

ACSS

AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

SENIOR LEADER SEMINAR

DAKAR, SENEGAL
1-12 November 1999



ACADEMIC SUMMARY

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A
Approved for Public Release
Distribution Unlimited

ENGLISH

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 3

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20000322 113

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Africa Center for Strategic Studies Senior Leader Seminar



From October 31 to November 12, 1999, 115 civilian and military officials from Africa, Europe, and the United States participated in the inaugural Senior Leader Seminar of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) in Dakar, Senegal.

In an interactive learning environment, where frank and open discussion is encouraged and guided by the principles of academic freedom and non-attribution, participants studied ways in which democratic states:

- Define the roles and missions of their militaries, and exercise democratic civilian control over them;
- Define their national interests, and develop and implement national security strategies;
- Organize and utilize their national resources to maintain national security and serve the needs of their citizens; and
- Interact with civil society, NGOs and regional organizations to define appropriate roles for security establishments.

The program concluded with an exercise in which participants from across Africa and Europe worked cooperatively in teams to address these issues in a realistic scenario.

The ACSS and its curriculum were developed with the full participation of America's African and European partners. The Center's goal is to support democratic governance and regional cooperation in Africa. The ACSS also strives to create a lasting atmosphere of familiarity, understanding, and trust among and between the participants.

Forty-three African nations, six European nations, and a total of ten regional and non-governmental organizations participated in this inaugural seminar. Consistent with ACSS goals, most nations were represented by at least one senior civilian official and one senior military official. Of the military officials, 29 were general officers. Several ministers of defense and permanent secretaries also attended the seminar. Twelve participants were women. The seminar was conducted in English and French.

This inaugural seminar was planned and implemented in partnership with the Senegalese government, which assumed responsibility for a number of key areas, including security, protocol, and the management of extracurricular activities. The U.S.-Senegalese team implemented the academic program with help from an adjunct faculty that included eight Africans and eight Americans. Several other partners in this new venture made substantial contributions. The Government of France has assigned a full-time representative on the ACSS staff and provided considerable advisory and logistical support to the seminar in Dakar. The British Government sponsored five participants in the seminar and provided ongoing curriculum support.

Senegal's Prime Minister Mamadou Lamine Loum opened the seminar. General Wesley Clark, Commander-in-Chief of U.S. European Command spoke at the closing ceremony. Other guest speakers included General Anthony Zinni, Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Central Command; General Jean-Pierre Kelche, Commander, Joint Chief of Staff (CJCS) of the French Armed Forces; General Pathe Seck, Chief of the Senegalese Gendarmerie; General Mamadou Seck, Chief of the Senegalese Armed Forces; and ADM MacGrath, Deputy Director of Strategic Affairs, Ministry of Defense of the Republic of France; and Mr. Dabi Diagne, member of the National Assembly of Senegal. Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Senegal's Minister of Defense; Mr. Terence McCulley, Charge D'Affaires, U.S. Embassy, Dakar; and Mr. Bernd McConnell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs presided over key events.

Dr. Nancy J. Walker
Director

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Mission Statement

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) supports democratic governance in Africa by offering senior African civilian and military leaders a rigorous academic and practical program in civil-military relations, national security strategy, and defense economics. To this end, the ACSS presents a substantive academic experience designed to:

- Promote, at the Center, informed and productive inquiry on the military's role in a democracy among military officers, government officials, and non-government civilian leaders;
- Assess the importance of civilian control and military professionalism in democratic processes;
- Examine the civilian-military interface in formulating and executing national security strategy;
- Explore efficient, transparent resource allocation processes that meet national security challenges;
- Foster, within participant countries, an understanding of the military's role that is shaped and shared by the people, their governments, and their militaries;
- Maintain long-term, continuing interaction with and among participants on matters relevant to the Center's mission; and,
- Support additional research, seminars, conferences, and other exchange activities on relevant topics in Africa, Europe, and the United States.

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Core Values

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING, RESEARCH AND OUTREACH . . . Fostering an open, creative and stimulating environment for learning.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY . . . Providing the climate to express and pursue ideas, opinions, and issues relevant to the Center's mission and vision, free of undue limitations, restraints, hidden agendas or coercion by the organization or external environment; accomplishing institutional learning objectives in an intellectually and academically responsible manner; critiquing ideas, not people.

NONATTRIBUTION . . . Providing faculty, guests, and participants the opportunity to express ideas and discuss issues without fear of external critique and being quoted by name.

DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT AND KNOWLEDGE . . . Sustaining an environment characterized by diversity of thought, open inquiry, intellectual honesty, and responsibility.

