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THESIS

**FROM A GUERRILLA FORCE TO A STATE MILITARY: AN
ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SUDAN
PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (SPLA) FROM 2006–2010**

By

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December 2011

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**FROM A GUERRILLA FORCE TO A STATE MILITARY: AN ASSESSMENT
OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SUDAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION
ARMY (SPLA) FROM 2006–2010**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(DEFENSE DECISION MAKING AND PLANNING)**

from the

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ABSTRACT

Countries have been transforming their militaries with some of them involved in the transformation of formerly guerrilla militaries to state militaries. Since 2006, an intact guerrilla armed force in South Sudan has been transforming itself into a state military. Measured against four transformation areas during assessment, in order to establish any transformation effect as of 2010, the research reveals that compared to 2005, the area of operational effectiveness progressed further than the areas of force structure, training and civil-military relations because the SPLA's self-transformation efforts, which have been driven by security threats, were more dominant than the donor supported transformation efforts which were SSR-driven.

The SSR-driven efforts simply laid down frameworks for civil-military relations at the strategic level, but these frameworks have not been translated to changes in organization, process and personnel. The overall pace of SSR-driven transformation has also been affected by the divergence and contention between the SPLA's and donor priorities, in which the SPLA priorities were much more dominant.

The find further reveals that the transformation approach undertaken by the SPLA has not been consistent with the standard definition of military "transformation" which involves changes in doctrine, organization and processes. The SPLA's transformation process simply involved rearmament, therefore not sufficient to warrant conclusion that the SPLA has transformed.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COGS	Chief of General Staff
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
D/COGS	Deputy Chief of General Staff
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission
DFID	Department for Foreign and International Development
GHQS	General Headquarters
GOSS	Government of Southern Sudan
IHL	International Humanitarian Laws
JIUs	Joint Integrated Units
KIA	Killed in Action
MANPADS	Man-Portable Air- Defense System
METL	Mission Essential Task List
MIA	Missing in Action
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
MTR	Military Technical Revolution
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer
OAGs	Other Armed Groups
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
PME	Professional Military Education
PMO	Political and Moral Orientation
PRA/M	Patriotic Revolutionary Army/Movement
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement

SSDDT	Security Sector Development and Defense Transformation
SSDF	South Sudan Defense Force
SSLA	Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TADT	Training Advisory and Development Team
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WIA	Wounded in Action

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. INTRODUCTION

Many militaries in the world are engaged in self-transformation as an important means of improving military concepts, efficiency, and effectiveness in the face of changing threats and resources.¹ Developed countries are engaged in a revolution in military affairs (RMA), as inspired by the former Soviet Union's concept of military technical revolution (MTR), but adding doctrinal and organization elements to technological factors in military transformation.² Developing countries meanwhile are engaged in transformation based on security sector reform (SSR), which emphasizes the management and governance of the military (along with other security institutions) under civilian authority.³ Transformation is thus closely associated with democratization and sometimes involves building a new military from scratch in post-conflict situations such as in Liberia and Croatia.⁴

Unlike internally driven RMA in developed countries, transformation in the developing countries is often sponsored by external donors. Donor-sponsored SSR undertook to reform the Sierra Leone army as part of post-conflict recovery, to create new armed forces of Liberia from scratch, and to absorb numerous guerrilla armies into

¹ Andrew Ross, Michele Flournoy, Cindy Williams and David Mosher, "What do we Mean by 'Transformation'? An Exchange – Defense Policy, United States," *Naval War College Review*, Vol. LV, No. 1, (Winter 2002): 27–30.

² Elinor Sloan, *Military Transformation and Modern Warfare: A Reference Handbook* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publisher, 2008), 1–2.

³ Alan Bryden, Boubacar N'Diaye and Funmi Olonisakin, 'Understanding the Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa' in *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa*, ed. Alan Bryden, Boubacar N'Diaye and Funmi Olonisakin (Geneva: Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008), 1.

⁴ Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina C. Matei, "Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil–Military Relations" in *Democratization*, 15, No. 5, December 2008, 913; Timothy Edmunds, *Security Sector Reform in Transforming Societies: Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 16–22; Mark Malan, *Security Sector Reform in Liberia: Mixed results from humble beginnings*, (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), 67–70; Fayemi Koyode, *Governing Insecurity in Post-conflict States: The Case of Sierra Leone and Liberia* (Geneva: Center for the Democratization of the Armed Forces, 2004); Peter Albrecht and Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997–2007* (Birmingham, UK: GFN-SSR, 2009), 200–208.

the national armed forces, while simultaneously subordinating the force to democratic, civilian control in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Sudan, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 left the guerrilla Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) intact, with responsibility for safeguarding security in the territory designated as South Sudan for a period of six years, after which the population will vote on secession.⁵ In these circumstances, the SPLA was left to transform itself from a guerrilla army into a national armed force, with donor assistance. It thus straddles the line between RMA and donor-sponsored SSR.

In early 2006 the SPLA and South Sudan Ministry of SPLA Affairs launched a program for this self-transformation into a “professional and operational effective armed force” to match the new socioeconomic, political, and security realities and increase professionalism in the SPLA which was considered inadequate.⁶ Four main transformation areas were earmarked by the SPLA leadership: force structures; training of SPLA soldiers and officers; realignment of SPLA roles and functions with the interim constitution of South Sudan; and increasing the SPLA's lethality through rearmament.

The four transformation objectives were defined as follows. Reorganization involves defining, across the levels of the SPLA, force structure, size and accountability. Training entails enhancing discipline, morale and agility; developing a professional military-education (PME) system; and establishing a training-management-cycle system. Alignment of roles and functions with the interim constitution of South Sudan involves enhancing civil-military relations. Increased lethality entails improving firepower through armament and improving effectiveness and rapidity of response. Transformation thus involves increasing the three interdependent components of fighting power (material, moral, and doctrinal), changing organizational structures, *modus operandi*, resource management, and the discipline of the soldiers in order to transform into a

⁵ IGAD Secretariat, *The Security Arrangement Protocol: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army* (Nairobi: CPA Secretariat, 2005), 87.

⁶ SPLA GHQs, *Report of the Senior Command and Staff Meeting*, (Juba: SPLA GHQs, 2006); SPLA GHQs, *SPLA White Paper on Defense*, (Juba: published by Committee of the SPLA White Paper on Defense, 2008), 19.

professional, accountable, affordable, and combat-effective force. The overall goal was a more professional SPLA that sticks to its roles and functions as defined by the constitution, Defense Act, and defense policies; a more accountable SPLA that is subordinated to the civilian government and accepts oversight from the parliament; and a more affordable SPLA that plans and operates in accordance with available resources, while retaining its combat effectiveness.

In late 2006, a consortium of advisors from the USA, the UK, and Switzerland launched the “Security Sector Development and Defense Transformation” (SSDDT) program, which addressed the “transformation of the security-sector system which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions, so that it is managed and operated in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework.”⁷ US support focused on command and staff training and infrastructure development, while Swiss and British support focused on establishing institutionalized democratic, civilian control.⁸ SSDDT seeks to develop capacity and capability in the government of Southern Sudan’s security decision-making structures, defense-policy development, the SPLA, the Ministry of SPLA Affairs, parliamentary defense oversight, and civil society.⁹ Thus, donor-sponsored SSR targeted the third element of the SPLA’s transformation agenda.

The transformation process has been in progress for five years, not long enough for a final assessment, but a reasonable period of time for an interim assessment of progress. How much progress has the transformation made toward each of its stated goals and why? The situation in South Sudan provides a unique opportunity to study military transformation in which an intact force and international donors are pursuing

⁷ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), Security issues and development cooperation: A conceptual framework for enhancing policy coherence, the CAC Journal, Vol. 2. No. 3 (2001): 11–35.

⁸ Training Advisory and Development Team, *the Statement of Work and Performance Work Statement for Enhancing the SPLA Capacities* (Juba: TADT, 2006), 1–10; Markus Schefer, *Report of the On-site In-depth Assessment* (Berne: Swiss Armed Forces, Oct. 2007), 1–8; Department for Foreign and International Development, *Project Memorandum: DFID Support to Security Sector Development and Defense Transformation Process in Southern Sudan* (Juba: DFID, 2007), 4–14.

⁹ Ibid., 7–9.

transformation/reform cooperatively, but with different emphases.¹⁰ Most of the research on the effectiveness of military transformation has been conducted in the United States. Eliot Cohen's analysis of the U.S. military finds that transformation based on RMA which is more of a military self-transformation has been effective because it brings with it technology which shapes military forces to look different from what they were in the past, it shapes the process of battle, and it enhances the combat power and effectiveness of the military.¹¹ Technology thus, creates changes in the organizational framework and doctrine of the military.¹² Similarly, James Adams, Michael O'Hanlon, and Robin Laird et al. conclude that RMA has increased the effectiveness of the U.S. military because it brings with it technology which in turn transforms the military and increases its operational effectiveness.¹³ David Betz's study of the experiences of RMA in the U.S. military concludes that although advanced technology is a key component of RMA, it cannot "substitute for good political judgment," but "multiples effectiveness and increases the likelihood of mission success" in the case of military operations other than war (MOOTW).¹⁴

In contrast, Adam N. Stulberg et al.'s comparative study of the British, German and U.S. militaries argues that strategies adopted for transformation that are limited to technology, systems, and operations—without considering changing an organization's culture or, more specifically, ensuring that internal mechanisms manage and sustain

¹⁰ Amos Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times: On Professional, Praetorian, and Revolutionary Soldier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 9–17; Douglas H. Johnson; "The Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Problem of Factionalism" in *African Guerrillas*, ed. Christopher Clapham (Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 1998), 56–57.

¹¹ Eliot Cohen, "Change and Transformation in Military Affairs," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 27, No. 3, September 2004, 404–405, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1362369042000283958> (accessed August 26, 2010).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ James Adams, *The Next World War; Computers are the Weapon and the Front Line is Everywhere* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 301–313; Michael O'Hanlon, *Technological Change and the Future of Warfare* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 1–4, 107–112, 192–195; Robin Laird and Holger Mey, *The Revolution in Military Affairs: Allied Perspectives* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Institute for National Strategy, 1999), 98–103.

¹⁴ David J. Betz, "The RMA and 'Military Operations Other than War': A Swift Sword that Cuts both Ways" in *Military Transformation and Strategy: Revolutions in Military Affairs and Small States*, ed. Bernard Loo (London: Routledge, 2009), 127.

changes—may cause failures and limit effects.¹⁵ David Kilcullen, and Richard Shultz and Andrea Dew’s studies of Western military effectiveness in Somalia, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, also challenge the conventional wisdom that post-RMA, modern, high-tech militaries are operationally effective.¹⁶ These studies conclude that high-tech military advancement undermines the ability of Western militaries to engage effectively in warfare that is increasingly moving towards insurgent and non-conventional types.¹⁷

The literature on transformation in the developing world focuses on civil–military relations and security sector reform rather than military effectiveness.¹⁸ The early case-study literature suggests mixed results, depending on how SSR is translated into practice.¹⁹ Sarah Meharg and Aleisah Arnusch argue that the overall effectiveness of SSR in Kosovo was greatly limited by organizational culture and by the struggles of members of the old communist regime to protect their interest and networks. These struggles led to corruption and nepotism, which were particularly damaging to SSR initiatives to reconstruct a civil administration and reestablish the rule of law. Similarly, Timothy Edmunds argues that SSR progressed faster in Croatia than Serbia–Montenegro because it built security organizations from scratch, preventing “ideologically-based security-sector obstructionism” by pre-reform agents, organizational cultures, and networks. In contrast, the pace of transformation was slower and overall effectiveness lower in Serbia–Montenegro as a result of “inertia, conservatism, and obstructionism.”²⁰ Thus, this camp suggests that SSR is less effective when applied to more intact security sectors.

¹⁵ Adam N. Stulberg, Michael Salomone and Austin Long, *Managing Defense Transformation: Agency, Culture and Service Change* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 181–196.

¹⁶ Richard H. Shultz and Andrew Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 261–261; David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 4–6.

¹⁷ Shultz, *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias*, 261–261; Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 406.

¹⁸ Edmunds, *Security Sector Reform in Transforming Societies*, 2.

