Rethinking National Security Strategies in Africa

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The delivery of security to state and citizens will continue to be the daunting task facing nation states in Africa. Many African countries are becoming increasingly unable to deliver security to their citizens and in some instances; states themselves have become sources of insecurity. This is attributed less to the evolving security threats exacerbated by megatrends but more to the governance deficit manifested in weak social contract and strategic leadership that are short supply in many African countries. Despite a well-articulated security and defense policy of the African Union with a call for its member states to do the same, there is a dearth of national security strategies in most African states. This is largely attributed not only to the lack of effective implementation mechanisms of such policy but importantly to the absence of tools to help member states to craft and implement their national security strategies. There is a convincing wealth of evidence that shows a well-designed and inclusive process of developing national security strategies enables decision-makers to better confront the security threats and improve effective delivery of security to all citizens and state. Such a process provides an invaluable opportunity as well for forging a new social contract between state and its people. This article is an attempt to contribute to rethinking of how security could be perceived, planned, and delivered to the citizens in Africa.

Keywords: Africa, Security, Policy, Strategy, Human Security, State Security, Security Threats

Introduction

Africa remains a continent of promise and enduring challenges. Many African countries are becoming increasingly unable to provide security to their citizens and in some instances; states themselves have become sources of insecurity. The security landscape in Africa is rapidly changing with security threats that are becoming increasingly multifaceted, dynamic, intertwined and complex. The occurrence, severity, and duration of these security threats are exacerbated by the effects of global megatrends acutely manifested in Africa. Besides the changing security threats, the concept of security is dissociating from state and regime-centric and evolving towards human security. Despite these dynamics and changes in security landscape, many African countries continue to use traditional approaches to address these security threats. For Africa and its security leaders to effectively deliver sustainable security to their citizens, there is a need to move away from the "business-as-usual" approach to more proactive and strategic approaches.

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In delivering security in sustainable way to the citizens, the conventional intervention toolkits adopted by many African countries are ill fit to address the contemporary security threats facing Africa. Thus, there is a need for new rethinking in the way security is perceived, planned, managed, and delivered to the citizens in the contemporary African security environment. This article attempts to provide the rationale for the new approach that frames security in more inclusive terms and places citizens at the center during the process of formulating national security strategy. This article articulates this new rethinking by reviewing the changing security threats and opportunities, the evolving concepts of security and strategy, the status of current security strategies and the new approach for formulating national security strategy in Africa.

The Changing Security Landscape in Africa

The trends, nature and dynamics of security threats have changed considerably and become more complex in Africa. Despite the context specificity of security landscape, there are common features in the security trajectory in Africa. The genesis of insecurity in Africa could be traced to the pre-colonial era that was characterized by acrimonious inter- and intra- community conflicts during the process of their migration that ended with peaceful settlements in their current communal territories. This relative tranquility was disrupted by the exploitative incursion of the colonial European countries that imperiled the African lives and livelihoods with far reaching and unprecedented insecurity that continues to haunt the continent. This colonization of African states and peoples made the interstate conflicts as the main source of insecurity. The interstate conflicts caused by colonialism were confronted by the uprising of liberation and resistance movements that made intra conflicts the dominant feature of insecurity through insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare that endangered rural livelihoods. The post-independent Africa has been characterized by a decline of interstate conflict, an increase in intra conflicts, as well as civil wars with states becoming increasingly the source of insecurity of its citizens (Palik, AasRustad, & Methi, 2020).

While the colonial wars almost vanished in the early 1970s with interstate conflicts becoming a rare event, the intrastate conflicts and civil wars have been increasing since the end of the 1950s, particularly during the last 15 years. In addition, the non-state conflicts are decreasing but intrastate conflicts remain the major source of insecurity with Africa having the largest number of rising one-sided violence in relation to other regions (Palik et al., 2020). Besides the rising violent conflicts, the non-violent and violent riots in Africa have drastically increased by twelvefold since 2001 that is largely attributed to substantial increase in awareness, access to internet and social media (Cilliers, 2018).

In addition, the continent is infested with new forms of complex, multifaceted transnational organized crime included but not limited to cyber, maritime, terrorism, violent extremism, pandemics, human and arms trafficking, and other crimes related to trade that have been committed by a web of national, regional, and international criminal actors and networks (Enhancing Africa's Response to Transnational Organized Crime [ENACT], 2019). According to Organized Crime Index (ENACT, 2019), the continent has about half (4.97 scores) of the global aggregate of 10 scores of the level of transnational organized crimes. East Africa and West Africa have scores above the average global aggregate score and Southern Africa have the lowest score in relation to other regions (ENACT, 2019). In terms of response to this transnational organized crime, Africa as a continent scored less than half (3.86 scores) of the global resilience aggregate score (10 scores) with Southern Africa, West Africa and North Africa regions having a better resilience scores than East Africa and Central Africa regions (ENACT, 2019).