INTELLECTUAL RIGOR . . . Executing quality teaching, learning and research processes that meet the highest standards of academe and developing the participants' sense of intellectual duty that will continue beyond the resident seminar.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS . . . Fostering an environment in which all are treated with dignity and without discrimination; acting in a collegial manner; seeking first to understand, then to be understood.

ETHICAL CONDUCT . . . Doing what is right; placing principle first; exercising integrity in programs and practice.

TEAMWORK . . . Working together to create knowledge, to develop relevant disciplines of study, and to build the Center.

SERVICE . . . Contributing to the African, European, and American communities.

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Academic Summary

The specific purpose of the Senior Leader Seminar is to afford African policymakers an opportunity to consider and evaluate alternative approaches to the pressing challenges of “democratic defense.” The seminar explored potential solutions to the challenges of balancing the often-competing priorities of security and liberty in developing democracies.

The format of the Senior Leader Seminar emphasizes small-group discussion and practical exercises. Participants also received several presentations by subject matter experts. However, most of the participants’ time at the seminar was spent in smaller discussion groups of about 15 members. Each of the discussion groups was structured for maximum diversity of background and region and was led by two facilitators: an African and a US faculty member.

The two-week curriculum was structured around the three core subjects of civil-military relations, national security strategy formulation, and defense economics in democracies. These core subject areas were complemented by a final capstone exercise designed to help tie the subjects into a coherent whole.

Core Curriculum

Civil-Military Relations: This topic examined the nexus between democratic societies and their security organs. It included a broad assessment of the appropriate ways in which executive branches, legislatures, judicial institutions and civil society relate to security forces, and suggested mechanisms to maintain an acceptable balance between these organizations. The topic sought to define the responsibilities that public and private sector actors should fulfill in order to achieve and maintain the balance, including the imperatives of civil supremacy and maintenance of professional, non-partisan security services that serve the society as a whole.

National Security Strategy: This topic examined the derivation of national interests in democratic societies and identified the mechanisms that may be employed to combine these into effective national strategies utilizing the various instruments of national power – diplomatic, economic, informational and military – to pursue and secure national interests. This subject area also defined the notion of “strategy,” examining how it is constructed, de-conflicted, and implemented for maximum effect.

Defense Economics: This broad topic explored ways to enhance efficient and transparent allocation of national resources between security-related and non security requirements, analyzed the relationship between national security and economic development; examined how national security is financed in a democracy; and ensured an understanding of how military expenditures affect growth, development and security – all in the environment of developing market economies.

What Is Democracy?

During the Senior Leader Seminar, it was often mentioned that the term “new democracy” misrepresented the process that is taking place on the African continent. Many participants argued that many African states are in the process of “reestablishing” democracies that existed prior to the colonial era. Selected groups began by discussing how to reestablish democracy and adapt it to the African context. For the most part, participants concurred that democratization is a necessary process. However, it was also stated that African nations must embrace this process, define its parameters, and complete it at their own pace.

Some participants argued that the international community’s emphasis on elections as a means of gauging democracy was faulty. African nations, they observed, often are pressured to hold elections even though they are not prepared for this process. In addition to political stability, some participants suggested that African democracy should focus on social and economic development. Conversely, some participants argued that the emphasis on African models of democracy was nothing more than an attempt to block the democratization process.

Given the ethnic and political diversity that exists within many African nations, many participants questioned how democracy could fit within this context. For instance, the existence of traditional leaders within many African societies and their role in the democratization process was discussed. A number of participants recognized the need to reconcile the existence of traditional leaders with the authority of the state. Moreover, African states must determine what effect traditional styles of governance will have on democratization. Some individuals expressed concern that traditional values and leadership could pose possible threats to democracy.

Most participants acknowledged the challenges faced by many African nations due to ethnic diversity. Some stated that the “majority rule” could have a destructive effect on some African countries as they attempt to democratize. Moreover, given the diversity that exists in many African nations, a consensus might not be reached among citizens. Therefore, some participants considered it imperative to insure that African masses understand the democratic process and participate therein. All seminar groups thought the onus should be placed on African leaders and African political parties to clarify democratization to their citizens.

The necessity of democratizing African institutions was also raised by participants. The participants discussed whether there was a need to change colonial constitutions and institutions to adapt to democracy as defined by African nations. While no consensus was reached, it was agreed that the mere creation and maintenance of governmental institutions are not adequate if democratization is the objective a nation is trying to reach. Virtually all participants concluded that the will of the people must be expressed through institutions that are backed by a constitution.

Finally, some suggested that regional and sub-regional organizations could play a greater role in insuring democracy among member-states. It was thought that adequate sanctions against nations blocking civil rights could provide greater respect for democratic values.