¹⁹ Patrick W. Skora, “Analysis of Security Sector Reform in Post-conflict Sierra Leone: A Comparison of Current Verses Historical Capabilities,” M.A. thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2010, 45–48; Malan, *Security Sector Reform in Liberia*, 67–70; Koyode, *Governing Insecurity in Post-conflict States*, 199–201; Albrecht and Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone*, 200–208; Sarah Meharg and Aleisha Arnusch, *Security Sector Reform: A Case Study Approach to Transition and Capacity Building*, ed. Susan Merrill (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), 1–19.

²⁰ Edmunds, *Security Sector Reform in Transforming Societies*, 239, 181.

Malan's study of Liberia, Haiti, East Timor, and Sierra Leone finds that the effectiveness of SSR is affected by the size and approach of the programs, rather than their breadth or whether they started from scratch. He argues that in all cases SSR was largely ineffective because levels of funding were too low and the programs too short.²¹ Malan finds that more comprehensive approaches are more effective, even in the context of inadequate time and resources. Similarly, Alfred Lokuji et al. find that early effectiveness of SSR was later greatly limited by its narrow application in Southern Sudan, focusing too much on the SPLA, while the police, the judiciary, and the correctional services have received little attention.²²

Finally, there is a debate about the effect of "local ownership" on SSR effectiveness. International donors and recipient governments agree that local ownership is important to successful security-sector reform.²³ Nevertheless, there are conflicting findings on its effect in the research. For Sierra Leone, there are debates about both the level of local ownership and the success of SSR.²⁴ Based on the limited capacity of the Sierra Leonean government to generate resources internally to sustain SSR, and the level of involvement by Sierra Leoneans in the initial design of the program, Osman Gbla concludes that local ownership is low and argues that this has limited the effectiveness of SSR.²⁵ Fayemi Koyode reaches a similar conclusion based on the extent of reliance on

²¹ Malan, *Security Sector Reform in Liberia*, xii, 72.

²² Alfred Lokuji, Abraham Abatneh, and Chaplain K. Wani, *Police Reform in Southern Sudan* (Juba: Center for Peace and Development Studies, University of Juba, 2009), 16.

²³ Herbert Wulf, 'Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries' in *Security Sector Reform: Potentials and Challenges for Conflict Transformation*, ed. Clem McCartney, Martina Fischer and Oliver Wils (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2004), 16.

²⁴ Skora, *Analysis of Security Sector Reform in Post-conflict Sierra Leone*, 4.

²⁵ Osman Gbla, "Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone Reform" in *Challenges to Security Sector Reform in the Horn of Africa*, ed. Len Le Roux and Yemane Kidane (Pretoria: ISS Monograph Series No. 135. May, 2007), 86–88.

donor directives.²⁶ However, Albrecht and Jackson find that local ownership is high, citing local participation and consultation in the development of security policies, and argue that this has contributed to SSR effectiveness.²⁷

On the other side of the debate, Herbert Wulf's study of Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Democratic Republic of the Congo suggests that strong external, donor-driven SSR without significant local ownership has been effective precisely because it cuts out local, self-interested obstructionism.²⁸ Wulf also notes that often domestic SSR efforts "are not directed at improving the security of the population but are exclusively aimed at rationalizing or modernizing armed forces and police to save money or to enhance their postures and capabilities."²⁹

The research on RMA suggests that security concerns are determinant in military self-transformation; the primary aim of the military being combat effectiveness to "fight and win its nation's war."³⁰ This suggests that the SPLA transformation process should have progressed furthest on the combat effectiveness goal. The literature on SSR suggests that it is less effective when applied to a more intact military and/or when limited in size and scope. Both of these conditions are present in South Sudan, so one would expect to find that the SSDDT has had little impact on advancing the civil-military relations goal of the SPLA transformation agenda. The debate on whether more local ownership is associated with more or less effective reform has more ambiguous implications for South Sudan. However, on balance, the limited scope of donor engagement suggests that the SPLA's priorities will drive transformation, thus reinforcing the overall thrust of existing knowledge that leads us to expect more progress

²⁶ Koyode, *Governing Insecurity in Post-conflict States*, 23–27; Skora, *Analysis of Security Sector Reform in Post-conflict Sierra Leone*, 5.

²⁷ Ibid., 23–27.

²⁸ Wulf, *Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries*, 16.

²⁹ Ibid., 15.

³⁰ Togo D. West, Jr., and Dennis J. Reimer, "A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army Fiscal year 1997, presented to the Committees of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives Second Session," 104th Congress, the Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Congressional Activities Division (DACS-CAD), 1997, <http://www.army.mil/aps/97/ch1.htm> (accessed August 30, 2010).

on combat effectiveness and less on SPLA subordination to institutionalized civilian authority. Finally, it is expected that progress on restructuring and retraining (the other two elements of the SPLA transformation) will be most limited, because neither actor prioritizes these in practice.

In order to test this hypothesis the thesis begins by establishing baseline measures on each transformation objective as of the end of 2005, just before the transformation process was adopted. The thesis draws largely upon primary sources to evaluate the extent of progress on each element by the end of 2010, including unpublished government documents and the author's own experience as a direct participant in the process of transforming the SPLA since 2006. Additional evidence is collected through questionnaires and structured telephone interviews with the military leadership and other officers at the SPLA general headquarters, division, brigade and battalion levels, members of the civilian government, the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, civil-society organizations, and international partners such as the United States security advisors to the SPLA, the United Kingdom Department for Foreign and International Development, overseers of Swiss support to security-sector reform, Adam Smith International, the Center for Policy Research and Dialogue, and DynCorp International, all of which are direct implementers of the security-sector reform program.

The documentary evidence is generally used to establish the extent of progress on each goal, and the questionnaires and interviews to explain the patterns of transformation. The survey asked the following: Have the force structure, size and/or control and accountability been affected in any way by the transformation process and why? Has the level of preparedness (developing discipline, morale, agility) changed as a result of the transformation process and why? Have a professional military-education (PME) system and a training-management-cycle system been developed and have these changes contributed to improved discipline, morale and agility? Has the SPLA been brought under institutional oversight mechanisms, and how much are its mission and roles guided by strategic vision and defense policies? Has lethality (through rearmament and rapid responsiveness) of the SPLA been built as intended? Why or why not? The original target number of the subjects to be enrolled for the survey was between 350 and 500.

Ultimately, there were 393 participants, of which 49 percent were soldiers and officers and 51 percent civilians. Six percent of civilian respondents were non-Sudanese involved directly or indirectly in the transformation program.

(N=393)

S/NO.	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1	Military	192	48.9%
	Officers	160	
	Soldiers	32	
2.	Civilians	201	51.1%
	South Sudanese Nationals	188	
	Foreign Nationals	13	

Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Characteristics

This thesis is organized into four chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter establishes the baseline measures of force structure, training effect, civil-military relations and operational effectiveness in 2005. The third chapter establishes and explains the extent of progress on each objective by the end of 2010. The final chapter draws conclusions and provides recommendations to inform future policies and plans on the ongoing transformation of the SPLA.

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II. THE STATUS OF SPLA IN 2005 PRIOR TO THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

A. INTRODUCTION

The SPLA was estimated to be 104,441 strong³¹ when, in accordance with the CPA and the interim Constitution; it became a *de facto* state military tasked with providing security and defense for the territory designated as South Sudan in 2005.³² The size of the SPLA subsequently expanded with time as more and more soldiers reported and were registered into the overall parade, and as forces of the other armed groups were integrated into the SPLA.³³ There was, however, a general consensus that it fell short of standards and capacities expected of a national armed force.³⁴ First, it was a guerrilla armed force in its organization, training doctrine, civil-military relations and combat approaches.³⁵ Second, it was perceived to be inadequately prepared to fend off a potential attack by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) in the north.³⁶ Third, there were new budgetary issues since for the first time a civilian authority was statutorily obligated to pay for the

³¹ SPLA Directorate of Administration, *The SPLA total parade for salary*, (Juba: SPLA GHQs, 2006).

³² IGAD Secretariat, *The Security Arrangement Protocol: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army*, 87–117; Government of Sudan, *The Interim National Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan* (Khartoum: Government of Sudan, 2005), 84; Government of South Sudan, *The Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan* (Juba: Government of South Sudan, 2005), 61–62.

³³ Richard Rands, *In Need of Review; SPLA Transformation in 2006 -10 and Beyond* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, 2010), 7, 11, 14 and 38.

³⁴ SPLA GHQs, *Report of the Senior Command and Staff Meeting*.

³⁵ Christopher Clapham, “Introduction: Analyzing African Insurgencies,” in *African Guerrillas*, ed. Christopher Clapham (Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 1998), 5–7; Johnson, *The Sudan People’s Liberation Army and the Problem of Factionalism*, 57–72; Madut-Arop, *Sudan's Painful Road to Peace: A Full Story of the Founding and Development of SPLM/A* (Charleston: Book surge publishing, 2006), 77, 87, 95.

³⁶ SPLA GHQs, *Report of Senior Command and Staff Meeting*.

SPLA, which had previously been self-sufficient.³⁷ Fourth, there were challenges of integrating other armed groups, some of which had opposed the SPLA, into the force based on the Juba Agreement of 2006.³⁸

This chapter provides a 2005 baseline measure of SPLA structure and procedures that were targets for transformation in 2006 (force structures; training of SPLA soldiers and officers; roles and functions in the absence of civilian control over the SPLA; and lethality).³⁹ The following discussion both describes the weaknesses targeted for transformation and provides a baseline for judging the level of change in force structure organization, training, functions and roles, and combat effectiveness as a result of the transformation process through the end of 2010.

B. FORCE STRUCTURE

The challenges of force structure, accountability and management can be traced to the evolution of the SPLA as a decentralized guerrilla force facing the challenges of scarce resources, poor physical infrastructures and the vastness of its area of operation. Although the leadership structure was very centralized in principle, Bradbury et al note that “local commanders enjoyed a considerable freedom of action. Indeed, the SPLM/A was described by one interviewee as an organization built on a series of almost semi-autonomous commanders or ‘warlords’ who are ‘franchised’ to operate on behalf of the leadership.”⁴⁰ Similarly, the recruitment system had been based on both forceful drafting and voluntarism often under the supervision of the ‘mobile units’ or ‘task forces’ commanders that were sent to areas around South Sudan to conduct political

³⁷ IGAD Secretariat, *The Security Arrangement Protocol: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army*, 87–117.

³⁸ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 7, 11, 14 and 38.

³⁹ Ibid, 38.

⁴⁰ Hannah Badiey, “The Transformation of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and the Challenges of Post-Conflict Institutional Change in Southern Sudan,” MPhil Dissertation, International Development Center, Oxford University, 2007, 24; Mark Bradbury, Nicholas Leader and Kate Mackintosh, The ‘Agreement on Ground Rules’ in South Sudan: Study 3 in *The Politics of Principle: The Principles of Humanitarian Action in Practice* (London: Overseas Development Institute, March 2000), 18.

mobilization.⁴¹ As a result, in 2005 the SPLA force structure was not clearly defined in terms of the required size, how its officers and soldiers were organized in accordance with their ranks and skills, or how its weapons and equipment were distributed.⁴² It lacked a framework for the organization of its general headquarters (GHQs), Infantry Division and support units, in which ranks, force strength, required armament and logistics would be distributed, and thus lacked even a template to guide it with regards to required force structure, size, and firepower.⁴³

In recognition of this challenge, at the end of 2005 the SPLA issued a message to all its officers and soldiers to report to specified assembling points in Lainya, Papa 91 and Akucieng for verification, and established a military cluster committee sub-committee on organizational structure to design a force structure framework and template.⁴⁴ In addition, the SPLA had difficulties ensuring force control and accountability because it lacked functional record systems on enlisted and NCO's travels, leaves, health status, level of education, transfers, desertion, missing in Action (MIA), wounded in Action (WIA), killed in Action (KIA) or death from other causes.⁴⁵ It had a rudimentary system for the officers corps commonly referred to as a "Dam Record," which basically was a record of officers' date of commissioning, promotions and seniority, but it was equally faced with a few challenges, and a limited number of messages conveying transfers, death and desertion of predominantly senior officers.⁴⁶ Complaints from officers claiming delays in

⁴¹ Ibid., 19; Johnson, *The Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Problem of Factionalism*, 1998, 58; Madut-Arop, *Sudan's Painful Road to Peace*, 93–94.

⁴² SPLA GHQs, *Report of Senior Command and Staff Meeting*.

⁴³ Moran, Michael, "Modern Military Force Structures," *Council on Foreign Relations*, October 26, 2006, <http://www.cfr.org/defensehomeland-security/modern-military-force-structures/p11819#p1> (accessed February 26, 2011).

