forces readiness are raging in the defence ministries of developed states, as there are no short-term solutions or exit strategies from this new role. What has also evolved from the two most recent post-conflict scenarios in Afghanistan and Iraq is that the military is often far ahead of its civilian counterparts in development agencies when it comes to understanding the situation on the ground. The exclusion of civilian development agencies in unstable post-war zones is underscored by their absence from the planning phases of these post-conflict missions. Development agencies are still incapable of directly managing the transformation of the security sector for lack of experience or armed protection. What this reflects is that despite the security-development nexus, the reality on the ground is that the development culture has been unable to adapt to the new reality of failed states.

This is the irony of the situation we face in a world where so many states continue to spiral downward to economic and political chaos, with the concomitant violence that ultimately affects the civilians who are the victims. Yet it will be left to the armed forces

of developed states, or to UN peace operations to be the first responders. Whether these military institutions can actually lay the foundation for a more sustainable development mission has yet to be determined. One point is clear, however: if development assistance agencies remain outside the planning circle, or are unable or unwilling to take on tasks like police reform, demobilisation of armed forces or conflict prevention at the community level, their work will continue to be delegated to military organisations.

Relief and development are no longer considered opposite ends of a continuum, despite the neatness of this concept. Humanitarian assistance and development tasks are concurrent and require a broader mix of skill sets than had ever been conceived in the earlier days of natural disasters (UNDPA 2000). Man-made emergencies, civil wars and other conflicts all require an agreed framework that can sequence assistance to meet the emergency needs of individual victims and address the immediate structural needs for institutional development. An agreed framework for post-conflict reconstruction could go a long way to empower bilateral donor states, civilian and military institutions and multilateral organisations like the United Nations to operate in a more coherent fashion (AUSA 2000).

Finally, an agreed framework that would address both security and development needs would also be a way to engage those who must remain after the international assistance ends to forge ahead with the hardest jobs of all: rebuilding countries torn apart by war and addressing earlier failures of development to recognise political and social divisions that were at the heart of these state breakdowns. Currently between 50% and 70% of all reconstruction projects fail within the first five years – partly for lack of vision, but also because the commitment to peace, and thus security reform, requires time and patience. These last two characteristics are in short supply

in the bilateral and multilateral donor community.

## Conclusion

Crisis is part of the development process. Security is an essential component of any post-conflict development programme. Humanitarian aid is a means of supporting individuals whose lives are affected by conflict, but it is not the means by which states recover or develop capable institutions to support national life. Integrating humanitarian programmes with programmes focusing on stable and sustainable development is the best approach to recovery and reconstruction. In addition to integration of programmes is the absolute need to join the skills of military organisations charged with protecting civilians with the know-how of development practitioners who can bring years of experience to the post-war environment. Leadership within the international community is needed to support programmes that achieve sound economic governance, which addresses the roots of poverty on the one hand and the immediate needs of war-torn societies on the other. The military alone is incapable of fulfilling this mission. The challenge for governments concerned with development is to find a means of enabling both security and development to occur, using the unique capacities of both civilian and military communities in working together. As the events in Iraq so dramatically show, the United States cannot go it alone in a world where the short-run military achievements must be made to coincide with the medium- to longer-term goals of a peaceful and secure world order in which humanity can flourish. A new civilian-military arrangement is waiting to happen, but will be achieved only if each community reaches out to ensure that the all organisation's comparative advantages are maximised in dealing with the problems of reconstruction. The urgency this type of arrangement cannot be overestimated.

**JOHANNA MENDELSON-FORMAN** is senior programme officer for Peace, Security, and Human Rights at the United Nations Foundation. She holds a faculty appointment at The American University's School of International Service in Washington, DC, and at Georgetown University's Centre for National Security Studies. She is also a founder of the Conflict Prevention Network, a coalition of donor nations working together to coordinate and support the reconstruction of war-torn societies.

### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> This report (Narayan et al. 2000) concluded that security was the first concern of the poor in all regions of the world, overtaking such issues as jobs, or shelter or even food!

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