Civilian Control of the Military in Democratic States

Discussions groups addressed how to assess the military's role during the democratization process. Participants stated that it is necessary for the military's role to be clearly defined before the democratization process begins. Most understood the military's role to be limited to defending territorial integrity, defending the constitution and people, and participating in maintaining internal order. Therefore, it was widely recommended that civilians control the military during the democratizing process as well. Participants saw the need for terms like "civilian" and "military" not to be thought of as contradictory in nature, but rather as complementing each other in terms of the division of labor in defense matters, i.e. policy-making, decision-making, and the implementation of national security policy.

According to some participants, the military is inherently undemocratic in nature and therefore must be controlled by civilians. Some encouraged military leaders to find other means to alter policies of governments other than through coups d'etat, i.e., through regional or sub-regional organizations. According to some, coups d'etat could be justified for particular reasons. However, most maintained that coups should never be accepted, because they create a precedent that could be a source of instability.

Some participants stated that civilian responsibility over the military is exactly the same as over the other branches of government. Most concurred that civilian leaders had a responsibility to insure the following for the military:

- Training
- Salary
- Housing
- Military equipment to achieve their mission

However, it was emphasized that the military's needs can only be met within the limits of available resources. On the other hand, there were participants who emphasized the need for civilian leaders to be more conscious of the military's needs. In addition, some participants expressed concern that civilian leaders often do not have adequate training to control the armed services. They recommended that civilian leaders be given the opportunity to gain training in this area.

The need for a distinction to be made between civilian control and civilian interference in military affairs was emphasized by some participants. It was also thought that an agreement could be made between governments and militaries within the framework of professionalism, because many saw the need for a code of conduct to be established for the military.

Participants conceded that the military's role varies according to the local context; however, the military's neutrality, impartiality, and subordination to democratic civilian rule should be without fail. There are times at which the military's intervention to restore order may be needed, but this is a decision that should be made by civilian leaders, not by the military. Participants added that the use of the military by civilian authorities for their own interests is anti-democratic. The military should only be engaged for matters of national interests and not by politicians for personal interests. Participants stressed the importance of having a system of "checks and balances" to avoid such abuse.

Defining National Interests in Democracies

Participants were asked to determine how nations might define national interests within a democratic framework. Some concluded that the process of defining national interests is about the end results a country wishes to achieve. Other participants concluded that the national interests that were most important were those related to preservation of the state and its borders. Social and economic issues, (cultural values, health, education, etc.) also were listed. Most importantly, through this process of defining and prioritizing national interests, the groups realized how difficult it is to avoid alienating and frustrating others. Finally, the participants concluded that national security decisions were very difficult to make within a democratic framework.

Assessing the Security Environment

When assessing the security environment, the participants emphasized the importance of reviewing national security strategies in the context of current situations as well as foreseeable problems. Some thought of a threat in terms of a situation that is voluntarily organized, utilized and led against a country with the intent to destabilize it. Participants identified the following as internal threats:

- Ethnic conflict
- Poverty
- Bad governance
- Displaced persons / refugees
- Natural disasters

The participants also suggested that external factors threaten national security:

- High debt levels
- International conditionality
- Regional instability
- Arms imports

The legacy of colonialism was also cited as threatening the security of many African nations. Colonizers created artificial borders, which according to participants, continue to cause ethnic conflict and political instability. Secessionist threats are becoming increasingly intense for many countries.

Some groups stressed the importance of determining how national security strategy is prepared and who makes this decision. Many thought that the government, the military, and civil society should be involved in the analysis and the preparation of a country's national security strategy. This process was viewed as a three-step process that should include the following:

- National consultations

- Parliamentary debates
- Final decisions

Participants mentioned that the military's role is not to make final decisions about national security strategy, but it is to assist in the preparation of the strategy.

The theme of regionalism was prevalent throughout the groups' discussions when addressing national security strategies. Some argued that national security strategies would be increasingly linked to regional, sub-regional, and global organizations. Participants also stated that it was time to rethink the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states. They explained that this type of intervention should be done through a sub-regional organization instead of by individual states. On the other hand, some argued that while regionalism is important, it should not eclipse the importance of national security.

The Tools of National Security Strategy

The seminar groups discussed the instruments of state power at length, often listing the core tools of power—military, economic, and political / diplomatic. Some of the groups added additional elements to the list of the instruments of national security strategy such as the informational or even the intellectual tools of power. The seminar groups also assessed the importance of thinking about other national security instruments in the African context. The other tools of state power examined by the participants included, for example, regional cooperation, good government, and economic development.

Some groups focused on the utility of the tools of state power for African countries. One group concluded that, in theory, the instruments of power are available to all countries, but that in reality there are substantial differences in the ability of countries to employ those tools. Participants argued that variations in the ability of countries to effectively use the tools of national security strategy are based on factors such as their relative size and the resources at their disposal.