⁴⁴ SPLA GHQs, *Message to All Units*, SPLA GHQs, November 2005; SPLA GHQs, *Organizational structure of the SPLA GHQs*, (Juba: Military Cluster Committee, Sub-Committee on Organizational Structure and Establishment of SPLA, 2006), 4–5; SPLA GHQs, *Organizational Structure of the SPLA Infantry Division*, (Juba: Military Cluster Committee, sub-committee on organizational structure and establishment of SPLA, 2006), 1–168; SPLA GHQs, *Organizational Structure of the SPLA Support Units*, (Juba: Military Cluster Committee, sub-committee on organizational structure and establishment of SPLA, 2006), 1–400.

⁴⁵ Bradbury, Leader and Mackintosh, *The Agreement on Ground Rules in South Sudan*, 18; Personal observation at the SPLA GHQs, until 2009 the Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration Commission (DDR) and the SPLA Administration were still collecting data on the MIA, WIA and KIA.

⁴⁶ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 20.

their promotions and displacement from their rightful seniority were common, particularly after forces from the other armed groups were integrated. This problem was particularly apparent when, in response to the message ordering all SPLA forces to report to assembly points, a large number of non-SPLA men and women reported, calling themselves SPLA fighters and demanding to be included in the newly established payroll and military benefits (including monthly salaries, food and medical care).⁴⁷ Lacking records, the SPLA had great difficulty establishing who was and was not a member of the force.

Before 2006 the size of the SPLA was not limited by policy or available financial resources mainly because human resources were its primary fighting tool, and fighters were not paid.⁴⁸ This changed after 2005 when the newly formed government of South Sudan (GoSS) assumed financial responsibility for the SPLA, and members of the SPLA began to expect regular pay and other support now that the force was a national army.⁴⁹ The force size was huge in relation to available resources. For example, the SPLA registered a total parade of 104,441 soldiers and officers on its salary sheet in 2006, with an annual budget of about 40 percent from GoSS.⁵⁰ In addition to overall force structure and size the SPLA was top heavy in 2005.⁵¹ This problem was also exacerbated by the integration of the other armed forces. For example, the SPLA integrated about 17 Major Generals from the other armed groups (OAGs).⁵² The excessive number of officers became apparent when the SPLA began to reorganize its GHQs, infantry Divisions and

⁴⁷ SPLA GHQs, *Message to All Units*, November 2005.

⁴⁸ Based on the author's personal experience as an SPLA officer, not a single SPLA soldier or officer received salary prior to the signing of the CPA.

⁴⁹ IGAD Secretariat, *The Security Arrangement Protocol: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army*, 87.

⁵⁰ Government of South Sudan, *Approved Budget of 2006* (Juba: GOSS, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2006), 3; Government of South Sudan, *Approved budget of 2007* (Juba: GOSS Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2007), 4; Government of South Sudan, *Budget at a glance: Government of South Sudan, Approved budget of 2008* (Juba: GOSS Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2008), 4; Government of South Sudan, *Approved budget of 2009* (Juba: GOSS Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2009), 5.

⁵¹ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 20, 38.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 11 and 20.

support units on the basis of the framework developed by the sub-committee on organizational structure under the Military Cluster Committee in 2006.⁵³

C. TRAINING

Past training approaches which were designed to produce “revolutionary soldiers” who were instruments of political mobilization had resulted in inadequacies in professionalism.⁵⁴ The SPLA training doctrine from its inception was heavily focused on “politicization” and orientation as opposed to professional military education.⁵⁵ Training and promotion was based on shared beliefs in a “political cause” rather than military education and training.⁵⁶ These training approaches had continued up to 2005 and had equally caused concerns for transformation. The provision of monthly pay for the first time in 2006, which came with new requirements for soldiers to report for full time duty and adhere strictly to military standing orders, exposed the gaps in the SPLA’s professionalism. By 2005, there was an increase in indiscipline among soldiers as many used their new salaries for alcohol consumption and unauthorized movements.⁵⁷ Akucieng assembling and training camp was turned into a market place, complete with local breweries, both reflecting and exacerbating indiscipline and command and control problems.⁵⁸ Further indiscipline problems were illustrated in November 2006 when an SPLA company of a Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), many of whom were drunk, broke loose and began shooting into the air on the streets of Juba demanding their pay following a short delay in payment because of problems in Khartoum that were beyond the control of the SPLA Headquarters in Juba.⁵⁹

⁵³ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 11.

⁵⁴ Madut-Arop, *Sudan's Painful Road to Peace*, 93–95.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times*, 13–17, 205–280; John Ellis, *Armies in Revolutions* (London: Croom Helm, 1973) 238–251.

⁵⁷ SPLA Directorate of Training and Research, *Assessment Report* (Juba: Department of Military Research and Planning, SPLA GHQs, 2006) 27–29.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ United Nations Missions in Sudan, “Media Headlines,” December 16, 2006,” <http://unmis.unmissions.org/Portals/UNMIS/2006Docs/mmr-dec16.pdf> (Accessed January 14, 2011).

Indiscipline, disorderliness, neglect of duty and disobedience were also apparent within the officer corps.⁶⁰ The Department of Military Research and Planning within the Directorate of Training and Research Branch determined that some of this was attributable to inadequate education, which was an obstacle to internalization of military discipline and ethos.⁶¹ Many SPLA officers did not go through the standard military progression, but rather mastered officers' responsibilities through experience, practice and short courses.⁶² Even those who attended cadet, platoon and company command courses outside of Sudan often fell short on *officership*, defined by skills, knowledge and expertise acquired through formal education, performance credibility, competence and adherence to formal code of law and ethnics.⁶³ In 2005 the SPLA lacked functional Professional Military Education defined as "progressive levels of military education that prepares military officers for leadership including various basic level courses for the new and junior officers, command and staff colleges for the mid-level officers, and war colleges for the senior officers."⁶⁴

Widespread indiscipline and disorderliness among soldiers and officers made it obvious to the SPLA General Headquarters and the Directorate of SPLA Training and Research Branch that the training system needed to be transformed.⁶⁵ One of the primary tasks of the Directorate of Training and Research Branch from 2005 was to retrain the forces once they were screened and organized into conventional military structures from Squad to Division levels. It was immediately confronted with multiple challenges. First, the nine training centers (New Kush, Pariak, Korpiot, Owingkybul, Booth, Mapel,

⁶⁰ Author's personal observation, 2006; SPLA Directorate of Training and Research Branch, *Assessment Report*, 27–29.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ LeRiche, "How Humanitarianism affected the conduct and outcome of war in South Sudan," PhD Dissertation, Department of War Studies, King's College, University of London, 2009, 66, 74; J.A.A. Van Doorn, "The Military Profession in Transition," in *Manpower Research in a Defense Context*, ed. N.A.B. Wilson (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Company, Inc., 1969), 451–459.

⁶⁴ U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "PME as defined by the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency," http://www.dsca.osd.mil/home/professional_military_education.htm (Accessed January 23, 2011).

⁶⁵ SPLA GHQs, *Report on Senior Command and Staff Meeting*.

Akucieng, Gufa and Jawu) earmarked for the mass retraining lacked even basic facilities such as shelter, clean drinking water, sanitary facilities and a perimeter fence for control and security purposes.⁶⁶ Institutions for officers training also lacked basic facilities. As a result, the mass assembly of forces in these training centers in 2006 led to outbreaks of cholera and other hygiene related diseases.⁶⁷

In addition, there was an acute shortage of qualified instructors.⁶⁸ During initial basic training a soldier is trained to be part of a squad. The standard ratio is one instructor to 11 trainees. This ratio is equally applicable to squad leader/junior NCO training since leadership and command of the squad is the focus of training. Specialist training (armor, artillery, etc) is dependent on the size of the crew/team operating the equipment or weapon system. For example, if the tank crew is four personnel, then the ratio is one instructor to four soldiers. For platoon commander/platoon sergeant courses, the ratio can be extended to two instructors per 33 men (or a platoon). In this case, one instructor is an officer and the other is a senior NCO/sergeant major in order to replicate the responsibilities of platoon command and administration. During training the students work as a platoon with command appointments alternating as training develops. For command and staff courses, at Junior and senior level, the ratio is dependent on the number of students that can be managed in a syndicate/discussion group. The maximum ratio is 1:25-30 depending on the capabilities of the students and the instructor.⁶⁹ These standards and conditions did not exist for the SPLA in 2005.⁷⁰ In Akucieng training center, for example, there were about 40 instructors for the training of about three Brigades (with each Brigade composed of 2,487 personnel without the Brigade support

⁶⁶ Author's personal observation, 2006; SPLA Directorate of Training and Research, *Assessment Report*, 30–36.

⁶⁷ SPLA Directorate of Training and Research, *End of Year Report for 2006* (Juba: Directorate of Training and Research, SPLA GHQs, 2006).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Department of Military Research and Planning, *Consolidated Report of the Training and Research Branch from 2005–2008* (Juba: Department of Military Research and Planning, SPLA GHQs, February 2009), 16–28.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

units),⁷¹ making the instructor to trainee ration 1:187, making it difficult for instructors to give attention to individual soldier training progress.. In addition, only half of the instructors were qualified and experienced in specific skills such as foot drills, tactics, marksmanship, and weaponry.⁷²

Finally, there was no codified training doctrine or unified training manual or syllabus to guide the retraining program.⁷³ There was also no training management cycle to provide for ongoing assessment for identification of training requirements, from which training plans, programs and exercises could be monitored and. Thus, the SPLA lacked the ability to establish training priorities, allocate training resources appropriately, develop training plans and objectives and evaluate training. There was also no functional system linking training needs to capability analysis in relation to threat landscapes.

D. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

There was no institutionalized civil-military relations framework in 2005. The CPA and the interim Constitution of South Sudan (2005) provided the basis for the establishment of the Government of South Sudan and for setting up “institutional control mechanisms,”⁷⁴ including the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Parliamentary Committees on Security and Defense. However, the Ministry of SPLA Affairs (a de facto Ministry of Defense) was not formed until mid 2007 when a Minister was appointed.⁷⁵ There were also no strategic policy frameworks and positions that clearly stipulated:

1. Guidelines within which SPLA’s strategies and plans could be framed and activities could take place;
2. Conceptual and practical guidelines via which the SPLA could be assessed, held accountable and avoid decision-making that was not cost effective;
3. The SPLA’s posture, size and roles;

⁷¹ SPLA GHQs, *Organizational Structure of the SPLA Infantry Division*, 49.

⁷² Directorate of Military Research and Planning, *Consolidated Report of the Training and Research Branch from 2005–2008*, 16–28.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Bruneau and Matei, *Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations*, 909–924.

⁷⁵ Rand, *In Need of Review*, 39.

4. A framework for ensuring that the SPLA performed the roles allocated to it to acceptable standards as defined by a civil authority.

The existing quasi defense planning system was sufficient for setting the general mission and goals of the SPLA as a guerrilla force, but was incapable of translating missions and goals into time-bound plans, programs and budget systems feeding back to strategic level decision-making architectures with the GoSS. The limited professionalism of the SPLA noted in the preceding paragraphs was another obstacle to the exercise of institutionalized civilian authority. On the whole, as of 2005, the institutions and practice of civil-military relations involving the SPLA were inadequate if not absent.

E. OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The SPLA's operational capability in the years preceding the CPA was unquestionable as illustrated by its size, lethality, resilience, agility and ability to employ guerrilla or conventional tactics as dictated by the circumstance that established the military stalemate that produced the CPA.⁷⁶ This capability was supported by its equipment inventory, which included armoured battle tanks, artillery pieces, BM-21 Rocket Launchers, Man-Portable Air-Defense Systems (MANPADS) and other anti-aircraft, communication equipment, and combat transport vehicles (some of which were captured during battles with the Sudan Armed Forces).⁷⁷ Nevertheless, in 2006 the military leadership identified weakness in lethality, mobility, agility, morale, and strategic planning that had the potential to undermine operational effectiveness in against future threats.⁷⁸

One of the main problems identified was the functional depreciation of SPLA equipment. Some of its rifles were nearly two decades old. Mobility was also deemed to be inadequate for rapid response and forward deployment in the event of combat, as a

⁷⁶ Johnson, *The Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Problem of Factionalism*, 1998, 59; LeRiche, *How Humanitarianism affected the conduct and outcome of war in South Sudan*, 84; Madut-Arop, *Sudan's Painful Road to Peace*, 77; Bradbury, Leader and Mackintosh, *The 'Agreement on Ground Rules' in South Sudan*, 18; SPLA GHQs, *SPLA Act: Laws of the New Sudan* (Yei: Secretariat of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development, 2003), 5–10.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ SPLA GHQs, *Report of Senior Command and Staff Meeting*.

result of too few transport vehicles.⁷⁹ Morale and esprit de corps were also considered inadequate as a result of combat fatigue and ethnic tension.⁸⁰ Political rivalries within the political wing of the SPLA and within the diverse societies of South Sudan had often produced knock on effects on the overall esprit de corps and capabilities of the SPLA, particularly of the officer's corps, and threatened to do so again.⁸¹

F. CONCLUSION

By late 2005, following the signing of the CPA and the formation of the Government of South Sudan, it was clear to the SPLA leadership that its guerrilla character and modus operandi was inadequate for the new political and institutional landscape. Its force structure needed to be defined, its force size reduced to an affordable level, training reoriented and improved, institutionalized civilian oversight mechanisms established, strategic guidance developed, and operational effectiveness augmented. The political and military leadership in South Sudan thus called for a transformation of the SPLA from guerrilla to a state armed force.