The occurrence, duration and intensity of these security threats facing Africa are exacerbated and compounded by imminent changes in a number of megatrends such as demographic and social change, the rising middle class, enabling technology, climate change and resource stress and urbanization. With rapid changes in these megatrends, Africa, in the foreseeable future, will be a different place, perhaps radically, with diverse implications for security. The rapid growing population in Africa is a double-edged-sword. On the one hand, it provides an enormous working age labor force that can become an engine of economic growth; but on the other hand, it will pose security threats if this growing population of youth is unemployed. The anticipated fastest growing middle class in Africa will raise expectations among citizens who will increasingly demand improved representative and accountable governance, but it will also cause rising income inequality that could precipitate social unrest.

The rapid growth in use of mobile devices, access to Internet and social media in Africa will undoubtedly improve access to public information, increase demand for transparency and enable security sector in delivering better security to the citizens. However, this enabling technology will also pose security threats in increasing criminality, particularly in cyber space and transnational organized crime. The rapid climate change in terms of increasing greenhouse gas emission levels will cause rising sea levels, flooding and droughts that will result in increased human insecurity in terms of displacement, food insecurity and severe water deficit (KPMG, 2014). The projected rapid urbanization in Africa will provide opportunities for social and economic development and more sustainable living in Africa, but it will also pose security threats in terms of increase urban poverty including increased populations living in informal settlements and city slums (KPMG, 2014).

These trends are inevitable, but their outcome will depend on the policy response. African governments have no choice but to proactively plan for and respond to these trends so as to mitigate anticipated risks and harness potential opportunities. These megatrends create new challenges and opportunities for governments to review the current policy and regulatory tools available to them and to enable them to respond better to these complex security threats. Besides the call for new security policies and strategies, these new security threats and megatrends also call for effective coordination and collaboration across multiple government agencies and nation states, flexible, iterative and adaptive response mechanisms, leveraging external partnership, and development of foresight capabilities.

Besides these security threats and megatrends, the real and the underlying security threat is the growing governance deficit in Africa with states becoming increasingly a source of insecurity. There is cumulative empirical evidence that shows democracy as the best path to security; as strong democracies are associated with low interstate and intrastate conflicts and much lower human insecurity (Piccone, 2017). This governance deficit in Africa is reflected in the significant decline of the number of democracies and surge in the number of autocracies and intermediate regimes during the last decade (Siegle, 2019).

Since the mid-2000s, the substantial democratic progress witnessed since the 1980s in sub-Saharan Africa has stagnated or regressed. The African public opinion shows that the supply of democracy that has been increasing since the beginning of the 20th century has started declining since 2011/2013 (Mattes, 2019). However, this trend of a decline in the quality of democracy is not unique to Africa but it is a worldwide phenomenon (Abramowitz, 2018). Despite the decline in supply of democracy, the demand for democracy in Africa has on average been increasing and outweighs the supply deficit of democracy (Mattes, 2019).

This changing security landscape in Africa has important implications for how such security threats are to

be perceived, assessed, and addressed. The traditional security threats that are related to the existential of state and territorial integrity that necessitated state security to become the core priority are no longer the main source of insecurity in Africa. This makes traditional security policies that focus on state security inapt to address the contemporary and future security threats that are becoming increasing internal, multifaceted, intertwined, transnational and evolving with rapid changes in megatrends.

The Evolution of Concept of Security: Human Security as National Security

Like any other concept, security is elusive as its conception is shaped and changed by time and rapidly changing security landscape. Generally, "security" is perceived as dearth of threats that imperil the survival of certain referent object (Schafer, 2013). The evolution of the concept of security has largely been shaped by the understanding of the referent object; as there is a lack of consensus and common understanding (Bayeh, 2014). This evolution is also related with the process of state formation in Africa with the referent object becoming the focus in confronting threats that endanger its survival. During the pre-colonial era, the referent object of security was determined by the early group and community formation that initially started with the survival of social individual which then progressed to family and community. The community became largely the main referent object of security during the pre-colonial era. With the arrival of the European colonists to Africa, an alien western modern state was transplanted with the extractive institutions to siphon the Africa resources including humans. During this colonial period, the state became the referent object of security and it became the source of insecurity of the African communities with traditional institutions co-opted to become an integral part of these extractive institutions. The Cold War also accentuated the state-centric and territorial perception of security due to ideological and power competition between the East and West with developing countries, particularly Africa, became battlefields.

In confronting the colonial domination of Africa, various resistance and liberation movements emerged with slogans of liberating Africans from the yoke of colonialism. In the process of liberation struggle, these liberation movements became the referent object of security and relied on communities as means of their survival. In the process of waging insurgency warfare, many liberation movements became increasingly a source of insecurity of the community under their control. During this period of liberation movements, the survival of communities and citizens was endangered by both insurgency warfare and counterinsurgency warfare. With independence of many African countries, the post-independence Africa ruling elites took the state as the core referent object and many failed to forge a resilient social contract and that resulted in the surge of civil wars (Kuol, 2020). Some scholars describe the failure of the liberation movements to govern well after assuming power as "the curse of liberation" (Clapham, 2012, p. 42) and some call for the second liberation of liberating Africans from the liberators (Herbst & Mills, 2012).