The seminar groups then examined the utility of these tools of national security strategy in the African context. These discussions tended to emphasize several areas that are of particular importance to African countries and their leaders, including regional cooperation and regional organizations, corruption and good governance, and economic development.

Regional Cooperation

In their discussions of the tools of national security strategy, the seminar groups focused in part on regional cooperation. Participants pointed out that African countries often face enormous difficulties in trying to solve national, sub-regional, and regional problems at the level of the individual state. They argued this is frequently due to a lack of the resources needed by states to employ the instruments of national power effectively. As a result, national leaders often find it more useful to employ limited resources at regional or sub-regional levels. Participants thus argued that regional and sub-regional intergovernmental organizations should be seen as important national security instruments for Africa. More specifically, they argued that regional organizations represent yet another source of leverage for countries with limited power.

Many participants suggested that regionalism and regional organizations represent the future focal point of African countries' national security strategies. They argued that organizations such as ECOWAS and IGAD will play an increasingly important role in conflict prevention and conflict resolution, and they universally noted that this is a relatively new phenomenon. On the other hand, participants also pointed out that Africa's regional and sub-regional organizations often lack independence and autonomy, which they viewed as a significant impediment to their success. However, participants also noted that Africa's regional organizations had already accomplished a great deal in their efforts to build influence at the regional and global levels.

"Good Government"

There was a broader emphasis within many seminar groups on institutional factors underpinning national security. These discussions focused primarily on the institutional capacities of African countries and, in particular, on problems of corruption and bad governance. The participants argued that "good governance" should be viewed as an important tool of national security, and that institutional problems related to governance represent an important constraint on the ability of African countries to wield national power efficiently and effectively.

There was tremendous sensitivity and anxiety among the participants over issues of corruption and bad governance. Discussions highlighted the distrust that often exists between the military and civilians over these issues. Some of the participants argued against airing "dirty laundry" at the ACSS, but this was not a common perception. More common was the view that corruption is a moral problem that African countries must confront head-on, rather than an institutional problem. However, other participants pointed out that substantial institutional checks and balances exist to reduce corruption and improve governance.

The seminar discussions on corruption and governance emphasized the need to address these issues seriously. In some groups, participants discussed the things that African leaders might do to solve these problems. They concluded that the key to overcoming corruption and governance problems is to create mechanisms that ensure transparency and accountability. There was widespread agreement that the creation of such institutional mechanisms will require the participation of both state officials and civil society. State representatives must play a key role as experts in this process with military and civilian officials playing appropriate roles in their respective areas and civil society playing a "watchdog" role.

Economic Development

The seminar groups spent substantial time discussing the role of economic development as a tool of national security for African countries. Several factors contributed to the view that economic development is a significant instrument of national security for African nations. First, participants argued that poverty should be seen as a threat to the national security that can be overcome only through development. Second, several groups focused on the dependence of African nations on trade as well as regional and international institutions to finance development. This discussion emphasized the need to improve regional and international cooperation in these areas. Third, discussion in some groups focused on improving government management of the national economy and the country's natural

resources. This discussion revolved around the need to create a stable security and economic environment that is favorable to investment.

Actors, Institutions and Processes

The seminar groups then turned to the actors, institutions, and processes involved in making national security strategy. They engaged in lengthy discussions of the roles of various actors such as executives, legislatures, and the military in the national security strategy process. A diverse range of other actors were often viewed as relevant participants in the national security strategy process, including the judiciary, political parties, the press, and civic organizations.

Participants understood that making national security policy is an inherently political process that must be deliberative in nature, transparent, and legitimate in the eyes of the public. During discussions of this topic, participants gained a new understanding of the complexity, inefficiency, and disorder that often characterize the national security process in democratic states. In several groups, the participants argued that African countries are currently altering the manner in which they make national security strategy to democratize that process. They concluded that during this transition process it is important to create feedback mechanisms, to ensure transparency, and to hold actors accountable for making and implementing national security strategies that are based on popular support and consensus.

There was general agreement among the seminar participants on a range of key points. Participants agreed that the military should have a voice in debates on national security policy, but that military officials should advise civilian authorities on national security matters rather than make policy decisions. The participants also agreed that the armed forces should be under executive control and subject to legislative oversight.

The Executive Branch

The participants agreed, for instance, that the executive should play the principal role in setting national security policy, with legislatures playing a secondary oversight and budgetary role. Participants in one group expressed the concern that if the executive is too strong, he may impose his vision/plan for a country's national security on the other actors.

The Legislative Branch

There was widespread recognition among the participants that legislatures face substantial obstacles to their ability to play a central role in making national security strategy. Several groups discussed the weaknesses of African legislative institutions in this area, including their lack independence and expertise. One group emphasized the critical importance of establishing specialized committees as a way to create expertise on national security issues among elected officials. Some participants argued that elected representatives should focus on the overall national interest, rather than on the interests of their respective constituencies.