⁷⁹ Directorate of Logistics, *Report on Status of SPLA Logistics* (Juba: Directorate of Logistic, SPLA GHQs, 2006), 1–13.

⁸⁰ Africa Watch, *Denying "The Honor of Living" Sudan: A Human Rights Disaster* (Africa Watch Committee: New York, March, 1990), 153; Human Rights Watch, *Civilian Devastation: Abuses by all Parties in the War in Southern Sudan* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1994), 55; LeRiche, *How Humanitarianism Affected the Conduct and Outcome of War in South Sudan*, 362–3.

⁸¹ Johnson, *The Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Problem of Factionalism*, 1998, 53–72; Julie Flint, 'Sudanese Rebels Await Armed Onslaught' *The Guardian (London)*, 7 November 1994, 10; Sharon Hutchinson, *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War and the State* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 338–345; Sharon Hutchinson 'A Curse from God? Religious and Political Dimensions of the Post-1991 Rise of Ethnic Violence in South Sudan' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 39. No. 2, 2001, 307–331.

III. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS ON THE EFFECTS OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS ON THE SPLA BY 2010

A. INTRODUCTION

Have there been significant changes in the four main areas targeted by the transformation process, and why or why not? Has the force structure, size and/or control and accountability been affected? Has preparedness (developing discipline, morale, agility) improved? Has a professional military-education (PME) system and a training-management-cycle system been developed? How much has the SPLA been brought under institutional oversight mechanisms, and how much are its mission and roles guided by strategic vision and defense policies? Finally how much lethality (through rearmament and rapid responsiveness) has been built? And what explains this pattern of transformation?

As expected, five years of transformation efforts have not produced uniform effects across all the transformation goals. This chapter will show that progress on institutionalizing civil-military relations has been made at the strategic level, which was targeted by donors and the GoSS, but has not been implemented at lower levels by the SPLA in accordance with donor expectations.⁸² Progress on the goal of increasing lethality was met at the strategic, operational and tactical levels because this was the SPLA's primary objective and it therefore concentrated its limited capabilities on meeting this goal. Less progress was made on other two goals, because donors did not target them, and the SPLA largely sacrificed them to the goal of increasing lethality. Overall, the SPLA is not yet a transformed armed force.

B. FORCE STRUCTURE

Little has been achieved on transforming the organizational framework of the SPLA in terms of force accountability, force size or rank alignment with the force size.

⁸² Markus Schefer, in discussion with the author, October 1, 2010.

The only success has been at the GHQs level, because these changes supported donor priorities with respect to the civil military relations objective. There was no discernable progress at the operational or tactical levels, because these changes were less critical to the donor priority and competed with the SPLA's priority for maximizing operational effectiveness.

The research findings reveal that 84 percent of the SPLA officers and soldiers surveyed believe that the force structure has improved as a result of the transformation efforts, but mostly at the GHQs level. Most cited more clearly defined structures at the GHQs, which they see as resulting from concentration of support systems, training opportunities and advisory support at the GHQs in Juba. Without a doubt, further evidence shows policy guideline documents and frameworks for organizational structure, such as the SPLA White Paper on Defense and the SPLA Act were developed and only disseminated at the strategic level. Most of the dissemination workshops sponsored by donors and the various donor mentoring activities were at the HQs level. For example, all of the US \$9.6 million allocated by the UK government for the transformation of the SPLA between 2006 and 2011 focused on the strategic level, and all nine advisors contracted by the UK were stationed at the SPLA GHQs.⁸³ Plan for wider dissemination to the SPLA's tactical levels only began in mid-2009.⁸⁴

Similarly, further evidence from the findings which supports the claims about success at the SPLA GHQs level shows that as a result of the transformation efforts, the organizational framework was completed August 2006 in the form of three interdependent documents: organizational structure of the SPLA GHQs, organizational structure of the SPLA Infantry Division and organizational structure of the SPLA support units.⁸⁵ These documents provide organizational charts for composition by rank, strength

⁸³ Department for Foreign and International Development, *Project Memorandum*, 4–14; Rands, *In Need of Review*, 36.

⁸⁴ Directorate of Military Research and Transformation, *Workshop Report on SPLA Transformation Process* (Juba: SPLA GHQs, 2009), 22–23.

⁸⁵ SPLA GHQs, *Organizational Structure of the SPLA GHQs*, 4–5; SPLA GHQs, *Organizational Structure of the SPLA Infantry Division*, 1–168; SPLA GHQs, *Organizational Structure of the SPLA Support Units*, 1–400.

distribution and armament and logistics, such as transport. The SPLA General Headquarters was immediately reorganized in accordance with the organizational frameworks laid out in the three interdependent documents. The office of the Chief of General Staff, supported by six deputies who were appointed in mid 2005, was confirmed by the new framework to oversee the newly established Directorates, support units and corps. The GHQs improved its capacity to respond appropriately to various defense requirements over the course of the next four years. By 2010 the GHQs deployed and employed its forces to some extent in line with the set frameworks.⁸⁶ It received regular reports from the Infantry divisions through its operation center, and the regular push forward of logistics and finances to the infantry divisions was through the developed logistic and financial frameworks.⁸⁷

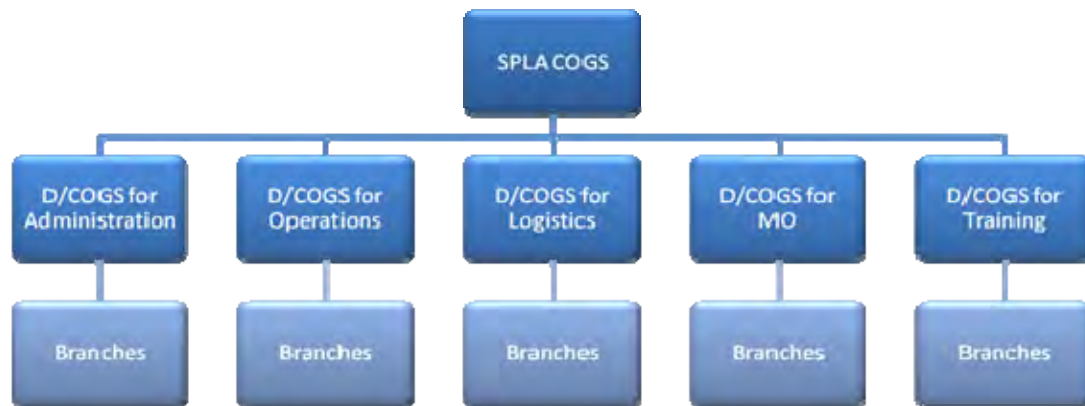


Figure 2. SPLA GHQs Command and Staff Organizational Structure and Composition from Organizational Structure of the SPLA GHQs of 2006⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Office of the President and Commander in Chief, *Redeployment (Transfer) of the SPLA Senior Officers* (Juba, Office of the President, 2010).

⁸⁷ Rand, *In Need of Review*, 26–31.

⁸⁸ SPLA GHQs, *Organizational structure of the SPLA GHQs*, 14.

Particulars	Officers								Other ranks						TOTAL
	Maj. Gen.	Brig. Gen.	Col.	Lt. Col.	Maj.	Capt.	1 st Lt.	2 nd Lt.	R/SM	SM	SGT	CPL	L/CPL	PVT	
Infantry Division and its support units	1	8	27	53	170	207	313	351	90	310	1457	2290	1827	6514	12,488
Total	1,130								12,488						13,618

Figure 3. Composition of SPLA Infantry Division and Support Units after Data Extracted from Organizational Structure of the SPLA Infantry Division⁸⁹

On the whole, the only effects of the transformation program that have been apparent as of 2010 were at the headquarters level which confirms the common assertion that such effects were expected because of the over concentration of the donor support system at the GHQs level. As one senior officer notes: “everybody now knows where he or she falls within the structures of the GHQs as evidenced by the position you hold and the salary you receive. There are however, still problems with the force structure as you go lower.”⁹⁰

The transformation plans which provided for force structure frameworks aimed at guiding overall restructuring, force accountability at all echelons, and right sizing of the force were instead steered by the SPLA leadership towards the reorganization of the SPLA’s component of fighting power because of the continuous looming threats from the Government of Sudan. Developing combat capability was therefore a high priority for the SPLA leadership. Indeed, findings from 88 percent of the SPLA officers and soldiers interviewed reveal that the SPLA’s force structure has not been restructured strictly on the basis of the provided force structure framework defined by the transformation plans. This percentage of interviewees agree that the main reason the SPLA did not follow the transformation plans as set is because the SPLA leadership made a deliberate decision not to as it would have endangered the SPLA cohesion. Obviously for the SPLA leadership it

⁸⁹ SPLA GHQs, *Organizational structure of the SPLA GHQs*, 32.

⁹⁰ SPLA Brigadier General noted in the survey questionnaire, October 2010.

was apparent that some of the key elements spelled out in the force structure framework such as rightsizing of the force and realignment of the ranks would have entailed demobilization of the forces most of whom were already experienced and harden fighters. Such an action would have in turn had negative implications for the overall force morale and above all, it would have created a serious gap in the human fighting power of the SPLA which the SPLA by and large rely on.

On the whole, the reluctance by the SPLA leadership to transform the other components of force structure such as rightsizing and rank alignment had knock on effects on the overall force structure. There are problems with the force structure as you go lower. First, the force has not been reorganized based on the provided frameworks and there are still misunderstandings of roles and functions below the GHQs level. The 7th and 8th Divisions' parades, for example, were 5,438 and 6,778, respectively, far below the 10,000 stipulated in the organizational structure. Other Divisions, meanwhile, were far above their required force size (Figure 5) as a result of integration of other armed groups. Therefore, the transformation efforts have not made any progress in reorganizing the forces at the division level and 88 percent of the respondents attribute this particular lack of progress to gaps in the transformation plans that failed to enhance force management capacities at both the GHQs and division levels.

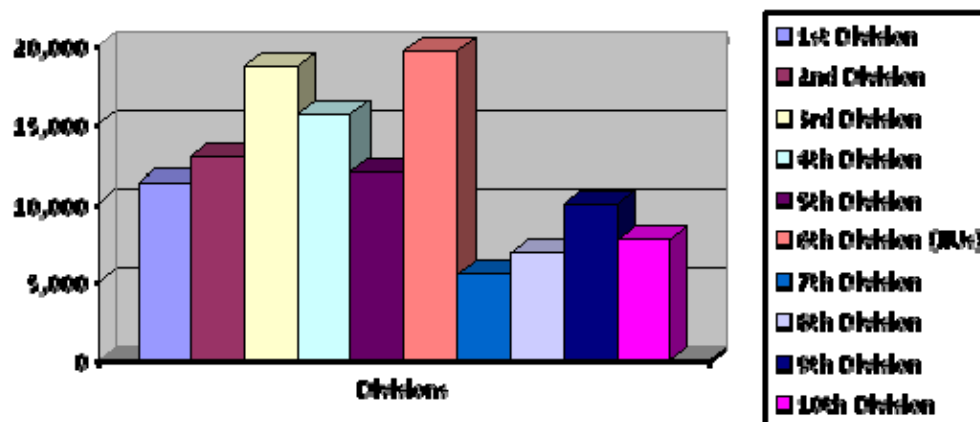


Figure 4. Force Size by Division, After Data Collected from the SPLA Parade List of 2010.⁹¹

⁹¹ SPLA Brigadier General noted in the survey questionnaire, October 2010.

