



**AFRICA CENTER
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Botswana Case Study

**Working Paper
(Preliminary Draft)**

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1. Introduction:

Botswana attained independence in 1966 and has since grown significantly from a nondescript and desolate British Protectorate to a middle income status country as defined by the World Bank's economic ratings. Some scholars and political commentators have attributed this to a prudent and cautious formative leadership that recognized adherence to strong national principles and the need for a sound economic base for national development. These principles are in no order of priority; Democracy, Development, Self Reliance, Unity and Botho (Humanity).²

It is of little argument if any, that these national principles and constitutional core values have sustained the country to date, albeit with bumpy rides along the way. It is the respect for constitutional imperatives such as human rights and the rule of law, coupled with economic prudence that the country has indeed been exemplary in a number of ways. Over the years the country has enjoyed relative peace and prosperity, consequently earning herself international accolades with superlatives such as "a shining example of democracy" and "the miracle of Africa". Whether or not these accolades remain relevant today is a subject for debate elsewhere.

In the mid 1990s, the dynamics of the country's economic outlook as well as the social landscape and values were instrumental for the country to realize the need for change by way of a strategic guiding document:- Vision 2016: "Towards Prosperity for All". This vision with its seven pillars together with the National Development Plans (NDPs) could be viewed as the blue prints for any strategic policy development of the country. The seven pillars are:- An Educated, Informed Nation; A Prosperous, Productive and Innovative Nation; A Compassionate and Caring Nation; A Safe and Secure Nation; An Open, Democratic and Accountable Nation; A Moral and Tolerant Nation; A United and Proud Nation.

In the strict sense of definitions, Botswana does not have a National Security Strategy but rather relies heavily on the legislative instruments in the form of the respective Acts of Parliament pertaining to Defence, Public Safety, Justice, Intelligence etc. The Vision 2016 and these legislative instruments have since formed the national core points of entry for any strategic considerations. Of course these pieces of legislation have been found wanting over time, hence the need for a comprehensive national security strategy became evident in the quest for an effective and accountable security architecture.

The country also had to take into account her international obligations to recognize some strategic guidelines such as

- the UN "Millenium Development Goals"⁴ which are complementary to Vision 2016;
- it was also instructive to be aware of the African Union's genesis of the Security Policy Framework from the 1991 OAU "Security Calabash"³ (one of the first documents to appreciate human security) to the 2007 AU Draft Security Policy Framework, later adopted in 2011 as the AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform which sets out some enabling recommendations for reforms.
- Regionally the strategic environmental assessment took note of the SADC guidelines as enshrined in the "Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO).⁵

This paper intends to give a narrative of what transpired in the NSSD process, giving a broad outline of the concept of national security strategy that was envisaged; its processes; the inherent challenges associated with such a profound change and the lessons learnt thereof.

2. Process (Development and Implementation):

Entry Point, Initiation and Legal and Institutional Foundation:

Sometime between end of 2002 and early 2003, the then Commander of Botswana Defence Force (BDF), felt highly constrained in his vision to develop a small professional, effective and accountable Defence Force against the backdrop of the ever scarce national resources. He took a giant leap to address the strategy vacuum that hitherto existed in the overall security space of Botswana by requesting for a Defence Review. This initiative went a long way in setting the tone for the country's attempted NSSD.

His point of departure was that there ought to be a specific direction from his political masters regarding the country's national interests and existential threats so that he could plan his defence capabilities accordingly. To this end, he set up a task force of two high ranking staff officers to draft a Defence Review Proposal for submission to the Defence Council - a superintendent authority over the general affairs of the BDF.

Around mid-March 2003 the Defence Council accepted in principle that there should be a Defence Policy Review Commission and that the Minister for Presidential Affairs and Public Administration should motivate a draft Cabinet Memorandum for consideration by Cabinet. It was not until end of May 2005 (6 months after general elections) that the Permanent Secretary to the President (PSP) circulated a draft cabinet memorandum to that effect. The long period between the motivation in 2003 and plan of action in 2006 could be attributed to the preparations for the 2004 general elections taking priority on the Executive's calendar; and the subsequent new Ministerial appointments post the elections could possibly have slowed down the motivation. It would appear that the Ministry for Presidential Affairs and Public Administration was not adequately resourced in human capital to undertake the defence policy review (no Ministry of Defence then).