The Military

There was little disagreement among the participants regarding the broad outlines of the military's role in making national security strategy. They agreed that the military should have a voice in national debates on security issues, but that it should not play an autonomous role in the decision-making process. Rather, they agreed that military officers should advise civilian officials on national security strategy, and that the armed forces should be under executive control and subject to legislative oversight. There was also widespread agreement that an overemphasis on the role of the military in the national security strategy-making process can create an imbalance with other state and societal interests having limited influence over government decisions in this realm.

Civil Society

The majority of the participants believed that civil society should play an important and effective role in making national security strategies within African countries. They suggested that the individuals and groups that comprise civil society could play three fundamental roles in that process. Civic organizations may serve as watchdogs that provide checks on the abuse of state power; they help to introduce a diversity of views and opinions into the public debate; and they help to mobilize the people in support of the government or specific interests.

The participants noted that civil society labors under several constraints when trying to influence the national security strategy process. For example, the individuals and groups that comprise civil society generally lack expertise on national security matters. As a result, civic groups often lack of credibility with their governments. Some participants argued that civic organizations lack legitimacy because they are thought to be pursuing the specific agendas of their funding organizations, which are often located in Western countries.

The Media

The participants also agreed that the media can and should play a role in making national security strategy. They tended to view the media as legitimate actors in national debates on national security issues, but also suggested that it is important to ensure that the media not manipulate public opinion. Several participants pointed to the need to maintain secrecy in the area of national security affairs and wondered if a free press could be counted upon to preserve the national interest.

Three Potential Problems

The seminar groups identified three problems that the participants generally viewed as significant issues. The first problem involved the perception that there is a general lack of specialized expertise on national security matters outside of the military. The participants argued that, for the most part, political leaders in Africa possess only limited knowledge about questions of national security strategy. This led to the conclusion that African countries must mobilize and use all of the skills and expertise that they have available to make the strategy-making process work. Participants argued that legislative and parliamentary institutions, civil society groups, and the media all suffer to varying degrees from the relative lack of expertise in this field.

A second problem identified was the potential for the concentration of decision-making power in the hands of the executive branch. Several groups noted that, even if a broad range of actors are involved in making national security policy, the possibility exists that power will be concentrated in the hands of a few people.

The third potential problem identified was the inefficiency of the democratic process. Some participants worried that the inclusion of a broad range of interested actors in the national security strategy process increases inefficiency, leads to security leaks, and creates the need to compromise on critical issues. While several groups noted that increases in the number of relevant actors created inefficiencies, others argued that this improves the outcome of the decision-making process by incorporating additional viewpoints and areas of expertise.

Defining Roles and Missions for the Military in Democratic States

The Senior Leader Seminar then examined the military's roles and missions in democratic states. In this session, the seminar groups discussed the different roles that could be assigned to their military establishments, listing them in order of priority. In general, the seminar groups concluded that African countries should adopt the following roles and missions:

- Territorial security and integrity
- Support to civil authorities, or internal security
- Nation-building or public works and economic development activities
- Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
- Participation in regional and international peacekeeping operations
- Other roles and missions included the provision of health services, wildlife and fisheries protection, and agricultural assistance

There was a broad consensus that civilian authorities must be empowered to determine the military's roles and missions in a democracy. Much discussion took place on the requirements for civil-military cooperation in defining roles and missions. In a number of groups, military participants argued that it is very important for civilian officials to better understand the military, with its unique requirements and capabilities. Others highlighted the importance of ensuring that military and civilian officials receive similar levels of education on national security matters.

The most controversial issue discussed by the seminar groups was the internal security role performed by the armed forces of many African countries. Several groups examined the appropriate role for the military in a democracy by comparing and contrasting the different approaches to the military's internal security role in Anglophone and Francophone countries. The vast majority of the participants argued that there might be a legitimate internal security role for the military in a democracy. During this discussion, civilian participants in several groups laid out their own perceptions—what they termed 'negative stereotypes'—of the military in Africa. In discussing this issue, participants emphasized that the internal security role of African military establishments often creates problems in civil-military relations.

Defense Ethics and Leadership

Seminar groups typically opened their discussion of ethics and leadership by debating and listing these qualities. Participants generally agreed that each country should determine the standards of ethical conduct expected of military personnel. There also was general acceptance by the participants that military officers must be professional and politically neutral, that they must obey the constitution and the rule of law, and that they must serve the entire nation rather than any particular regime or individual.