Secondly, the force structure in terms of force size at the operational and tactical levels and in terms of ranks at all the levels as of 2010 is not close to the proposed standard set by the transformation framework as indicated in Figure 3. The distribution of ranks became significantly worse in the first five years of the transformation process.⁹² The total number of officers *increased* from 10,361 in 2006 to 20,991 in 2010 (Figures 7 and 8). Eighty eight percent of the survey respondents suggest that the integration of other armed groups held back any attempt to address the excessive ranks, while increasing the number of officers in the SPLA. For example, about 17 Major Generals from OAGs were integrated into the SPLA.⁹³ According to a senior SPLA officer at GHQs:

The transformation efforts were simply limited to policy statements with limited practical implementation strategy. In reality, the rank issues have been extremely sensitive and everybody avoided handling it because the only appropriate way to address it is to retire officers regardless of their age.⁹⁴

On the whole, compared to the force structure in 2006, the transformation efforts have made no progress in terms of alignment of the ranks in accordance with the force structure.

⁹² SPLA Brigadier General noted in the survey questionnaire, October 2010.; SPLA GHQs, *Organizational Structure of the SPLA Infantry Division*, 49.

⁹³ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 11.

⁹⁴ SPLA Colonel noted in the survey questionnaire, November 4, 2010.

	Particulars	Officers								Other ranks						TOTAL
		Maj. Gen.	Brig. Gen.	Col.	Lt. Col.	Maj.	Capt.	1 st Lt.	2 nd Lt.	R/SM	SM	SGT	CPL	L/CPL	PVT	
Framework	Infantry Division and its support units	1	8	27	53	170	207	313	351	90	310	1457	2290	1827	6514	12,488
	Total	1,130								12,488						13,618
Actual	4 th Infantry Division	3	12	62	112	190	421	521	656	115	291	1368	1672	1435	8699	15,557
	Totals	1,977								13,580						15,557

Figure 5. Rank Distribution in the Framework and the Current 4th Infantry Division.⁹⁵

	Particulars	Officers									
		Gen.	Lt. Gen.	Maj. Gen.	Brig. Gen.	Col.	Lt. Col.	Maj.	Capt.	1 st Lt.	2 nd Lt.
No. of officers in 2006	Infantry Division and its support units	0	2	16	114	336	577	1624	1988	2857	2847
	Total	10,361									
No. of officers in 2010	Infantry Division and its support units	1	12	74	353	897	1299	2106	3889	4676	7690
	Total	20, 997									

Figure 6. Comparing the Number of SPLA Officers in 2006 with that of 2010, after Data Extracted from the SPLA Total Parades of 2006 and 2010⁹⁶

⁹⁵ SPLA Directorate of Administration, *The SPLA Total Parade for Salary*, 2010; SPLA GHQs, *Organizational Structure of the SPLA Infantry Division*, 1–168; SPLA GHQs, *Organizational Structure of the SPLA Support Units*, 1–400.

⁹⁶ SPLA Directorate of Administration, *The SPLA Total Parade for Salary*, 2006; SPLA Directorate of Administration, 2010.

Thirdly, transformation also failed completely with regard to downsizing the force to an affordable size because as cited by 88 percent the SPLA interviewees, the SPLA leadership made deliberate decisions not to down size as it would have endangered the SPLA cohesion and would have cost the SPLA its already experienced and hardened fighters on whom the SPLA would rely on for any eventualities. In 2006, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) consortium, consisting of the Government of South Sudan and the United Nations (UN), originally called for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of 90,000 individuals. The DDR consortium later deemed this target figure as unrealistic and reduced it to 35,000, which they believed could be achieved mainly by decommissioning the war disabled and the aged. By 2010, fewer than 10,000 had been processed under the DDR scheme, and almost all of these were non-SPLA forces.⁹⁷

In 2010 the SPLA's registered total parade was 194,995. From the originally registered force size of 104,441, between 2006 and 2010 the force size grew by about 90,554. These additional forces included 31,573 wounded veterans who were no longer on active duty; 31,000 of the additional force that came as a result of the integration of the South Sudan Defense Forces (SSDF) under the Juba Declaration;⁹⁸ and about 27,981 of the additional forces that came about as a result of the subsequent integration of the forces of the other armed groups such as the Gelweng and Patriotic Revolutionary Army/Movement (PRA/M) of Dr. Alfred Ladu Gore.⁹⁹ These various integration schemes indicate that force size actually *increased dramatically*, as did the proportion of the SPLA annual budget devoted to salaries (Figures 5 and 6). The proportion of the

⁹⁷ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 42–45.

⁹⁸ SPLA Directorate of Administration, *The SPLA Total Parade for Salary*, 2006; Government of South Sudan Mission, "Juba Declaration on Unity and Integration between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF)," January 8, 2006, http://www.gossmmission.org/goss/images/agreements/juba_declaration_on_unity.pdf (Accessed January 20, 2011); Gurtong Project, "Ex-SSDF integration complete says SPLA spokesperson," JUBA, Sudan, June 9, Gurtong, <http://www.gurtong.net/ECM/Editorial/tabid/124/ctl/ArticleView/mid/519/articleId/1036/Ex-SSDF-integration-complete-says-SPLA-spokesperson.aspx>, (Accessed January 20, 2011).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

budget devoted to salaries hit a new high of 91.4 percent in 2010.¹⁰⁰ This level of defense spending was clearly unsustainable, and at the same time far from adequate to sustain the SPLA at its prevailing size. The proportion of the SPLA budget allotted to salaries ballooned from 16 percent in 2006 to an average of 82 percent in 2007–2009, effectively gutting capital expenditures.¹⁰¹

	Salary	Salary %	Operation cost	Capital cost	Total
2006	87,855,480	16.7%	77,394,520	360,750,000	526,000,000
2007	497,270,400	90.4%	25,577,800	27,151,800	550,000,000
2008	348,258,706	70%	99,502,488	49,751,244	497,512,438
2009	386,586,926	87.2%	41,716,082	14,927,612	443,230,6212

Figure 7. Government of South Sudan Annual Approved Budget for the SPLA (U.S. \$)¹⁰²

Eighty eight percent of the officers and soldiers interviewed suggest that the SPLA refused to downsize after absorbing more men and women from the other armed groups.¹⁰³ The integration was politically and militarily important given the need to build a unified South Sudanese army, but respondents suggest that it also created fear within the SPLA that it would lose its original identity. The integration therefore sapped any will to demobilize. Ninety four percent of the military respondents suggest that the fact that the demobilization also generated fears that demobilization would create the appearance that SPLA soldiers had been replaced by those newly integrated, generating a tensions within the force. Eighty eight percent of military respondents and 79.6 percent of civilian respondents also cite lack of political will within the GoSS as a factor in the failure to

¹⁰⁰ Government of South Sudan, *Budget at a Glance: Approved Budget of 2010*, (Juba: GOSS, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1010), 10.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Government of South Sudan, *Approved Budget of 2006*, 3; Government of South Sudan, *Approved Budget of 2007*, 4; Government of South Sudan, *Budget at a Glance: Government of South Sudan, Approved Budget of 2008*, 4; Government of South Sudan, *Approved Budget of 2009*, 5.

¹⁰³ Government of South Sudan Mission, “Juba Declaration on Unity and Integration between the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) and the South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF), 2006; “Ex-SSDF Integration Complete says SPLA Spokesperson,” 2006.

downsize. Respondents believe that like the SPLA, the GoSS was far more concerned about maximizing fighting capabilities in the event of renewed war with the North than anything else.¹⁰⁴

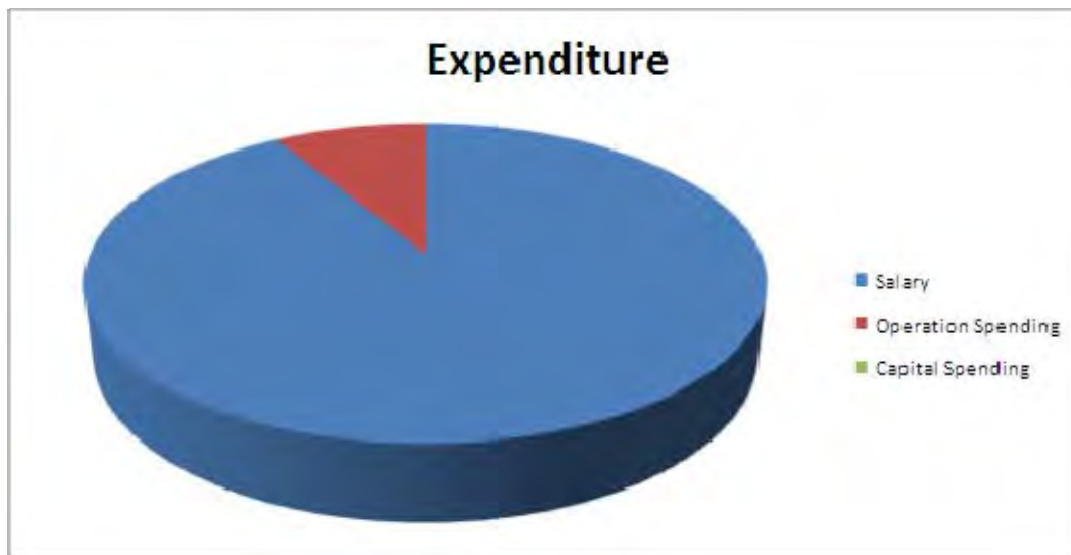


Figure 8. Distribution of SPLA 2010 Budget after Data Collected from the Budget at a Glance: Approved Budget of 2010¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ John Ashworth, *The State of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement* (Utrecht: IKV Pax Christi, 2009), 5.

¹⁰⁵ Government of South Sudan, *Budget at a Glance: Approved Budget of 2010*, 10.

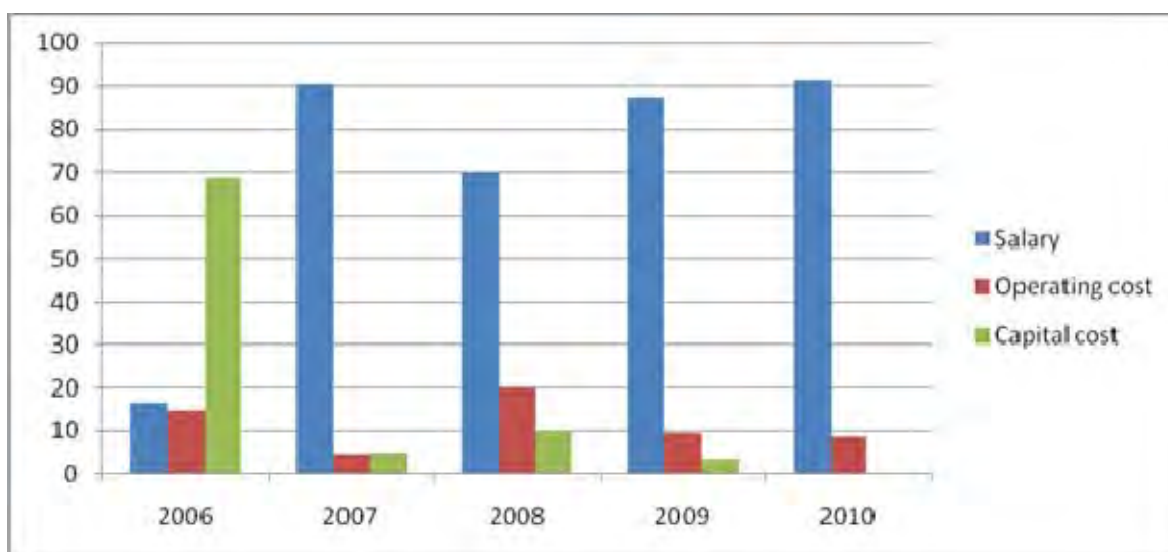


Figure 9. SPLA Salary in Relation to Operating and Capital Expenditures after Data Collected from the Approved Budget of 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010¹⁰⁶

C. TRAINING

The transformation programs for training launched in 2006 aimed at improving discipline of the forces, improving the overall training institution and system, increasing the capacities of the training personnel and above all increasing combat readiness and effectiveness. The transformation program has had varying effects on training. The transformation efforts made more progress in creating training activities that increased combat readiness and effectiveness than in the other areas of improved discipline and improved overall training institutions and system. This variation in the effects of transformation on training confirms the overall initial intent of the SPLA which has very much been inclined towards increasing operational effectiveness of the SPLA which is critical to its priority, hence making other training areas of less priority, and secondarily because they were not a donor priority either.