It can be argued that the genesis of the state-centric conception of security in Africa can be traced to the colonial period and then accentuated and becoming increasingly regime-centric during the post-independence. The main premise of state-centric security is to ensure security of states rather than that of people by confronting state existential threat and defending state territorial integrity and its political sovereignty (Knudsen, 2012). This understanding of security calls for the building and strengthening the military and economic power to protect state sovereignty (Bayeh, 2014). Unlike state-centric security, the regime-centric security is to ensure the security of the incumbent ruling elites and their government rather than that of state or citizens by using the military and economic power to protect them from internal and external existential and survival threat. The

implication of such understanding of security as state-centric or regime-centric is that security policies and strategies have been formulated to justify the use of military and economic power to meet the security interests of nation states or regimes instead of achieving the security interests of citizens (Bayeh, 2014). Other implication of such understanding of security is that it overlooks the rising dominance of intrastate security threats with states and regimes have increasingly become the source of insecurity of citizens (Schafer, 2013).

This traditional conception of security has become irrelevant, as the interstate security threats including military threats are no longer the dominant threats to security, as they have been increasingly supplanted by intrastate security threats. As a result of the end of the Cold War that was accompanied by surge in intrastate, non-military and transnational security threats (Bayeh, 2014), the state-centric security started giving way to people-centric security. This resulted in the emergence and presentation of the people-centered approach of human security in 1994 with its definition as "freedom from want and fear" with seven of its essential dimensions: economic, food, health, environment, personal, community and political (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 1994). This definition was adopted in 2012 by the United Nations General Assembly (UN, 2012).

In recognition of growing intrastate security threats and in order to achieve common security of its member states and citizens, the African Union (AU, 2004) adapted this definition of human security and provides a multi-dimensional definition of security that: "embodies both the traditional, state-centric, notion of the survival of the state and the non-military notion, which is informed by the new international environment and the high incidence of intra-state conflict" (p. 3).

This definition aims at ensuring the common security of Africa at national, regional, and continental levels guided by the principle that "security of each African country is inseparably linked to that of other African countries and the African continent as a whole" (AU, 2004, p. 3). The AU (2013) expounded on this multidimensional definition of security by qualifying the protection of its member states from external aggression by military means, as well as the non-military notion of human security based on political, economic, social, and environmental imperatives in addition to human rights.

Some scholars continue to define human security as one of the three basic dimensions of security: state, societal and human (Knudsen, 2102) with implicit understanding that human security is not by itself a national security. The UN definition of the human security with its seven core dimensions underscores that national security of states is synonymous with human security, as achievement of human security is a prerequisite for achieving national security of states. Based on a thorough analysis of the growing subnational, intrastate, and transnational security threats that are exacerbated by megatrends in the globalized world, Reveron and Mahoney-Norris (2018) challenged the traditional and state-centric perception of security and argue instead that human security is national security today for all countries including great powers.

This recognition of human security as national security has important implications for the way security is perceived, planned, managed, and delivered to the citizens. This multidimensional definition of security implies that human security is people-centered, multi-sectoral, comprehensive, context-specific, and prevention-oriented (UN, 2009). These attributes emphasize the centrality of human beings in analyzing security threats, prioritization of human lives and livelihoods in responding to security threats, a call for integrated and multidimensional response to security threats and prioritization of prevention in confronting security threats (Bayeh, 2014). One important implication of these characteristics of human security is that

citizens rather than state are at the center in formulating policies for delivering and sustaining security at national, regional, and global levels (Mwagiru, 2008). Another implication of these attributes of human security is that policies for delivering security should not only be people-centered but they should also be comprehensive, holistic, and integrated to advance a full-fledge security (Bayeh, 2014).

State of Art: Status of Security Strategies in Africa

One of the core functions of any nation-state is to provide its own security as well as the security and safety of its citizens. Based on its adoption of human security concept, the African Union (2004) requested its member states: "to produce through a fully consultative and participatory process, a well-defined national security strategy based on democratic principles, human security needs, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law" (p. 14).

Despite this request by the AU, most African countries do not have overarching national security strategies. Instead, they have uncoordinated sectorial security strategies that are formulated with limited involvement of citizens, induced and financed by external partners (Africa Center for Strategic Studies [ACSS], 2017). This lack of grand strategy as a reference point for decision-makers in security sector inhibits effective coordination, alignment of resources and leveraging of partnership, prioritization of security threats and shared understanding of national security vision and objectives.

Most African countries continue with traditional and state-centric and in most cases regime-centric security approach. This approach is largely guided by defense policies or defense white papers (ACSS, 2017) that continue to aim at addressing the traditional and irrelevant security threats with focus on delivering security to the nation states or regimes rather than citizens. The process of formulating these defense policies is characterized by a culture of secrecy with no engagement of citizens and its outcome, in terms of defense policy document; it is hardly scrutinized or debated by parliaments and in most cases classified and inaccessible. It is estimated that more than three-quarters of states in Sub-Saharan Africa have published neither a defense white paper nor a defense policy (Tian, Wezeman, & Yun, 2018). Also, most African countries have a high corruption risk in defense expenditure as their defense budgets do lack transparency and hardly subjected to external auditing with utter absence of independent external oversight of intelligence services policies, budgets, and administration (Feinstein, 2013).