The participants concluded that the military must have its own standards of conduct and behavior. They argued, however, that this should not have a negative effect on civil-military relations. The groups listed the various qualities that they believe to be important components of leadership and ethical conduct for Africa's military officers and establishments:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-sacrifice ▪ Trust ▪ Obedience ▪ Loyalty ▪ Honesty ▪ Commitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Honor ▪ Duty ▪ Discipline ▪ Character ▪ Courage ▪ Competence |
|--|---|

In summary, some groups argued that leadership should be seen as a personal quality that was labeled variously as "integrity," "propriety," or "character." Participants tended to view leadership as related to the problem of corruption, which is seen as a moral rather than an institutional issue. In this context, participants argued that leadership should be equated with strategic vision, which they viewed as a real commitment to broader national security interests rather than parochial, sectional, or personal agendas.

Defense Economics – What Does it Mean in the African Context?

The first session on defense economics attempted to identify the economic tools appropriate for evaluating the defense sector. The value of these economic tools was then assessed with respect to the environment of African states. The participants agreed that African countries must find a more appropriate balance between defense spending and the other public demands on state budgets. Some participants argued that African countries expend too much of their limited resources on defense, and others argued that legislatures must approve defense budgets. There was, however, a broad consensus that African countries should not decrease their defense spending so much that they cannot ensure security and stability.

There also was a general consensus that African countries need to improve defense budget processes, which currently produce military establishments that are too large, too costly, and too difficult to maintain in an environment of scarce resources. Some participants argued that African countries must develop and adopt defense budget processes that are more flexible and efficient. Some participants expressed the concern that democratizing and rationalizing

the defense budget process would lead to reductions in armed forces' portion of national expenditures in African countries.

The seminar groups also debated the factors that serve to inhibit the ability to conduct defense budgetary processes effectively and efficiently. These factors include:

- Limited specialized expertise in analyzing defense budgets
- Absence of effective checks and balances
- Lack of long-term vision and prioritization of needs
- Limited public participation in the defense budget process
- Limits on state autonomy due to pressure from external actors
- Absence of broad consultative processes involving the different branches of government
- Destructive external influences such as the arms trade

The discussions focused on the organizations and the individuals charged with making defense budget decisions in African countries. They argued that, with only a few exceptions, most African nations employ a similar defense budget process. In this process, the Minister of Finance develops the national budget, the Minister of Defense allocates funds to the armed forces, and the National Assembly reviews the proposed budget.

The participants also listed the problems that may beset the defense budget process in African countries. For example, the budget process is often top-down rather than bottom-up in nature, as well as directive rather than consultative. In addition, secret allocations may be used to hide expenditures, and there is little if any oversight and accountability. Some participants argued that African countries must create transparent mechanisms for determining defense budgets so their people can better understand the requirements of national security.

Where Do the Resources Come From? The Three Economies of Africa

The seminar groups next turned their attention to defense economics. They first explored the "three economies" of Africa: the formal economy, the informal economy, and the global economy. The discussion in this session focused on the budgetary problems created by the concentration of economic activity in the informal economy throughout much of Africa. The informal economy operates outside of state control, and, consequently, African governments are unable to capture revenues from activities that occur within the informal economy. One group noted that the informal economy is based in part on corruption, and that it serves to perpetuate the problem of official corruption within African countries.

Much of the discussion in this session explored the types of regulatory mechanisms that African countries might use to increase state revenues by capturing funds from the informal sector of the economy. They argued that African countries should seek to reduce capital flight, improve tax collection, increase customs revenues, impose controls on the use of foreign aid, and reduce corruption by requiring that senior officials disclose the sources of their income. One group suggested that efforts to regulate the informal economy are unlikely to succeed, and that African countries must educate their people about the need to organize their economies to be more competitive. Another group suggested a different alternative,

arguing that African countries must reduce the budgetary pressure on the formal economy by cutting their defense budgets.

Participants discussed the factors that sustain the informal economy in African countries. They noted the disincentives in many African countries that make it very difficult to move economic activity out of the informal economy and into the formal economy. These disincentives include annual inflation rates of 30 percent or more, bank loan rates of 50 percent, and individual tax rates of 40 percent or more. The intertwining of formal and informal economies also makes it difficult for governments to move informal activities into the formal sector.

More importantly, however, there was a widespread focus within the seminar groups on "self-sufficiency." This discussion focused on what countries can do to reduce the pressure that the state budget, and military spending in particular puts on the formal economy. One group argued that African countries must reduce defense spending to lessen the pressure that military spending exerts on the formal economy. They noted that several factors are currently forcing African countries to reduce their defense spending, including pressure from donor countries and organizations, alterations in the post-Cold War strategic environment, the requirements of democratization and development, and lower government revenues.