Yet another very critical variable was the transition of the presidency in 2008. It was not a given that the incoming President would take ownership of the project and so it was with abundance of caution that the project could be tabled before him. Luckily a Minister for Defence Justice and Security was appointed under the Office of the President and it just so happened that he was a retired Brigadier General turned politician. This is one of the few Cabinet Ministers who fully understood the intricacies of the NSSD as well as its benefits to the nation and thus became both the "driver and ambassador" during his tenure.

The retirement of the BDF Commander in 2004 also seems to have had an adverse impact in the continuum for expediency. There was a general flux in the security environment between 2004 and 2007 regarding the expected Defence Review. The ensuing strategic drift had to be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

The Drafting, Consultation Process and Stakeholders:

In early September 2007 it was agreed that the National Security Strategy Review process would be driven by three stakeholder components viz: The Steering Group (SG) comprising some security department leaders at Permanent Secretary level and chaired by the Minister for Defence Justice and Security (MDJS); The Working Group (WG) of same stakeholder departments and chaired by the Permanent Secretary (MDJS); and The Secretariat (a team of six) drawn from stakeholder officials at minimum level of Deputy Director and headed by a National Security Strategy Review Coordinator - a Brigadier General from the BDF. The lead

stakeholder departments were Defence, National Intelligence, Police, Prisons, Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Finance. A very important point to note with regards to state bureaucracy is that although the process started in earnest in September 2007, it was only formally approved for commencement by Cabinet at the end of June 2008 through a Presidential Directive CAB 19(B)/2008.

The aforesaid groups held an inaugural meeting in September 2007 and resolved that the process would be covered under seven stages:- Strategic Environment Assessment; Threat Assessment; Institutional Framework; Gap Analysis; Institutional Policy Framework; Implementation; and Monitoring & Evaluation. Although these groups were drawn from the security sector departments, it did not necessarily mean that all were conversant with the nature of the work at hand. Therefore this called for some work-in-progress training by Head of the Secretariat to bring the members of the Secretariat to an appreciable degree of comprehension in terms of the concept, research and drafting of documents for subsequent presentation to the Working Group who in turn would make submissions to the Steering Group for a thorough scrutiny before approval.

A number of challenges, both administrative and technical were experienced throughout these formulation stages and the process took much longer than was initially envisaged, from eighteen months to almost three years! It should be appreciated that except for the Secretariat, the other two groups could only meet at scheduled intervals, taking them away from their daily office routines. Unfortunately these scheduled meetings experienced some disruptions due to the members' exigency of duty elsewhere. The formulation stages of NSSD process were eventually approved as follows: - Stage 1 approved in December 2007; Stages 2 & 3 approved in September 2008; and Stages 4 & 5 approved in August 2009.

The initial consultative process could only be arranged after the formal commencement approval by the Executive branch of government. Even then it was only a limited consultative arrangement by way of a seminar with participants drawn from a wide spectrum covering government departments, Political Parties, House of Chiefs, Non-Governmental Organisations, Members of the Academia and the Media. The purpose of this seminar was mainly to raise public awareness and bring into the fold what the general public thought or perceived as national interests and associated threats. Admittedly the seminar was not representative enough a sample to guarantee national ownership but their input was crucial for subsequent analytical validation when it came to identifying and prioritizing on national interests and associated threats. The general modus operandi for Botswana government consultative process is that the Executive would caucus on the issue at hand; sell it to the legislature who after acceptance then take it to their respective constituencies. In this instance, a Presidential Directive was issued, invariably short changing the usual beneficiaries in the consultative process.

Involvement of Foreign Expertise:

It would appear that Cabinet recommended that some external assistance be solicited for the Defence Review as evidenced by a diplomatic request for some expertise from the British High Commission in October 2006. The British government, through its Security Sector Development Advisory Team (SSDAT) expertly advised that it would not be in the best interests for the government of Botswana to conduct a defence review without first completing a National Security Strategy. This was an informed recommendation emanating from a National Security Strategy Review (NSSR) scoping study that was undertaken by

SSDAT between March and May of 2007. It was very important to understand that the NSSR would be a national overarching strategy that would inform all other specific institutional policies such as the Defence Policy.