These defense policies are becoming irrelevant as they continue to accentuate the traditional approach of addressing the contemporary complex security threats through military and economic powers. The way these defense policies are formulated and implemented without engagement of citizens, particularly their parliaments and legislatures has created increasing mistrust between the citizens and security institutions (Ibrahim Index of African Governance [IIAG], 2020). This lack of scrutiny and debate of defense policies has alienated citizens to know and appreciate national security vision and goals, how such vision and goals to be achieved and the time and resources required to realize such goals (Feinstein, 2013). It has also inhibited strategic and collective approach of identifying and prioritizing security threats and lack of division of labor that may result in the misalignment of resources with security sector having the lion share of the national budget and at the expense of other sectors of the economy such as education and health.

With lack of grand national security strategies and the dominance of state-centric security approach, many states in Africa are becoming increasingly incapable of ensuring the security and safety of their citizens.

Despite the inordinate resources that African states allocate to the security sector, most countries fail to deliver security to their citizens. This can be shown in the link between military spending as proxy for the military efforts of states to counter military threats and personal safety of citizens (see Figure 1). While military spending has been increasing on average in Africa, the proxy indicators for national security or national defense has been declining as well as proxy indicators for personal safety since 2008 till 2014 when military spending started declining with national security and personal safety (see Figure 1).

However, based on data series, 2008-2017, there is a negative correlation between military spending and national security (-0.64) and personal safety (-0.93). This inverse link between military spending is more prominent and exceptionally high with personal safety than with national defense. These findings are consistent with other empirical evidence that shows security sector spending is unresponsive to security threats with more defense investment seems to correlate as in the case of South Sudan with insecurity with an additional 1 percent spent on security translates to at least 60 deaths (Mayai, 2020).

These findings underscore that the military spending that is guided by state-centered security strategies are not only ineffective in defending state itself, but they are paradoxically contributing to insecurity of citizens. In other words, the security strategies adopted by many nation states in Africa are ineffective and irrelevant to addressing the human security and contemporary security threats that are becoming increasingly non-military. The apparent implication is that there is a need for African countries to review their current security policies and to tailor them to address the contemporary security threats so as to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of security to all citizens.
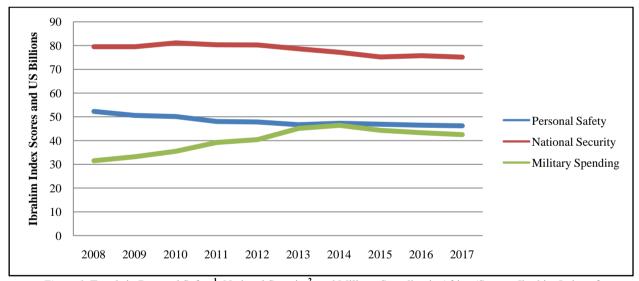

Figure 1. Trends in Personal Safety[1], National Security[2] and Military Spending in Africa (Source: Ibrahim Index of Governance in Africa (IIGA) and SPIRI Military Spending).

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[1] The Personal Safety sub-category includes six indicators measuring Domestic Political Persecution, Social Unrest, Safety of the Person, Reliability of Police Services, Violent Crime and Human Trafficking (IIAG).
[2] The National Security or National Defense sub-category includes five indicators measuring generally the security and defense of a nation state, such as Cross Border Tensions, Government Involvement in Armed Conflict, Domestic Armed Conflict, Political Refugees and Internally Displaced People (IIAG).

Rethinking Security Strategies in Africa: New Approach

The Demand for National Security Strategies

This growing insecurity, the emergence of new security threats and a fundamental change in understandings of the meaning of security have necessitated "why" African governments need to rethink their approach to national security strategy and to craft new national security strategies and review the existing ones. Unlike approaches to development, which have evolved from elite-centric and top down to people-centric and participatory, the provision of security remains a top-down process within the domain of state without involvement of citizens. A change in the way security is perceived, planned, and delivered to citizens by states in Africa is necessary to foster good governance and civilian democratic control of the security sector. National Security Strategy Development (NSSD) is about a theory of change and success and a way to deliver better the security to state and its citizens and offers an invaluable opportunity for forging a new social contract between state and its people (UN, 2012).

It has been shown that a well-designed and inclusive process for formulating national security strategy produces good strategy and enables decision-makers to plan better for addressing national security threats as well as effecting long-term change for delivering security to state and its citizens (Cancian, 2017). In particular, the United Nations (UN, 2012) provides some of the following rationales for crafting and implementing national security strategy:

- To advance the delivery of security to people and state through informed dialogue,
- To increase trust in the state and its institutions through active participation of all stakeholders,
- To provide national guidance for formation of effective and accountable security institutions,
- To ensure cost-effective security resource management within national priorities and transparent national budgeting processes,
- To harness, leverage, align and harmonize external partnership and aid,
- To create conducive investment environment and ensure sustainable and shared growth within the security-development-governance nexus,
- To enhance confidence building with the neighboring countries and region.