Other seminar groups focused on how African countries can enhance economic self-sufficiency while also reducing budgetary pressures on the formal economy. The participants first argued that countries must develop their economies by attracting foreign capital, which would enhance the resources that they can devote to national defense. Participants offered other suggestions for how Africa's military and civilian leaders can decrease the pressure on the formal budget, including reducing the number of senior officers in their armed forces, creating retraining programs to prepare veterans for work in the formal economy, and reducing their full-time forces through the creation of reserve units.

"Guns versus Butter," or What Portion of an Economy's Resources should go to Defense?

The third session in the Defense Economics portion explored the tensions faced by governments in allocating funds to military and civilian uses. The core question for this session examined the portion of national budgets that should go to defense.

The seminar groups also explored both positive and negative impacts of defense expenditures. These discussions focused on how defense spending siphons resources away from the civilian economy. Several groups discussed the types of defense expenditures that may either enhance or reduce productivity within the civilian sectors of national economies.

Participants concluded that the following military activities could work to enhance the productivity of national economies:

- Education programs
- Health services (including MEDEVAC)
- Infrastructure projects
- Border patrols and other customs or anti-smuggling activities

- Natural resource management (maritime or national park/game preserve patrols, etc.)
- Search and rescue activities

The seminar groups concluded that spending for the following types of military activities might serve to harm national economies:

- Retention of senior officers
- “Perks” for senior officers
- Purchasing of overly sophisticated or unneeded equipment
- Large and inefficient maintenance activities
- Large support infrastructures
- Military facilities that are better than those provided to the civilian sector

The participants acknowledged that every African country must find the appropriate balance between military needs and those of the civilian economy. Participants concluded that this question must be answered by each country on a case-by-case basis, and that it should be based on the security environment faced by each country, as well as the roles and missions assigned to their militaries.

“Bang for the Buck” – People, Procurement and Budget

Participants began defense budget discussions by highlighting the difficulty African nations face due to limited resources. In recent years, the international community has been reluctant to provide money for military purposes. Therefore, most African defense budget funds come from taxpayers. Some participants explained that taxes do not generate sufficient amounts of money, and consequently the defense budget in many African countries is inadequate. Nevertheless, participants found that it was imperative that the following three categories appear in African defense budgets:

- Personnel
- Operations
- Equipment

Most importantly, decisions about defense spending must be made in an organized process. The seminar groups also called attention to corruption and its negative effect on resource allocation and distribution. Corruption contributes to the insufficiency of soldiers’ salaries, trafficking in arms and ammunition, and in turn, creates an environment where it is hard to attract qualified personnel into the armed forces.

Finally, many participants raised the essentiality for transparency and accountability. Participants reinforced the need for citizens to be informed about how military resources are allocated. However, some groups expressed concerns about military secrets being exposed because of transparency. Others noted that transparency is possible without leaking military secrets.

Groups also stressed the importance of demobilization to many African countries. Many countries procure guns for warring factions within a country in order to defend their national

interests. However, this creates a demobilization problem after the war. African nations currently are faced with the issue of reintegrating former soldiers into the civilian economy and civil society. According to some, former soldiers are often a source of insecurity and instability because they establish criminal gangs. Participants suggested that there is a need to create an effective program for reinsertion of demobilized soldiers.

Some participants questioned whether African countries should produce more of their own weapons and other types of military equipment instead of buying these items from other nations. Some said that building arms factories would be costly and not in the interest of the countries. On the other hand, others thought that countries that have the means should build their own arms factories. It was also suggested that sub-regional factories would minimize the dependency of African countries on Western nations for arms.

Panel Discussions: Civil Society, NGOs and the Military

Promoting informed and productive dialogue on the military's role in a democracy among non-government civilian leaders, government officials, and military officers is part of the ACSS mission. This final discussion group session provided representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society with opportunities to enrich the dialogue on curricular topics from other points of view.

During this final discussion session prior to the Capstone exercise, three separate and simultaneous panels comprised of participants from NGO and civil society offered brief presentations, followed by discussion from the floor. The three discussions examined the roles of civil society in civil-military relations, national security strategy formulation, and the financing of national security.

Achieving Transparency and Accountability in Financing National Security

For the first panel discussion, representatives of civic and non-governmental organizations discussed the things that African countries can do to increase transparency and accountability in the defense budget process. NGO representatives suggested the following potential improvements:

- Parliamentary oversight
- Independent auditing
- Give civic organizations a voice in defense budget decisions
- Cost benefit analysis
- Declassification of archives to deter fraud and ensure accountability

The question and answer session revolved primarily around a statement by one of the speakers that some African countries do not need military forces. This statement led to a very animated and controversial debate, the main tenets of which were that military forces are not always the best place for society to invest its limited resources.

One speaker pointed out that a major threat to African countries is their unpaid, underpaid or unfit militaries, and that civilian leaders should be held responsible for this problem. Another speaker argued that Africa needs capability-based rather than threat-based militaries. In

conclusion, the discussion revolved around the contention that in Africa civil society must be both a partner and a counterweight to governments.

