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DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF THE SECURITY SECTOR: BASIS AND THEORY

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Outline

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- Importance of the Security Sector
- Basis of Democratic Control
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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?



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