The SSDAT agreed to attend scheduled meetings of the WG as and when required. These meetings took place every three months on average between 2007 and 2009. The SSDAT involvement was however, unceremoniously curtailed during the Gap Analysis/Institutional Framework stages when it became apparent that the process was encountering some institutional resistance from one of the lead departments in the Directorate of Intelligence and Security Services (DISS). This led to SSDAT informal withdrawal from any further assistance with the project. For all intents and purposes the SSDAT was only to advise on the process, following best international practices and this is what obtained throughout the formulation stages of the process.

Division of Labor and Lead Agency:

It was a leap of good faith on the part of the Executive and the huge sectoral responsibility under its jurisdiction, that the MDJS assumed the role of lead agency. This involuntarily set up the Ministry as a surrogate custodian of NSSD by default.

The other stakeholder sectoral agencies executed their work independently but attended scheduled meetings as and when called upon. Ordinarily the lead agency would have been under the Office of the President but was not so due to the organizational structure deficiencies thereto. For example, if a formally legislated National Security Council was in place it would have been the designated authority for both the custody of the derived NSSD and the resultant National Security Policy that would have subsequently informed all other agency reforms and strategic policies.

Inter-agency Coordination and Collaboration mechanisms

The import of the NSSD was never meant to reinvent the wheel. However, a bone of contention was with regards to the institutional framework "reengineering" vis-à-vis roles & restructuring reforms which could have led to new agencies, combinations or rendering others redundant and obsolete. Unfortunately these noble observations were akin to stepping on one's toes and led to downright indifference and subtle turf wars on the part of some key stakeholders.

The advent of the NSSD formulation found in place an inherent status quo of institutional silo formations with their perceived power bases and organizational cultures. In particular, the legislative provisions of the DIS Act with a skewed power concentration reserved for the Director General and the President rendered the inter-agency and collaboration mechanisms difficult to adopt. The DISS had come into being in April 2008 with a dark cloud over its head. Its set-up had always been controversial even in Parliament when its Bill was debated.

Be that as it may, the formulation process progressed without the participation of the DISS until the recommendations for Institutional Reform and Policy Framework were drafted and adopted. Consequently the arrogance, non-cooperation and the malfeasant disposition of the DISS Director General brought the NSSD to its knees at a stage when the recommendations for institutional reforms were ready for the President's briefing and submission to Cabinet.

The situation was further aggravated by the NSSD Coordinator's term of contract coming to an end (just two days after the President's briefing), with no administrative provisions in place for an extension. The Minister for Defence Justice and Security who had unreservedly owned

the process had also resigned earlier on pending a court case of his alleged corruption. He was subsequently cleared of all the corruption charges and returned to the same office but he became a lone voice of reason in the wilderness. These two events could only be described as unfortunate because it would appear there was nobody left thereafter to challenge the establishment to continue with the project. .

Resource Allocation and Implementation Plan.

The respective agencies were to use their already existing NDP Nine budget allocations for the NSSD. It was also envisaged that they would be well positioned to draft and present their implementation plan estimates for consolidation into the NDP Ten.

The British government assisted by sponsoring the inaugural NSSD seminar as well as the training of two members of the Secretariat who attended two security practitioners' short courses (a NSSR Global Facilitation Network course and a Strategic Planning for National Security course) in the United Kingdom.

External Partnerships

Any other external partnerships were left for the individual agencies to initiate or continue with as per their agreements. A case in point was the collaboration of the BDF with the USA Office of the Secretary of Defence (OSD) for their Defence Resources Management Study Programme which was to beef up their NSSD implementation plan.

3. National Security Strategy Document:

Purpose, Objectives and Coverage:

The above were well articulated to leave no room for ambiguity so that all the stakeholder agencies could develop such strategies as would be required to address the respective threats in an efficient, affordable and accountable manner.

Definition of security and Identification and prioritization of security threats:

The definition of security was drawn from the constitutional imperatives and acknowledgement of the contemporary view premised on the security/development/governance & oversight nexus. This concept is not fully understood nor well comprehended at all levels of government to the extent that most members of the executive as well as high ranking civil service officials relegated it to the traditional state referent security. Parliamentarians were also found limited on substance in their debates on national security. The NSSD was viewed as a "BDF thing".