Putting "Civil" Back into Civil-Military Relations

The panel began by discussing the nature of civil society in Africa. One panelist suggested that civil society, which is composed of unions, political parties, religious groups, and development groups, should be considered in a larger sense. The panelist also characterized civil society as the "hope and threat" of Africa, and argued that governments need to protect civil society in Africa. More importantly, the panelist asserted that civil society is extremely important in Africa, and that civic organizations should rely on their own resources generated from within their own countries, rather than relying on international donors.

A second panelist expressed concern about the ability of African militaries to fulfil their mandate. She stated that the primary job of the military is to protect states against external threats. She also questioned whether the military has done its job in this regard, because external aggression is almost non-existent in Africa. The panelist argued that the military does not have a significant role in Africa because neighboring countries typically have cooperative relationships. She asserted that the military has at least indirectly caused many of Africa's problems because of their involvement in the internal affairs of states. This panelist strongly recommended that the military redeem its image and assist in development.

The panelist also argued that democracy has not taken root in Africa because democratic structures do not resemble African culture. The panelist stated that traditional structures should be incorporated into the democratic framework. Another panelist added that Africa has had as many as 43 coups since the 1970s, and agreed that coups undermine the professionalism of African militaries. Panelists stated that it was time to insure that Africa's armed forces remain in the barracks. In addition, there is a need to understand the root cause of coups, instead of just trying to stop them. One panelist also asserted that coups are not just an African phenomenon, pointing to the experiences of countries such as Argentina and Chile.

Panelists emphasized the importance of civil society, arguing that civil society should have an important role in the democratic process. One participant criticized civil society groups for joining the opposition instead of working with government authorities. The panelists suggested that the independence of civic organizations is undermined when they receive money from the government. At the same time, when the funds for civic organizations are supplied by the international community, they often find it difficult to pursue their own agendas. One panelist suggested that civic and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must have their own sources of financing in order to function effectively.

Civilian and Regional Perspectives on Security and Strategy

The third panel was comprised of representatives of civic organizations who discussed civilian and regional perspectives on security. The first speaker focused on the shift in recent years in African national security strategies to regionalism, a change that he argued was caused by a shift from intra-state to inter-state problems during the 1990s.

To address these security problems, the states of West Africa reshaped ECOWAS to take on new roles in regional conflict resolution and peacemaking. As part of this process, ECOWAS

has instituted a mechanism for monitoring and regulating regional trade in small arms. In response to questions from the participants, the speaker noted that ECOWAS has not found the changes in its mission to be easy, but that with the support of its member states they are beginning to accomplish their objectives.

The second speaker discussed the views of civil society regarding civil-military relations in Africa. The speaker argued that the ultimate responsibility for the nature of civil-military relations rests with governments. Healthy civil-military relations were defined as the subordination of militaries to civilian authority. Coherent national security strategies require the participation of a wide range of actors, with civic groups playing three roles. Civic groups work to influence the formulation of national security strategies, they monitor and critique the activities of government agencies, and they mobilize and enhance public awareness about national security matters. The speaker closed by noting that African governments are increasingly open to the participation of civic organizations in the formulation of national security strategies.

The third speaker discussed the work of a regional conflict resolution organization named Accord de Non-Agression et de Defense (ANAD). ANAD is an African paramilitary organization comprised of Francophone states that performs its conflict resolution functions through dialogue, mediation, disaster relief, and defense assistance. The speaker noted that there is growing competition among regional organizations in Africa, and that ANAD does not intervene in internal conflicts. A major problem faced by ANAD is a lack of knowledge and understanding about its purpose and activities on the part of Africa's Anglophone nations.

The final speaker discussed the role of women in the development of national security strategies. The speaker called for the creation of participatory approaches to decision-making in the realm of national security, and argued that women's groups must assist in the creation of checks and balances. They also must insist that government officials are accountable for their actions. The speaker noted the growing role of women's organizations in national security because of training they have received in conflict resolution. In particular, the speaker argued that women's groups are playing an increasingly important role in the conflict resolution mechanisms established by the OAU and ECOWAS. However, she also argued that women's groups must be given a greater role in the management of these activities.

The Capstone Exercise

The Capstone Exercise was the final academic event in the curriculum. It gave participants an opportunity to use the insights and techniques discussed throughout the course in a brief practical exercise. Through the exercise participants had a final opportunity to evaluate issues addressed in the course, and a limited context in which to test the relevance of their insights. In the exercise participants reviewed their perspectives on civil-military relations through debate and consultation. They applied their knowledge of strategic planning and the allocation of defense resources through the construction of three key documents—a national security strategy, a national military strategy, and a detailed defense budget.

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