



**AFRICA CENTER
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Burkina Faso Case Study

Working Paper

**Colonel-Major Aime Barthelemy
Simpore
Director, National Center for Strategic
Studies – Burkina Faso**

July 2020

BURKINA FASO NSP/NSS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Burkina Faso National Security Policy and Strategy: Requirement for National Legitimacy, Strategic Coherence and Operational Effectiveness of National Security.

Burkina Faso National Security Policy (NSP) is a set of guidance, options and objectives defined to promote and defend the core interests of the nation. It asserts the sovereignty of Burkina Faso as an independent nation freely exercising its choices and responsibly assuming its national, regional and international sovereign obligations.

This new Burkina Faso security governance and political reference framework is the outcome of a nation-wide participatory and inclusive exercise which gathered all the country's representatives. It lays the foundations of the national security fabric as it relates to socio-economic development and sets out a political vision and strategic objectives for the next 30 years.

Burkina Faso NSP enshrines a strategic paradigm shift in security governance. The new strategic approach is holistic. Its rationale lies in the belief that the nature of emerging threats and security challenges calls for diverse and coordinated responses. The classic military-police response must now be complemented by other political, diplomatic, economic, social and cultural response options that eradicate the root causes of the threats and not just their manifestations.

Burkina Faso NSP incorporates another security requirement, i. e. the concept of human security. In addition to the need to ensure the security of the State and the physical security of the citizens, there is also a critical need to ensure that the conditions for satisfactory food, health, economic, environmental, social and political security are met for them.

Burkina Faso judiciously opted first to develop a National Security Policy, which defines the conceptual option underlying national security as well as the political vision and strategic objectives to be achieved over a relatively long period of time. This NSP is then underpinned by a National Security Strategy (NSS) as well as sectoral and specific strategies defined over shorter timeframes. This approach has the benefit of stabilizing the NSP over a long period of time whilst allowing for more frequent review and adaptation of the NSS to changing context, without having necessarily to modify the Policy.

Burkina Faso NSP is structured into five main parts. The first part defines the core values and vision of the nation's desired future. The second part defines national interests, which

are divided into vital interests, strategic interests and peripheral interests. The third part presents an analysis of the international, regional and national strategic context. The fourth part diagnoses national security threats, risks and vulnerabilities. The fifth and final section sets out the national security vision and strategic objectives.

1. NSP/NSS Rationale

Since April 2015, the security situation in Burkina Faso has been deteriorating dramatically. Already confronted with the challenges of serious local and transnational organized crime, the country, like its neighbors Mali and Niger, has become a major target of deadly attacks by armed terrorist groups that are swarming throughout the Sahel region and threatening the very foundations of the existence of States.

The terrorist threat has catalyzed the emergence of other internal security challenges such as community conflicts, massive displacements of populations fleeing insecurity, the closure of many schools, the development of transnational organized crime, and the worsening of the precarious living conditions of the populations in the affected areas. It highlighted the geopolitical dynamics of Burkina Faso strategic environment as well as its structural and capacity vulnerabilities.

The realities of this new context have invalidated the paradigms hitherto in force in the defense and security sectors governance. The new security challenges have revealed the doctrinal and conceptual inadequacy of this sector-based, state-centered approach, basically governed by both the Defense Policy and the Homeland Security Strategy, the major reference frameworks.

Difficulties in adapting to this new context have highlighted the need for a strategic reference framework to guarantee the coherence and optimize the effectiveness of national responses. They further highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in security governance through the adoption of a holistic approach that takes into account the increasingly complex realities of these hybrid, diffuse and asymmetric threats.

The development of a National Security Policy and a National Security Strategy (NSP/NSS) is thus justified by the need to bring coherence to the various national security public policies, through a vision and strategic objectives and determining the ways and means of achieving them.

2. NSP/NSS Development Process Initiation

The development of the National Security Policy was decided by the Government of Burkina Faso pursuant to one of the recommendations of the National Security Forum

held in Ouagadougou in October 2017. A technical team from the Ministry of Security and the Secretariat-General for National Defense¹ initiated the process.

This initiation phase consisted of defining the process political and conceptual framework, identifying the necessary expertise to be sought, determining the structure, composition and mandate of the various bodies to lead the process, and then setting the duration of the work.

At the end of the initiation phase, which lasted almost a year, the Government issued a decree in December 2018 establishing a multidisciplinary committee in charge of developing a National Defense and Security Policy within 100 days.

3. National Security Policy Development Committee: Membership and Mandate.

The National Security Policy Development Committee (NSP-DC) was established according to the principles of multidisciplinary and national inclusiveness. It brought together defense and security experts, academics and researchers, as well as representatives of the National Assembly, ministries, majority and opposition political parties, traditional and religious authorities, civil society organizations, trade unions, women's and youth organizations, and the private sector.

Under the authority of the High Council for National Defense, the NSP-DC was structured into four components: An Oversight Committee, a Scientific Committee, an Drafting Committee and an Advisory Group.

The **Oversight Committee**, chaired by the Minister of Security and co-chaired by the Ministers of Defense and Justice, consisted of a Coordinator and the Secretaries-General of Defense, Security, Foreign Affairs, Territorial Administration, Economy and Environment ministerial departments. Its mission was to ensure overall supervision of the process, work coordination and internal validation of the milestone deliverables.

The **Scientific Committee**, consisted of twelve members with different backgrounds, including six security experts and six academics; their mission was to ensure the scientific guidance of the work. In this capacity, they were in charge of developing the terms of reference, designing methodological tools, training the Drafting Committee members on the concepts and process of NSP development, conducting consultations and internal pre-validation of the deliverables of the different stages and finalizing the draft version of the NSP.

