Short Session Report

Session Title:
Global Standards for Global Stability: Can a Common Understanding of Responsible Defence Governance Contribute to Stability and Peace in the World?

Date & Time: 2 December 2016, 9-11 am
Report prepared by: Amira El-Sayed, Project Manager, Networks, Transparency International Defence and Security

Experts:

Sarah Chayes, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment
Alberto Bin, Director, Integration, Partnership and Cooperation, NATO
Cesar Augusto Arenas González, Colonel, Colombia Ministry of National Defense

Moderated by: Katherine Dixon, Programme Director, Transparency International Defence and Security
Session coordinated by: Amira El-Sayed, Project Manager, Networks, Transparency International Defence and Security

Main issues raised in kick off remarks. What’s the focus of the session?

The director of Transparency International’s Defence and Security team kicked off the session by outlining TI’s campaign for establishing global defence governance standards.

The three panellists then responded. Colonel Arenas from the Colombian MOD outlined Colombia’s extensive efforts to improve integrity in the armed forces. The Colombian military had clearly
identified the importance of anti-corruption efforts in terms of operational effectiveness but more importantly in terms of building wider trust within Colombian society.

Dr Alberto Bin, a director within NATO’s Political Affairs and Security Policy Division set out the work that NATO has been doing to support members and partners in developing their institutional controls against corruption. NATO’s focus was firmly in the field of prevention and their thinking in recent years has largely been driven by their experiences in Afghanistan and their recognition in the ways in which corruption drives insecurity and instability.

Finally, Sarah Chayes began by describing her experiences in Kandahar and the role that the police and military had played in driving public perception and the impact that had on the government’s legitimacy. She went on to illustrate the links with international security assistance; and the assumption that military to military cooperation would inevitably lead to improvements in defence governance. She thought establishing global standards could make a real contribution by improving the way governments like the US thought about military assistance.

What initiatives have been showcased? Briefly describe the Game Changing strategies/ ideas (if applicable)

The creation of global standards has been successfully implemented in different complex sectors. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), for example, established principles of good governance for the extractive industries and led to the creation of robust internal and external monitoring mechanisms. More significantly, and however imperfect the implementation, the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights has established a set of norms, around which the vast majority of the international community has coalesced, and provides civil society groups with a clear principle against which to judge their national governments. It surprised many government and civil society representatives alike that not even basic standard exist for a sector as important as defence.

In this session, an initiative for global standards for defence has been presented and discussed with the audience. Governments should formalise what is already common sense about how defence sectors
should be governed. A small number of founding states should drive this initiative and convince other governments to join. Meanwhile, civil society can accompany governments in the implementation and monitor the standards once they’ve been adopted.

Briefly describe the highlights including the thematically interesting questions and ideas that were generated from the discussion or from the floor, and session quotes.

- Panellists advised TI not to be prescriptive about global standards. If we were going to be successful in getting this off the ground, states needed to take it forward.
- Another issue that was raised was whether NATO institutions could play a greater role in eradicating corruption in defence deals between member states.
- Sarah Chayes highlighted the opacity of US military spending internationally and suggested that any defence governance standards should incorporate this aspect.
- The Colombian colonel stressed Colombia’s potential role – having achieved a great deal domestically – in leading international efforts to tackle defence governance.
- A major theme throughout was the importance of the legitimacy of the armed forces as a major contribution factor to peace and security. It couldn’t be security first, anti-corruption second. These were intrinsically linked.

What are the key recommendations, follow-up Actions (200 words narrative form)

As above

Key Insights that could be included in the IACC Declaration

Whilst corruption is on the international agenda, defence corruption rarely gets the attention it deserves. Establishing global standards in defence could play a major role in shining a light on a normally opaque sector and so make a huge contribution to anti-corruption efforts. It’s both achievable and needed.
Rapporteur’s name and date submitted

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