¹⁰⁶ Government of South Sudan, *Approved Budget of 2006*, 3; Government of South Sudan, *Approved Budget of 2007*, 4; Government of South Sudan, *Budget at a Glance*: Government of South Sudan, *Approved Budget of 2008*, 4; Government of South Sudan, *Approved Budget of 2009*, 5

A small percentage of SPLA respondents (about 30 percent) cited lack of resources as the main obstacle to the transformation efforts to improve the other training components which would have enhanced discipline and professionalism. The same percentage of respondents also cited illiteracy as another major hindrance because of the fact that although, a Directorate of Education established within General Headquarters in 2008 was to oversee a literacy program, in 2010 illiteracy remained unchanged at 90 percent among soldiers and 70 percent among officers. This implies that the level of literacy is determinant of the level of internalization of training inputs by trainees and therefore increasing training effects on trainees. These rationales cited by the small percentage of SPLA respondents are valid to some extent but on the whole the biggest percentage of SPLA respondents cited a rationale that validates the claim by the initial hypothesis.

Research reveals that much of the effort for the transformation of the training system was directed towards combat effectiveness. These findings imply that the transformation process focused on training that aimed at producing resilient and agile fighters but not necessarily producing disciplined and professional soldiers. Seventy-six percent of the SPLA officers and soldiers interviewed confirmed this claim by citing that the main reason for the SPLA to take the path of focusing the transformation of the training system to ensure combat effectiveness as a priority is because there was a minimum and lack of practical and consistent guidance from the civilian leadership for the SPLA during the transformation process. This implies that practical guidance and checks from the civilian leadership which would have kept the SPLA from over focusing on transforming the training system for combat readiness at the expense of other equally vital components of training such as training for discipline, capacities of training institutions and systems were absent.

Evidence revealed by the research supports the rationale of the interviewees which asserts that the lack of progress on transforming some of the components of training is directly attributable to the SPLA not seeing them as critical to its priority of increasing combat readiness and effectiveness. Much of this evidence is based on the practical transformation activities related to training of the SPLA. For example, the SPLA

screening of its force for verification purposes in 2006 included basic retraining which almost all soldiers and officers had received. About 90 percent of Generals (Brig. and above) had attended courses in Staff and Command Skills. Almost all the Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels had completed training in the School of Infantry in Malou. Most of the Majors and Lieutenants completed retraining in Nacigak Junior Officers Military Academy in Owingy kibul. About 500 NCOs and officers had also completed training outside of South Sudan in various National Defense Colleges, Senior and Junior Command and Staff Colleges. Other SPLA officers and soldiers completed training in specialized areas such as handling the 130mm field gun, artillery operations, anti-aircraft 23m, missile/IGLLA, armor and anti-tank weapons. Each of the 10 Divisions also successfully completed retraining following their reorganization.¹⁰⁷ All in all, these training activities were very much directed towards combat readiness, with minimum time spent on discipline and on transforming the long developed guerrilla ethos.

Further evidence is revealed by the 65 percent of SPLA respondents and 93.5 percent of civilian respondents who cited that because most of the transformation activities were tailored towards combat readiness at the expense of other training components, the levels of discipline and orderliness within the SPLA did not improve to a large extent as originally intended by the transformation objectives. 90.3 percent of civilian respondents still see SPLA soldiers and officers as the main source of insecurity among civilians, which they attribute to inadequate training. The 65 percent of military respondents who saw no improvement suggest that if there have been some aspects of progress, they are likely a result of military policing rather than increased discipline which is brought about by the effects of transformation. The same 65 percent of SPLA respondents note that only officers' training includes human rights elements, International Humanitarian Laws (IHL) and SPLA Acts, giving them some grounding on discipline issues, human rights issues and civil-military relations, but that has not reached down to the soldiers. The 65 percent respondents therefore concluded that the lack

¹⁰⁷ Department of Military Research and Planning, *Consolidated Report of the Training and Research Branch from 2005–2008*, 16–28.

of effects by the transformation efforts in the area of discipline was mainly because the SPLA did not see it as critical to its initial list of priority which is increasing combat effectiveness.

At the same time, despite the roles played by various donors in the transformation of the SPLA, the support system towards training was very much limited to policy development. This was mainly because none of the components of training (improving the training institutions and system, improving discipline through training, improving combat readiness) fell within donors' priority of developing policies and capacities at the strategic level. According to a senior SPLA officer:

Even the support from the donors has not been helpful in our training system because their inputs have not been adequately translated on the ground. It seems like the donors have misled our headquarters that everything must be limited to the Headquarters in terms of designing nice looking papers. We all have to go to the ground to change the discipline of our soldiers.¹⁰⁸

Besides, 76 percent of the SPLA officers and soldiers interviewed also confirmed that the failures to effect progress by donors in the areas of training was also because of the huge cost normally involved with training activities and the long term commitments required to provide such a support system. This rationale by the respondents is synonymous with the assertion that donors often go for quick fix programs which yield quick outputs than long terms outcomes.

On the whole, as a result of the SPLA's and donor priority lists for transformation within the context of training, by 2010 the SPLA still did not have a functional professional military education system. Seventy-one percent of officers and soldiers interviewed said that despite the establishment of the NCO school, Nacigak Junior Officers Military Academy, and School of Infantry training is not systematic in terms of determining the next career move in rank and leadership. According to a General from GHQ:

There is no Professional Military Education system within the SPLA based on an internationally recognized standard. The intended efforts put by the training institutions of the SPLA for the last six years should have aimed at clearing the mess that had piled up and reorganize the SPLA soldiers and officers into the

¹⁰⁸ SPLA Brigadier General stated in the survey questionnaire, October 16, 2010.

mainstream. This was not the case to a large extent. If a typical Professional Military Education system was exercised, then one would even find senior Colonels attending cadet courses in order to cover the gaps. I think it will only be after the referendum in 2011 that the SPLA will start to restructure its training systems and also become strict about the stages of military education that prepares officers for command.¹⁰⁹

This statement implies that overall the transformation process did not remodel the training system from one which previously focused solely on producing resilient and agile fighters to one that also produced disciplined and professional soldiers. This is mainly because the SPLA has been more interested in building combat readiness hence making other training areas of less priority.

At the same time, the slight semblance of some progress in transforming the training system was simply limited to developing physical training infrastructure (such as the Non Commissioned Officers' (NCO) school in Mapel and the School of Infantry in Malou), training of military instructors in the development of training methodology, training programs, training syllabus, systems approaches to training, weapons training, NCO training, basic officers training and command and staff training, and the development of a series of Training Aide Memoires and a syllabus.¹¹⁰ In a way, these activities were very much viewed by the SPLA as supportive of its initial priority of improving combat readiness, which was why the SPLA pursued it. However, multiple gaps still remain as further revealed by the respondents. Eighty-eight percent of the military respondents and all 13 of the foreign contractors working directly or indirectly in the transformation reveal that the transformation efforts did not improve the institutions of training. In 2010 the SPLA still lacked a functional training management cycle system that provides a framework for developing a Mission Essential Task List (METL), establishing training priorities and allocation of resources, planning, execution and assessing the state of training which subsequently gave a feedback to the overall training system in 2010.

¹⁰⁹ SPLA Lieutenant General reveals in the survey questionnaire, November 23, 2010.

¹¹⁰ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 30–31.

D. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

By 2010, the effects of the transformation process on civil-military relations varied with some areas showing some progress while others showing lack of progress. All in all, the transformation process has made some progress on institutionalizing civil-military relations at strategic level, but showed limited progress at the lower level because of the failures by both donors and the SPLA to translate policies to practices.

Eighty-four percent of military respondents and 97.5 percent of civilian respondents reveal that the transformation process has only had effects on the SPLA at the strategic level, and they cited the willingness of the donors to limit their efforts at the strategic level and the SPLA's reluctance to facilitate the translation of the transformation effects down to the operational and tactical levels as the main reasons. For the supporting donors, civil-military relations was the priority areas and every other intervention by them in the areas of training and force structure development was tailored in support of building capacities at the GHQs levels and the Ministry of SPLA Affairs in order to enhance civil-military relations. The confirmation by the respondents agrees with the initial objectives and strategies set in the DFID's conceptual framework.

Of note, 84.6 percent of the donor representatives interviewed reveal that limiting transformation by the supporting donors at the strategic level through policy development was considered a critical priority and viable because they consider the strategy of top-bottom approach as urgently required at the time. One of the main reasons cited by the respondents is that there is a need for an urgent development of capacity at the strategic level in order to set a strategic vision and provide a strategic guidance which all subsequent plans would be anchored on and the other lower levels of defense activities would follow.

There have been other reasons that also provided favorable conditions for the relative progress at the strategic level as opposed to comprehensive progress which cover both the strategic and operational levels. First is that although there has been a divergence in priorities between the SPLA and the supporting donors in terms of transformation priorities and in terms of what levels the transformation activities should be limited at,

76.9 percent of the donor respondents reveal that the SPLA on its part cooperated (perhaps as a matter of good will) with the donors in as far as the donor transformation activities at the strategic levels were concern. The combination of the donors' will to support transformation at the strategic level and the SPLA's good will to cooperate produced some successful strategic defense products and thus explains the progress in the transformation of civil-military relations at the strategic level.

Secondly, as the transformation process was launched in 2006, there was a concurrent establishment of the civilian oversight institutions as per the provisions of the CPA and the interim constitution of Southern Sudan. The Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security was the first civilian oversight institution to be established in the late part of 2005, followed by the Ministry of SPLA Affairs in 2007. This implies that the necessary conditions for accommodating civil-military relations have been available. Thirdly, 84.6 percent reveal that the donors' choices to limit their support system at the strategic level was also guided by the assumptions that the SPLA would translate the outputs of the donor support system to the lower levels of commands through the SPLA's command chains and structures.

The nature of transformation activities undertaken by the donors provides ample evidence in support of the relative progress at the strategic levels. First of all, the US \$ 9.6 million allocated by the UK government for the transformation of the SPLA between 2006 and 20011 focused on areas at the strategic level.¹¹¹ All the advisors contracted under the UK support system for the transformation are stationed at the SPLA GHQs.¹¹² Much of the evidence shows that it was only in 2009 that the donors began to support the dissemination of the products of transformation to the lower levels of defense.¹¹³

Secondly, the South Sudan Security Strategy, which provided a framework for the coordinated application of the instruments of power to achieve security objectives of

¹¹¹ Department for Foreign and International Development, *Project Memorandum*, 4–14.

¹¹² Rands, *In Need of Review*, 36.

¹¹³ Directorate of Military Research and Transformation, *Workshop Report on SPLA Transformation Process* (Juba: SPLA GHQs, 2009), 22–23.

South Sudan, was adopted in February 2009.¹¹⁴ The SPLA Act and the SPLA White Paper on Defense, adopted and approved, respectively, in 2008 provided the framework for the Ministry of SPLA Affairs to produce defense guidance every two years with clear “planning priorities for resource allocation against an agreed time-frame.”¹¹⁵ The preceding framework entailed provisions for optimal use of resources in pursuit of specific defense objectives, definition of the required defense posture, definition of the roles and tasks of the SPLA and definition of the extent of spending.¹¹⁶ These interlinked defense decision-making and planning processes set clearly the strategic vision from which the Ministry of SPLA Affairs derives its defense objectives and concepts. Thus, a defense decision-making process involving both civilians and the military was in place by 2010 and this progress can be attributed to the donor support system and the good will of the SPLA.

Thirdly, the increased practice of involving civilian and military leaders in governing defense affairs marked a significant departure from the past, when defense matters were considered to be the exclusive domain of the military. By 2010 defense plans were developed in accordance with strategic vision and guidance authorized and approved by civilian authorities within the government of South Sudan, as illustrated by the approval of the annual defense plans and budget through the Ministry of SPLA Affairs.¹¹⁷ These institutional and policy developments marked an important step towards setting up the frameworks for civil-military relations.¹¹⁸

As depicted by the illustration in Figure 10, a strategic thought process has been set in place which follows a civil-military relations model of deriving policies and plans on the strategic vision set by the civilian leadership. For example, the Ministry of SPLA Affairs began to use the set frameworks to convert plans into budget and to allocate

¹¹⁴ Sudan Tribune, “South Sudan Security Strategy was adopted in February 2009 <http://www.sudantribune.com/South-Sudan-cabinet-passes,30238> (Accessed January 21, 2011).

