DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF THE SECURITY SECTOR: BASIS AND THEORY

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Outline

• Introduction
• Importance of the Security Sector
• Basis of Democratic Control
• Theory of Democratic Control
• Outline of Democratic Control
• Challenges of Democratic Control
• Conclusion
Introduction

• Effective governance of the security sector is a crucial issue for fledgling democracies
• Management of the Monopoly on Violence (Max Weber)
• Proper Governance and Regulation of the security sector require Trained, Well Informed Actors
• Governance according to the principles of democratic control and accountability
• Relevance, Role, Missions, Financing and Management of Security Forces in Society
• Security Forces and Political Participation: Apolitical or Non-Interference in Politics?
• Political Role of the Army: What Role and How?
Importance of the Security Sector

• Security is essential for effective and sustainable development

• The Security Sector must be staffed with qualified, well-managed people acting within the limits of an institutional framework defined by law

• When badly governed, the security sector becomes the actual source of insecurity

• When badly managed, it hampers development, discourages investments and helps perpetuate poverty

• Security is a fragile common asset, which must be protected by a multisector strategy devised, overseen and implemented by the stakeholders

• The active role played by parliament, the media and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) guarantees that control is not only civil but above all democratic.
Basis of Democratic Control

• Clausewitz: war is the continuation of policy by other means, so the rifle must serve the policy and not the other way around.
• Even though power grows out of the barrel of gun (according to Mao), policy controls the gun and not the other way around.
• How do we reconcile protection by the army, on the one hand, with protection against the army, on the other?
• To limit the spheres of influence so that mutual trust and cooperation will prevail.
• According to Huntington, there can be no effective democracy without democratic control: Objective or Subjective.
• Quis custodiet ipsos custodies? Who should guard the guardian? Who oversees the overseer?
• Democratic control in Traditional Africa: Civil Monarch in charge of the Army.
• Two (2) documented coups d’état in history: Sakoura in Mali (1285) and Askia Mohammed in the Songhai Empire (1493).
Theory of Democratic Control

• As armed offshoots of the State, security forces are mere tools of the political authorities
• But they deserve a degree of professional autonomy
• The mission, role and responsibilities for the security forces must be established by the civil authorities and written into the constitution
• Subordination of armed forces to elected representatives
• Make sure that the armed forces serve the societies that they are protecting, and that the military policies and capabilities are in line with the political objectives and economic resources
• Democratic control in Africa should conform to Rebecca Schiff’s “theory of concordance” or Douglas Bland’s “shared responsibility
Outline of Democratic Control

• Detect and prevent abuses, arbitrary or illegal and unconstitutional behavior
• Demand that the Government account for how the taxpayers’ money gets used
• Make sure that the policies enacted by Parliament are actually implemented
• Increase the transparency of the Government’s activities and boost the citizens’ trust in the Government
• Powers of Parliament: To question the Executive; to access sensitive or classified information and places; to gather evidence; to officially request, start or conduct investigations; to publish conclusions and recommendations without thereby compromising sensitive information, etc.
Challenges to Democratic Control

• Constraints in terms of legitimacy: Nature of representativeness; Wrongly-elected representatives
• Political constraints: Inability to stand up to one’s political party; partisan nature of the Assembly
• Constraints on authority: lack of legal authority granted by the law or conventions
• Institutional constraints: institutional deficiencies can hamper effective parliamentary control
• Constraints in terms of capabilities: lack of institutional capabilities or skills; lack of human and material resources
• Even simple internal rules of Parliament can pose an obstacle to good governance of the security sector
Conclusion

• The security Forces also have a duty of loyalty toward the State that employs them in the taxpayers’ name.
• Give advice on devising security policy/defense and assistance to carry it out
• But they do not define it: doctors do not define health policy and teachers do not define education policy
• The Security Forces are directly accountable to the government, and the government, in turn, is accountable to parliament
• Principles of good governance and rule of law also apply to the security and defense forces.
• The Media and Civil Society Organizations can also play a role in Democratic Control.
Thank you for your attention
Questions, Comments and Suggestions?