In recognition of the continuing gap between existing approaches to Security Sector Reform (SSR) and deficits in the delivery and governance of security in many of its member states, the African Union has not only acknowledged the need for the development of national security strategies as a prerequisite for the SSR but has also requested its member states to produce such strategies through a fully consultative and participatory process (AU, 2013).

Although the AU has provided general guidelines for its member states to develop their national security strategies, there are limited tools available to help them in crafting national security strategies. As many African countries have started the process of developing and reviewing their national security strategies, there is a need for a common understanding of the concept of strategy and approaches and processes for drafting national security strategies. Producing a strategy in a consultative and participatory manner in a sector that is overly secretive may be challenging, particularly in terms of consultation and engagement of citizens.

The genesis of the concept of strategy is rooted in the military doctrine and warfare. The ancient Greek termed strategy as "*strategos*" that means "army leader" and its verb refers to how to defeat the enemies through the effective use of resources (Bracker, 1980). This resource-centric approach of strategy has dominated the

concept of strategic management both in military and business as well as the formulation of public policies. This is well reflected in the popular Lykke Strategy Model that defines military strategy as "ends (objectives toward which one strives) plus ways (courses of action) plus means (instruments by which some end can be achieved)" (Meiser, 2017, p. 83). This military-centric definition of strategy has come under increasing criticism as it inhibits critical, strategic, creative, new, and adaptive thinking, as well as reducing strategy to a perfunctory exercise of resource allocation (Meiser, 2017). This has renewed calls to rethink and redefine "strategy" as a "theory of success" or "theory of victory" and to shift the conversation from resources and means-based planning to a discussion of what actions will lead to success and how (Meiser, 2017). This resource-centric approach of strategy and its military-centric definition accentuate the traditional and state-centric approach of security and the supremacy of military power to defend nation states and address security threats.

The rapid rising of transnational organized crime, pandemics and intrastate conflicts have triggered a growing global interest of the nation states to revisit their current security strategies with aim of producing new and adaptive strategies (Layton, 2012); particularly in Africa after the socialization of the concept of national security strategy development[3]. The spread of COVID-19 has not only exposed serious cracks in public policies and failure of national security establishments but has shown that human security is less at risk of the military threats than by a pandemic that can hardly be fought by conventional weaponry.

In the case of Africa, there have been reactive responses to the pandemic, as most countries do not have coherent proactive and forward-looking national security strategies. The absence of such strategies has resulted in the inability of many African countries to strike strategic balance not only between economic and health priorities but also in the security-development-governance nexus (Kuol, 2020). Similar reactive responses and failure of governments to act on the dangers of pandemic have been observed in the developed countries (Ungerer, 2020). The COVID-19 has renewed call for a proactive people-centered national security strategy in Africa (Kuol, 2020) and a demand in developed countries for a new forward-looking national security strategy for the 21st century (Ungerer, 2020).

National Security Strategy: Conceptual Approaches and Processes

Despite the logical call for the development of national security strategy, there is a lack of clarity between the National Security Policy (NSP) and National Security Strategy (NSS). The UN provides clear definitions and distinction between the two concepts (UN, 2012). The NSP is defined as

> a formal description of a country's understanding of its national values, interests, goals, strategic environment and threats in view of protecting or promoting national security for the State and its people, which is anchored in a vision of security determined through a comprehensive process of dialogue with all national stakeholders (and regional and international ones if deemed appropriate by the State concerned). (UN, 2012, p. viii)

While the NSS is defined as "a formal description of the methods to be used by the State and its people to realize the vision and goals outlined in a national security policy" (UN, 2012, p. ix). The two concepts are used interchangeably, and the general practice is that the NSS is often used when the NSP and NSS are combined into one document.

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[3] The Africa Center for Strategic Studies initiated in 2017 special academic program on "National Security Strategy Development in Africa" with a series of academic programs that covered countries of Western Africa (2018), Southern and Central Africa (2019), and North and Eastern Africa (2019).

These definitions provide general parameters and elements of strategies but not the ways of how such strategies to be produced. The production of such strategies requires conceptual approach that reflects the context specificity of the nation states and their theory of change of how security could be delivered better to the states and their peoples. Layton (2012) identified two set of conceptual approaches to the drafting of national security strategies; namely an ends-centric conceptual approach and means-centric conceptual approaches. While an ends-centric conceptual approach provides a grand strategy with clearly defined security objectives that guide the effective use of resources, the means-centric conceptual approaches await external events to develop either opportunistic management policies or risk management policies that are guided by resources rather than security objectives.