¹¹⁵ SPLA GHQs, *SPLA Act*, (Juba: Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, 2008); SPLA GHQs, *SPLA White Paper on Defense*, 10–18.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ From the authors personal experience as the Head of the Department of Planning and Research, in the Directorate of Military Research at SPLA GHQs, Juba between 2005 and 2009.

¹¹⁸ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 39.

resources to activities that were approved on the basis of the acceptable procedures by 2010.¹¹⁹ The General Headquarters was equipped with the framework for determining the required capabilities, building the required readiness of the SPLA and deploying and commanding the SPLA in any operation that fell within the mission and roles of the SPLA as defined by the Constitution, the SPLA Act, and the White Paper on Defense.¹²⁰ On the whole, the processes and procedures appear to show some relative success in contrast to the periods around 2006 and 2007 when the SPLA was not managed by principles set in a White Paper on Defense which provided general guidelines and frameworks within which strategies and plans were framed and activities could take place.



Figure 10. The Strategic Thought Process after Extract from the Interim Constitution, and SPLA Policy and Strategic Documents

¹¹⁹ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 25–26.

¹²⁰ SPLA GHQs, *SPLA White paper on Defense*, 16; Government of South Sudan, *The Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan*, 59–60.

Evidently, despite the transformation progress at the strategic levels, there has been a lack of progress made by the transformation process at the lower levels of the SPLA's command. Both donor and SPLA respondents agree although there has been a significant cooperation between the donors and the SPLA, the limited progress at the lower levels is attributed to the failures to translate policies related to civil-military relations into its structures and plans of the SPLA. In addition, 82.2 percent of SPLA respondents attribute the lack of progress made by the transformation process at the lower levels of the SPLA command to the claims that there have been other priorities which the SPLA deemed urgent and which consumed most of the resources and time. One of these priorities was to development of the SPLA's combat readiness as South Sudan was faced by multiple eminent threats. The SPLA's transformation priorities therefore relegated the areas of enhancing civil-military relations at least at the operational and tactical levels to a secondary position on the list of transformation target areas. However, areas of civil-military relations in the context of enhancing civilian oversight institutions happened to be the most critical priority area for the donors which are supporting the transformation of the SPLA.

The claims by both SPLA and donor respondents as to why there were differences in progress made by the transformation at the various levels and divergence in transformation priorities between the donors and the SPLA, clearly confirm the existence of a disjuncture between the strategic level and the operational and tactical levels. Eighty-four percent of SPLA respondents reveal that a disjuncture between strategic objectives and priorities and outputs limited the success of the transformation in enhancing civilian control of the SPLA. Basically, it was difficult to meet in practice some of the transformation objectives such as downsizing which were set in accordance with strategic objectives in the respective policies. The respondents attribute the disjuncture between policies and practice to the lack of reconciliation between the defense plans and the identified needs and available resources. The most apparent evidence is the fact that the SPLA perennially ran short of funds and requested supplementary budget allocations.¹²¹

¹²¹ Rands, *In Need of Review*, 23-25; Sudan Tribune, "Southern Sudan Legislators Approve Supplementary Military Spending," *Sudan Tribune*, October 24, 2008: <http://www.sudantribune.com/South-Sudan-legislators-approves,29031> (Accessed: 12/19/1010).

This shows that the success of the transformation process in laying down institutions and policies has not guaranteed translation of these policies into outputs that produce meaningful effects on SPLA civil-military relations.

Moreover, 80.7 percent of the military respondents said that the reason why the disjuncture between policy and process continue to limit the enhancement of civil-military relations is because of the neglect by the transformation efforts to build the human capacities that would have utilized the civilian oversight institutions and processes developed. One respondent stated that: “institutions and processes do not run themselves. They have to be run by skilled and informed individuals, which in the case of the SPLA is lacking.”¹²²

Similarly, 93.5 percent of civilians interviewed claim that the failure of the transformation process to enhance civil-military relations lies in the fact that it concentrated in setting up frameworks for institutions and developing policies but these efforts did not consider training the human resources that go with those institutions. Seventy nine percent of military respondents also attributed the shortfalls and overshoot to planners and programmers within the Ministry of SPLA Affairs being bypassed in favor of ad hoc committees. SPLA documents confirm that programs often entered the budgeting phase from ad hoc committee without consultation with planners and programmers within the various Directorates, Divisions, Units and Corps, or the budget committee.¹²³ This leads to duplications in programming involving various Directorates and Units. For example, more often than not specialized units (Military Intelligence, Field Artillery, etc) organize for their own training without adequate consultations with the Directorate of Training, leading to duplication.¹²⁴

The above analysis reveals that institutional and policy developments were relatively easy to achieve but that these new institutions and policies are not yet

¹²² SPLA Lt. Col. stated in a survey questionnaire, December 3, 2010.

¹²³ SPLA Directorate of Finance, *A Manual on Public Expenditure Management for the Ministry for SPLA Affairs* (Juba: Ministry for SPLA Affairs, November, 2008), 3.

¹²⁴ Department of Military Research and Planning, *A Consolidated Report of the Training and Research Branch from 2006–2008*, 28.

enhancing control and accountability significantly. The capacities of defense institutions relevant to civil-military relations had been improved and relevant policy documents developed, but the processes and procedures within these institutions were not enough to significantly increase civilian control of the military or military accountability to the civilian government. By 2010, therefore, these institutional and policy developments and establishments of processes marked an important step towards setting up the frameworks for civil-military relations, but civilian oversight and military accountability still remained weak. This implies that there are still challenges that hinder the ability of the Ministry of SPLA Affairs and the SPLA GHQs to use the established frameworks to convert strategic policies into operational plans, budget and to allocate resources to activities that were approved on the basis of the acceptable procedures.¹²⁵

On the whole, the over focus by the donors on transforming civil-military relations through policy development at the strategic levels, and the SPLA focus on enhancing its operational effectiveness and combat readiness, caused variations in the overall progress of the transformation process on the civil-military relations areas relevant to the SPLA. The SPLA did not utilize the transformation process to go beyond establishing institutions and developing policies. With the donors focused on institution and policy development, and the SPLA focused elsewhere, there was no urgency of deeper transformation in civil-military relations.¹²⁶

E. OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Operational effectiveness goals were largely met by 2010, according to 82.2 percent of SPLA respondents and 95 percent of civilian respondents. They attribute this success to the high priority given to this goal by the SPLA. The armament inventory had increased significantly in quantity and quality.¹²⁷ Rapid responsiveness and lethality also

¹²⁵ Department of Military Research and Planning, *A Consolidated Report*, 25–26.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Adam O’Brien, *Shots in the Dark: The 2008 South Sudan Civilian Disarmament Campaign* (HSBA Sudan Working Paper No. 16, January 2009), 18; Enough Project, *Peace on the Rocks: Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement* (Centre for American Progress, February 2009), http://www.enoughproject.org/files/publications/sudan_peace_agreement_revised_0.pdf (Accessed January 21, 2011).

increased.¹²⁸ All civilian and military respondents agreed that the weaponry required for any eventuality had been acquired between 2007 and 2010. According to one civilian respondent:

The SPLA's major achievement with its transformation program is the level of armament that it has built. Armament is one area that the SPLA has lived up to the standard it had set for itself in the transformation program. May be it is because our future and security, including that of the military leaders rest on how much volume of fire the SPLA can spit.¹²⁹

For the military and political leadership, transformation of the SPLA meant first and foremost building its capabilities in terms of lethality, mobility and sustainment, although this notion of transformation is not consistent with military transformation in classical terms and in terms of the notion of RMA.¹³⁰ This notion of transformation therefore implies that in actuality, the SPLA has never transformed but rather rearmed because the transformation process of the SPLA missed out on the doctrinal and organization elements.¹³¹ The fact that the annual defense budget remained at 40 percent of government expenditures and the SPLA was given supplementary budget allocations when requested shows that its priorities were shared by the executive and legislative branches of the GoSS.¹³² This also explains why there was no dissemination of the policy development framework beyond the strategic level. And it also explains the failure to downsize or cut salaries, since keeping the morale of the soldiers high is an important component of fighting power. A senior member of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) summarized the prioritization for capability development and

¹²⁸ Ukraine State Service for Export Control (DSECU), *Information on the Volume of International Arms Transfers Realized by Ukraine in 2007* (http://www.dsecu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=40683&cat_id=34940 accessed May 10, 2010); Ukraine State Service for Export Control, "Submission to UN Register of Conventional Arms, 18 June 2008 http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.NSF Accessed May 10, 2010; Ukraine State Service for Export Control, Report of the Freight/Cargo Manifest for MV Faina, 1 September 2008. http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.NSF Accessed May 10, 2010.

¹²⁹ A prominent member of South Sudan Legislative Assembly response in the survey questionnaire, November 16, 2010.

¹³⁰ SPLA GHQs, *SPLA White Paper on Defense*, 13; Ralf Emmers, "Securitization," in *Contemporary Security Studies*, ed. Alan Collins, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 137–151; From author's personal observation as the Head of the Department of Military Research and Planning in the Directorate of Training Branch.

¹³¹ Sloan, *Military Transformation and Modern Warfare*, 1–2.

¹³² *Sudan Tribune*, "Southern Sudan Legislators Approve Supplementary Military Spending," 2008.

operational effectiveness thus: “As the north continues to build its military capability, we shall also continue with the same in the south. We have therefore agreed in the Assembly that transformation must mean building the teeth first and the tail later.”

F. CONCLUSION

These research findings confirm the initial hypothesis that security concerns are determinant in military self-transformation, and the SPLA is not an exception. The research reveals that the SPLA transformation process has progressed furthest on the combat effectiveness goal. This trend in the transformation of the SPLA in turns inhibits any effective progress in transforming the SPLA’s civil-military relations, current force structure and training system. The SPLA’s primary transformation focus has therefore been to develop the required capabilities in the form of operational effectiveness in order to fend off any possible threats. This transformation focus basically relegated the other transformation targeted areas (force structure, training and civil-military relations) to secondary priorities.

Additionally, there have been divergent but not necessarily conflicting priorities in the transformation program for the SPLA between the external donors and the SPLA. While the SPLA’s main priority is to focus on combat effectiveness, much of the focus of the donors has been on governance and management of the security system. The SPLA has managed to steer the transformation process to meet its lists of priority which is building operational and combat readiness. Although, donor support system in the transformation process which began in 2006 managed to establish a defense institutions and policies involving the SPLA, they are yet to be translated into viable defense products. The divergence has thus limited mutual assistance to permeate the efforts of transformation throughout the echelons of the SPLA, and hence affected the overall pace of transformation of the SPLA. Therefore, there are variations in the levels of progress of transformation of the SPLA.

IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

A. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The objective of this research has been to assess the effects of the SPLA self-transformation process and the donor supported transformation initiative on the SPLA and to also establish why the effects turned out to be what they are. Measured against the four transformation areas described in the first chapter, the SPLA self-transformation and the donor supported transformation initiatives have had varying effects on the SPLA by 2010. On the whole compared to 2005, the area of operational effectiveness experienced changes more than the areas of force structure, training and civil-military relations mainly because the SPLA self-transformation efforts which have been driven by security threats were more dominant than the donor supported transformation efforts which were SSR-driven.

1. Force Structure

Comparatively, by 2010 the SPLA force structure did not meet the transformation objectives. Although the SPLA managed to obtain a force structure framework in the form of three interdependent documents: organizational structure of the SPLA GHQs, organizational structure of the SPLA Infantry Division and organizational structure of the SPLA support units, the framework was not translated into practice. The force size thus has remained huge; force accountability has been inadequate and rank alignments with the specified force structure remains top heavy. Compared to 2005, the SPLA total parade has basically gone up by almost 87 percent as of 2010, hence causing a dramatic rise of the SPLA annual budget for salary by almost 74.7 percent.

The SPLA did not consider reducing force size as critical to its priorities because doing so could endangered its ability to retain and increase combat effectiveness as human resource remained the most important military assert that it can bring to bear. Contrary to the SPLA's transformation objective of realignment of the ranks in accordance with a defined force structure, as of 2010, most of the divisions had multiple

discrepancies with regards to ranks alignment. A classical example is the 4th infantry division which by 2010 had excess ranks of about 14.2 percent. Therefore by 2010 no progress was made towards the transformation objective set in 2006 which aimed at right sizing and defining a force structure which is affordable.

