

# **STABILISATION AND THE STABILISATION UNIT**

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE STABILISATION UNIT**

### **What is the Stabilisation Environment?**

1. Her Majesty's Government (HMG) defines a stabilisation environment as one in which;
  - a. Conflict is severe enough to undermine the fundamental relationship between the state and society, and the state lacks the will or capacity to protect the security of its population.
  - b. There is an identified need to address the root causes of conflict as well as deal with the immediate security problem.
  - c. Ordinary mechanisms for the delivery of the sustainable development that may be necessary to address the root causes of conflict are broken or severely damaged, either across the state or in a significant part of the country.
  - d. The ordinary military mechanisms for identifying and neutralising security threats must be heavily balanced by the need to pursue a workable political settlement and create entry points for sustainable development.
  - e. There is a need for an external security presence. The presence may be in the form of an army or police force and may be foreign or national. The term external refers to the perception of the local population.

### **What are its Critical Challenges?**

2. Such an environment creates the following critical challenges;
  - a. It 'plays the seams' of HMG structures and processes given the different departmental objectives and cultures that exist within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Department for International Development (DFID), Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Cabinet Office. Seen through different eyes the provision of books to a school may be seen as short term military consent winning, an entry point in education development or part of a long term sustainable education programme. It may therefore fall to the MOD or DFID and it may have long term influence and credibility impacts that are more the province of FCO. Such environments greatly complicate the issue of who is responsible and encourage an environment of overlapping programmes and operations. The art of stabilisation is to select and implement activities which respond to as many of these shared objectives as possible, reduce the

risk that activities undermine the objectives of other actors, and respond to the needs of the country. Stabilisation expertise reduces the risk of unintended consequences and ensures strong linkages between tactical (consent), operational (tolerance of local government) and strategic (confidence in government and resistance to insurgents) objectives.

b. It raises the problem of host national capability versus host nation credibility. No matter how lacking in capability an indigenous institution is, international intervention may finally and fatally undermine it in the eyes of a population whose relationship with the state will already be weak. Short term security problems often place a premium on size and capability over credibility; effective security forces containing and reducing violence on the ground. Long term sustainable development to address the root causes of conflict places a premium on credibility over capability; the indigenous security forces undertaking tasks even when international forces may deliver the objective more quickly or safely in order to build their credibility and relationships with the population.

c. It can create difficult questions of transition from external international forces to the host nation. Whatever the point on the continuum we must move to an end point where the host nation does it all with as little financial or other support as possible. To stand any chance of effective transition we seek to minimise the risk of the nascent relationship between state and population does not become a relationship between the population and 'us' at the cost of the state.

d. It creates very difficult questions of political settlement. All HMG action (including military operations) must be conducted with a view to identifying credible leaders that can bring insurgent groups to and through a peace process. This will ultimately mean negotiating with those we have fought.

e. It creates problems of sequencing. Physical security, reform of the security and justice institutions, state revenue generation and support to nascent political settlements may well be areas of early focus in a particularly dysfunctional state, but they will not be the only issues nor can they be taken sequentially before other sectors such as health or education.

### **What are our Stabilisation Objectives in these Environments?**

3. To prevent or contain violent conflict. This may include coercive as well as political intervention and the commitment to address the causes of underlying tensions.
4. Protect people, key assets and institutions. The minimum precondition for stability is provision of security for men, women and children to begin going about their daily lives and for government to function. This may involve external military forces acting in support of local forces.
5. Promote political processes which lead to greater stability. The main aim is to achieve political settlements which make it in the parties' interests to contest power and resources peacefully rather than violently.
6. Prepare for longer term development and address the causes of conflict. Vitally, stabilisation must create entry points for the long term development that achieve sustainable stability.

### **What Does the Stabilisation Unit Seek to Do?**

7. All of these problems have been faced before although the combination of them is different in every different scenario. The Stabilisation Unit exists to;
  - a. Support planning in this complex inter-agency environment to ensure that HMG departments establish a common aim for intervention, a single assessment of the problem, common objectives and clear lines of responsibility for delivering success.
  - b. Learn lessons from such complex environments.
  - c. Apply those lessons to current and future stabilisation interventions.
  - d. Select, develop and train civilians skilled at working in such environments.
  - e. Deploy, manage and support those civilians.

### **How is the Unit Organised?**

8. To meet this remit the Unit is organised into 4 groups;
  - a. A capability group which determines future civilian capability requirements in consultation with the Unit lessons team and parent Departments before recruiting, training and developing that capability through the Civilian Response Team organisation.

- b. A lessons and planning group which supports cross-Government planning, extracts analyses and disseminates stabilisation lessons, manages international relationships with similar organisations overseas, coordinates the Unit's communications effort and develops stabilisation concepts in close collaboration with the parent departments.
- c. An operations group which selects civilian experts for deployment, organises their country specific training, deploys, equips and recovers them and also runs the Unit's country programmes work.
- d. A security and justice group which runs security and justice sector institutional capacity building programmes and provides subject matter experts to the Unit and to overseas missions.

### **What We Can Do for You**

- 9. Provide planners versed in the methodologies and languages of the FCO, DFID and the MOD to facilitate identification of common HMG stabilisation aims and coordination of your plans with wider HMG efforts.
- 10. Provide experts with extensive experience of the stabilisation environment and its particular challenges to support your staff.
- 11. Design and maintenance of catalytic programmes creating entry points for long term development in conflict environments.
- 12. Provide focused and experienced security and justice expertise and design of institutional capacity building programmes.
- 13. Development opportunities and training for your staff to improve their understanding of stabilisation, conflict and partner departments through our training courses and through membership of the Civil Response Team.