When comparing these conceptual approaches, Layton (2012) found the ends-centric conceptual approach in terms of grand strategy as superior to the means-centric approaches; particularly in the effective and efficient mobilization, realignment, allocation, and management of resources. Also, the grand strategy is considered as a process that is iterative and adaptive as articulated by Kagan (2008):

> [A] grand strategy is ... not a plan, but a process of ... developing clear objectives, understanding available resources ... and then putting resources against tasks in an iterative fashion, adjusting objectives, approaches, and resource allocation as appropriate to the changing situation. ... The development and execution of grand strategy is ... a process of continuous adaptation. (p. 63)

The United Nations (UN, 2012) suggested seven phases for NSSD process: initiation, planning/inception, drafting/feedback, approval, dissemination, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Based on some Africa case studies, and review of the UN suggested phases by some African security experts, the NSSD process may be organized into six phases: (i) planning and initiation, (ii) pre-drafting: actions and preparation, (iii) drafting and consultation process, (iv) adoption and approval, (v) dissemination and communication, and (vi) implementation including monitoring and evaluation (ACSS, 2020). The sequence of these phases is important and context specific, but it is not linear, as the actual NSSD process is complex, dynamically interconnected, multi-dimensional, iterative, interactive, and often imprecise process (Heffington Oler, & Tretler, 2019). These six phases vary from one country to another, with each phase introducing a set of the following tools, concepts and actions that are important in the process of NSSD (ACSS, 2020):

Phase 1: Initiation and planning. In this phase, the national institution to lead the process is designated and the drafting committee is constituted with clear terms of reference and methodology to be followed. Also, a plan of action for the entire process is developed with estimates of resources required for the process, clear roles, steps and timeline for the process and public outreach and education.

Phase 2: Pre-drafting: Assessments, reviews and analysis. This phase is to prepare the drafting committee to commence its work by taking stock of the current state security sector and orientation of what is expected in the process. Institutional audit of security sector is to be conducted to identify gaps in terms of policies, legislations, regulations, division of labor, decision-making and coordination mechanisms, oversight and monitoring systems and map relevant stakeholders. Besides institutional audit, the drafting committee is to gather the necessary data by commissioning background papers, conducting consultations and interviews and conduct analysis of such data to inform the drafting process. The drafting committee may reorganize itself into specialized working groups.

Phase 3: Drafting. This phase is to initiate the process of drafting the key elements of National Security Strategy. These elements include articulation of national security vision, definition of national values and national security interests to guide the drafting process, a thorough and critical analysis of national security threats and opportunities, articulation of the core national security goals and objectives, division of labor and mechanisms for implementation. The drafting committee is to produce a zero-draft document that is both values-driven and a practical basis for national consultation of how security could best be managed and delivered to the citizens.

Phase 4: Consultation and review. This phase is to subject zero draft (or parts thereof) document for review and wide national consultations by holding public forums, national dialogues, specialist workshops with the aim of gathering feedback and validating the content of the zero-draft document. These consultations are to be with strategic, institutional, and societal actors to inform the drafting process. The drafting committee is to align final draft with constructive feedback obtained from the consultations.

Phase 5: Adoption and approval. This phase is to ensure the approval of the national security strategy document from the executive authority or parliament. The drafting committee is to submit final draft to initiating authority (usually executive) for approval and adoption. If parliamentary approval is not a formal requirement, the drafting committee may recommend to initiating authority to submit final draft to voluntary parliamentary debate or vote of approval.

Phase 6: Dissemination and communication. This phase is to develop and implement dissemination and communication plan for engaging public and key stakeholders on key elements of new national security strategy. This plan is to ensure every government institution that needs to align their work with the national security strategy has access to the strategy and is aware of their role in implementing it. The plan will as well ensure sharing the national security strategy document publicly through public service announcements and by working with media outlets. Raise awareness among security sector actors and the public about the values at the center of the new strategy and the expectations for behavior they set

Phase 7: Implementation, monitoring and review. This phase is to establish implementation mechanisms to put the national security strategy into practice and as a living document that is iterative and adaptive. This Phase provides guidelines for all security institutions and agencies to develop sectoral policies and strategies so that the missions and tasks laid out in the national security strategy document are reflected in these sectoral strategies for capability development, force structures, procurement, training and personnel. The initiating authority monitors progress on implementation according to a mechanism stipulated in the strategy. The strategy may be subjected to periodic review, including insights gained from ongoing oversight and monitoring.

The NSSD case studies clearly indicate that the process of NSSD is context specific and differs from one country to another. In the case of Niger, the NSSD process was divided into five stages: preparatory, analysis and diagnosis, policy and strategy framing, institutional implementation framework and harmonization and preparation of the final draft document. These phases of the NSSD process should be guided by the core African principles for SSR developed by the AU (2013) and a set of SSR norms and principles developed by the United Nations (UN, 2012). In particular, the NSSD process to be comprehended in the context of African solidarity and partnership, regional integration, national ownership, national responsibility, and national commitment.

Furthermore, the NSSD process is to be viewed as part of the broader process of democratization and good governance including justice and gender equality and social contract. It should also recognize the importance of gender mainstreaming at every phase of NSS development and implementation, as well as informal and customary institutions in the provision of security. Besides these principles, some countries may adopt their own principles to guide the NSSD process, such as transparency, participation, interdisciplinary, inclusiveness, iterative confidence building, partnership building (UN, 2012).