2. Training

The SPLA training system by 2010 as a result of the transformation efforts, has witnessed a series of training products such the development of Training Aide Memoires and syllabuses, construction of new training facilities, and retraining of about 90 percent of officers and soldiers. These products, however, have not contributed to the overall changes of the SPLA's soldiers as of 2010 in accordance with the transformation objective of professionalization of the SPLA. The various training that has been conducted has not contributed to changes in the guerrilla ethos and modus operandi within the SPLA. Cases of indiscipline and disorderliness among soldiers and officers still remain challenging. As of 2010, soldiers have been cited as one of the sources of insecurity, similar to the various citations in 2005 and 2006. The culture of professionalism within the SPLA has not been fostered.

At the system level, the transformation efforts had no effect on training. The training system remained the same as in 2005. Although a series of training aid memoires were developed, by 2010 the SPLA still lacked a functional training management cycle system that provides a framework for developing Mission Essential Task List (METL), establishing training priorities and allocation of resources, planning, execution and assessing the state of training which would give feedback to the overall training system. A continuous and measureable training for readiness system was also not in place, therefore making it difficult to provide a logical framework against which the SPLA would monitor and evaluate its training. As of 2010, the SPLA still lacked a systematic professional military-education (PME). The effect of transformation therefore is not deep enough to warrant any proclamation of change in the training system. The intended effects of the transformation process through training therefore have not been achieved to a large extent.

All in all, by 2010, the SPLA training program continued to focus on combat readiness, with minimum time spent on discipline and on transforming the long developed guerrilla ethos. Compared to 2005, the transformation program through training has not contributed towards the attainment of professionalism as indicated by the following: First, Literacy which is an important ingredient for professionalism is still very low. Illiteracy level within the SPLA has not changed by 2010 as it remained at 90 percent among soldiers and 70 percent among officers. Secondly, the guerrilla ethos has not changed much as indicated by the rampant indiscipline. Thirdly, by 2010 the SPLA still did not have a functional professional military education system, which enhanced *officership*.

3. Civil-Military Relations

Compared to 2005, civil-military relations involving the SPLA changed minimally by 2010 because the transformation process effected only a few changes in civil-military relations at the strategic level. Basically, as of 2010, the designing of the civil-military relations frameworks and policies marked a small but yet important departure from a state of civil-military relations which had no strategic policy framework in 2005 to one which became anchored on policy frameworks such as the South Sudan Security Strategy, SPLA White Paper on Defense, SPLA Acts and Rules and Regulations. By 2010 therefore, the SPLA had a framework which provided for a strategic thought process based on civil-military relations principles.

The establishment of civil-military relations frameworks at the strategic levels at least put institutions and systems in place that provided opportunities for a civil-military relations exercise but the practice of civil-military relations still remains minimum with limited changes compared to 2005. For example, the “institutional control mechanisms” on the SPLA by the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Parliamentary Committees on Security and Defense remained limited because capacities continue to remain low.

4. Operational Effectiveness

Although it is difficult to measure operational effectiveness quantitatively because measuring it experientially is virtually impossible and it would involve actual combat,¹³³ the SPLA operational capabilities as of 2010 have improved tremendously compared to 2005. Compared to 2005 and the years before where the SPLA was under constant pressure to deploy forces into combat, by 2010 the SPLA has had ample time to obtain combat readiness training. Compared to 2005, the SPLA's armament inventory has increased and improved by 2010 although numbers and costs have remained classified. New weapons ranging from infantry primary rifles to artillery pieces have replaced the old ones. The purchase of over 400 trucks, 1000 jeeps (land cruisers) and about 10 MI-17 Helicopters has improved SPLA's mobility and enhanced its capacity for rapid response and forward deployment.

Compared to 2005, the SPLA soldier's morale which is an important component of fighting power has also been boosted because of the payment of salaries to the soldiers, regular distribution of uniforms and availability of food ration and medical facilities. On the whole, the SPLA transformation process progressed furthest on the combat effectiveness goal. This improvement is attributed to the extensive political will and commitment to focus on these areas because of the looming threats of attacks.

B. CONCLUSION

Drawing on the hypothesis of this research, the overall findings reveals a lot about transformation process within the SPLA and transformation in general of an intact guerrilla armed force during a post-conflict situation. The overall findings therefore confirm significantly much of the research hypothesis. First, this research on SPLA transformation confirms that when security concerns are the main antecedent condition for military transformation, the primary aim of a military transformation is improved combat effectiveness so that it can "fight and win its nation's war."¹³⁴ This strategic

¹³³ Philip Hayward, "The Measurement of Combat Effectiveness," JSTOR: Operations Research, Vol. 16, No. 2, March-April 1968, 314. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/168759> (Accessed November 23, 2010).

¹³⁴ West and Reimer, A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army Fiscal Year 1997, <http://www.army.mil/aps/97/ch1.htm> (Accessed August 30, 2010).

thought process has been confirmed by the findings of the research which reveal that the main area that has been guiding transformation decision making processes within the SPLA Headquarters has not been the policy stipulations on the strategic documents such as the White Paper on Defense which provides a transformation framework but rather the ever looming threats based on the estimation that the adversary in the north was likely to renege on the peace deal and attack the SPLA positions. Perceived threats have therefore provided a big push for the SPLA HQs to continuously focus on building operational effectiveness which entails building capabilities in terms of lethality, mobility and sustainment, as opposed to holistic defense transformation which entails transforming organization, process, personnel and technology.

The preceding premise for transformation implies that the transformation approach undertaken by the SPLA was not consistent with the standard definition of the word “transformation” or even RMA which combines technology, organization, innovative process and personnel development.¹³⁵ The SPLA’s transformation process did not bring about new technological changes which contribute to drastic changes of old systems and processes. The transformation process did not cause changes in doctrine, tactics and procedures that determine how the SPLA’s force structure is organized, trained, and equipped. On the whole, the transformation process did not create new operational concepts. This notion of transformation therefore implies that in actual sense, the SPLA has never transformed but rather rearmed because the transformation process of the SPLA missed out on the doctrinal, technological and organization elements. The lesson brought forward by this research is that the SPLA did not transform but rather rearm.

Secondly, there is a validation of the hypothesis that the application of SSR during post conflict on an intact military such as the SPLA with well-developed ethos does not yield immediate effect. Indeed the SSDDT transformation program which has been SSR-driven only manages to lay down frameworks and policies for civil-military relations at the strategic level, but these frameworks and policies have not be translated to

¹³⁵ SPLA GHQs, *SPLA White Paper on Defense*, 13; Emmers, *Securitization*, 137–151.

overall changes in the organization, process and personnel at the operational and tactical levels. The overall pace of SSR-driven transformation was thus affected by the fact that divergence between the SPLA priorities and donor priorities and continues to limit mutual assistance to permeate the efforts of transformation throughout the echelons of the SPLA because of the contending priorities between those of the SPLA and those of the donors. The process of military transformation and the intervention of security-sector reform in South Sudan have been faced with a unique situation, in which military stalemate led to a compromise that in turn left a guerrilla military with an autonomous status in the South while preparations were made for a referendum on secession.¹³⁶ This scenario in South Sudan has therefore hampered to a large extent both military transformation and security-sector reform efforts, as they are dealing with transforming a guerrilla military, with its own established and intact ethos.

On the whole, the findings of this research from a wider perspective continue to dispute the claim by some of the western donors' approaches to military transformation, which seems to imply that RMA is appropriate for Western militaries and SSR as appropriate for developing countries is limited to some extent. The overall findings imply that this differentiation that prescribes RMA for Western militaries and SSR for the militaries of developing countries tends to undermine the fact that the militaries of developing countries, just like other militaries, are equally driven by transformation objectives that seek to build their capacities to fulfill the traditional military roles (fighting and winning wars in defense of the nation's interests) because of the ever perceived security threats. Thus, for as long as the western donors' approaches to military transformation continue to go down the path of the mentioned differentiation, there will be to a large extent divergence and conflicting priorities in the transformation program between the external donors and the militaries being targeted for transformation. The military which is a target of transformation will have combat effectiveness as its main priority of transformation, while donors will focus on governance and management of the security system.

¹³⁶ IGAD Secretariat, *The Security Arrangement Protocol: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army*, 87.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

As a follow on from the conclusion that first the SPLA transformation effort was flawed because the SPLA simply rearmed itself rather than effecting changes in its organization, personnel and process; secondly, that the SPLA transformation process progressed furthest on the combat effectiveness goal because of perceived security threats therefore relegating the other transformation targeted areas (force structure, training and civil-military relations) to secondary priorities; thirdly, that the SSR-driven transformation program cannot be that effective in a post conflict situation that the SPLA is in, this research makes a series of recommendations:

First and foremost the research recommends that the political and military leadership in South Sudan together with the supporting international partners develop through a transformation dialogue a consensus on a definition of transformation which is relevant and timely for the SPLA. Such a consensus must revolve around what the most critical elements of transformation for the SPLA entails. As a recommendation, perhaps some of the most critical elements worth considering as priorities for transformation could include a combination of force structure, ethos (mindset) and processes. In specific terms these priority areas for transformation could include: changing the way the SPLA is organized, trained and equipped; changing the doctrine and procedures that determines how the SPLA is employed; changing the way the SPLA is led and how the SPLA future leaders are prepared.

Secondly, in light of the need to transform and build combat effectiveness as designed by the SPLA's transformation objectives, the SPLA must also maintain some of its past guerrilla characteristics, such as the ability to operate with meager resources but yet accomplish its mission; and the past ability to fight with guerrilla tactics. Clearly, Africa's most fought wars since the first quarter of the twentieth century have been intra-state wars mainly involving state militaries against a complex mix of categories of non-

state opponents such as guerrillas and insurgents.¹³⁷ This type of warfare will continue to define the nature of military threats for many years to come in Africa and South Sudan will not be an exception.

Thirdly, as the research conclusion reveals that much of the transformation interventions were limited to policy therefore strategic levels, there is evidence that there have not been functional mechanisms for translating the transformation plans into practical plans. The research therefore recommends that future transformation strategy must bear with it practical plans and programs which contain Objective Verifiable Indicators (OVIs), timeframe and strict responsibilities.

Fourthly, there is an indication from the research findings that the SPLA's transformation efforts have been bogged down with inherent resistance to change, just like with most militaries which are intact and have well developed ethos. In the case of the SPLA, undertaking any transformation efforts which can be embraced and supported across all levels of the SPLA's echelon requires what one would refer to as a comprehensive and a thorough set of transformation preconditions which entail a break from the self-denial that the past *modus operandi* does not work in the current scenario. Such a break requires giving up all perceptions as a result of a developed positive self image with attributes that the SPLA has been the sole body that brought about the achievements as epitomized by the signing of the CPA, and that it was the main guarantor that deterred the government in Khartoum from reneging the CPA, therefore all about it is fine and there is no reason for changes.

Indeed, given the fact that the SPLA has a well developed ethos and is still consisting of well entrenched resistance to change, transformation of the SPLA into a regular, professional, non-partisan modern army that is appropriate, adequate, accountable, affordable and operationally effective" will be hard to achieve. Assessing the SPLA transformation effects at this point in time may not reveal much as the time spent on transformation is not long enough for ultimate conclusion. As John Kotter states, "The most general lesson to be learned from the more successful cases is that the change

¹³⁷ Clapham, *Introduction: Analyzing African Insurgencies*, 1–2.

process goes through a series of phases that, in total, usually require a considerable length of time. Skipping steps creates only the illusion of speed and never produces satisfactory results” and “making critical mistakes in any of the phases can have a devastating impact, slowing momentum and negating hard-won gains.”

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Subj: CHANGE IN DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT FOR ADB377658

1. Request a distribution statement change for:

ADB377658: Gedima, Africano Mande. *From a Guerrilla Force to a State Military: An Assessment of the Transformation of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) from 2006-2010*. Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, December 2011. UNCLASSIFIED [Distribution authorized to DoD Components only; Foreign Government Information; December 14, 2011. Other requests for this document must be referred to the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army Directorate of Military Research].

2. Upon consultation with NPS subject matter experts and external subject matter experts, the School has determined that this thesis may be released to the public with unlimited distribution effective January 12, 2016.

3. POC for this request is George Goncalves, Librarian, Restricted Resources and Services, 831-656-2061, DSN 756-2061 (gmgoncal@nps.edu).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "E. Uhlinger", is positioned above the printed name.

ELEANOR S. UHLINGER
University Librarian