¹ The Secretariat-General for National Defense is an interministerial coordination body in charge of national defense issues under the Office of the Prime Minister, under the direct authority of the Prime Minister.

The **Drafting Committee** consisted of fifty-two members representing the different socio-professional strata of the nation. They were responsible—under the direction of the Scientific Committee—for carrying out the sectoral and specific thematic workshops, participating in the drafting of the different parts of the NSP, participating in the regional consultations and in the drafting of the general report of the work.

The mission of the **Advisory Group**, composed of twelve highly experienced personalities, was to support the Scientific Committee in supervising the work of the Drafting Committee and in the pre-validation of the deliverables at the various stages.

4. Process Flow

The work of the NSP-DC was carried out in four stages: preliminary work and initiation of the process, consultation and drafting, review and conciliation, approval and adoption. There were some challenges.

4.1. Preliminary Work and Process Initiation

The preliminary work of the process—which took into account the outcomes of the 2017 National Security Forum, –consisted of clarifying concepts, developing terms of reference, defining a methodology and a work schedule.

At the beginning of its work, the Scientific Committee complied with the requirement for conceptual clarification which led to the adoption of the concept of National Security Policy in lieu of that of Defense and Security Policy as initially prescribed by Government decree. This conceptual shift is justified by the demands of the contemporary global context, which underscores the importance of a holistic approach as the basis for effective and satisfactory security governance. This new concept has been approved by the High Council for National Defense, thus allowing the work to continue unimpeded.

The overall methodology of the work was structured as follows:

- A critical desk review that allowed the collection and sharing of a wide range of national and international publications on security issues in the broadest sense;
- A consultative process extended to all the nation’s major stakeholders, which made it possible to gather perceptions, expectations and visions (individual interviews, focus groups, public conferences and panels, systematic quantitative study of perceptions);
- A seminar to bring NSP-DC members up to speed, which made it possible to achieve the convergence of views needed to ensure consistency in the conduct of the work;

- Thematic workshops that made it possible to carry out a participatory and inclusive multidisciplinary diagnosis of all the security issues of the Nation, the conclusions of which were used in developing the drafts of the different parts of the NSP;
- Drafting and validation sessions.

The Head of State chaired a solemn ceremony to launch the process, which was followed by the Drafting Committee training seminar.

4.2. Consultations and Drafting

Consultations—a critical dimension of the process—were conducted throughout the work. The first consultations involved senior political authorities through a government seminar which made it possible to achieve a convergence of political views and to involve the entire Government in the process. Other republican institutions, different categories of state and non-state actors and civil society organizations were then consulted. In addition, public conferences—of a consultative nature—were held on issues related to national security.

These various consultations alternated with thematic workshops that mobilized, in addition to the members of the NSP-DC, more than a hundred competencies from the nation, making it possible to consolidate the participatory and inclusive nature of the process. Regional consultations were held at the end of the process to gather the opinions and concerns of the population and to enrich the content of the NSP project.

4.3. Approval, adoption and dissemination of the document.

All the stages of the process were marked by intermediate internal validation sessions of the deliverables. The official presentation of the draft NSP and the general report of the work to the Head of State marked the end of the process. The final approval was made by the High Council for National Defense. Formal adoption of the NSP is foreseen by a decree of the President of Faso. The NSP includes a communication plan for its dissemination as an appendix.

4.4. Challenges

The conduct of the process is fraught with many challenges, the most important of which are:

- The challenge of conceptual clarification which arises from the very beginning of the process and which is important to take up decisively in order to be able to continue the work unimpeded.
- The challenge of consensus throughout the process must be overcome while preserving the participatory and inclusive nature of the process.

- The challenge of security emergency pressure. In the case of countries facing security emergencies such as Burkina Faso, it is a real challenge to talk about the National Security Policy and to be understood by populations in the throes of insecurity and who claim immediate solutions to their security concerns.

5. Implementation Plan and Matrix

In accordance with the conceptual approach adopted, the National Security Policy is to be implemented through the National Security Strategy. The NSP-DC has developed a draft National Security Strategy—as a supplement to the NSP—which is currently under further development and which will be extended by sectoral or specific national strategies.

CONCLUSION

At the end of its work, the NSP-DC learned five key lessons:

- **The importance of clarifying key concepts:** Conceptual clarification is a critical step to be taken early in the process. It makes it possible to achieve the consensus necessary for a smooth continuation of the process. It is both a requirement for the scientific quality of the work and an important challenge to be met.
- **The importance of the participatory and inclusive process:** The participatory and inclusive nature of the development process is as important as the policy itself. It guarantees the legitimacy of the process as well as the national ownership that is essential for the successful implementation of the NSP.
- **Relevance of the holistic approach:** The appropriateness and relevance of the holistic approach adopted by the Scientific Committee from the conceptual clarification stage was tested throughout the process. This helped to break down all the barriers erected by the advocates of the sector-wide approach, who quickly understood the need for a paradigm shift.
- **The multidisciplinary nature of the NSP-DC:** The multidisciplinary composition of the Scientific Committee has been a major asset for the scientific conduct of the process. Mixing security expertise with academic skills is a guarantee of the quality and legitimacy of the scientific approach.
- **Time Management.** Allocation of sufficient time is a requirement for the scientific and participatory quality of the process as well as for the quality of the final product. In the case of Burkina Faso, the process stretched over a year.