For the first time ever, the NSSD was able to identify and prioritise national security threats; further tasking appropriate security agencies for their specific policy development.

Linkage with Other Sectoral Security Strategies and Sub-national Levels:

It became evident during the Institutional Framework and Policy Development stages that the majority of the agencies had policies in place or were in the process of drafting. The only thing to do was to ensure that the respective agencies aligned their policies to the national security

goals and objectives in order to deal with the corresponding threats appropriately. Coordination was highly recommended where duplication of effort seemed prevalent.

Confidentiality:

The formulation process was not in itself secret but the contents thereof were treated confidentially and the reporting lines followed the normal government classification procedures. Any confidential information deemed necessary for public consumption would have been declassified accordingly.

4. Security Oversight:

Oversight Institutions and Mechanisms

There are Parliamentary Oversight Committees responsible for the individual security agencies. However, these committees lack technical staffing to ensure a well informed responsibility on their part. There is also a Parliamentary Accounts Committee which calls on all agency leaders to account and their work is informed by the Auditor General's annual reports which scrutinize all government expenditure.

Periodic Re-assessment of Security Threats

Due to lack of a coordinated institutional forum, the periodic re-assessment of security threats is left to the respective agencies. Under the present dispensation the reporting to the Executive seems to be the sole prerogative of the DISS.

5. Conclusion:

Although the main objective was not totally achieved, several lessons could be learnt from the whole exercise in particular, with regards to leadership. The strategic environment prevailing at the time of the NSSD inception provided a good opportunity for the country to prove itself as an example of a liberal democracy with all its tenets of a safe and secure nation. A completed NSSD would have been a stark contrast to most cases of NSSD which are a result of post conflict or transitional states decisions which are usually accompanied by lots of donor influence on the host country. The uncoerced initiative for a defence review was a rare open book test for Botswana government to introspect on their effectiveness with respect to accountability, governance and oversight which ought to have been relentlessly pursued by the executive for a futuristic united and proud nation.

Consequently the lack of a comprehensive NSSD has seen the country take a nosedive into a pit of security threats that were at the most peripheral but now escalating into unchartered territory. Corruption and money laundering have skyrocketed because of lack of accountability, whereas clear strategic recommendations were formulated to thwart such threats. The political leadership in their respected wisdom, need a strong, knowledgeable and well informed arm of advice (eg: National Security Advisor) so that a sense of professionalism could prevail in strategic spheres of national security.

The Botswana NSSD did not come to its rightful conclusion because it was a test of transformational change against an entrenched absolute executive power base.

Any hope of resuscitating the NSSD must take cognizance of the following five main factors which were overly detrimental to a noble and just course and should be taken home as food for thought:

- Lack of political will at executive level
- Preexisting pieces of legislation conferring excessive powers on the highest offices of the land.
- Weak Oversight mechanisms
- Insufficient preparation due to little or no comprehension of the NSSD across the entire stakeholder spectrum.
- Unnecessary battles of sabotage by some critical stakeholders due to protection of personal turfs.

NOTES

1. *(Ret.) Brig. Gaseikanngwe Ace Peke was a senior staff officer in the BDF who was a task force member of the Defence Review Proposal. He was privy to all the Defence Council deliberations on the subject and later seconded to the Office of the President as the National Security Strategy Coordinator/Head of Secretariat for the entire duration of the Botswana National Security Strategy Review Project; from September 2007 to March 2009 and a further two years up to March 2011 on contract basis after retirement. All the information contained in this document is first hand, drawn from his personal experiences during his tenure at the Ministry of Defence Justice and Security.*
2. *These principles are as contained in the Botswana Vision 2016 document.*
3. *The OAU Heads of States met in Kampala in May 1991 for their Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa. These conference items were then identified as calabashes for discussion and adoption in the resultant Kampala Document. <https://www/sarpn.org/documents>*
4. *Botswana's Millenium Development Goals Situation as reported in the UNDP document of March 2008. <http://www.unbotswana.org/bw/undp/mdg>*
5. *A SADC policy document that spells out sectoral responsibilities for cooperation by member states on Politics, Defence and Security. [https://www.sadc.int/files/Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan](https://www.sadc.int/files/Regional%20Indicative%20Strategic%20Development%20Plan)*