Besides the inclusive, participatory, and people-centered process of drafting national security strategy, the product of such process in terms of national security document is equally important as the process itself. Although each country may have its unique process to draft its own national security strategy, there are some key elements that are common in any national security strategy. Based on some samples of national security strategy documents from African countries and others, here are some key common elements in any national security strategy (ACSS, 2020; DuMont, 2019):

• Leadership endorsement: As the development of national security strategy is usually initiated by the head of the government, the final document of national security strategy may require the endorsement of the head of government. This endorsement can be in the form of signed introductory letter which serves as the formal frontispiece of the document. Such endorsement will not only ensure the legitimacy of the document as a formal public guidance to the rest of the government; it will also provide the much-needed political commitment for its effective implementation.

• National security vision: The national security strategy document should reflect the desired future security state for the nation, and it is closely linked to cultural, political values and vision of a nation and must be realistic, credible, inspiring and future oriented (Knudsen, 2012). National security vision is not a national vision but is informed and guided by it. If such a national vision does not exist, the development of national security strategy provides an opportunity to develop one in participatory and inclusive process or to revisit the existing one. Formulating national security vision is one of the elements that may require guidance from the political leadership and a nationwide consultation.

• National values: The national security strategy document should reflect and reinforce national values as the basis for prioritizing security interests, threats, and effective implementation of the strategy. Besides these values, the document should provide core guiding principles for the strategy. These key values and principles are usually provided in the national constitution as well as commitments of member states in the covenants and agreements in regional, continental, and international organizations. The African Union provides a comprehensive list of core principles and values that are underlying the common African Defense and Security Policy (AU, 2004) and Security Sector Reform (AU, 2013).

• National security interests: The strategy should clearly articulate and prioritize core national security interests. This process is largely informed by the national security vision, and national values. Most countries only list national security interests without prioritization and valuation. The best practice is to prioritize these interests by categorizing them either into most important and secondary (Knudsen, 2012) or valuing them in scale of "vital", "important/major" and "peripheral" (Heffington et al., 2019). The prioritization of national security interests helps in proactively anticipating and preparing for security threats. Unlike the national values that are broadly static, the national security interests are changeable as may be dictated by political leadership and evolving security environment.

• National security threats and opportunities. As the national security strategy is forward-looking document to confront the current and future anticipated and unexpected security threats as well as harnessing security opportunities, the document should identify, assess, prioritize, and rank the most important threats and opportunities. This element is the first step in applying strategic logic and it involves a thorough assessment and analysis of security environment and context. This process is largely guided and informed by the priority list of security interests, national security vision and national values. This element is essential for effective division of labor among security institutions and agencies, effective allocation of resources and proactive response to each security threat. Some countries use different criteria for ranking and prioritizing security threats and opportunities such as the likely occurrence of threats and opportunities, their consequences and impact if they occur and whether they will require immediate and urgent attention and response. Given the difficulty of predicting future security threats, the government may prioritize the development of inclusive and centralized foresight capabilities that are guided by a proactive forward-looking approach.

• National security core objectives. Based on a priority list of national security threats and opportunities that provides a clear problem statement of national security, the strategy document should provide a prioritized list of national security core objectives. The framing of these national security objectives is usually informed by priority list of national security threats, prioritized national security interests, the national security *vision*, and the political agenda of the incumbent political leadership. Some countries prefer to define a limited and precise number of national security objectives. These core objectives will guide the formulation of more specific and subordinate objectives in sectoral security strategies.

• Division of labor in security sector: Based on the assessment and prioritization of security threats, the strategy document will clearly assign responsibilities and roles for security institutions and agencies in confronting each of the prioritized security threats. This division of labor is to be informed by a comprehensive assessment and audit of security institutions to identify what the roles these institutions should or might be in addressing the prioritized security threats. This institutional audit will list the existing institutions and identify gaps in terms of institutions, sectors, size of security forces (uniformed vs. non-uniformed), legislations and policies that are necessary for addressing prioritized security threats. In assigning roles and responsibilities and identifying overlaps and gaps, some countries, such as Liberia used a matrix of institutions (current and new ones if needed) and the prioritized security threats under the main security objectives. Such an exercise may help not only in the division of labor but also in assigning leading and supporting roles to various institutions in responding to specific security threats. This element may require consultation with relevant institutions and experts. Besides the division of labor, the strategy document should provide the new reorganization of national security architecture to ensure institutional harmonization, synergy, collaboration, effective horizontal and vertical coordination, and clear leadership.

• Implementation mechanism: The national security strategy document is to provide a clear mechanism for its implementation in form of a detailed matrix, monitoring and evaluation system and to make the document as a living document that is iterative and adaptive to the changing security threats. Besides the implementation matrix, the implementation mechanism will provide guidelines for formulating sectoral security strategies, guidelines for allocation and management of security resources, guidelines for leveraging partnerships and security assistance, and mechanisms for democratic control and oversights.

The Political and Institutional Prerequisites

The security sector in Africa has largely been characterized by the legacies of abuse and mistrust and culture of secrecy. In many African countries, security sector remains over-classified and susceptible to cultures of exceptionalism with the notion that national security is a no-go zone for civil authorities. This has contributed to security been perceived by citizens as a taboo subject that only security professionals are qualified to address. The fear that discussing security publicly poses a personal risk of harm is particularly corrosive to public confidence in the government and its security sector. These factors are likely to hamper public discussion and marginalize the views of those whose security is at stake in the use of public resources for security provision. Overcoming these challenges and to ensure the active participation of citizens in the NSSD process will require some political and institutional prerequisites.

On the top of these prerequisites is the *political leadership*. The entire process of NSSD is a highly political process that requires strategic political will and leadership (Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance [DCAF], 2015) to provide clear political guidance and national strategic vision. The key aspects of political leadership are explicit political will, firm political commitment, allocation of national resources, buying-in of the relevant institutions, civil society and traditional leaders, building confidence and articulating strategic vision (DCAF, 2015). While "political will" is the resolve of political leadership to act and set priorities and shape a national agenda that will yield concrete results, political commitment is about effective response to realize these national priorities and agendas (Moderan, 2015). Also, fostering political will and leadership for NSSD process may face many challenges including the culture of "closed" and "secretive" decision-making in security sector, a lack of understanding of political and financial advantages of NSSD process and fear of power shift (UN, 2012, p. 130).

Besides the role of political leadership, the success of any NSSD process rests with *national ownership*, which is about exercising one's own leadership and exerting control and command over the entire process of developing NSS. There are some instances when national stakeholders were tempted with external security assistance to relinquish their national leadership and ownership to donor programs and projects. There are good examples in Africa of countries that have been successful in ensuring national ownership in the process of developing and implementing their public policies that yielded good outcomes with support of external actors. National *ownership* is a necessary pre-requisite for a successful nationally driven process of NSSD. It is effective in guiding the process of NSSD if there is a nationally shared vision that is not imposed by external actors on national actors or not imposed by national authorities on the citizens and it is conducted through an inclusive and participatory way (DCAF, 2015). There is an abundance of national visions in Africa, but such visions are often articulated by elites without participation of citizens.

The NSSD process requires not only political will and national ownership but also change in attitudes and perceptions in a sector that has a history of the military enjoying a monopoly on the use of force and in affairs of state. The process of NSSD as a prerequisite to security sector reform is essentially a political process that is exceedingly complex, as it influences the state structure and state's monopoly on the use of force with far reaching implications for redistribution of power and resources (Moderan, 2015). The process of crafting NSS will undoubtedly contribute to shape the attitudes, perceptions, and power dynamics in the web of civil-military relations but also attitudes about the role of armed forces and security services in relation to state. The NSSD process should ideally provide strategic foundations for transforming security sector not only to adhere to

democratic governance but also to uphold the civilian supremacy, primacy of individual and community and civilian democratic control of security sector (UN, 2012). The Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) has taken a lead in adopting the Code of Conduct for the Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa that upholds the civilian supremacy and provides building blocks for democratic control of security sector (ECOWAS, 2011).

Conclusion

The sustainable delivery of security to citizens in Africa will continue to be one of the challenges facing nation states in Africa. Many African countries are becoming increasingly unable to deliver security to their citizens and in some instances states themselves have become sources of insecurity. This is less about the evolving and complex security threats facing the continent, but more about the governance deficit that is manifested in the shrinking trust of citizens in their governments. This has been exacerbated by weak and exclusive security institutions inherited from the colonial regimes which made state rather than citizens as a referent object in delivering security. The post-independence African ruling elites continued with state-centric approach and in most cases regime-centric approach that resulted in the allocation of most resources to the military and at the expense of other sectors. This has resulted in the failure of governments to deliver security and other public services that eroded trust between state and citizens.

The COVID-19 is a wake-up call as it has exposed strategic deficiencies in delivering security to citizens not only in developing countries but also in the developed countries. It provides, as well, opportunities for rethinking of how national security strategy could be crafted differently and to become "whole of society" approach in confronting the anticipated and unexpected security threats. While there is an eloquent articulation of security policy at the level of African Union, there is dearth of such policies at the level of its member states. This is largely attributed not only to the lack of effective implementation mechanisms but importantly to the absence of tools to help member states to craft and implement their national security strategies. One dominant feature in Africa is that there is abundance of well-articulated policies and strategies; however, they are hardly implemented largely because of the way such policies are crafted as a solution-driven process rather than a problem-driven process (Andrew, 2018).

Although the development of national security strategy is not a panacea for addressing all security challenges in Africa, there is abundance of evidence that shows a well-designed and inclusive process provides better opportunities for confronting security threats and better delivery of security to the citizens while managing the security sector in a more effective and more accountable way. The process of crafting a national security strategy is not only about making people as the center for delivering security but to make people as key stakeholders in planning, managing, and delivering security. This process will undoubtedly contribute to forging a new social contract that will reinforce the key concept of governments as servants of the people in delivering security and accountable to them. Forging a new social contract will require strategic leadership with a national vision. The process of NSS development is about creating a realistic vision for transforming the security sector. The key assumption is that by developing and implementing NSS, the security sector will be better managed to achieve national security objectives and realize the national security vision by managing security resources transparently, efficiently, and effectively. The process of NSSD is more important than the NSS product. This article attempts to rethink the way the national security strategy could be designed differently by providing some tools for ensuring inclusive and participatory process.

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